

# Weighing Start Times

Analyze how a writer balances evidence, limits, and audience concerns.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.1b** “Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form that...”

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 READ AND MARK \_\_\_\_\_ Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline the main claim and the counterclaim. Circle each piece of evidence, then write S beside a strength and L beside a limitation for each position.

### Should High School Start Later?

- ① Our district should begin high school classes at 8:30 a.m. or later. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start no earlier than 8:30 because teens' biological clocks shift later during puberty. In a 2018 study of two Seattle high schools, moving the start time 55 minutes later was associated with students sleeping about 34 more minutes per night and earning grades that rose about 4.5 percent. These findings speak to students and families who value health and learning. However, the Seattle study examined only two schools, so its results may not predict every district's experience.
- ② A fair counterclaim is that a later high school schedule could disrupt transportation and after-school work. In many districts, the same buses carry students on more than one route, so changing one schedule can affect younger children and drivers. A transportation office might estimate that adding buses would cost money, a concern for taxpayers. Students who work afternoons or play sports may also worry about later practices. This counterclaim is strong because it identifies practical effects, not just inconvenience. Its limitation is that an estimate is not a final cost, and it does not measure whether scheduling changes, such as different bus routes, could reduce the expense.
- ③ District leaders should not treat either concern as automatic proof. They could pilot an 8:30 start at one high school for a year, track sleep, attendance, grades, bus costs, and participation in sports and jobs, then report the results publicly. This plan respects families who need reliable transportation and taxpayers who want clear costs. It also avoids claiming that later starts alone will raise achievement, since grades can change for many reasons. If the pilot shows more sleep without unmanageable costs or harms to younger students, the board would have stronger local evidence for a wider change. Until then, the health evidence supports testing the proposal rather than dismissing it.

**2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE** \_\_\_\_\_ Use the passage

**1** What is the author's main claim? Give two pieces of evidence used to support it.

---

---

**2** What counterclaim does the author present? Explain one strength and one limitation of that counterclaim.

---

---

**3** How does the author anticipate the concerns of at least two audiences? Use details from the passage.

---

---

**4** What data would the proposed pilot collect, and why would that data make the argument more fair and thorough?

---

---

**3 YOUR TURN** \_\_\_\_\_ Your own words

Write a 140-170 word recommendation to the principal about installing a covered bicycle rack. Use these local findings: 62 of 180 surveyed students said they would bike more often with covered parking, the facilities manager estimates installation at \$3,600, and 18 students currently bike on a typical dry day. State a claim, fairly explain a counterclaim and its evidence, assess the strength and limitation of both positions, and address a concern of students, families, or taxpayers.

---

---

---

**PART 1 • READ AND MARK**

Underline the main claim and the counterclaim. Circle each piece of evidence, then write S beside a strength and L beside a limitation for each position. 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 two pieces of evidence used to support it.                              | <b>The district should start high school at 8:30 a.m. or later. Evidence includes the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation and the Seattle study's findings of about 34 more minutes of sleep and grades rising about 4.5 percent.</b>                                          |
| 2 | What counterclaim does the author present? Explain one strength and one limitation of that counterclaim.      | <b>The counterclaim is that later starts could disrupt transportation and after-school work. It is strong because it identifies practical effects and costs. It is limited because a transportation estimate is not a final cost and may not account for cheaper scheduling changes.</b> |
| 3 | How does the author anticipate the concerns of at least two audiences? Use details from the passage.          | <b>The author addresses students and families by discussing health, learning, reliable transportation, jobs, and sports. The author addresses taxpayers by discussing bus costs and public reporting of results.</b>                                                                     |
| 4 | What data would the proposed pilot collect, and why would that data make the argument more fair and thorough? | <b>The pilot would track sleep, attendance, grades, bus costs, and participation in sports and jobs. This local evidence would test benefits and possible harms instead of assuming that either side is correct.</b>                                                                     |

**PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)**

Our school should install a covered bicycle rack near the main entrance. In a survey, 62 of 180 students said they would bike more often if their bicycles could stay dry, while only 18 currently bike on a typical dry day. The survey supports a real student need, although it does not prove that every respondent will begin biking. Families may value a safer, less crowded pickup area, and students may value protecting their bikes. A reasonable counterclaim is that the \$3,600 installation cost would serve too few riders. Taxpayers should question spending on a project when current use is low. This concern is strong because the facilities manager provided a specific estimate. Yet the estimate does not compare the rack's long-term cost with possible benefits, such as fewer cars at dismissal. The principal should install the rack for one year and count daily use. If use stays low, the school can reconsider rather than expand the program.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the claim, counterclaim, evidence, strengths, and limitations when they are grounded in the passage. For the open response, look for balanced treatment of both positions, accurate use of all three local findings, and clear attention to an identified audience.