Proof Before Policy

Trace claims, test evidence, and judge whether an argument holds up.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.8 "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the three paragraphs. Underline the main claim, circle each piece of evidence, and write 1 beside evidence that strongly supports a claim or 2 beside evidence that needs more support.

Should School Start Later?

(1) Riverton Middle School should begin classes at 8:30 instead of 7:45. The American Academy of Pediatrics has said that middle and high schools should aim for start times of 8:30 or later because teenagers need adequate sleep. In a survey of 420 Riverton students, 68 percent reported sleeping fewer than eight hours on school nights. A later start could give many students more time to sleep, especially those who ride early buses.

(2) Some people say the change would make students more alert in class. That claim is reasonable, but the passage does not provide Riverton attendance, grade, or classroom-attention data to prove it. The principal also argues that later starts would improve test scores because a neighboring district changed its schedule and scores rose the next year. This evidence is weak by itself. Scores can change for many reasons, such as different teaching programs or a new group of students.

(3) Before making a decision, the school board should collect stronger local evidence. It could compare students' sleep, attendance, and first-period grades before and after a trial later start. It should also ask families about bus schedules, child care, and after-school activities. These details matter because a policy can help students sleep while creating transportation problems for some families. The board could then weigh both benefits and costs instead of relying on one district's test-score change.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the passage's main claim about Riverton Middle School?

2. Which evidence most directly supports the idea that Riverton students may need more sleep? Explain why it is relevant.

3. Why is the neighboring district's test-score change not enough evidence to prove that a later start would raise Riverton's test scores?

4. What additional evidence does the passage say the school board should collect? How would it make the argument stronger?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose one school policy, such as limiting homework, adding recess, or changing lunch time. Write a claim about the policy, name two types of relevant evidence you would collect, and explain why one piece of evidence alone would not be enough.

ANSWER KEY

Proof Before Policy

GRADES K-12 · CCRA.R.8

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the three paragraphs. Underline the main claim, circle each piece of evidence, and write 1 beside evidence that strongly supports a claim or 2 beside evidence that needs more support. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the passage's main claim about Riverton Middle School?	**Riverton Middle School should start classes at 8:30 instead of 7:45.**
2	Which evidence most directly supports the idea that Riverton students may need more sleep? Explain why it is relevant.	**The survey showing that 68 percent of 420 students sleep fewer than eight hours on school nights. It directly gives local information about students' sleep.**
3	Why is the neighboring district's test-score change not enough evidence to prove that a later start would raise Riverton's test scores?	**The score increase may have had other causes, such as different teaching programs or a different group of students, and it is from another district.**
4	What additional evidence does the passage say the school board should collect? How would it make the argument stronger?	**The board should collect local data on sleep, attendance, and first-period grades before and after a trial, plus family information about transportation and child care. This evidence would show local benefits and possible costs.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Riverton should limit homework to 45 minutes per night for middle school students. The school should collect student sleep logs and compare homework time with assignment completion and grades. It should also survey teachers and families about whether students have enough time for activities and responsibilities. A few students saying they feel tired would not be enough because their experiences may not represent the whole school or show whether homework caused the problem.

Accept equivalent statements of the main claim and evidence evaluations when students accurately explain relevance, limits, or missing information. In Part 3, accept different policies if the response includes a clear claim, relevant evidence, and a valid reason that one source of evidence is insufficient.