The Later Bell

Study how an argument builds support and answers a concern.

ELA.8.C.1 "Communicating Through Writing"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the writer's claim, circle details that support it, and write C beside the counterclaim and R beside the response to trace how the argument is built.

A Stronger Start to the Day

1. Middle schools should begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. Many teenagers do not fall asleep early because their body clocks shift during puberty. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 or later. When students arrive after enough sleep, they are more likely to stay alert, participate in class, and remember new information. A later start would not solve every challenge students face, but it would give learning a stronger beginning each day.

2. Some families may worry that a later bell will disrupt bus routes, sports practices, or after-school jobs. Those concerns deserve planning, yet they do not outweigh the need for students to be ready to learn. Districts can adjust transportation schedules and coordinate practice times with local teams. Schools already make schedules for many needs, including weather delays and testing days. Protecting sleep should be treated as another important need, especially when it affects students' health and attention.

3. To make this change workable, the school board could test a later start for one semester and collect attendance, tardy, and student survey data. Families should receive the new bus times well before the trial begins. At the end of the semester, board members could compare the results with data from the previous year. This careful approach would let the community examine the effects of a later start instead of guessing about them. For these reasons, the board should approve a pilot schedule.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the writer's main claim?

2. Which expert recommendation does the writer use as evidence, and how does it support the claim?

3. What concern does the writer acknowledge, and what response does the writer give?

4. How does the final paragraph make the argument more convincing?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90-110-word letter to your principal proposing one change at school. State a clear claim, include at least two reasons or specific details, address one possible concern, and end with a requested action.

The Later Bell

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the writer's claim, circle details that support it, and write C beside the counterclaim and R beside the response to 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?	**Middle schools should begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m.**
2	Which expert recommendation does the writer use as evidence, and how does it support the claim?	**The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends an 8:30 a.m. or later start for middle and high schools. This supports the claim by providing expert guidance about school start times.**
3	What concern does the writer acknowledge, and what response does the writer give?	**The writer acknowledges that a later bell could disrupt bus routes, sports, or jobs. The response is that districts can adjust transportation and practice schedules, and students' readiness to learn is more important.**
4	How does the final paragraph make the argument more convincing?	**It offers a practical pilot plan and explains that the board could collect and compare data instead of guessing about the effects.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Principal Rivera, our school should add two shade sails near the outdoor lunch tables. At lunch, students often move their trays to the few shaded seats, while many sunny tables remain empty. More shade would give students a cooler place to eat and would make the outdoor area usable on bright days. Some people may say shade sails cost too much. However, the school could begin with two sails and ask the parent organization or local businesses to help fund them. Please ask the school council to study prices and choose a safe location before next spring.

Accept equivalent wording for the claim, evidence, counterclaim, response, and explanation of the pilot plan. For Part 3, accept varied school changes if the response meets the word range and includes all required argument parts.