The Later Bell

Read an op-ed for its claim, evidence, and counterclaims.

9.3.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 writer's exact proposal, circle the two named expert sources, and number each counterclaim and its response with matching numbers to trace how the argument stays balanced.

Should the First Bell Ring Later?

(1) At our high school, the first bell rings at 7:45 a.m. That schedule asks teenagers to be alert before many have had enough sleep. Next fall, our school should move the first bell to 8:30 a.m., while keeping the length of the school day unchanged. This is not a promise that every student will sleep longer. It is a practical way to give students a better chance to meet a basic health need. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that teenagers ages 13 to 18 sleep eight to ten hours per day.

(2) The case for a later bell is not based on a single student's morning mood. In a policy statement, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later. Its recommendation fits the CDC's sleep guidance: a 7:45 start leaves less morning time for sleep than an 8:30 start does, if students keep the same bedtime. Of course, some students may stay up later instead. That possibility limits what the change can accomplish, but it does not erase the value of a schedule that makes sufficient sleep more possible.

(3) Families might object that a later dismissal could disrupt bus routes, jobs, or sports. Those concerns deserve planning, not a shrug. Before changing the bell, the district should publish a proposed bus schedule and ask students who work or play sports how the shift would affect them. Leaders could then adjust routes and activity times where possible. Keeping the school day the same length means dismissal also moves 45 minutes later, so the trade-off is real. Still, a transparent plan is a stronger response than keeping an early bell simply because the current schedule is familiar.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the writer's precise claim? Include the proposed time and when the change would happen.

2. Which named source supports an 8:30 start most directly? Explain why its evidence is more specific to the proposal than the other source's evidence.

3. What limit to the sleep argument does the writer acknowledge in paragraph 2? How does acknowledging it make the claim more defensible?

4. Identify one practical objection in paragraph 3 and the step the writer proposes to address it.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one 80 to 100 word op-ed paragraph arguing whether your school should add a bottle-filling station near the gym. Credit and use this CDC fact as evidence: drinking water helps prevent dehydration. Include a precise claim, a realistic counterclaim and response, and a tone suitable for school leaders.

ANSWER KEY

The Later Bell

GRADE 9 · 9.3.W.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the writer's exact proposal, circle the two named expert sources, and number each counterclaim and its response with matching numbers to trace how the argument stays balanced. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the writer's precise claim? Include the proposed time and when the change would happen.	**The school should move its first bell from 7:45 to 8:30 a.m. next fall while keeping the school day the same length.**
2	Which named source supports an 8:30 start most directly? Explain why its evidence is more specific to the proposal than the other source's evidence.	**The AAP directly recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later. The CDC gives a sleep recommendation for teenagers but does not specify a school start time.**
3	What limit to the sleep argument does the writer acknowledge in paragraph 2? How does acknowledging it make the claim more defensible?	**Some students may stay up later, so a later bell will not necessarily give everyone more sleep. The writer avoids claiming that the schedule guarantees longer sleep.**
4	Identify one practical objection in paragraph 3 and the step the writer proposes to address it.	**A later dismissal could disrupt bus routes. The writer proposes publishing a bus schedule and adjusting routes where possible. Answers about jobs or sports and the proposed student input are also acceptable.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should add a bottle-filling station beside the gym entrance next year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says drinking water helps prevent dehydration, so making water easy to reach after exercise supports students' health. Some school leaders may worry about installation costs, which deserve a clear estimate rather than a guess. Before buying equipment, the district could request a price quote and compare it with the cost of adapting an existing fountain. This proposal would not replace other water sources, but it could make a useful option easier to find.

Accept either position in Part 3 if the paragraph meets the word limit, uses the credited CDC fact accurately, and responds to a relevant counterclaim. In Part 2, accept equivalent wording that identifies evidence and reasoning present in the passage.