Credibility by Design

Notice how formal choices shape a persuasive public message.

10.T.SS.2.c "Use formal style when speaking or writing to establish credibility and tone. (C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline four words or phrases that create a formal, respectful tone, then number two details that make the writer seem credible.

A Request for Later Start Times

1 Dear Members of the School Board, I am writing to recommend that the district consider a later start time for high school students. This proposal is based on student health, attendance, and learning, rather than on personal preference. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that teenagers ages 13 to 18 need eight to ten hours of sleep each night. However, many students must wake before 6:00 a.m. to arrive for an early first period. A schedule that begins later would give adolescents a more realistic opportunity to meet this health recommendation.

2 Research also connects insufficient sleep with problems that affect school performance. In 2014, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended that middle and high schools aim for start times of 8:30 a.m. or later to support adolescent health. This recommendation does not require the district to ignore transportation, athletics, or family schedules. Instead, the board could form a committee that includes bus staff, families, and students to examine practical options. A careful review of local attendance and transportation data would allow the district to make a responsible decision based on evidence.

3 For these reasons, I respectfully ask the board to begin a public review of high school start times during the coming school year. A review would not promise an immediate change. It would show that the district takes student well-being seriously and is willing to study a complex issue openly. I recognize that any adjustment would require planning and community input. Nevertheless, the available health guidance and the value of a data-based process make this proposal worthy of consideration. Thank you for evaluating this request and for serving the district's students.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which sentence states the writer's purpose? Explain how its wording sounds formal rather than casual.

2. What two sources of expert information does the writer use? Explain how these sources build credibility.

3. Find one sentence in which the writer recognizes a concern or limitation. How does this choice affect the tone?

4. What action does the writer request from the board instead of demanding an immediate schedule change? How does that request strengthen credibility?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90-120 word formal email to your principal proposing a water-bottle refill station near the gymnasium. Include a greeting and closing, two specific reasons for the proposal, and one practical detail the school could check or investigate before making a decision.

ANSWER KEY

Credibility by Design

GRADE 10 · 10.T.SS.2.c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline four words or phrases that create a formal, respectful tone, then number two details that make the writer seem credible. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which sentence states the writer's purpose? Explain how its wording sounds formal rather than casual.	**"I am writing to recommend that the district consider a later start time for high school students." Words such as "recommend," "district," and "consider" create a formal, professional tone.**
2	What two sources of expert information does the writer use? Explain how these sources build credibility.	**The writer cites the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Recognized health organizations provide reliable support for the proposal.**
3	Find one sentence in which the writer recognizes a concern or limitation. How does this choice affect the tone?	**Possible responses include "This recommendation does not require the district to ignore transportation, athletics, or family schedules" or "I recognize that any adjustment would require planning and community input." This makes the writer sound balanced, respectful, and reasonable.**
4	What action does the writer request from the board instead of demanding an immediate schedule change? How does that request strengthen credibility?	**The writer asks the board to begin a public review and examine local data. Requesting a careful process shows that the writer values evidence and understands the issue is complex.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Principal Morales, I respectfully request that the school install a water-bottle refill station near the gymnasium. During lunch and after physical education, students often wait at a single fountain, which can limit access to drinking water before class. A refill station would serve students who carry reusable bottles and could reduce the number of disposable plastic bottles placed in campus trash cans. Before selecting a location, the school could ask custodial staff about maintenance needs and count daily use at the existing fountain. This information would support a practical decision. Thank you for considering this proposal. Sincerely, Jordan Lee

Accept other accurately quoted formal phrases and reasonable explanations of their effect on tone or credibility. For the email, accept varied proposals if the response is 90-120 words, uses formal language, includes the required parts, and presents specific, credible reasoning.