The Later Bell

Trace how an op-ed builds a balanced argument

12.3.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 its condition, and circle each named source and the evidence it provides. Number the counterclaim 1 and the writer's response 2 to track how the argument addresses an objection.

Start Later, Plan Carefully

1 A school board deciding whether to move a high school's first bell from 7:15 to 8:30 faces more than a scheduling problem. The decision affects how realistically teenagers can meet their sleep needs. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, teens ages 13 to 17 need eight to ten hours of sleep per day. A student who must wake at 6:00 a.m. would need to fall asleep by 10:00 p.m. to get eight hours. The board should adopt an 8:30 start, provided it publishes a workable transportation plan before the change.

2 A later bell does not manufacture sleep: students could stay up later. Still, it removes a school-imposed reason to wake early. In its 2014 policy statement, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools aim for start times no earlier than 8:30 a.m.; it also describes a biological shift toward later sleep timing in adolescence. That combination matters more than anecdotes about students who seem alert at dawn. The recommendation connects the proposed schedule to adolescent development, while the CDC guidance clarifies the amount of sleep at stake.

3 Opponents may argue that moving the bell could disrupt bus routes, after-school jobs, and family schedules. Those costs deserve more than a dismissive promise that everyone will adjust. Before voting, the board should compare proposed bus schedules, ask families about pickup conflicts, and publish its findings. If a route would leave students without reliable transportation, the plan needs revision, not a quick exception that restores the early bell for some students. Keep the 8:30 goal, but phase in the schedule only when access is protected. A later start is worth pursuing because it should work for students beyond the easiest-to-serve households.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. State the writer's thesis, including its condition. Why would that condition matter to a school board?

2. Which two named sources support a later start, and what distinct point does each provide?

3. What counterclaim does the writer acknowledge, and what action does the writer propose in response?

4. How does placing the sleep evidence before the transportation objection help the argument? Quote a phrase that keeps the response to that objection respectful.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90 to 110 word op-ed paragraph urging or opposing a two-day trial of keeping the school library open one extra hour after school. Use this evidence: a librarian's door tally recorded 24 arrivals in the last ten minutes before closing on Tuesday. Include a qualified thesis, a counterclaim with a response, and a practical next step.

ANSWER KEY

The Later Bell

GRADE 12 · 12.3.W.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the thesis and its condition, and circle each named source and the evidence it provides. Number the counterclaim 1 and the writer's response 2 to track how the argument addresses an objection. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	State the writer's thesis, including its condition. Why would that condition matter to a school board?	**The board should adopt an 8:30 start if it first publishes a workable transportation plan. The condition addresses the board's responsibility to ensure students can get to school.**
2	Which two named sources support a later start, and what distinct point does each provide?	**The CDC gives the recommended eight to ten hours of daily sleep for ages 13 to 17. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends starts no earlier than 8:30 and describes adolescents' shift toward later sleep timing.**
3	What counterclaim does the writer acknowledge, and what action does the writer propose in response?	**A later start could disrupt transportation, jobs, and family schedules. The board should review bus schedules, ask families about conflicts, publish findings, and revise routes before the change.**
4	How does placing the sleep evidence before the transportation objection help the argument? Quote a phrase that keeps the response to that objection respectful.	**The evidence establishes why a later start is worth considering before the writer addresses the costs of making it work. One suitable phrase is "Those costs deserve more than a dismissive promise that everyone will adjust."**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The student council should request a two-day trial that keeps the library open one extra hour, but only if the school can staff it safely. A librarian's door tally recorded 24 arrivals in the last ten minutes before closing on Tuesday, suggesting that current hours may cut short students' work time. One afternoon cannot prove that demand will stay high, and extra staffing could strain the budget. Rather than promise a permanent change, the council should ask the library to track attendance during the trial and compare the cost with actual use. Keep the added hour only if those results justify it.

For the marking job, accept the thesis in paragraph 1, source evidence in paragraphs 1 and 2, and the counterclaim followed by the response in paragraph 3. For Your Turn, accept either position if the paragraph stays within 90 to 110 words, uses the supplied tally without overstating it, and includes the requested argument elements.