

Farm

By: Elisha Cooper

Activity Level: Intermediate

PURPOSE

Students will evaluate the author's purpose for writing *Farm* and identify four areas of text evidence to support his or her reasoning. The purposes for writing discussed are: to persuade, to inform, to entertain, to explain, and to describe.

NEBRASKA STATE EDUCATION CONTENT STANDARDS CONNECTION

LA 3.1.6.a, LA 4.1.6.a

Identify the author's purpose(s) (e.g., explain, entertain, inform, persuade) to support text comprehension.

LA 3.1.6.e, LA 4.1.6.e

Determine the main ideas and supporting details from informational text and/or media.

LA 3.2.1.h, LA 4.2.1.h

Proofread and edit writing recursively for format and conventions of standard English (e.g., spelling, capitalization, grammar, punctuation, syntax, semantics).

WHAT'S THE CONNECTION TO AGRICULTURE?

Agriculture is the beginning of many food and fiber products and energy sources we use every day. Discover the geography that influences the growth of ag products, the families who own farms producing them, and understand the processes associated with producing which lead to their price and value in this beautiful and carefully observed book. Readers will develop a basic awareness of the seasonal processes of farmers planting seeds, caring for plants, caring for animals, and harvesting the product of their work.

MATERIALS

- Author's Purpose Anchor Chart (1 per student)
- Author's Purpose Noticing's worksheets (1 per student)

VOCABULARY

Alfalfa – a leafy green plant that is used as feed for farm animals

Auger – a screw-shaped machine that shoots grain and corn through a tube

Chaff – dusty bits of seed and cuttings left over after a harvest

Combine harvester – a big harvesting machine that combines two operations, like cutting and threshing

Fertilizer – a substance added to the soil to make it more fertile, increasing the yield of the harvest



Grain elevator – a large building with a mechanical elevator inside that is used for storing grain

Husk – the leafy outer cover of the corncob

Kernels – the seeds of the corn

Pesticide – a chemical that kills insects that would ruin a particular crop

Pit – the hole in the ground where corn is dropped

Silo – a round tower used for storing crops

Thresher – a machine that separates kernels from a cob, or grain from a stem

Tiller – a machine that turns soil over and prepares the land for growing crops

Yield – the quantity or amount of a crop that is produced

BACKGROUND AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION

Farms come in many shapes and sizes. Commercial agriculture uses massive tractors and implements, producing hundreds of thousands of bushels of grain for feed or fuel and thousands of pounds of meat for food. These commercial farms create more products than the farmers would use, and products are sold for a profit in order to produce more next year.

Other farms are hobby farms with just a few animals or food plants in a yard for the enjoyment of the owner. There may be enough harvest for sharing with friends or neighbors, but a hobby farmer does not participate in agriculture as his or her primary means to support himself/herself.

INTEREST APPROACH

- Read the below quotes from Elisha Cooper, the author of *Farm*.
 - “I grew up on a small farm in New England. It was a farm out of a children’s book, with goats and an apple orchard, and very different from a Midwestern farm with flat cornfields and John Deere tractors. This book is about those working farms. For research I drove around DeKalb County, in Illinois, sketching barns and talking with farmers. I became friends with one farmer; for the corn harvest he let me drive his combine harvester. This book tells the story of the seasons on one farm. Children’s books about farms, with cute pigs and red tractors, undersell farms. The reality is more interesting.”
 - “I think we pass by so many things. Writing about farms was a chance to slow down and take a closer look at what’s under our noses.”
- Ask students:
 - Do we know anyone who grows plants or raises animals for food or other products?
 - Discuss whether the products they grow are for themselves or to sell and distribute to others.
 - Why do we think an author writes a story?
 - Tell about a favorite story and how it makes us feel after reading it.

PROCEDURE

1. Explain to students that authors have a purpose or reason for writing their piece before they get started. The author may want to tell a story to entertain or inform the reader, explain or describe something, or convince the reader to believe in an opinion.
2. Pass out Author's Purpose Noticing's Worksheets to each student. Explain that they can write notes about four things that happen in the book, asking them to be ready to share their answers after the story. Read Farm aloud to the class.
3. Allow some independent work time to complete the Noticing's worksheet. Display the Author's Purpose Anchor Chart for the class and wrap up independent work time. Introduce the anchor chart to the class.
4. Ask students to pair up with an elbow partner to share their 'Noticing's' with each other. Ask students to assign what they believe the Author's Purpose is to each of the items they noticed and write their answers in the space provided on the worksheet. Direct them to use the anchor chart and discussions with their partner to determine the best fit.

LISTENING QUESTIONS

- Do we know anyone who grows plants or raises animals for food or other products?
 - Discuss whether the products they grow are for themselves or to sell and distribute to others.
- Why do we think an author writes a story?
- Tell about a favorite story and how it makes us feel after reading it.

FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

- Who was surprised by anything in the book? Did we learn anything new about farming that happens in the areas around our school?
- Share our opinions: do we believe it is important or enjoyable to read about farms?
- What are the common sources identified in this book for ag products?
 - *Corn: the farmer plants corn, the kind that animals eat.*
 - *Eggs/Meat: the farmer has chickens and roosters*
 - *Beef: the cattle pictured are Angus and Hereford. Used for beef, not milk like Holsteins.*
 - *Pork: there is a hog farm that people can smell when the wind comes out of that direction.*
- What is the geography of this book? What types of products are grown based on that geography?
 - *"The fields are flat stretching as far as the eye can see. There are no hills." Based on the description in the book, we can assume the farm is located in the Midwest. The farms are bigger operations with wide open spaces. The farmer is planting corn. Surrounding farms have alfalfa.*
- What kind of animals are on the farm? What other animals are around the farm but aren't necessarily farm animals (animals used for a specific purpose of meat, wool, eggs, or milk)?
 - *Cattle, chickens, dogs, cats, hogs on nearby farm.*
 - *Butterflies, bees, snake, skunk, rabbits, chipmunks, pheasants, foxes, catfish*

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Agricultural Transportation – Nebraska AITC
 - <https://nefbfoundation.org/images/FOUndation/Educators/Enriching-Activities/Agricultural-Transportation.pdf>
- Corn Calculations – Nebraska AITC
 - <https://nefbfoundation.org/images/FOUndation/Educators/Enriching-Activities/Corn-Calculations.pdf>
- Our World – Water & Soil – Nebraska AITC
 - <https://nefbfoundation.org/images/FOUndation/Educators/Enriching-Activities/Our-World.pdf>

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LITERACY OUTCOMES

- **Plants and Animals for Food, Fiber & Energy**
 - **T2.3-5** Provide examples of specific ways farmers/ranchers meet the needs of animals.
- **Food, Health and Lifestyle**
 - **T3.3-5d** Explain the costs associated with producing and purchasing food.
- **Culture, Society, Economy & Geography**
 - **T5.3-5d** Explain the value of agriculture and how it is important in daily life.

Author's Purpose

Purpose	Definition	Examples
Persuade	the author wants you to do, buy, or believe something	advertisements, persuasive letters, opinions, campaigns speeches
Inform	the author wants to give you information	textbooks, non-fiction books, expository essays, biographies, newspaper articles, directions
Entertain	the author wants to amuse you or for you to enjoy the writing	fiction stories, poems, songs, plays, jokes narratives
Explain	the author wants to tell you how to do something or how something works.	instructions, directions, steps, procedures, how-to, receipts
Describe	the author wants you to visualize or experience a person, place, or thing	product descriptions, descriptive essays, imagery



Our Noticing's



Group members: _____

We are reading _____

The author is _____

As you are reading, record four things you notice about the piece of writing.

Author's purpose:

Author's purpose:

Author's purpose:

Author's purpose: