Before the Bell

Read an argument about opening the school library early.

7.RC.8 "Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims, noting instances of bias and stereotyping."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the main claim and two supporting claims, circle the evidence, and number statements that need more proof or assume everyone in a group acts alike.

Open the Library Early

1. At 7:35 each morning, students wait outside Maple Middle School while the library stays locked until the 8:00 bell. I think the school should open the library twenty minutes before class starts. Some students could read or finish homework instead of standing in the cold. Last Tuesday and Thursday, I counted 18 and 21 students waiting near the library entrance before 7:45. Those counts show that students arrive early, but they do not show how many would actually use the library. A short trial would help answer that question.

2. The change might also give early arrivals a quiet place to work. During a two-day survey of my homeroom, 12 of 26 students said they would use the library at least once a week before school. That is evidence of interest, but one homeroom may not represent the whole school. The librarian arrives at 7:30, so opening early would cost nothing. She could simply unlock the doors and watch the room while students settle in. That seems like an easy way to give students more time to learn.

3. Some people worry that an open library would be loud. I ride the early bus, and bus riders are always quiet and serious, unlike students who walk to school. That proves the library would stay peaceful. Several friends on my bus agree with me, so complaints about noise should not delay the plan. A two-week trial could count visits and record whether noise interrupts work. If students use the space and staff can supervise it, the school could keep the earlier hours. Until then, calling the plan certain would be a stretch.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What change does the author want? Give two reasons the author offers for it.

2. Does the homeroom survey give enough evidence that students across the school would use the library early? Explain.

3. The author claims that opening early would cost nothing because the librarian arrives at 7:30. What is missing from that reasoning?

4. Which statement stereotypes students based on how they get to school? How might the author's perspective affect that statement?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences as a school council member. Suggest a new way to check whether opening early is a good plan, name information you would gather, explain how one possible result would affect your decision, and describe students without making assumptions about a group.

ANSWER KEY

Before the Bell

GRADE 7 · 7.RC.8

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the main claim and two supporting claims, circle the evidence, and number statements that need more proof or assume everyone in a group acts alike. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What change does the author want? Give two reasons the author offers for it.	**The author wants the library to open twenty minutes before class. Early arrivals could get out of the cold and have a quiet place to read or work.**
2	Does the homeroom survey give enough evidence that students across the school would use the library early? Explain.	**No. The survey shows interest among 12 of 26 students in one homeroom, but that group may not represent the whole school.**
3	The author claims that opening early would cost nothing because the librarian arrives at 7:30. What is missing from that reasoning?	**Arriving at 7:30 does not show that the librarian is free to supervise students then or that opening early would require no extra paid work.**
4	Which statement stereotypes students based on how they get to school? How might the author's perspective affect that statement?	**The author says bus riders are always quiet and serious, unlike walkers. Because the author rides the bus, personal experience with a few riders may lead to an unfair claim about both groups.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would ask the office for several weeks of arrival records to see how many students get to school before 7:40. I would also ask the librarian whether she is available to supervise visitors before 8:00. If few students arrive early or she is unavailable, I would not support changing the hours yet. Students who arrive by bus or on foot might both benefit, so I would not predict their behavior from how they travel.

Accept other passage-based reasons and well-explained limits on the evidence. For Part 3, look for a new, relevant check on the plan, a result tied to a decision, and language that avoids stereotyping.