Linking a Case

Trace how an argument connects claims, evidence, and counterclaims.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.1c "Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline every word, phrase, or clause that links a claim, reason, piece of evidence, or counterclaim to another idea. Circle the main claim and number the counterclaim 1.

A Later School Bell

(1) Our district should begin high school classes at 8:30 a.m. rather than 7:25. This change would not merely make mornings more pleasant, it would better match teenagers' biological sleep patterns. During puberty, many adolescents naturally become sleepy later at night and wake later in the morning. Consequently, an early bell can require students to learn before they are fully alert. The American Academy of Pediatrics has stated that middle and high schools should aim for start times of 8:30 a.m. or later. Therefore, the district has a health-based reason to reconsider its schedule.

(2) Moreover, later starts may improve attendance and learning. In 2018, Seattle Public Schools moved most high schools to a later schedule. A study of two Seattle schools reported that students slept 34 minutes longer on school nights after the change, while median grades rose 4.5 percent. Although one study cannot predict every district's results, its findings connect additional sleep with outcomes schools value. Because attendance, alertness, and course performance affect one another, the district should examine local data after any schedule change rather than assuming that the same result will occur everywhere.

(3) Some families and employers may object that a later bell would complicate bus routes, child care, or after-school jobs. Those concerns deserve planning, especially in a district where students share transportation with younger children. However, logistical difficulty is not a reason to dismiss the health evidence. The district could phase in new bus schedules, consult families, and protect practice time by adjusting the final bell. In short, a later start is not a cost-free policy. Yet when leaders weigh manageable scheduling problems against students' need for sleep, the stronger case is to move the high school bell to 8:30.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the writer's main claim, and which transition introduces the health-based reason for it?

2. How does the word "Consequently" clarify the relationship between teen sleep patterns and an early school bell?

3. How does the clause beginning with "Although one study" connect the Seattle evidence to the writer's reason?

4. What counterclaim does the final paragraph present, and how does the writer answer it?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Your school is considering a 20-minute phone-free lunch area. Write exactly four sentences that state a claim, link a reason to the evidence that 68 of 80 surveyed students said noise makes lunch stressful, acknowledge a counterclaim about contacting friends, and answer it. Use at least four linking words or phrases, including one that introduces the counterclaim.

ANSWER KEY

Linking a Case

HIGH SCHOOL · WHST.11-12.1c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline every word, phrase, or clause that links a claim, reason, piece of evidence, or counterclaim to another idea. Circle the main claim and number the counterclaim 1. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the writer's main claim, and which transition introduces the health-based reason for it?	**The main claim is that the district should begin high school at 8:30 a.m. rather than 7:25. "Therefore" introduces the health-based reason.**
2	How does the word "Consequently" clarify the relationship between teen sleep patterns and an early school bell?	**It shows that because adolescents naturally wake later, an early bell can make them learn before they are fully alert.**
3	How does the clause beginning with "Although one study" connect the Seattle evidence to the writer's reason?	**It acknowledges that one study cannot predict results in every district, while still explaining that the findings link more sleep to outcomes schools value.**
4	What counterclaim does the final paragraph present, and how does the writer answer it?	**The counterclaim is that a later bell could complicate bus routes, child care, and after-school jobs. The writer answers that the district can plan solutions, such as changing bus schedules, consulting families, and adjusting the final bell.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The school should create a 20-minute phone-free lunch area because students need a quieter place to eat. In a survey, 68 of 80 students said that noise makes lunch stressful, so the area could serve a clear need. Although some students may want to contact friends during lunch, they could use the rest of the lunch period for messages. Therefore, the school can offer the quiet area without banning phones everywhere.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the claim, evidence, counterclaim, and relationships in the passage. For the open response, check for exactly four sentences, a clear claim, the stated survey evidence, a counterclaim and response, and at least four logical linking words or phrases.