Bell Time Debate

Track a writer's position and response to opposing views.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.6 "Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one sentence that states the author's position. Circle each concern or opposing viewpoint, then number the sentence or sentences that respond to each one.

Should School Start Later?

1. At 7:20 each morning, buses pull up to our middle school while many students are still rubbing sleep from their eyes. Our district is considering a later start time, and the school board should approve it. The American Academy of Pediatrics has said that middle and high schools should aim for start times of 8:30 a.m. or later because teenagers' body clocks shift later during puberty. A schedule that matches this change could help students arrive more alert and ready to learn.

2. Some families worry that a later bell would disrupt bus routes, after-school sports, and parents' work schedules. Those concerns deserve planning, not dismissal. The district could use the same buses in two runs by adjusting elementary and secondary schedules, as many districts already do. Teams could begin practices later or use study hall before practice on game days. Families who need early supervision could have access to a staffed library or cafeteria. These steps would not remove every inconvenience, but they would make the change more workable.

3. Critics also say that a later start would simply lead students to stay up later. Sleep habits do matter, and schools cannot control every choice students make at home. Still, a later schedule gives students a better chance to get the 8 to 10 hours of sleep recommended for teens. Before making a final decision, the board should survey families, study transportation costs, and test the schedule for one semester. Careful planning is a stronger response than keeping a timetable that ignores adolescent sleep patterns.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the author's point of view about the proposed start time? Use one detail from the passage to support your answer.

2. What is the author's main purpose for writing this passage?

3. Identify one concern about a later start time from paragraph 2. How does the author respond to that concern?

4. How does the author respond to the claim that students would simply stay up later? Explain how this response affects the argument.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose one school policy you would like to change. Write exactly four sentences that state your position, fairly present one opposing viewpoint, respond to it, and include one factual or logical reason.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one sentence that states the author's position. Circle each concern or opposing viewpoint, then number the sentence or sentences that respond to each one. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the author's point of view about the proposed start time? Use one detail from the passage to support your answer.	**The author supports a later school start time. The author says the school board should approve it and argues that students could arrive more alert.**
2	What is the author's main purpose for writing this passage?	**The author's purpose is to persuade the school board to approve a later start time while showing that concerns can be addressed.**
3	Identify one concern about a later start time from paragraph 2. How does the author respond to that concern?	**One concern is that a later bell could disrupt bus routes, sports, and parents' work schedules. The author suggests adjusted bus runs, later practices or study hall, and early supervision in a library or cafeteria.**
4	How does the author respond to the claim that students would simply stay up later? Explain how this response affects the argument.	**The author admits that sleep habits matter and that schools cannot control choices at home. Then the author argues that a later schedule gives students a better chance to get enough sleep and proposes studying and testing the plan, which makes the argument more balanced and practical.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should add more water refill stations. Some people may say that buying and maintaining them costs too much. However, stations can reduce the number of single-use bottles students buy or throw away, and the school could add them gradually. This plan addresses the cost concern while making water easier to get.

Accept equivalent statements of the author's support for a later start and accurate references to the passage's opposing views and responses. For the open task, accept varied policies if the response has exactly four sentences and includes a position, a fair counterview, a response, and a relevant reason.