

Start Time Case

Analyze how a model argument uses evidence, rebuttal, and structure.

ELA.10.C.1.3 "Write to argue a position, supporting claims using logical reasoning and credible evidence from multiple sources, rebutting counterclaims with relevant evidence, using a logical organizational structure, elaboration..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the writer's main claim, number each piece of evidence from a source, and circle the counterclaim and its rebuttal. These marks will help you trace how the argument is built.

A Later Bell for High Schools

- ① High schools should begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. because teenagers need sleep to learn safely. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that most adolescents need 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep each night, yet early schedules can make that goal difficult. In a 2018 study of two Seattle high schools, researchers at the University of Washington found that moving start times later increased students' sleep by an average of 34 minutes. The study also reported higher median grades and less daytime sleepiness. These findings suggest that a later schedule would give students more time to rest before academic work begins.
- ② Some transportation officials argue that later starts would create problems for bus routes and after-school activities. This concern deserves consideration, but it does not outweigh the evidence about student health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later to help students obtain enough sleep. Districts can adjust bus schedules, coordinate shared routes, or move practice times. For example, Seattle Public Schools shifted high school start times from 7:50 to 8:45 in 2016. Although changes require planning, the documented benefits make a later start time a reasonable policy.
- ③ Therefore, the school board should adopt an 8:30 a.m. start time for high schools. First, the change responds to established health guidance from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Moreover, the Seattle research connects additional sleep with academic results, not merely student preference. A later start would not solve every challenge students face, but it would remove one schedule-based barrier to adequate rest. The board should publish a transportation plan before the change takes effect so families can prepare. With careful scheduling, the district can address practical concerns while placing learning and health at the center of its decision.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the writer’s main claim? Give two pieces of evidence from named sources that support it.

2 What counterclaim does the writer address, and how does the writer rebut it with relevant evidence or reasoning?

3 How do the transitions “For example,” “Although,” and “Therefore” help organize the argument?

4 How does the sentence “A later start would not solve every challenge students face” help the writer maintain an objective tone?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 150 to 180 word formal argument to a school board about a school policy other than start times. State a clear position, use evidence from two credible named sources, rebut one counterclaim with relevant evidence or reasoning, and use purposeful transitions.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the writer's main claim, number each piece of evidence from a source, and circle the counterclaim and its rebuttal. These marks will help you trace how the argument is built. 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? Give two pieces of evidence from named sources that support it.	The writer claims that high schools should start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. The American Academy of Pediatrics says most adolescents need 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep, and the University of Washington Seattle study found that later starts increased sleep by an average of 34 minutes.
2	What counterclaim does the writer address, and how does the writer rebut it with relevant evidence or reasoning?	The counterclaim is that later starts would disrupt bus routes and after-school activities. The writer responds that districts can adjust schedules and notes that Seattle Public Schools changed its high school start time from 7:50 to 8:45.
3	How do the transitions "For example," "Although," and "Therefore" help organize the argument?	"For example" introduces Seattle as a specific example, "Although" acknowledges that planning is needed, and "Therefore" signals the final conclusion and recommendation.
4	How does the sentence "A later start would not solve every challenge students face" help the writer maintain an objective tone?	It acknowledges a limitation of the policy instead of claiming that later starts will solve every problem, which makes the argument more balanced and credible.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The district should provide a 20-minute physical activity break during each high school day. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that young people ages 6 through 17 get at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily. A scheduled break would help students reach that target, especially students whose transportation or jobs limit time after school. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that classroom physical activity can improve attention and on-task behavior. Some people may argue that a daily break would reduce instructional time. However, a focused activity period could support attention during the remaining classes, and schools could offer walking, stretching, or supervised games without expensive equipment. The schedule could place the break between two long class periods, limiting disruption. Therefore, the board should add this activity break for one year, review attendance and behavior data, and then decide whether to continue the policy.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the claim, evidence, rebuttal, transitions, and objective tone when they are supported by the passage. For the writing task, look for a 150 to 180 word formal argument with a position, two credible named sources, a rebutted counterclaim, logical structure, and transitions.