

The Bell Debate

Analyze how an argument builds a case with evidence and rebuttal.

ELA.9.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 claim and each source-based piece of evidence, circle transition words or phrases, and write C beside the counterclaim and R beside the rebuttal.

Why High Schools Should Start Later

- ① High schools should begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. for students in grades 9 through 12. Teenagers need more sleep than many schedules allow, and an early bell can make focused learning harder. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later to support adolescent health and learning. Its policy statement explains that teens' natural sleep patterns shift later during puberty. Therefore, a later start does not simply offer extra comfort. It matches the school day more closely to students' biological sleep needs and gives them a stronger chance to arrive alert.
- ② The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that teenagers ages 13 to 18 need 8 to 10 hours of sleep per 24 hours. Yet students who must wake before sunrise for buses or long commutes may not reach that range, especially when homework, jobs, or activities extend the evening. In addition, a 2018 study published in the journal *Science Advances* found that later school start times were associated with longer sleep duration among adolescents. Together, these sources connect a practical policy, the starting bell, to evidence about the amount of sleep teens need. Schools should use that connection when they set schedules.
- ③ Opponents of later starts often point to bus routes, sports practices, and family pickup plans. Those concerns deserve planning, because changing one schedule can affect many people. However, inconvenience is not a reason to ignore health evidence. The CDC sleep recommendation applies to all teens, including athletes and students with after-school responsibilities. Districts can examine staggered bus schedules, adjust practice times, or work with community programs before changing the bell. In contrast, keeping an early start treats an avoidable sleep loss as normal. For these reasons, the school board should create a later-start plan rather than dismiss the proposal because the transition requires coordination.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the writer's central claim? State one reason the writer gives that logically supports it.

2 How do the American Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC evidence work together to support the claim?

3 What counterclaim does the writer acknowledge, and how does the writer rebut it?

4 Why does the writer address practical concerns in the third paragraph instead of beginning with them?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 90-120 word, two-paragraph argument about whether your high school should install covered bicycle racks. Use evidence from at least two credible sources, include a counterclaim and rebuttal, and use at least three purposeful transitions.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the writer's claim and each source-based piece of evidence, circle transition words or phrases, and write C beside the counterclaim and R beside the rebuttal. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the writer's central claim? State one reason the writer gives that logically supports it.	The writer claims that high schools should start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. One supporting reason is that later starts better match teens' later biological sleep patterns and can help them arrive alert.
2	How do the American Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC evidence work together to support the claim?	The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends starts at 8:30 a.m. or later, while the CDC says teens need 8 to 10 hours of sleep. Together, the sources show that later starts can support teens' sleep and health needs.
3	What counterclaim does the writer acknowledge, and how does the writer rebut it?	The writer acknowledges concerns about buses, sports, and family pickup schedules. The rebuttal says these concerns require planning but do not outweigh health evidence, and districts can adjust schedules or work with community programs.
4	Why does the writer address practical concerns in the third paragraph instead of beginning with them?	The writer first states the claim and supports it with evidence, then addresses and rebuts opposing concerns. This organization makes the argument clear before responding to objections.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our high school should install covered bicycle racks near the main entrance. First, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that regular physical activity can improve students' cognition, including memory and concentration. Safe, convenient racks would make biking to school more practical, so more students could add movement to their day. Some people argue that racks would serve too few students to justify the expense. However, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that young people ages 6 to 17 get 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Even if only some students bike, the racks remove one barrier to meeting that health recommendation. Therefore, the school should add racks and count their use after one year.

Accept equivalent claims and explanations that accurately connect the passage's evidence to its position. For the writing task, require a clear claim, credible evidence from two sources, a relevant counterclaim and rebuttal, logical organization, transitions, and an appropriate formal tone.