Evidence on the Clock

Analyze how cited findings build a careful research-based claim.

9.T.RA.1.b "Use analytical findings to support a research question or thesis, citing appropriately. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the thesis, circle each research finding that supports it, and number the citation connected to each finding. These marks will help you see how evidence and citations work together.

Should High Schools Start Later?

(1) Research question: Would a later school start time improve high school students' sleep? A defensible thesis is that districts should consider later starts because many teenagers do not get enough sleep, although schedules and transportation also matter. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later to help adolescents obtain enough sleep (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2014). This recommendation does not prove that every district will have the same outcome, but it gives leaders a research-based reason to examine local options.

(2) One study offers more direct evidence. In 2016, Seattle shifted two high schools from a 7:50 a.m. start to an 8:45 a.m. start. Researchers found that students slept 34 minutes longer on school nights after the change, and median grades increased 4.5 percent (Dunster et al., 2018). Those findings support the thesis because they connect a later schedule with outcomes students experience. However, the researchers studied students before and after a district policy change, not students randomly assigned to different schedules. Other changes in students' lives could have influenced the results, so a district should not treat this one study as a guarantee.

(3) National data show why the question matters beyond one city. Only 17.7 percent of U.S. public middle and high schools began at 8:30 a.m. or later in the 2011-12 school year (Wheaton et al., 2015). That statistic does not show how much sleep students got, but it shows that later start times were uncommon. Together, the pediatric recommendation, the Seattle findings, and the national statistic support investigating a later start. A careful proposal would also gather local evidence about bus routes, after-school activities, and families' work schedules before claiming that the change will work equally well everywhere.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What thesis does the passage present? Include the qualifier that keeps the claim from being too broad.

2. Which cited source provides the most direct evidence about what happened after a later start time? Explain why it is direct evidence.

3. Why does the passage say that one district should not treat the Seattle study as a guarantee?

4. Write one sentence that uses the national statistic to support investigating later start times. Include the citation exactly as it appears in the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence recommendation to a school district about high school start times. State a clear thesis, use and cite findings from at least two sources in the passage, and name one local factor the district should study before making a permanent decision.

ANSWER KEY

Evidence on the Clock

GRADE 9 · 9.T.RA.1.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the thesis, circle each research finding that supports it, and number the citation connected to each finding. These marks will help you see how evidence and citations work together. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What thesis does the passage present? Include the qualifier that keeps the claim from being too broad.	**Districts should consider later starts because many teenagers do not get enough sleep, although schedules and transportation also matter.**
2	Which cited source provides the most direct evidence about what happened after a later start time? Explain why it is direct evidence.	**Dunster et al. (2018) provides the most direct evidence because it reports that Seattle students slept 34 minutes longer and median grades increased 4.5 percent after the start-time change.**
3	Why does the passage say that one district should not treat the Seattle study as a guarantee?	**Students were studied before and after a policy change, not randomly assigned to schedules, so other changes in their lives could have affected the results.**
4	Write one sentence that uses the national statistic to support investigating later start times. Include the citation exactly as it appears in the passage.	**Later start times deserve investigation because only 17.7 percent of U.S. public middle and high schools began at 8:30 a.m. or later in 2011-12 (Wheaton et al., 2015).**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Districts should pilot an 8:30 a.m. high school start time because later schedules may improve student sleep and performance. In Seattle, students slept 34 minutes longer and median grades rose 4.5 percent after a 55-minute delay (Dunster et al., 2018). The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends starts at 8:30 a.m. or later (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2014), but the district should study bus routes before making a permanent change.

Accept equivalent claims that accurately use at least two cited sources and connect the findings to a recommendation. The local factor may be bus routes, activities, family work schedules, or another reasonable district-specific concern.