

## Grade 8 Playlist: Determine Author's Purpose and Analyze a Response to Conflicting Evidence

*Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.6:*

- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

### Welcome

In order to understand a nonfiction text, a reader must be able to determine the author's viewpoint and purpose for writing the text. Some authors state their purpose and viewpoint very clearly, but often, they imply them instead. Readers must then look for hints in the text in order to determine the author's viewpoint and purpose. Once a reader has identified them, he or she may notice that the author has chosen to include opinions or pieces of information that are in conflict with this viewpoint and purpose. Authors choose to do this for a variety of reasons. Understanding how an author attempts to persuade his or her reader to agree with a particular viewpoint will better prepare the reader to evaluate the viewpoint objectively. Readers can learn to identify the purpose and viewpoint of a text and think critically about an author's decision to include contradictory opinions and information in the text.

### Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- determine the author's purpose in writing a nonfiction text.
- analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence and viewpoints.

### Review

#### Key Terms

- An **author's purpose** is the reason he or she is writing a particular text. For example, a science fiction author writes with the purpose of entertaining his or her readers. The author may also intend to inform readers about certain scientific principles. Another example is a speechwriter for a political candidate. This author would create the speech with the purpose of persuading the audience to vote for the candidate or agree with the candidate's platform.
- A **persuasive text** is written in order to convince the reader of the author's argument. For example, a speechwriter is writing a persuasive text because he or she intends to use the text to convince people to agree with the candidate.
- An **author's viewpoint** or **point of view** is the perspective from which he or she writes. An author can have an **objective** or a **subjective** viewpoint. If an author writes with an objective viewpoint, he or she includes only facts, with none of his or her personal ideas or opinions. If an author is writing with a subjective viewpoint, he or she may include personal ideas and opinions alongside facts.



- When an author chooses to use a text to persuade someone to agree with his or her point of view, he or she might include a **conflicting viewpoint**, which is a different perspective on the subject of the text. An author might include a conflicting viewpoint in order to acknowledge that there are different understandings of the subject of the text and to argue against them. People who disagree with the subjective viewpoint of an author also have a conflicting viewpoint.

## Exploring the Standard

When an author writes an informational text, he or she must first communicate to the reader his or her purpose in writing the text. Some authors state their viewpoint and purpose very clearly. For example, a writer may say, “In this essay, I intend to persuade the reader that cats are better pets than dogs.” This statement is very clear. Authors are not always this straightforward, however, and sometimes readers must pay careful attention in order to understand the viewpoint and purpose of the text.

### Watch!

Watch this video to review author’s purpose and how to determine an author’s purpose for writing:

- [http://ctle.hccs.edu/gcpass/PREPPReading/prepreading\\_topic6.htm](http://ctle.hccs.edu/gcpass/PREPPReading/prepreading_topic6.htm)

### Practice!

To practice identifying an author’s purpose, complete the following exercise. Remember that an author’s purpose is often to inform, to persuade, or to entertain:

- <http://www.ereadingworksheets.com/reading-worksheets/authors-purpose-worksheet-5.htm>

## A Closer Look: Determining the Author’s Purpose

Readers must pay careful attention to a text in order to determine the author’s viewpoint and purpose. Here are a couple of steps that readers can take:

- Pay attention to word choice, which will help reveal whether the author is writing to persuade, to inform, or to entertain. For example, does the author use a lot of technical words? Is the author posing a question?
- Identify the tone of the text. Is the author being funny or serious? Does the author show that he or she cares deeply about the topic?

The following example is from the beginning of an essay entitled “The Importance of Exploration” by NASA Chief Historian Steven J. Dick. Read this opening paragraph and look for clues that indicate the author’s purpose and viewpoint.

