

# PURPOSE AND GENRE

## PURPOSE

All writing has a purpose. For example, the purpose behind your research paper could be to *inform* or *persuade* your audience on a topic, or the purpose behind your journal entry could be to *express*. No matter the case, there should always be a reason behind your writing. Ask yourself as you begin each paper: “*Why am I writing this? What do I want this piece of writing to do for both my reader and me?*” Your answer will become the purpose of your paper. There are four common writing purposes:

- Inform
- Persuade
- Express
- Entertain

You may choose one or a combination of purposes. Each one will lead you to write differently. For example, if you decide your purpose is to persuade, you will use examples and quotations that will support your view and use a tone that will cause your reader to take your stance. If your purpose is to inform, however, you will probably want to use a factual, unbiased tone, leaving conclusions up to the reader. Simply remember, *all the ideas in your writing should reflect your purpose*.

## GENRE

All writing also has a genre. Once you know your purpose, it’s time to choose a genre—a style of writing or form that your work will take. This will affect the way that you approach your purpose. Here are some genre options:

- Story
- Essay
- Biographical summary
- Speech or debate
- Analysis
- Magazine article
- Memo

## IMPORTANCE

Together, purpose and genre do the following:

- Influence the tone, or voice, you will use
- Create focus to communicate the main idea
- Make the writing meaningful and worthwhile

