

Start Time Tradeoffs

A model of fair argument for a school decision.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1b “Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values...”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the proposal's claim and counterclaim, circle evidence for each side, and write S or L beside each stated strength or limitation.

The Later Bell Proposal

- ① Riverton High is considering an 8:45 a.m. start time instead of 7:35. Supporters argue that later schedules fit teenagers' biological sleep patterns. The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that middle and high schools begin at 8:30 a.m. or later to support adolescent health. A later start could help students arrive more alert and may improve attendance. This evidence is strong because it comes from a medical organization, though it does not guarantee the same result in every district.
- ② Opponents note that a later bell may disrupt family routines. Riverton's transportation office estimates that shifting high school buses could require three additional drivers or altered routes. That estimate directly addresses taxpayers and caregivers who worry about costs and child care. Still, it is a projection, not a final contract, and the board could compare route changes before deciding. Students with after-school jobs may also reasonably fear that a later dismissal would shorten their work hours.
- ③ A fair recommendation should weigh both sides rather than treat one inconvenience as unimportant. The board could approve a one-year pilot and publish attendance, first-period grades, transportation costs, and student sleep survey results. Families who depend on early drop-off need advance notice, while students who struggle to stay awake deserve a meaningful test of the change. Some residents may value budgets over sleep benefits; others may assume any later start solves exhaustion. Reporting several measures would test those assumptions and show whether benefits justify trade-offs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What claim favors the later start, and why does the writer call its evidence strong?

2 What counterclaim does the transportation estimate support, and what limitation does the writer identify?

3 How does the writer address the concern of students with after-school jobs?

4 What assumptions might residents bring to the decision, and how would reporting several measures respond to them?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write one paragraph arguing for or against a school policy that keeps phones in backpacks during class. Include a claim, a counterclaim, relevant evidence for both sides, a strength and limitation, and a response to families' or students' concerns.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the proposal's claim and counterclaim, circle evidence for each side, and write S or L beside each stated strength or limitation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What claim favors the later start, and why does the writer call its evidence strong?	A later start may support adolescent sleep, alertness, and attendance. The evidence is strong because the recommendation comes from the American Academy of Pediatrics.
2	What counterclaim does the transportation estimate support, and what limitation does the writer identify?	It supports the concern that a later start could raise transportation costs or disrupt routes. It is only a projection, not a final contract.
3	How does the writer address the concern of students with after-school jobs?	The writer acknowledges that later dismissal could shorten their work hours, treating that concern as reasonable.
4	What assumptions might residents bring to the decision, and how would reporting several measures respond to them?	Some may prioritize budgets over sleep, while others may assume a later start solves exhaustion. Attendance, grades, costs, and sleep results would test both assumptions.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Class phones should stay in backpacks, with teacher-approved academic and accessibility use. In a 2017 experiment, participants had more available cognitive capacity when their phones were in another room than when nearby, so this policy could support focus, a strength for teachers and students seeking fewer interruptions. However, phones can provide translation and text-to-speech, and families may value quick contact. Allow exceptions, use the office for urgent messages, and review focus and access data after a trial.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the claim, counterclaim, evidence, strengths, limitations, and audience concerns. For the open response, require fair treatment of both positions and evidence that fits each position.