

The Bell Debate

Study how a model argument weighs a policy's benefits and costs.

9-10W1b "Develop claim(s) and counterclaims in a balanced manner, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both, anticipating the audience's knowledge level and concerns."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the main claim and the counterclaim, circle each piece of evidence, and write S or L beside each sentence that explains a strength or limitation.

Should High School Start Later?

- ① High schools should begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. because teenagers need sleep at a time when their body clocks naturally shift later. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends start times of 8:30 or later for middle and high schools. Studies of delayed start times have linked them to longer sleep and better attendance. This evidence is strong because it comes from health experts and measures school outcomes. Still, later schedules cannot guarantee that every student will sleep more. Homework, jobs, screens, and home responsibilities also affect sleep.
- ② Opponents argue that an 8:30 start could create serious problems for families and school programs. Many districts use the same buses for elementary, middle, and high school routes, so changing one schedule can require new routes or additional drivers. A later dismissal may also reduce daylight for outdoor practices and make after-school jobs harder to reach. These concerns are practical and deserve attention, especially from parents who depend on early transportation or afternoon child care. Yet this counterclaim has limits. Districts can revise routes, adjust practice times, or offer supervised study periods.
- ③ Therefore, the school board should move the opening bell to 8:30 a.m. for one year and review the results. A pilot gives students and families a clear chance to report whether sleep, attendance, transportation, and activities improve or become harder. The health case has the stronger evidence, but the transportation concern is not minor. A new schedule may cost money and disrupt routines. Before voting, board members should publish route changes, activity plans, and child-care options. That information answers reasonable family questions while allowing the district to test a policy supported by adolescent sleep research.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the writer's main claim? Give two pieces of evidence used to support it.

2 What strength and what limitation does the writer identify for the evidence supporting a later start time?

3 State the counterclaim. Then explain one piece of evidence or reasoning the writer uses to support it.

4 Why does the writer say the transportation concern is “not minor,” and what action does the writer propose to address family concerns?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 100-120 word recommendation about whether your school should allow refillable water bottles in class. Include a claim, a counterclaim, one concrete fact or example for each side, a strength and limitation of the two positions, and a response to a concern teachers, students, or families may have.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the main claim and the counterclaim, circle each piece of evidence, and write S or L beside each sentence that explains a strength or limitation. 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? Give two pieces of evidence used to support it.	The writer claims that high schools should begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. Evidence includes the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation and studies linking delayed starts to longer sleep and better attendance.
2	What strength and what limitation does the writer identify for the evidence supporting a later start time?	A strength is that the evidence comes from health experts and measures school outcomes. A limitation is that a later start cannot guarantee more sleep because other factors, such as homework or jobs, affect sleep.
3	State the counterclaim. Then explain one piece of evidence or reasoning the writer uses to support it.	The counterclaim is that an 8:30 start could cause problems for families and school programs. Districts may need new bus routes or additional drivers because buses often serve several school levels.
4	Why does the writer say the transportation concern is "not minor," and what action does the writer propose to address family concerns?	The concern is not minor because a new schedule may cost money and disrupt routines. The writer proposes that board members publish route changes, activity plans, and child-care options before voting.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should allow students to carry refillable water bottles in class. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says drinking water helps students stay hydrated, and a bottle may reduce trips to the fountain. This claim is strongest when teachers permit quiet, spill-proof bottles, but bottles alone cannot solve tiredness or hunger. Some teachers worry about spills and lost instructional time. That concern is reasonable because wet floors can be unsafe, although clear rules can limit it. Administrators should ask custodians and teachers about cleanup needs, then try the policy for one semester and track spills and hall passes.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the claim, counterclaim, evidence, strengths, and limitations when they are supported by the passage. For the open response, check for balanced treatment of both positions, relevant evidence for each, and attention to a specific audience concern.