

Bell Time Debate

Compare how opposing arguments use claims and support.

ELA.9.R.2.4 "Compare the development of two opposing arguments on the same topic, evaluating the effectiveness and validity of the claims."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each side's main claim, circle the evidence or examples used to support it, and write S or O beside each mark so you can compare how the arguments develop.

Should Riverton Start Later?

- ① Riverton's school board is considering a later start time for its high school. Supporters want classes to begin at 8:30 a.m. instead of 7:30. They argue that teenagers' body clocks naturally shift later during puberty, making it difficult for many students to fall asleep early. The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that middle and high schools start at 8:30 or later. Supporters also point to districts that reported improved attendance or more student sleep after schedule changes. Their claim is that a later start would help students arrive rested and ready to learn.
- ② Opponents agree that sleep matters, but they question whether changing the bell fixes the problem. They note that students might stay up later if practices, jobs, homework, and phone use remain unchanged. A later dismissal could also push sports, clubs, and family responsibilities into the evening. The district would need to revise bus routes, because the same buses currently serve younger students before high school students. Opponents claim that the cost and scheduling problems could outweigh the benefits. Unlike supporters, they offer no local survey or cost estimate, so the size of those problems is uncertain.
- ③ Both arguments connect a schedule change to students' daily lives, but they develop their claims differently. Supporters begin with a biological explanation and cite a medical organization's recommendation. They then add reported outcomes from other districts, although they do not name those districts or give numbers. Opponents use practical examples, including buses and after-school activities, to show possible obstacles. Those examples make their concerns plausible, but the argument lacks evidence showing Riverton's actual costs or student schedules. Before voting, board members could request local sleep data, transportation estimates, and a survey of families, students, and coaches.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the supporters' main claim, and what is the opponents' main claim?

2 How do supporters develop their argument? Name two kinds of support they use.

3 What evidence do opponents use, and what important evidence is missing from their argument?

4 Which argument is more effective and valid based on the passage? Explain your judgment with evidence from the text.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a school policy other than start times. Write two opposing claims about the policy, give one piece of evidence each side should use, and explain what local information would help decide which argument is stronger.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each side's main claim, circle the evidence or examples used to support it, and write S or O beside each mark so you can compare how the arguments develop. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the supporters' main claim, and what is the opponents' main claim?	Supporters claim that a later start would help students arrive rested and ready to learn. Opponents claim that the costs and scheduling problems could outweigh the benefits.
2	How do supporters develop their argument? Name two kinds of support they use.	They use a biological explanation about teenagers' body clocks, cite the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation, and mention reported attendance or sleep improvements in other districts.
3	What evidence do opponents use, and what important evidence is missing from their argument?	They use practical examples about later dismissal, activities, family responsibilities, and bus routes. They do not provide a local survey, cost estimate, or evidence about Riverton students' schedules.
4	Which argument is more effective and valid based on the passage? Explain your judgment with evidence from the text.	The supporters' argument is somewhat more effective because it includes a biological explanation, a medical organization's recommendation, and reported results from other districts. Its validity is still limited because it gives no names or numbers for those districts.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Policy: Should the school replace printed event flyers with digital announcements? Supporters claim the switch would reduce paper use, and they could compare the number of flyers printed each month with the cost of posting online. Opponents claim that some families may miss digital notices, and they could survey families about internet and smartphone access. The stronger argument would depend on reliable local printing records and survey results, not assumptions about what all families can access.

Accept equivalent statements of each claim and evidence-based judgments that explain why one argument is more effective or valid. For Part 3, accept varied policies if students present two opposing claims, appropriate evidence for both sides, and relevant local information to evaluate the arguments.