

Bell Time Debate

Compare claims, evidence, reasoning, and rhetoric in two related arguments.

ELA.12.R.2.4 “Compare the development of multiple arguments in related texts, evaluating the validity of the claims, the authors’ reasoning, use of the same information, and/or the authors’ rhetoric.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each author’s main claim, circle information used by both authors, and number each reason that connects evidence to a proposed action. Use your marks to compare how the arguments develop.

Should Riverton High Start Later?

- ① Text A: In an op-ed for the Riverton Gazette, pediatrician Dr. Lena Ortiz argues that Riverton High should begin at 8:45 rather than 7:35. She cites the American Academy of Pediatrics, which recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later, and notes that teenagers’ biological clocks shift later during puberty. Ortiz connects those facts to a local survey in which 62 percent of Riverton High students reported sleeping fewer than eight hours on school nights. “We are scheduling against adolescent biology,” she writes, calling the present bell “a daily tax on attention.”
- ② To answer concerns about buses and sports, Ortiz proposes moving elementary routes earlier and limiting practice on two afternoons. She points to a district transportation audit estimating that the change would cost \$180,000 in its first year, then compares that sum with the district’s \$96 million annual budget. Her reasoning is practical as well as medical: if tired students learn less efficiently, she argues, preserving a cheaper schedule creates hidden costs. Still, the op-ed offers no local evidence that a later start would improve grades or attendance. Its urgent phrases, “daily tax” and “hidden costs,” make delay sound irresponsible.
- ③ Text B: In a response for the same newspaper, school board member Marcus Hale agrees that sleep matters but opposes an immediate districtwide change. He cites the same Academy recommendation and the same 62 percent survey result, yet argues that neither source proves Riverton’s proposed schedule will solve the problem. The recommendation is national guidance, he says, while the survey does not show whether students stay awake because of homework, jobs, phones, or the early bell. Hale proposes a one-year pilot at Riverton High, with attendance, course grades, bus costs, and student sleep tracked before expansion. His repeated phrase, “measure before we move,” presents caution as responsibility rather than indifference.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1** Compare how Ortiz and Hale develop their main claims. State each claim and identify at least two moves each author uses to support it.

- 2** What two pieces of information do both authors use? Explain how each author interprets that information differently.

- 3** What limit does the passage identify in Ortiz's reasoning, and how does Hale's proposed pilot address that limit?

- 4** How does Ortiz's phrase "daily tax on attention" differ from Hale's phrase "measure before we move"? Explain the effect of each phrase on the reader.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

In 110 to 140 words, advise the Riverton school board whether to adopt Ortiz's proposal now or begin with Hale's pilot. Compare the authors' use of shared evidence, identify one evidence limitation, and explain how one rhetorical phrase affects your judgment.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each author's main claim, circle information used by both authors, and number each reason that connects evidence to a proposed action. Use your marks to compare how the arguments develop. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Compare how Ortiz and Hale develop their main claims. State each claim and identify at least two moves each author uses to support it.	Ortiz argues for an immediate 8:45 start, using the Academy recommendation, adolescent biology, the local sleep survey, and a cost comparison. Hale argues for a one-year pilot, accepting that sleep matters but questioning whether the evidence proves the early bell is the cause and proposing data collection before expansion.
2	What two pieces of information do both authors use? Explain how each author interprets that information differently.	Both use the Academy's later-start recommendation and the finding that 62 percent of students sleep fewer than eight hours. Ortiz treats them as support for changing the schedule now, while Hale treats them as reasons to investigate whether a later schedule would actually solve Riverton's problem.
3	What limit does the passage identify in Ortiz's reasoning, and how does Hale's proposed pilot address that limit?	Ortiz provides no local evidence that a later start would improve grades or attendance. Hale's pilot would track attendance, grades, costs, and sleep before the district expands the change.
4	How does Ortiz's phrase "daily tax on attention" differ from Hale's phrase "measure before we move"? Explain the effect of each phrase on the reader.	Ortiz's phrase makes the current schedule sound harmful and creates urgency for change. Hale's phrase presents caution and data collection as responsible decision-making.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Riverton should run Hale's one-year pilot before adopting Ortiz's 8:45 start. Ortiz makes a credible case that student sleep deserves attention: the Academy's recommendation, the biological-clock explanation, and the local survey all support concern. However, her conclusion that a new schedule will improve grades or attendance goes beyond the evidence provided. The survey reports limited sleep, not its causes or its academic effects. Hale uses the same facts more cautiously, asking whether homework, jobs, phones, or the early bell shape sleep. His phrase "measure before we move" frames data collection as responsible, while Ortiz's "daily tax on attention" creates pressure for immediate action. A pilot with attendance, grades, costs, and sleep data would test both arguments fairly.

Accept defensible recommendations that accurately compare the shared evidence and explain a limitation in the reasoning. Students may favor either author if they support the judgment with specific details and analyze rhetoric accurately.