Start Time Evidence

Evaluate a school schedule argument.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.8 "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline Chen's central claim. Circle each piece of evidence that supports or challenges the claim, and put an X beside one detail that does not help the board decide.

Should School Start Later?

1. Riverview Middle School should begin classes at 8:30 instead of 7:45, argues student council representative Maya Chen. She says later starts would help students arrive alert and ready to learn. Many eighth graders currently catch buses before 7:00, and some report feeling tired during first period. The council proposes moving the final bell 45 minutes later, so the school day would remain the same length. The principal will ask families and staff to comment before the board votes.

2. Chen points to a 2018 study of Seattle public high schools after their start times moved later. Researchers compared student sleep surveys before and after the change. Students reported getting more sleep. At one school, grades rose and absences and tardiness decreased. The study examined high school students in one city, not middle school students in Riverview. Chen also cites the American Academy of Pediatrics, which recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later to support adolescents' sleep needs.

3. Not everyone agrees with Chen's proposal. Her brother says he prefers an early start because it leaves more afternoon time for skateboarding. A parent worries that a later dismissal could complicate child-care schedules for younger children. Chen responds that the district could survey families and adjust bus routes before making a final decision. She also notes that Riverview's football team won two state titles while the school used its current schedule. At the board meeting, members must decide which information best addresses learning and the practical effects of a new start time.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is Chen's central claim, and what exact schedule change does she propose?

2. Is the Seattle study strong enough by itself to prove that Chen's proposal will work at Riverview? Use two details from the passage to explain.

3. Does the brother's statement provide sound reasoning against the proposal? Explain.

4. Which detail is irrelevant to deciding whether Riverview should change its start time? Explain why it is irrelevant.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

In exactly three sentences, write a recommendation to the board about a later start time. State your recommendation, use two relevant pieces of evidence from the passage, and explain one limit in the available evidence.

ANSWER KEY

Start Time Evidence

GRADE 8 · RI.8.8

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline Chen's central claim. Circle each piece of evidence that supports or challenges the claim, and put an X beside one detail that does not help the board decide. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is Chen's central claim, and what exact schedule change does she propose?	**Chen claims Riverview should start at 8:30 instead of 7:45. The final bell would move 45 minutes later.**
2	Is the Seattle study strong enough by itself to prove that Chen's proposal will work at Riverview? Use two details from the passage to explain.	**No. It is relevant because it examined later starts and reported more sleep, plus changes in grades, absences, and tardiness. However, it studied high school students in only one city, not Riverview middle school students.**
3	Does the brother's statement provide sound reasoning against the proposal? Explain.	**No. It gives one person's preference for more skateboarding time, but it does not provide evidence about student learning, sleep, or the effects on most families.**
4	Which detail is irrelevant to deciding whether Riverview should change its start time? Explain why it is irrelevant.	**The football team's two state titles are irrelevant. The titles do not provide evidence about how the current or a later schedule affects learning, sleep, transportation, or child care.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The board should test a later start for one semester before making a permanent change. Seattle's sleep and attendance results, along with the pediatric recommendation, make a trial reasonable, but Seattle involved high schools in one city. Riverview should compare its own attendance, sleep surveys, and bus costs before deciding.

Accept equivalent explanations that distinguish relevant evidence from personal preference or unrelated facts. For the open response, accept different recommendations if students use relevant passage evidence and identify a reasonable limitation.