

Evidence in Concert

Trace how credible sources build and qualify a policy claim.

11.T.RA.1.b “Synthesize information from a variety of credible sources to support a central thesis, citing appropriately. (I)”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the central thesis. Number one piece of evidence from each cited source, then circle words or phrases that limit what the evidence proves.

The Case for Later Starts

- ① High schools should begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. because later schedules better match adolescents’ biology and can improve outcomes. The American Academy of Pediatrics explains that puberty shifts many teenagers’ natural sleep timing later, making very early wake times especially difficult (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2014). Its policy statement recommends middle and high school start times of 8:30 a.m. or later. This medical organization supplies a biological reason for the claim, rather than relying on student preference. A schedule that asks teens to learn before they can regularly obtain enough sleep may create a barrier to attention, attendance, and learning.
- ② In Seattle, researchers examined a district schedule change that delayed two high schools’ starts by nearly an hour. Students’ median sleep increased by 34 minutes, and their median grades rose 4.5 percent at one studied school (Dunster et al., 2018). Because the research compared conditions before and after the change, it offers useful local evidence that sleep and school performance can move together. However, the study does not prove that every Seattle public-school student received higher grades. Its finding comes from participating schools, and the grade result reported for one school should not be expanded into a districtwide claim.
- ③ National data show why local studies matter but do not settle every question. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 82.9 percent of U.S. public middle, high, and combined schools started before 8:30 a.m. in 2011-12 (CDC, 2015). This report documents how common early schedules were, not whether a particular later schedule caused better grades. Taken together, the medical recommendation, Seattle study, and national survey support an 8:30 start as a well-supported policy goal. Still, districts should examine transportation, family schedules, and results in their own schools before predicting identical effects everywhere.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What central thesis does the writer support?

2 How does the American Academy of Pediatrics source support the thesis? Include the type of evidence it provides.

3 What Seattle finding supports the thesis, and what limitation does the writer place on that finding?

4 Why does the writer include the CDC report with the medical recommendation and Seattle study? Explain what the CDC source can and cannot show.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a school policy question. Write a 90-120 word paragraph that states a clear thesis, synthesizes evidence from at least two credible sources with parenthetical citations, and explains one limit or boundary of the evidence.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the central thesis. Number one piece of evidence from each cited source, then circle words or phrases that limit what the evidence proves. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What central thesis does the writer support?	High schools should start no earlier than 8:30 a.m.
2	How does the American Academy of Pediatrics source support the thesis? Include the type of evidence it provides.	It provides medical and biological reasoning: puberty shifts many teens' natural sleep timing later, and the organization recommends starts at 8:30 a.m. or later.
3	What Seattle finding supports the thesis, and what limitation does the writer place on that finding?	Median sleep increased by 34 minutes, and median grades rose 4.5 percent at one studied school. The result cannot be claimed for every Seattle public-school student or the whole district.
4	Why does the writer include the CDC report with the medical recommendation and Seattle study? Explain what the CDC source can and cannot show.	The CDC report shows that early starts were common nationally, adding context to the policy claim. It cannot show that a later start caused better grades at a particular school.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Schools should test drinking water outlets for lead and promptly remove unsafe outlets from use. The CDC states that no safe blood lead level in children has been identified (CDC, 2024), so prevention matters even when a student has no visible symptoms. EPA's 3Ts guidance gives schools a practical process to train staff, test outlets, communicate results, and take action (EPA, 2018). Together, these sources support routine testing as a health safeguard. However, neither source shows how often a particular school has lead in its water, so leaders should use local test results to choose repairs.

Accept equivalent explanations that accurately distinguish source type, evidence, and limits. For the open response, accept varied policy topics when the student has a defensible thesis, at least two credible cited sources, meaningful synthesis, and a valid limitation.