

Bell Time Debate

Trace how an author builds a claim while addressing limits and solutions.

9-10R3 "Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. In literary texts, analyze how complex and/or dynamic characters develop, interact with other characters, advance the plot..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the author's main claim and circle each piece of evidence or reasoning that develops it. Number the author's three main moves, from framing the issue to weighing a concern to proposing a test.

Should High Schools Start Later?

- ① At 7:20 a.m., many teenagers are beginning class before their bodies are ready for sustained attention. The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later, citing adolescents' biological sleep patterns. Yet changing a bell schedule can disrupt bus routes, sports, and family routines. The question is not simply whether later starts feel appealing. It is whether the educational benefits are strong enough to justify solving those practical problems in communities that must coordinate many daily schedules.
- ② Researchers who study sleep explain that puberty shifts many adolescents' internal clocks, making it harder for them to fall asleep early. When a school begins very early, students may lose sleep even if they try to follow a regular bedtime. Districts that moved start times later have often reported better attendance and less daytime sleepiness. These results do not prove that a new schedule alone raises every student's grades. Still, they support the narrower claim that later starts can remove one barrier to learning for many students.
- ③ Critics rightly note that a later dismissal can complicate athletics, after-school jobs, and elementary bus schedules. Those concerns matter because a policy that improves sleep but creates unsafe transportation or blocks participation may harm some students. For that reason, districts should study local routes and consult families before changing schedules. But logistical difficulty is a reason to plan carefully, not a reason to ignore evidence about adolescent sleep. A trial at one high school, followed by attendance and sleepiness data, could test whether the benefits outweigh the costs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How does paragraph 1 frame the debate about later high school start times?

2 What evidence and reasoning in paragraph 2 develop the author’s claim about later start times?

3 Why does the author include the critics’ concerns in paragraph 3?

4 How does the proposed trial in the final sentence connect to the author’s earlier ideas?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write one paragraph of 90 to 110 words arguing for or against a school policy. Introduce the issue, develop at least two connected reasons or pieces of evidence, address one concern, and end by proposing a next step.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the author's main claim and circle each piece of evidence or reasoning that develops it. Number the author's three main moves, from framing the issue to weighing a concern to proposing a test. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does paragraph 1 frame the debate about later high school start times?	It introduces the recommendation for later starts, acknowledges scheduling problems, and frames the issue as whether the benefits justify solving those problems.
2	What evidence and reasoning in paragraph 2 develop the author's claim about later start times?	The author explains that puberty shifts many teens' sleep clocks and notes reports of better attendance and less sleepiness in districts with later starts. This supports the claim that later starts can remove a barrier to learning.
3	Why does the author include the critics' concerns in paragraph 3?	The concerns show that later starts can create real problems with transportation, activities, and jobs. The author uses them to argue for careful planning rather than rejecting later starts.
4	How does the proposed trial in the final sentence connect to the author's earlier ideas?	A trial would respond to the need for local planning and test the claim with attendance and sleepiness data. It could show whether the benefits are greater than the scheduling costs.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Schools should create a phone-free lunch period, with phones stored in students' backpacks. First, lunch is one of the few parts of the day when students can talk without a lesson deadline. Removing screens could make it easier for classmates to join conversations and for students to notice friends who are alone. Some students use phones to coordinate rides or family plans, so the policy should allow access through the office in urgent situations. A two-week trial, followed by student surveys and lunchroom observations, would show whether the change improves connection without causing serious problems.

Accept answers that accurately trace the author's sequence: framing the issue, developing a qualified claim with evidence, addressing complications, and proposing a local test. For the open response, look for a clear claim, connected development, a relevant concern, and a logical next step.