

Spot the Counterclaim

Sort positions in an argument about later high school start times.

9-10W1a "Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from counterclaims, establish and organize clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaim(s), reasons, and evidence."

NAME _____

DATE _____

MAIN CLAIM

A claim states the writer's central position on an issue. It tells what the writer wants readers to believe or do.

The city should add protected bike lanes on major streets.

COUNTERCLAIM

A counterclaim states a different position that challenges the writer's claim. It is a position, not merely a reason or a fact.

The city should not add protected bike lanes on major streets.

1 SORT

8 items

The writer's claim is that high schools should begin at 8:30 a.m. or later, so circle CLAIM or COUNTER for each position, then choose two items and explain how each supports or challenges that claim.

1. High schools should move first period to 9:00 a.m.

CLAIM

COUNTER

2. A school day that begins at 8:45 a.m. is the better choice for teens.

CLAIM

COUNTER

3. High schools should begin at 7:45 a.m.

CLAIM

COUNTER

4. School boards should adopt an 8:30 a.m. first bell.

CLAIM

COUNTER

5. Schools should reject plans for a later first bell.

CLAIM

COUNTER

6. The district should continue starting high school at 7:30 a.m.

CLAIM

COUNTER

7. High schools should begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m.

CLAIM

COUNTER

8. The district should set the high school first bell for 8:40 a.m.

CLAIM

COUNTER

2

PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

3

MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new precise CLAIM that supports a later start time and one new precise COUNTER that challenges it.

CLAIM _____

COUNTER _____

CHALLENGE

Choose one CLAIM item and one COUNTER item, then write one reason and one piece of evidence that could support each position.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	High schools should move first period to 9:00 a.m.	CLAIM	Supports a start time later than 8:30 a.m.
2	A school day that begins at 8:45 a.m. is the better choice for teens.	CLAIM	Supports a start time later than 8:30 a.m.
3	High schools should begin at 7:45 a.m.	COUNTER	Advocates an earlier start time.
4	School boards should adopt an 8:30 a.m. first bell.	CLAIM	Matches the writer's stated position.
5	Schools should reject plans for a later first bell.	COUNTER	Directly opposes a later start time.
6	The district should continue starting high school at 7:30 a.m.	COUNTER	Advocates keeping an earlier start time.
7	High schools should begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m.	CLAIM	Matches the writer's stated position.
8	The district should set the high school first bell for 8:40 a.m.	CLAIM	Supports a start time later than 8:30 a.m.

PART 2 • PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 • MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **CLAIM:** High schools should begin classes at 9:15 a.m.
- **COUNTER:** The district should maintain its 7:20 a.m. high school start time.

Challenge: CLAIM, Item 4. Reason: Later starts better match teenagers' sleep needs. Evidence: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later. COUNTER, Item 3. Reason: Earlier starts protect time for after-school activities. Evidence: The school's published schedule lists dismissal at 3:00 p.m. and varsity practice at 3:30 p.m., so a later dismissal could create a conflict.

Accept CLAIM only for positions that support a high school start time of 8:30 a.m. or later. Accept COUNTER only for positions that oppose a later start or advocate an earlier one; reasons and evidence belong in the challenge, not in the sort.