

Bell Time Case

Analyze how a policy argument uses evidence, reasoning, and structure.

ELA.11.C.1 "Communicating Through Writing"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the writer's claim and reasons, circle each piece of source-based evidence, and number the transitions that move the argument forward. These choices show how the writer builds a clear, credible proposal.

A Later Start for Riverton High

- ① To the Riverton School Board: Riverton High should begin classes at 8:30 a.m. rather than 7:35. This change would give teenagers a schedule that better matches their sleep needs while preserving rigorous learning. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 or later because adolescent sleep cycles shift later during puberty. A later bell would not make school easier. Instead, it would give students a more realistic chance to arrive alert, participate in discussion, and complete demanding work well.
- ② Research also suggests that extra sleep can improve school outcomes. In a 2018 study published in Science Advances, researchers examined Seattle students after their start time moved later. The students slept a median of 34 more minutes each night, and their grades increased by 4.5 percent. Although one study cannot settle every local question, its findings support a careful pilot. Riverton could compare attendance, course performance, and student sleep surveys before and after a one-year change. That evidence would allow the board to revise the schedule using results, rather than guesses.
- ③ Critics may reasonably worry that a later dismissal would complicate bus routes, athletics, and after-school jobs. Those concerns deserve planning, not dismissal. For example, the district could test revised bus routes during the pilot and coordinate game times with nearby schools. It could also publish the transportation changes early so families can respond. Therefore, the board should authorize a one-year 8:30 start pilot and review the results publicly. A transparent review would let the community weigh benefits against costs with evidence at the pilot's conclusion.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What specific action does the writer ask the Riverton School Board to take?

2 What two numerical findings from the Seattle study does the writer use, and how do they support the proposal?

3 How does the sentence beginning “Although one study” strengthen the writer’s reasoning?

4 What concern does the writer address in the final paragraph, and what response does the writer provide?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write a 120-150-word proposal to a school decision maker about a different school policy. State a clear claim, give two reasons, support at least one reason with a specific observation, data point, or credible source, use a transition, and address one reasonable concern with a response.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the writer's claim and reasons, circle each piece of source-based evidence, and number the transitions that move the argument forward. These choices show how the writer builds a clear, credible proposal. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What specific action does the writer ask the Riverton School Board to take?	Authorize a one-year pilot in which Riverton High starts at 8:30 a.m.
2	What two numerical findings from the Seattle study does the writer use, and how do they support the proposal?	Students slept a median of 34 more minutes per night and their grades increased by 4.5 percent. The findings suggest that later start times can improve sleep and school outcomes.
3	How does the sentence beginning "Although one study" strengthen the writer's reasoning?	It acknowledges that one study is limited, then argues for a careful local pilot that would gather Riverton-specific evidence.
4	What concern does the writer address in the final paragraph, and what response does the writer provide?	The writer addresses concerns about buses, athletics, and after-school jobs. The response is to test bus routes, coordinate game times, publish changes early, and review the pilot publicly.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

To the Riverton principal, Riverton High should require students to place phones in numbered classroom caddies during lessons, with access during passing periods and emergencies. First, fewer visible phones would reduce interruptions during instruction. Common Sense Media reported in 2023 that teenagers receive a median of 237 notifications each day, including many during school hours. Even a silent screen can pull attention from a lab demonstration or a discussion. Second, caddies would make expectations fair because every student follows the same routine. Teachers could check the caddies before independent work begins. Some families may fear they cannot reach a student quickly. However, the office can contact any classroom immediately, and students would keep phones with them outside class. This policy protects focused learning without banning phones for the entire day.

Accept equivalent statements of the claim, evidence, limitation, and rebuttal when they accurately reflect the passage. For the open response, accept varied policy topics if the response is 120-150 words and includes a claim, two reasons, support, a transition, and a counterclaim response.