

Reading Skill: Author's Purpose

1. Which of these can best help you determine an author's purpose in a literary work?
- A. the title of the work
 - B. reviewers' opinions of the work
 - C. types of details the author uses
 - D. types of characters the author develops

Read the selection. Then, answer the questions that follow.

In what sport will you find the terms hack, guard, and slider? Baseball, perhaps? Nope. Golf? Wrong again. The answer is curling, an ice sport that originated in Scotland some 500 years ago. Today, millions of people around the world enjoy curling, a game in which two four-member teams slide 42-pound granite stones with handles toward a target. Players rotate the stone as it moves over the ice. This rotation is also known as the curl—hence, the sport's name. Team members use a broom, or brush, to sweep the ice, which reduces friction by creating a thin film of water between the stone and ice.

2. Which of these best expresses the author's purpose in writing the selection?
- A. to inform
 - B. to persuade
 - C. to reflect
 - D. to express an opinion
3. Which types of details best help you determine the author's purpose in this selection?
- A. opinions and reflections on the topic
 - B. appeals to readers' emotions
 - C. stories of the author's experiences
 - D. facts and statistics on the topic
4. Which of these is true of author's purpose in a selection such as this one?
- A. An author can have more than one purpose in a literary work.
 - B. An author's purpose in a literary work can be unclear.
 - C. Most authors write to influence readers' opinions.
 - D. Most literary works are written to entertain readers.

While it is true that we have an energy crisis in this country, we must carefully consider our options. There are workable alternatives to nuclear power. Research is being conducted into geothermal energy, for example. This energy comes from the heat in the earth's crust. Solar energy is another good alternative.

5. Based on the selection, which of the following best states the author's main conclusion?
- A. Nuclear power should not be the solution to the energy crisis.
 - B. Solar power is the only practical alternative to nuclear power.
 - C. Nuclear power plants should be monitored to make sure that they are run well.
 - D. If human error could be avoided, there would be nothing wrong with nuclear power.
6. What does the author use to support her conclusion that even the best-run plants pose a danger?
- A. statistics
 - B. the opinion of an expert
 - C. an emotional appeal
 - D. an example
7. Based on the selection, with which of these conclusions would the author most agree?
- A. No energy source could be considered truly safe.
 - B. Nuclear energy might be safe to use at some future time.
 - C. More money should be spent on research into solar and geothermal energy.
 - D. Good evacuation plans would offset some of the dangers of nuclear energy.

Literary Analysis: Narrative Essay and Expository Essay
Read the selection. Then, answer the questions that follow.

I remember Dad’s words to me that spring day, just before he removed the training wheels on my bicycle: “When you fall—and you will—get right back on that bike!” I wanted to be free of the small training wheels, to be one of the “big kids,” but I was afraid. How would I keep my balance on a bike that suddenly looked huge to me? Protesting, I climbed on the bike while Dad held onto the back of the seat. Then he gave me a shove that sent me rolling. The handlebars wobbled crazily. I’d forgotten how to use the pedals! Down I went. Then back up on the bike I went, again and again, until at last, away I went— still a little wobbly—to the end of the sidewalk, without a fall. After I braked the bike, I heard the cheering. I turned around and saw half the neighborhood gathered, watching and clapping. What could I do but take a bow?

8. Which of these best describes the selection?
- A. an expository essay
 - B. a persuasive essay
 - C. an autobiographical narrative
 - D. a biographical narrative
9. Which of these does the author include in this selection?
- A. a fictional story of riding a bike
 - B. the author’s own feelings
 - C. Dad’s experience riding a bicycle
 - D. a description of the neighborhood
10. Which of these best explains why the author tells about her feelings of fear in the selection?
- A. to add humor to the story of learning to ride a bike
 - B. to help the reader understand why learning to ride was a triumph
 - C. to convince others to learn to ride a bike
 - D. to show how difficult learning to ride a bike can be

Read the selection.

Then, answer the questions that follow.

The shapes and colors of traffic signs are important. For example, diamond-shaped traffic signs are always warnings: “Slippery When Wet” or “HILL” or “Signal Ahead.” An inverted triangle means “Yield.” And you know that an octagon—the one with eight sides—means “STOP.” A pentagon shows that a school is nearby, and a circle shape warns of a railroad crossing. The colors of signs have meanings, too. Black-and-white signs post regulations such as “No U Turn” and speed limits. Signs with green back- grounds give directions and mileage information, and point the way to hiking trails and parking places. Blue signs provide information about service facilities for motorists. Orange warning signs appear in construction areas.

11. How do you know that the selection is an expository essay?
- A. It explains how to do something.
 - B. It tells about the author’s life.
 - C. It is a short work of fiction.
 - D. It provides information on a topic.
12. Which of these best describes the focus of this selection?
- A. roadway dangers
 - B. shapes of traffic signs
 - C. highway safety
 - D. types of traffic signs
13. What is the author’s purpose in writing the selection?
- A. to entertain the reader
 - B. to discuss ideas
 - C. to inform the reader
 - D. to give directions

14. Which of these might you expect to find in a biography but not in an autobiography?

- A. information about a person who is not the author
- B. a description of events from the author's life story
- C. descriptions of challenges that a person faces
- D. information about a person's successes and failures

15. Which pronoun would you expect to see used often in an autobiography?

- A. he
- B. she
- C. I
- D. them

16. In which way are a biography and an autobiography similar?

- A. Both reveal the author's own feelings.
- B. Both rely on objective research.
- C. Both describe facts and events.
- D. Both tell a fictional story.