The First Bell

Trace how an op-ed builds a balanced argument.

11.3.W.3 "Students will compose argumentative essays, reviews, or op-eds that: • introduce precise, informed claims • include a defensible thesis • acknowledge counterclaims or alternate perspectives • organize claims, counterclaims..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the thesis and circle two pieces of evidence from named sources. Number one counterclaim and the writer's response to it in the order they appear.

A Later Start, With a Plan

1 At 7:15 a.m., the first bell at some high schools rings while students are still fighting sleep. Districts should start high school no earlier than 8:30 a.m. because adolescent sleep is a health need, not a reward for finishing homework. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools begin at 8:30 a.m. or later. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says teenagers ages 13 to 17 need eight to ten hours of sleep each night. An earlier bell cannot by itself determine bedtime, but it can cut short the morning hours available for sleep.

2 Moving the bell does not mean promising higher grades overnight. It means giving students a schedule more compatible with recommended sleep. Families who rely on an early bus, however, may face real problems if routes change; athletes and students with jobs may also get home later. These costs deserve more than a footnote. Before changing every campus at once, a district could test the schedule at one high school for a semester, then ask families about transportation and compare attendance and tardiness with the same semester in the previous year.

3 A pilot should not count only students who like the new start time. The district should survey families who depend on early drop-off and publish the number of students affected by revised buses. If the pilot shows serious access problems, adjust routes or offer a supervised early arrival space before expanding it. Still, inconvenience alone is not a sound reason to ignore a medical recommendation. An 8:30 start, paired with a public check on its costs, is a more responsible choice than keeping an early bell simply because the buses already run.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the writer's thesis, and how does its wording make the claim precise?

2. What distinct point does each named health organization contribute to the argument?

3. Identify two practical objections the writer acknowledges. What steps does the writer propose to address them?

4. Why does the writer propose a pilot after describing the objections? Explain how this order could affect a school board weighing the decision.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one 85- to 105-word paragraph for a student council op-ed arguing whether your school should pilot a quiet lunch room twice a week. Assume a staff member has volunteered to supervise it; include a precise thesis, that relevant fact, a fair counterclaim and response, and a credible source you would consult before expanding the pilot.

ANSWER KEY

The First Bell

GRADE 11 · 11.3.W.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the thesis and circle two pieces of evidence from named sources. Number one counterclaim and the writer's response to it in the order they appear. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the writer's thesis, and how does its wording make the claim precise?	**Districts should start high school no earlier than 8:30 a.m. The claim specifies the schools affected and an exact earliest start time.**
2	What distinct point does each named health organization contribute to the argument?	**The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends an 8:30 a.m. or later start for middle and high schools. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that teenagers ages 13 to 17 need eight to ten hours of sleep.**
3	Identify two practical objections the writer acknowledges. What steps does the writer propose to address them?	**Changing bus routes could disrupt families, and later dismissal could affect athletes or students with jobs. The writer proposes a semester-long pilot, family feedback, and adjustments such as revised routes or supervised early arrival.**
4	Why does the writer propose a pilot after describing the objections? Explain how this order could affect a school board weighing the decision.	**The pilot responds to the costs just raised rather than dismissing them. Its checks on transportation, attendance, and tardiness give a school board a way to evaluate the proposal before expanding it.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should pilot a quiet lunch room twice a week so students who need a break from noise have an option. A staff member has volunteered to supervise it, making a small pilot practical. Some students may worry that moving lunch into a classroom will isolate their friends. Participation should be optional, and the council should keep the regular lunch space open. Before expanding the pilot, the school counselor could conduct an anonymous student survey about whether the option helps students feel comfortable at lunch.

Accept other accurately supported readings of the op-ed's objections and proposed checks. For the open task, look for an 85- to 105-word paragraph that uses the given fact without inventing survey results and names a credible source to consult.