

## WHO'S ON THE OTHER SIDE?

One great way to help understand the primary ideas an author is trying to communicate is to think about what ideas the author appears to be writing against. Imagine that each excerpt below is the beginning of an editorial or speech that relates to school in some way or another. Think about what ideas the author is writing against. On the basis of who the author is writing against, discuss what ideas the author might be writing for.

1. The most powerful lessons anyone learns are learned from living, not from reading books. If we want students to be truly educated we have to give them time to explore, to play sports, to go to museums, to be with friends.
  - What ideas might the author be writing against?
  - What ideas might the author be writing for?
2. Schools should be about more than reading, writing, and 'rithmetic. They should also be about learning to work with others different from ourselves. A class of kids with similar abilities in math may indeed get a chapter or two more done than one that has kids of differing abilities, but at what cost?
  - What ideas might the author be writing against?
  - What ideas might the author be writing for?
3. High school is hard enough for kids without having to worry about not having the "right" kind of jeans or the trendiest shirt or blouse.
  - What ideas might the author be writing against?
  - What ideas might the author be writing for?
4. "First-period English class, 7:40 a.m. Most of the ninth-grade students stare glassy-eyed at their teacher. Two lay their heads on the desk." From "Sleep and Adolescents," by Peg Dawson (2005, p. 1).
  - What ideas might the author be writing against?
  - What ideas might the author be writing for?
5. "Students in the United States spend much less time in school than do students in most other industrialized nations, and the school year has been essentially unchanged for more than a century." (Marcotte & Hansen, 2010)
  - What ideas might the author be writing against?
  - What ideas might the author be writing for?
6. More and more United States prisons resemble nursing homes with bars, where the elderly and infirm eke out shrunken lives. (Fellner, 2013)
  - What ideas might the author be writing against?
  - What ideas might the author be writing for?
7. Think back on the answers you've provided. Explain as best you can how you came to your conclusions.

**Now try applying what you've learned to a new situation.**



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Figure 4.3