Bell Time Debate

Trace how a model argument builds its case.

8.T.T.3.c "Apply argumentative techniques (e.g., author's claim, supporting relevant and logical evidence, an identified counterclaim, a rebuttal, and a conclusion) to enhance writing and engage audiences. (C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the author's claim and conclusion. Circle each fact or research finding used as evidence, then write 1 beside the counterclaim and 2 beside the rebuttal.

A Later First Bell

(1) Our district should begin middle school at 8:30 a.m. or later. Teenagers' internal 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 a.m. or later to support adolescent health. A later bell would give students a better chance to arrive alert, listen carefully, and learn during first period. This change would put school schedules closer to what sleep research says adolescents need.

(2) Evidence from a real schedule change supports this idea. In a 2018 Seattle study, students slept an average of 34 minutes more on school nights after start times moved 55 minutes later. Researchers also reported that students' median grades increased by 4.5 percent. More sleep does not solve every learning problem, but it can improve attention and reduce daytime sleepiness. Because students must be awake to participate, this evidence directly supports a later start time.

(3) Some families may worry that a later start would disrupt bus routes, sports, or after-school jobs. That concern deserves attention because schedule changes can create real costs and conflicts. However, districts can adjust bus plans, coordinate practice times, and ask students and families which problems need solutions first. A difficult schedule is not a reason to ignore students' need for sleep. The school board should create a plan for an 8:30 start, then review the results after one year.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the author's main claim?

2. What research finding does the author use as evidence, and how does it support the claim?

3. What counterclaim does the author identify?

4. How does the author rebut the counterclaim, and what action does the conclusion urge?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose one change you think your school should make. Write exactly five sentences that include a clear claim, a relevant reason supported by a specific fact, observation, or example, a counterclaim, a rebuttal, and a conclusion that urges an action.

ANSWER KEY

Bell Time Debate

GRADE 8 · 8.T.T.3.c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the author's claim and conclusion. Circle each fact or research finding used as evidence, then write 1 beside the counterclaim and 2 beside the rebuttal. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the author's main claim?	**The district should begin middle school at 8:30 a.m. or later.**
2	What research finding does the author use as evidence, and how does it support the claim?	**After Seattle schools started 55 minutes later, students slept 34 more minutes and median grades increased 4.5 percent. This supports the idea that a later start can help students be more ready to learn.**
3	What counterclaim does the author identify?	**A later start could disrupt bus routes, sports, or after-school jobs and create costs or conflicts.**
4	How does the author rebut the counterclaim, and what action does the conclusion urge?	**The author says districts can adjust buses and practice times and ask families about problems. The conclusion urges the school board to plan for an 8:30 start and review results after one year.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should add a water refill station near the cafeteria. At lunch, students who carry reusable bottles could refill them there instead of needing to buy a drink. Some people may say that installing a station costs too much money. However, the school could begin with one busy location and measure how often students use it before adding more. Therefore, the principal should fund one station this year and review the results.

Accept equivalent wording that accurately identifies the claim, evidence, counterclaim, rebuttal, and conclusion. For Part 3, accept varied topics when all five required argument parts are present and the evidence is relevant and logical.