RI 6: I can determine the author’s point of view and the details that support it.

Study Guide

Did you ever read an article that tried to convince you to agree with the writer’s ideas? If so, you may have noted that certain words were chosen to appeal to your emotions. The writer may have made different choices if the text were meant to inform or entertain, for example. After all, content is shaped by the **author’s purpose**, or main reason for writing. Content is also shaped by the **author’s point of view**, or feelings about a topic. The words and ideas used in a text provide important clues about an author’s perspective.

Recognizing an author’s reason for writing and the feelings about a topic and help you decide what to do with the information. Should you treat it as a simple set of facts? Will you agree with the author, or will you develop your own opinion? To determine an author’s point of view, look at words chosen, the opinions expressed, and the details that are given (or left out). All are clues to an author’s purpose and point of view.

**Example:**

Climbing Ice!

By Melissa Thompson

Imagine facing an enormous frozen waterfall. You are at the bottom of this huge ice formation, staring up and thinking through the steps you’ll take to climb it. Yes, it’s dangerous—and that’s part of the fun!

For adventure seekers, ice climbing offers a physical challenge and a unique thrill. The surface of ice varies greatly from one location to another, so an ice climber must be ready for any situation that could arise during a climb. One wrong step could lead to a deadly fall. Yet to enthusiasts, the risks seem small when compared to the reward of finally reaching the top!

Speed competitions are for ice climbers who need more adventure than simply scaling a steep ice wall. These events offer the rush of danger coupled with the excitement of speed and competition.

**What is the author’s point of view about ice climbing? What textual evidence reveals this viewpoint?**

The author does not directly state her opinion or attitude about ice climbing. Use the chart to determine her point of view based on text details and word choice.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Topic | Evidence | Positive (+) or Negative (-) |
| Ice Climbing | “dangerous,” “unique thrill,” “deadly fall” | + and - |
| Ice climbing speed competitions | “rush of danger coupled with the excitement of speed and competition” | + and - |

**Author’s Point of View:** The author views ice climbing and speed competitions both positively and negatively. She thinks they are dangerous, but the risks are worth the thrill and adrenaline that come with those dangers.

**Directions: Read the editorial about ice climbing. Use the Close Reading and the Hint to help you answer the question.**

**Worth the Risk?**

**Close Reading**

Look closely at the words the author uses in the editorial’s first paragraph. **Circle** words and phrases that help you understand the author’s point of view.

**Worth the Risk?**

By Chris Lau

Ice climbing is a dangerous sport in which people attempt to climb frozen waterfalls and icy mountainsides. Training and proper equipment, along with protective clothing, are essential, but they are not enough to guarantee safety. Even experienced climbers continue to be injured and killed while participating in the high-risk sport.

Do the thrills outweigh the risks? When an ice climber is buried under an avalanche, emergency responders are dispatched at great expense to the community. If by luck the climber survives, it may take months or even years for him or her to recover. Are such costs worth a few hours of excitement?

By Chris Lau

What is Chris Lau’s point of view about ice climbing?

1. He admires the bravery of people who participate in the sport.
2. He strongly encourages people to get the proper equipment and training before trying ice climbing.
3. He questions the wisdom of people who think the thrill of ice climbing is worth the dangers.
4. He downplays the high costs and serious risks of the sport.

**Hint**

How would you describe the author’s feelings about ice climbing? Is he simply providing information or does he have another purpose?

Look at the answer you chose above. Explain which words and phrases in the article helped you identify the author’s point of view.

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**What is the difference between author’s purpose and point of view?**

The author’s purpose is his or her reason for writing: to persuade, inform, entertain, or express. The author’s point of view is how he or she feels about the topic.

**\*Always look closely at headlines, subheadings, captions, and the thesis statement (last sentence in the first paragraph) to find hints about the author’s point of view.**