Smarter Start Times

Trace how credible evidence supports an argument.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1b "Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the author's main claim, circle each piece of evidence that supports it, and number the sources named in the passage. These marks will help you see how the author builds a reasoned argument.

A Smarter First Bell

(1) Middle and high schools should begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. Teenagers' body clocks naturally shift later during puberty, making it harder for many students to fall asleep early. The American Academy of Pediatrics, a national group of children's doctors, recommends start times of 8:30 or later for middle and high schools. This recommendation matters because students cannot learn well when they are regularly short on sleep. A later bell would give many students a better chance to arrive alert and ready to work.

(2) Research from Seattle gives a concrete example. In a 2018 study published in Science Advances, researchers examined students after their school day began 55 minutes later. Students slept an average of 34 more minutes each night, and their median grades increased by 4.5 percent. A peer-reviewed science journal is a credible source because other experts examine the methods before publication. Although one study cannot predict every school's results, its measured changes support the idea that more sleep can improve students' school experience.

(3) Some families may worry that a later start would disrupt bus routes, sports, or after-school jobs. That concern deserves planning, but it does not erase the health evidence. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a federal public-health agency, reports that most high school students do not get enough sleep on school nights. A district could survey families, test new bus schedules, and review attendance data during a pilot. By weighing a practical concern against medical guidance and research results, leaders can make a reasoned decision.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the author's main claim about school start times?

2. Why does the author describe Science Advances as a credible source?

3. What two results from the Seattle study support the author's claim?

4. How does the author respond to the concern about buses, sports, and after-school jobs?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 5- to 7-sentence argumentative paragraph stating whether middle and high schools should start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. Use two specific pieces of evidence from the passage, name at least one source, explain how the evidence supports your claim, and address the concern about schedules or transportation.

ANSWER KEY

Smarter Start Times

GRADE 8 · W.8.1b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the author's main claim, circle each piece of evidence that supports it, and number the sources named in the passage. These marks will help you see how the author builds a reasoned argument. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the author's main claim about school start times?	**Middle and high schools should begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m.**
2	Why does the author describe Science Advances as a credible source?	**It is a peer-reviewed science journal, so other experts examine the methods before publication.**
3	What two results from the Seattle study support the author's claim?	**Students slept an average of 34 more minutes each night, and their median grades increased by 4.5 percent.**
4	How does the author respond to the concern about buses, sports, and after-school jobs?	**The author says the concern deserves planning and suggests surveying families, testing bus schedules, and reviewing attendance data during a pilot.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Middle and high schools should start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends this time because teen body clocks shift later during puberty. Also, the Seattle study published in Science Advances found that students slept 34 more minutes after a 55-minute later start, and their median grades rose 4.5 percent. These results suggest that extra sleep can help students arrive ready to learn and perform better in class. Families may be concerned about buses and after-school activities. Schools can test bus schedules during a pilot while reviewing attendance data.

Accept clear paraphrases of the claim, evidence, and reasoning from the passage. In Part 3, look for a definite claim, two accurate passage-based details, a named source, an explanation of how evidence supports the claim, and a response to the scheduling concern.