

Evaluating an Author's Intent

0:00	Owl: Welcome to Evaluating an Author's Intent, an instructional video on reading comprehension brought to you by the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab.
0:12	Analyzing a text requires you to think critically about why, how, and to whom the author is speaking.
0:20	In this video, we'll cover how to evaluate an author's intent by paying attention to four aspects of authorial intent: point of view, purpose, intended audience, and tone.
0:36	After watching this video, be sure to visit the Online Reading Comprehension Lab of the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab for additional videos and resources on how to analyze a text, such as How to Identify Writing Patterns and Evaluating an Argument.
0:54	Point of view is the author's position on an issue.
0:59	You can discern an author's point of view by looking for key words, such as support, benefit, oppose, harm, and against.
1:11	With these key words in mind, let's try to identify the point of view of the following statement:
1:17	Stricter gun control laws would benefit the public by keeping guns off the streets and out of the hands of dangerous or unstable individuals.
1:26	The key word "benefit" provides a clue to the author's point of view on the topic of gun control.
1:32	In this case, the author is in favor of stricter gun control laws.
1:37	Purpose is the author's reason for writing.
1:41	There are many reasons for writing.
1:44	For instance, an author may write to inform, to explain or instruct, to entertain, or to persuade.
1:55	You can identify the author's purpose by asking yourself the following discovery questions:
2:00	Why did the author write this?
2:03	What is he or she trying to achieve?
2:07	Let's look at some statements to identify the purpose.
2:11	"In the event of a crash landing, each passenger should ensure that their seatbelt is securely fastened and tuck their arms, legs, and head into their body."
2:21	This statement is instructive because it's intended to explain what to do in the event of a crash landing.
2:29	"Columbus Day is a controversial holiday because of its tacit endorsement of colonization, slavery, and the genocide of indigenous peoples."
2:39	This statement is persuasive because it's trying to convince the reader to agree with the author's point of view about Columbus Day.

2:46	Advertisements and commercials are also persuasive since their goal is to persuade you to buy something.
2:54	“The Dow Jones Industrial dropped five hundred points today after the President announced the latest unemployment statistics.”
3:01	This statement is informative because it is trying to update the reader on what happened with the stock market today.
3:09	“The zombie horde shambled up the hill in pursuit of its prey, an injured pony whose frightened whinnies incited a virtual zombie stampede!”
3:19	This statement is trying to entertain the reader by describing a fictitious zombie encounter.
3:27	The intended audience is the group of people that the author has in mind as his or her primary readers.
3:34	You can identify the author’s intended audience by asking yourself the following discovery questions:
3:41	For whom is the author writing?
3:44	Where was it published and who is most likely to find it there?
3:49	What is the topic and who is generally interested in it?
3:53	What level of language does the author use? Is it simple, sophisticated, or specialized?
3:59	What assumptions does the author make about the audience’s values and beliefs?
4:05	and What is the author’s purpose for writing?
4:09	For instance, if the author writes:
4:11	“The presidential candidate is a rabid proponent of the big government, tax-the-rich, entitlement policies that have bankrupted the European Union.”
4:20	You can surmise that the author is writing for a conservative audience because he or she assumes the intended audience is familiar with and comfortable using phrases such as “big government,” “tax-the-rich,” and “entitlements” as derogatory terms.
4:35	The description of the politician as “rabid” is also a clue that the intended audience will not agree with the politician’s policies.
4:43	Tone refers to the author’s attitude towards the subject or audience.
4:48	For example, let’s say you come across a newspaper headline that reads: President Grinch to Steal Halloween, Too.
4:56	The author’s tone is sarcastic.
4:58	You can probably guess from the tone that the author is definitely not in favor of the President.
5:04	The author’s sarcastic tone is also a good sign that he or she may be biased about the topic.
5:10	Being aware of any biases will help you to keep a critical distance as you read so that you can evaluate the truth value of what’s being said.
5:19	Tone comes in lots of different flavors.
5:21	Some words commonly used to describe tone are:



- 5:25 Angry, apologetic, approving, cheerful, contemptuous, critical, cynical, disapproving, doubtful, emotional, enthusiastic, friendly, formal, humorous, informal, ironic, mocking, negative, neutral, nostalgic, objective, optimistic, passionate, patriotic, pessimistic, playful, positive, righteous, sarcastic, sentimental, sensational, serious, shocked, skeptical, sympathetic, and worried.
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- 6:19 By evaluating an author's intent, you'll be more aware of what an author is trying to communicate and better able to formulate a critical response.
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- 6:28 Remember to visit the Online Reading Comprehension Lab of the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab for additional videos and resources on how to analyze a text.
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- 6:39 Thanks for listening to this instructional video on Evaluating an Author's Intent!
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- 6:44 Visit the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab for more support with reading and writing skills

