Make the Case

Study how writers build support, address concerns, and invite agreement.

9.T.T.3.c "Apply argumentative techniques strategically to enhance writing and engage audiences. (C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the claim and each reason or piece of evidence. Circle the counterargument and its response, then number the question or proposed action that helps persuade readers.

A Better First Bell

1 Students should begin high school at 8:30 a.m. or later. The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that middle and high schools start at 8:30 or later because teenagers' sleep patterns shift later during puberty. Yet many students arrive before sunrise, then try to learn algebra, analyze novels, and make safe choices while tired. If school expects careful thinking, its schedule should support the brains doing that thinking. A later start would not solve every problem, but it would give students a more realistic chance to get the sleep their bodies need.

2 Some families worry that a later bell would disrupt bus routes, sports, or after-school jobs. Those concerns deserve planning, not dismissal. Districts can survey transportation needs, adjust practice times, and coordinate with local employers before changing schedules. However, inconvenience alone is not a strong reason to keep a timetable that conflicts with adolescent sleep research. When adults ask teenagers to be responsible drivers, teammates, and learners, adults should also create conditions that make responsibility possible. The question is simple: should a bus schedule matter more than students being alert enough to learn and travel safely?

3 Changing start times would require work, but schools already revise schedules when they see a clear need. A pilot program at one high school could test a later start for a semester and compare attendance, tardiness, and student sleep reports with earlier data. The school board should invite students, families, staff members, and bus planners to review the results at a public meeting. This approach respects practical limits while treating student health as a serious priority. A school day should be designed around learning, not around a clock that leaves many learners exhausted before first period.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the writer's main claim? Identify one research-based detail that supports it.

2. What concern does the writer acknowledge in paragraph 2, and how does the writer respond to it?

3. How does the rhetorical question in paragraph 2 engage the audience and strengthen the argument?

4. Why does the writer propose a pilot program instead of demanding an immediate districtwide change?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write 3 or 4 sentences, 75 to 95 words, persuading school leaders to make one change at your school. Include a clear claim, a concrete reason or example, a counterargument with a response, and either a rhetorical question or a specific proposed action.

ANSWER KEY

Make the Case

GRADE 9 · 9.T.T.3.c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the claim and each reason or piece of evidence. Circle the counterargument and its response, then number the question or proposed action that helps 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 main claim? Identify one research-based detail that supports it.	**High schools should start at 8:30 a.m. or later. The writer cites the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation and explains that teen sleep patterns shift later during puberty.**
2	What concern does the writer acknowledge in paragraph 2, and how does the writer respond to it?	**The writer acknowledges concerns about bus routes, sports, and after-school jobs. The response is that districts can plan for those needs by surveying transportation, adjusting practices, and coordinating with employers.**
3	How does the rhetorical question in paragraph 2 engage the audience and strengthen the argument?	**It asks readers to compare bus scheduling with students' ability to learn and travel safely, pushing them to consider the human cost of early start times.**
4	Why does the writer propose a pilot program instead of demanding an immediate districtwide change?	**A pilot program addresses practical concerns by testing the change and collecting attendance, tardiness, and sleep data before a larger decision.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

School leaders should add covered outdoor seating near the cafeteria. During rainy days, students crowd into hallways because the current patio has no shelter, and a covered area would give them a safer place to wait and eat. Although construction costs matter, the school could begin with a small canopy funded through its facilities plan rather than building a large structure at once. Why should students have to choose between getting wet outside and blocking a busy hallway?

For Part 3, look for all required elements, logical support, and a response that makes the claim more persuasive.