**“The Plot Against the People” – p.488**

Opening Quickwrite: Fill in the blanks…

* It annoys me the most when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ breaks down, when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ gets lost, and when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ doesn’t work.

During Reading: The author, Russell Baker, uses the pattern of organization known as **classification** to group everyday items into the three categories below. Classification is when one sorts ideas or objects into groups that share common characteristics. While you read, complete the chart by listing example items from each category and their characteristics.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Categories of Classification** | **Example Items** | **Characteristics of this Category** |
| **Things that break down** |  |  |
| **Things that get lost** |  |  |
| **Things that don’t work** |  |  |

After Reading: Analyze the tone the author creates in the selection. **Tone** is the expression of the author’s attitude towards a subject. How does **tone** show **irony?**

1. “With the cunning typical of its breed, the automobile never breaks down while entering a filling station…it waits until it reaches a downtown intersection in the middle of rush hour” (9-10).
   * Tone?
2. “The most plausible theory [about things that get lost] is that they have developed a secret method of locomotion which they are able to conceal the instant a human eye falls upon them” (24-26).
   * Tone?
3. “Some persons believe this constitutes evidence that inanimate objects are not entirely hostile to man, and that a negotiated peace is possible” (39-40). Also, consider the title: “The Plot Against the People”
   * Tone?
4. “The most interesting holds that the things that don’t work have attained the highest state possible for an inanimate object, the state to which things that break down and things that get lost can still only aspire” (56-58).
   * Tone?

**“Doing Nothing Is Something” – p.578**

Quickwrite: I have \_\_\_\_ hours of free time daily during the school year and \_\_\_\_ hours of free time daily in the summer. I feel I (do or do not) need more free time because…

During Reading: In order to persuade readers of their opinions, authors use claims supported by reasons and evidence. A **claim** is an argument, or the writer’s position on an issue. **Reasons** explain or justify an action, belief, or decision while **evidence** exists as facts, statistics, examples, or the views of experts. While you read, complete the chart below by

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Claim:** We need to allow children to have downtime in the summer. | |
| **Reasons:** | **Evidence:** |
| Doing nothing fuels creativity |  |
| Children are overscheduled |  |
| Children have lost downtime in recent years |  |
| **Claim:** It is the fault of adults that children have a lack of downtime. | |
| **Reasons:** | **Evidence:** |
| There is a culture of adult distrust of kids left unoccupied |  |
| There is a culture of cutthroat and unquestioning competition |  |
| There is a culture of workplace presence – having busy kids is convenient for busy parents |  |

After Reading: Decide whether each statement from the reading is a fact or opinion and explain your choice.

* **Fact** – a statement that can be proved
* **Opinion** – a statement of feeling or belief; cannot be proved

1. “I don’t believe you can write, compose music, or become an actor without down time” (23-26).

* Fact or Opinion? Why?

1. “There is a culture of cutthroat and unquestioning competition amongst parents [concerning their kids]” (37-39).

* Fact or Opinion? Why?

1. “…in the last 20 years American kids have lost about four unstructured hours a week” (78-80).

* Fact or Opinion? Why?

1. “…we are creating an entire generation of people whose ability to think outside the box…is being systematically stunted by scheduling” (70-75).

* Fact or Opinion? Why?