Trace the Evidence

Trace how research findings build a careful, cited argument.

10.T.RA.1.b "Use analytical findings to support a research question or thesis, citing appropriately. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the thesis, circle each parenthetical citation, and number the research findings that support or limit the thesis.

Should School Start Later?

(1) Many high schools begin before 8:00 a.m., even though teenagers' body clocks often make early sleep difficult. This mismatch raises a research question: Would a later start time improve students' learning? Evidence suggests that districts should consider starting high school at 8:30 a.m. or later. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. because adolescents need sufficient sleep for health, safety, and academic performance (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2014). This recommendation does not prove that every district can change its schedule, but it gives the argument a credible health-based starting point.

(2) One study supplies more direct evidence. Researchers compared students at two Seattle high schools before and after start times moved nearly one hour later. Students slept an average of 34 minutes longer each night, and their median grades rose 4.5 percent, according to the study (Dunster et al., 2018). Because the researchers measured the same schools across the schedule change, the findings connect the new timetable with changes in sleep and grades. Still, the study cannot show that later starts alone caused every grade increase. Teachers, courses, and other conditions may also have affected results. A careful thesis should present the study as strong support, not as final proof.

(3) National data strengthen the concern but also show why local evidence matters. In the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 77.9 percent of U.S. high school students reported sleeping less than eight hours on an average school night (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023). This figure shows that short sleep is widespread, yet it does not compare districts with different schedules. A district researching a change should therefore collect local bus, athletics, and family-care information alongside sleep data. The available findings support investigating later starts, while the final decision should weigh academic benefits against practical costs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1 State the author's thesis. Then name the cited source that provides a health-based reason for it.

2 How do the Seattle study's method and results support the thesis? Why does the author avoid calling the study final proof?

3 What can the national survey legitimately show, and what can it not show?

4 Which citation should follow a sentence claiming that Seattle students slept 34 minutes longer after a schedule change? Explain why.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Using both fictional source notes, write a 3-sentence, 45-60 word recommendation about whether Riverbend High should expand its phone-free study hall. State a thesis, analyze both findings with parenthetical citations, and include one limitation: Source A, in a six-week optional pilot with 120 students, 72 percent reported finishing homework at school more often; Source B, participants averaged 1.8 fewer late arrivals than during the previous six weeks.

ANSWER KEY

Trace the Evidence

GRADE 10 · 10.T.RA.1.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the thesis, circle each parenthetical citation, and number the research findings that support or limit the thesis. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	State the author's thesis. Then name the cited source that provides a health-based reason for it.	**The thesis is that districts should consider starting high school at 8:30 a.m. or later. The American Academy of Pediatrics provides the health-based support.**
2	How do the Seattle study's method and results support the thesis? Why does the author avoid calling the study final proof?	**The study compared the same schools before and after a later start, and students slept 34 minutes longer while median grades rose 4.5 percent. Other factors, such as teachers, courses, or conditions, may have affected grades.**
3	What can the national survey legitimately show, and what can it not show?	**It can show that short sleep is widespread among U.S. high school students. It cannot show how different school schedules affect sleep because it does not compare districts with different schedules.**
4	Which citation should follow a sentence claiming that Seattle students slept 34 minutes longer after a schedule change? Explain why.	**(Dunster et al., 2018) should follow the sentence because that study reports the Seattle schools' sleep results.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Riverbend should expand the phone-free study hall because the pilot may help students use school time more effectively. More participants reported finishing homework at school, and they averaged fewer late arrivals, supporting possible academic and attendance benefits (Source A; Source B). Because the study was optional and brief, Riverbend should compare similar students before adopting it permanently.

Accept equivalent wording when students accurately connect findings to the thesis and identify limits on what the evidence proves. For the open task, require a clear recommendation, use of both citations, analysis rather than a list of data, and a relevant limitation.