The Bell Debate

Evidence, listening, and language in a school forum

11-12.CC "Students discuss and debate ideas based on research and specific evidence, allowing for all perspectives to be heard, and assessing and analyzing a speaker's stylistic choices."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the research evidence, circle a question or phrase meant to influence listeners, and number each moment when someone makes room for another perspective. Use your marks to examine both the speakers' ideas and how they present them.

Should the First Bell Ring Later?

1 At a student council forum, Maya leaned toward the microphone. "If our first bell rang at 8:40 instead of 7:40, would more students arrive ready to learn?" She cited a 2018 Seattle study: after two high schools shifted their start times later, researchers measured an average increase of 34 minutes of sleep on school nights. "That is not a promise for our school," she added, "but it is a reason to try." She paused before saying "34 minutes," giving the number room to land. A few students nodded; others looked toward the athletes waiting to speak.

2 Devin, a runner, thanked Maya for admitting the study's limits. "Those students gained sleep, but what happened to their afternoon schedules?" he asked. He explained that his team currently practices before sunset in winter and that a later dismissal could shorten outdoor practice. "I am not saying sleep is optional," he said. "I am asking whose time we move." His repeated questions shifted the discussion from a single benefit to a trade-off. Instead of dismissing the sleep data, Devin asked the council to find out how many students rely on after-school buses before voting.

3 Maya answered without treating Devin's concern as an attack. "You are right that the Seattle finding does not tell us what happens to our bus routes or practice fields." She suggested a two-week schedule trial, with anonymous sleep logs, bus-ridership counts, and feedback from students with jobs or family duties. Devin proposed adding practice attendance to those measures. The moderator then invited students who had not spoken to describe possible costs or benefits. "A later bell could help," Maya concluded, "but a good decision needs more than one clock." Her final image linked their competing schedules without pretending the conflict had vanished.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What research finding supports Maya's proposal, and why does she say it cannot settle the decision for this school?

2. How do Devin's repeated questions change what the council must consider? Explain why this choice may persuade listeners who support a later start.

3. What does Maya's response to Devin show about how she handles disagreement? How does her final image reinforce that approach?

4. Whose perspectives does the proposed trial seek beyond those of students focused on sleep or sports? Identify a measure or action in the passage that could bring each perspective into the discussion.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one 75 to 105 word comment as a student with an after-school job. Use the Seattle finding, fairly respond to Maya or Devin, propose one way to include working students in the trial, and use a deliberate speaking choice, such as a pointed question or repeated phrase.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the research evidence, circle a question or phrase meant to influence listeners, and number each moment when someone makes room for another perspective. Use your marks to examine both the speakers' ideas and how they present them. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What research finding supports Maya's proposal, and why does she say it cannot settle the decision for this school?	**A 2018 Seattle study found an average gain of 34 minutes of sleep on school nights after two high schools started later. Maya says that finding does not predict what will happen at their school.**
2	How do Devin's repeated questions change what the council must consider? Explain why this choice may persuade listeners who support a later start.	**His questions draw attention to afternoon trade-offs, including practice and bus schedules. Because he acknowledges the sleep finding rather than rejecting it, supporters of a later start have reason to consider his concerns.**
3	What does Maya's response to Devin show about how she handles disagreement? How does her final image reinforce that approach?	**Maya agrees that the Seattle study cannot answer local scheduling questions and proposes a trial that measures them. Her image of needing more than one clock suggests that the decision must account for competing schedules.**
4	Whose perspectives does the proposed trial seek beyond those of students focused on sleep or sports? Identify a measure or action in the passage that could bring each perspective into the discussion.	**Bus riders are represented through ridership counts. Students with jobs or family duties are invited to give feedback, and the moderator invites students who have not spoken to share costs or benefits.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I work at a grocery store three afternoons a week, so a later dismissal could cost me part of my shift. The Seattle study found that students gained an average of 34 minutes of sleep after later start times, and that matters. Maya is right to take that finding seriously, but a trial should track more than sleep. What happens to students whose wages help pay household bills? Ask working students to record any lost work hours anonymously during the trial, then compare those reports with the sleep logs before deciding whether to change the bell.

Accept different interpretations of a speaking choice when students connect it to specific wording and a plausible effect on listeners. For Part 3, look for accurate use of the study, a fair response, a concrete way to include working students, and a purposeful stylistic choice.