Same Facts, Different Calls

Compare how two writers argue from the same school board report.

E.P.3.2.B "Evaluate the author's point of view, potential bias, and how authors can reach different conclusions regarding the same issue."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline a fact both writers discuss, circle each writer's proposed decision, and number the two details about their roles that might shape their opinions.

Should the Later Bell Stay?

(1) In the fictional town of Larch, the school board tested a later high school start for one semester, moving the first bell from 7:30 to 8:45 a.m. Attendance rose from 91 percent to 94 percent during the trial. The change also added $180,000 in bus costs because the district needed extra routes. These numbers alone do not say whether the town should keep the schedule. Two local writers read the same school board report and published different opinions in the town paper. Both cited the attendance gain and the bus expense, but each emphasized a different cost of the decision.

(2) Maya Ortiz, a parent and a school nurse, argues that Larch should keep the later start. She calls the rise in attendance from 91 percent to 94 percent a sign that more students can get to school regularly. She acknowledges the extra $180,000 for buses, but says the board should look for savings elsewhere rather than return to an earlier bell. Ortiz writes, "A budget is meant to serve students, not the other way around." Her work with tired teenagers gives her firsthand experience, yet it may also lead her to give less attention to families affected by bus spending.

(3) Daniel Price, a parent who runs an after-school care program, argues that Larch should return to the earlier start. He notes the same attendance increase but says the report cannot show whether the new bell time caused it. He puts more weight on the extra $180,000 for buses, warning that those funds cannot also support other school needs. Price writes, "A small attendance gain is not a blank check." His business depends on families' schedules, which may shape what he notices. Neither writer explains what else changed during the trial, so readers cannot settle the cause of the attendance increase from these opinions alone.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does Ortiz interpret the attendance increase, and what decision does she support?

2. How does Price interpret the same attendance increase differently, and what decision does he support?

3. What about Ortiz's role might shape her point of view, and what concern might she give less attention?

4. How might Price's role shape his argument, and what information is missing before either writer can explain the attendance increase?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five- or six-sentence editorial as a student who rides the bus and works after school. Propose a third course of action, use both reported numbers, explain how your interests might shape your view, and name evidence you would seek before claiming the bell time caused the attendance change.

ANSWER KEY

Same Facts, Different Calls

HIGH SCHOOL · E.P.3.2.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline a fact both writers discuss, circle each writer's proposed decision, and number the two details about their roles that might shape their opinions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Ortiz interpret the attendance increase, and what decision does she support?	**She sees the increase as a sign that more students can get to school regularly and supports keeping the later start.**
2	How does Price interpret the same attendance increase differently, and what decision does he support?	**He says the report does not show whether the later start caused the increase and supports returning to the earlier start.**
3	What about Ortiz's role might shape her point of view, and what concern might she give less attention?	**As a school nurse who works with tired teenagers, she may focus on students' needs and give less attention to families affected by bus spending.**
4	How might Price's role shape his argument, and what information is missing before either writer can explain the attendance increase?	**Because his care program depends on families' schedules, Price may focus on the costs of changing them. The writers do not explain what else changed during the trial, so they cannot establish that the bell time caused the attendance increase.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

As a student who rides the bus and works after school, I would extend the later start for another semester while testing fewer bus routes. Attendance rose from 91 percent to 94 percent, so the schedule may be worth another look. But the extra $180,000 in bus costs could take money from other needs. My job makes me value a reliable afternoon bus, so I might overlook costs that other families face. Before I claim the later start raised attendance, I would compare attendance at similar schools that kept their original bell times. The board should also check whether any route changes make students miss school or work.

Accept other plausible explanations of how each writer's role could shape their emphasis. For the editorial, look for a distinct proposal, accurate use of both numbers, a possible personal bias, and relevant evidence to investigate causation.