Bell Time Debate

Analyze how a writer builds an argument about a later school start.

8.T.T.3 "Argumentative Techniques: Analyze and apply argumentative techniques."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the writer's claim and reasons, circle evidence or examples, and number the counterclaim, rebuttal, and rhetorical question 1, 2, and 3. These marks show how the writer tries to persuade readers.

Start School Later

(1) Our middle school should begin classes at 8:30 a.m. instead of 7:45. Teenagers' body clocks naturally shift later during puberty, so many students are alert later in the morning. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 or later. A later bell would not make school easier. It would give students a better chance to arrive awake, participate in class, and learn safely during the first period every school day.

(2) Some families may worry that a later start would interfere with bus schedules, sports, or after-school jobs. Those concerns deserve planning, but they do not outweigh students' need for sleep. Districts can adjust bus routes, move some practices, or offer study time before school. In Seattle, researchers found that students got more sleep after high schools moved to later start times, and their grades improved. This example shows that schedule changes can bring academic benefits, not only inconvenience.

(3) Starting later is not a promise that every student will suddenly earn higher grades. Sleep habits, homework, and teaching also matter. Still, a school schedule should support health rather than work against it. If we know tired students struggle to focus, why keep asking them to solve equations before their brains are ready? The school board should survey families, examine transportation options, and test an 8:30 start for one semester, with public results, before making a permanent decision.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the writer's central claim?

2. What evidence does the writer use from Seattle, and how does it support the claim?

3. What concern does the writer concede in paragraph 2, and how does the writer rebut it?

4. What idea does the rhetorical question make readers consider, and why is it effective?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write an 80 to 100 word proposal arguing for or against a change at school. Include and label a claim, one specific piece of evidence, a concession followed by a rebuttal, and one rhetorical question.

ANSWER KEY

Bell Time Debate

GRADE 8 · 8.T.T.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the writer's claim and reasons, circle evidence or examples, and number the counterclaim, rebuttal, and rhetorical question 1, 2, and 3. These marks show how the writer tries to persuade readers. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the writer's central claim?	**The middle school should begin classes at 8:30 a.m. instead of 7:45 a.m.**
2	What evidence does the writer use from Seattle, and how does it support the claim?	**Researchers found that students slept more and their grades improved after later start times. This supports the idea that later starts can help students learn.**
3	What concern does the writer concede in paragraph 2, and how does the writer rebut it?	**The writer concedes that later starts could affect buses, sports, and jobs. The rebuttal is that districts can adjust schedules and that students' need for sleep outweighs the inconvenience.**
4	What idea does the rhetorical question make readers consider, and why is it effective?	**It makes readers consider whether tired students can focus on difficult work early in the morning. It is effective because it leads readers toward agreeing that school should start later.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

[Claim] Our school should add a water-refill station near the gym. [Evidence] During a one-week bin count, student volunteers found 120 empty plastic bottles near the gym. [Concession] A station would cost money to install. [Rebuttal] However, the school could seek a community grant, and fewer disposable bottles would reduce waste. [Rhetorical question] Why keep filling trash cans with bottles when students can refill the ones they own? The principal should ask the student council to research prices and grant options before choosing a final plan.

Accept equivalent wording for the claim, evidence, counterclaim, rebuttal, and rhetorical question analysis when it is supported by the passage. For Part 3, check that the response meets the word range and includes each labeled argumentative technique.