

Bell Time Debate

Evaluate claims, evidence, and reasoning in a school schedule argument.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.9b "Apply grades 9-10 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient...")

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the author's main claim and each piece of evidence used to support it. Circle a counterclaim or limitation, and put a star beside any statement that needs more evidence or uses unfair reasoning.

Should School Start Later?

- ① At 6:20 each morning, I watch students wait for the bus with coffee cups and half-closed eyes. Our high school begins at 7:25, but the district should move the opening bell to 8:30. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 or later because teenagers' biological clocks shift later during puberty. This recommendation does not mean sleep solves every school problem. It does mean that a schedule requiring many adolescents to wake before dawn works against a well-established pattern of teen development.
- ② Last spring, the student council surveyed 214 seniors. Of those respondents, 161 said they slept less than eight hours on most school nights, and 148 said they had arrived late at least once because they overslept. These numbers are relevant because they describe students affected by the current schedule, although they cannot prove that a later bell would raise grades or eliminate tardiness. Research would need to compare attendance, sleep, and academic results before and after a schedule change. Still, the survey gives the district a local reason to investigate a later start.
- ③ Some board members say changing the schedule would make after-school jobs and sports harder to manage. That concern deserves planning, since bus routes, practices, and family schedules are real constraints. However, one speaker declared, "Every student who feels tired is being harmed by the 7:25 bell, so anyone who supports the current time does not care about students." Another speaker replied that the district should not decide until it has compared transportation costs, activity changes, and evidence about student sleep, attendance, and health. The board needs to consider those factors before choosing a schedule.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the author's main claim? Give one piece of evidence from the passage that supports it.

2 What conclusion can the district reasonably draw from the student council survey, and what conclusion would the survey not prove?

3 Is the concern about after-school jobs and sports relevant to the decision about start time? Explain using the passage.

4 Identify two problems with the speaker's statement that every tired student is harmed and that supporters of the current time do not care about students.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

In exactly three sentences, recommend a next step for the district. Use one relevant piece of evidence from the passage, name one limitation or concern, and explain what additional information the board should use.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the author's main claim and each piece of evidence used to support it. Circle a counterclaim or limitation, and put a star beside any statement that needs more evidence or uses unfair reasoning. 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? Give one piece of evidence from the passage that supports it.	The district should move the opening bell to 8:30. Supporting evidence includes the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation for middle and high schools to start at 8:30 or later.
2	What conclusion can the district reasonably draw from the student council survey, and what conclusion would the survey not prove?	The district can reasonably conclude that many surveyed seniors report too little sleep and oversleeping-related lateness. The survey does not prove that a later start would raise grades or eliminate tardiness.
3	Is the concern about after-school jobs and sports relevant to the decision about start time? Explain using the passage.	Yes. Bus routes, practices, jobs, and family schedules could be affected by a later start, so they are relevant constraints the board should consider.
4	Identify two problems with the speaker's statement that every tired student is harmed and that supporters of the current time do not care about students.	It makes an unsupported sweeping claim about every tired student. It also attacks the motives of people who support the current schedule instead of evaluating their reasons.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The district should pilot an 8:30 start for one year and track attendance, tardiness, sleep, grades, and transportation costs. The pediatric recommendation and the local survey give a reasonable basis for testing the change, but the survey alone does not show that grades will improve. The board should review the pilot data and the effects on activities before making the schedule permanent.

Accept equivalent statements of the main claim, relevant evidence, survey limitation, and reasoning flaws. For Part 3, accept varied recommendations if the response has exactly three sentences and includes evidence, a limitation or concern, and additional information to examine.