Evidence Before Action

Analyze how a policy argument maintains a formal, objective tone.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1d "Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline language that makes a claim or recommendation. Circle language that qualifies a claim or grounds it in evidence, then number three formal policy or research terms.

A Later Start-Time Proposal

1. The school board should consider moving the high school start time from 7:25 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. This proposal responds to evidence about adolescent sleep patterns rather than to personal preference. The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that middle and high schools begin at 8:30 a.m. or later to support student health, safety, and academic performance. A later schedule would not guarantee higher grades for every student; however, it would align the school day more closely with research indicating that many teenagers experience a biological shift toward later sleep and wake times.

2. Implementation requires attention to transportation, athletics, and family schedules. District planners could examine bus routes, negotiate practice times with neighboring schools, and publish revised schedules well before the change takes effect. These steps would address practical constraints without treating them as reasons to dismiss the proposal. In Seattle, public schools shifted secondary start times later in 2016, and researchers subsequently reported longer sleep duration among students at two participating high schools. That result does not prove that the same outcome would occur in every district, but it provides relevant evidence for a local pilot program.

3. Before adopting a districtwide revision, the board should authorize a one-year pilot at one high school and collect attendance, tardiness, course-performance, and transportation data. The evaluation should also include student and family surveys, because schedules affect households in different ways. A public report should compare the pilot school's results with its own prior-year data and identify any costs or service changes. If the evidence indicates meaningful benefits and manageable trade-offs, the board could consider expansion. This measured approach supports a defensible decision while acknowledging that scheduling policy involves competing community needs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What phrase in paragraph 1 shows that the recommendation is based on evidence rather than personal preference?

2. What limitation does the writer place on the Seattle result in paragraph 2, and why does that limitation create an objective tone?

3. Which four kinds of data does the writer propose collecting in paragraph 3? How does naming these categories support a formal policy argument?

4. Which words in paragraph 3 make expansion conditional rather than certain?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Your principal is considering a phone-free instructional-day policy. Write a 90-110 word formal recommendation using these trial results: during a six-week Grade 10 trial, classroom removals were 18 lower than in the previous six weeks, and assignment completion rose from 82 percent to 88 percent; include a qualification and a next step for evaluating the policy.

Evidence Before Action

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline language that makes a claim or recommendation. Circle language that qualifies a claim or grounds it in evidence, then number three formal policy or research terms. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What phrase in paragraph 1 shows that the recommendation is based on evidence rather than personal preference?	**"This proposal responds to evidence about adolescent sleep patterns rather than to personal preference."**
2	What limitation does the writer place on the Seattle result in paragraph 2, and why does that limitation create an objective tone?	**The writer states that the result does not prove the same outcome would occur in every district. This avoids treating one study result as certain proof for all districts.**
3	Which four kinds of data does the writer propose collecting in paragraph 3? How does naming these categories support a formal policy argument?	**Attendance, tardiness, course-performance, and transportation data. Naming measurable categories makes the evaluation specific and verifiable.**
4	Which words in paragraph 3 make expansion conditional rather than certain?	**"If the evidence indicates meaningful benefits and manageable trade-offs, the board could consider expansion."**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The school should extend the phone-free instructional-day policy to all grades for one semester. During the six-week Grade 10 trial, teachers recorded 18 fewer classroom removals than during the previous six weeks, while the average assignment-completion rate rose from 82 percent to 88 percent. These figures do not establish that the policy alone caused both changes, because other classroom conditions may have differed. Therefore, administrators should collect comparable data across grades and survey students about emergency communication procedures. A semester-long implementation with a published evaluation would provide a sounder basis for a permanent decision.

Accept answers that accurately identify claims, qualifications, evidence, and formal policy conventions from the passage. For the writing task, accept varied recommendations if they use the provided data accurately, maintain an objective tone, include a limitation, and propose an evaluative next step.