Claims in Context

Analyze how an editorial makes its case.

12.T.T.3.a "Read, discuss, evaluate, and critique a variety of texts, considering the argumentative techniques used to present and design content and their associated implications on meaning or central idea. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the central claim and the evidence used to support it. Circle two presentation or design choices, number them 1 and 2, and note in the margin how each choice shapes the central idea.

Later Bells, Better Mornings

(1) At 6:10 a.m., junior Mateo rides the bus with his chemistry notes unopened in his lap. He is not lazy, he is exhausted. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later because adolescents need 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep each night. Our 7:20 first bell runs against that guidance. A later schedule is not a luxury. It is a safety rail for students who drive before sunrise and try to learn while exhausted in class.

(2) Critics will point to bus routes, athletics, and family schedules, and those concerns deserve a public plan. Yet inconvenience should be weighed against a daily cost borne by every student. Consider the simple contrast printed on the district calendar: 7:20, then 8:30. The two times make the choice visible before any committee report is opened. Supporters also repeat one plain sentence, "Sleep is schoolwork." The slogan compresses a complicated health argument into words that can fit on a poster, but it may make schedule changes seem easier than they are.

(3) Board members should approve an 8:30 start next fall, after publishing transportation options and surveying families. The proposal uses the word "approve" rather than "consider" to create urgency, and it ends with practical safeguards to answer objections. Still, the strongest evidence offered here is a national recommendation, not local attendance, crash, or route data. Before voting, the board should request those local figures. A decision about teenagers' mornings should rest on more than a memorable slogan. It should rest on evidence that fits this community well.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the opening story about Mateo support the writer's central claim?

2. What effect does placing "7:20" beside "8:30" have on the argument?

3. Explain one strength and one limitation of the slogan "Sleep is schoolwork."

4. What evidence does the writer admit is missing, and how does that admission affect the argument?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75-90-word critique of a public message, such as a flyer, advertisement, announcement, or social media post. Identify one argumentative technique and one design choice, explain how they shape the central idea, and name one question or piece of evidence readers need.

ANSWER KEY

Claims in Context

GRADE 12 · 12.T.T.3.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the central claim and the evidence used to support it. Circle two presentation or design choices, number them 1 and 2, and note in the margin how each choice shapes the central idea. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the opening story about Mateo support the writer's central claim?	**It makes student exhaustion concrete and supports the claim that the school should move to a later start time.**
2	What effect does placing "7:20" beside "8:30" have on the argument?	**The visual contrast makes the scheduling choice seem simple and immediate before readers consider detailed reports.**
3	Explain one strength and one limitation of the slogan "Sleep is schoolwork."	**Its short, memorable wording makes the health argument easy to remember, but it can oversimplify the practical difficulty of changing schedules.**
4	What evidence does the writer admit is missing, and how does that admission affect the argument?	**Local attendance, crash, and route data are missing. The admission makes the argument more balanced, but it also shows that the case is incomplete.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A school flyer urging students to bring reusable bottles uses a photo of an overflowing trash bin and the phrase "Refill, not landfill" in large type. The image creates disgust, while the rhyme makes the environmental claim easy to remember. Together, these choices support the flyer's central idea that students should reduce disposable plastic. However, the flyer gives no information about whether enough refill stations are available. Readers should ask how the school will make its request practical.

Accept equivalent descriptions of techniques, design choices, and effects when students support them with details from the passage. For Part 3, responses should identify both a technique and a design choice, connect them to meaning, and raise a relevant evidence question.