

The Bell Debate

Read a model argument and trace the writer's craft choices.

8.11.C "compose multi-paragraph argumentative texts using genre characteristics and craft; and"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the writer's main claim and each supporting reason. Circle the counterclaim and its response, then number three facts or examples that strengthen the argument.

A Later Bell for Middle School

- ① To the School Board: Our middle school should begin at 8:30 rather than 7:40. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that teens ages 13 to 18 sleep eight to ten hours each night, yet an early bell makes that goal difficult. A later start would not solve every tired morning, but it would give students a fairer chance to arrive alert, learn safely, and participate fully. The board should test the new schedule for one year.
- ② First, sleep affects the work students do in class. When students are exhausted, they may struggle to focus during a lab, follow a discussion, or remember directions. Extra morning sleep can help students come prepared to think, not simply stay awake. A later bell could also improve safety. Many students walk, bike, or ride with family members before sunrise in winter. Starting fifty minutes later would place more of that travel in daylight, when drivers and students can see more clearly.
- ③ Some families may worry that a later dismissal would interfere with sports, jobs, or child care. Those concerns deserve planning, not dismissal. The school could adjust practice times, coordinate bus routes, and ask local programs to shift their schedules during the trial. In return, students would gain a stronger opportunity to meet a basic health need. Our school asks students to do demanding work every day. It should set a schedule that supports that work. Board members should approve a one-year, 8:30 start-time trial and review its results.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What is the writer's main claim, and what action does the writer ask the board to take?

2 Identify two reasons the writer gives for a later start time. Include one supporting detail for each reason.

3 What concern does the writer acknowledge in paragraph 3? How does the writer respond to that concern?

4 How do the final two sentences strengthen the argument?

Write a three-paragraph argument of 130 to 170 words for a change at your school. Introduce a clear claim in paragraph 1. Develop two reasons with concrete details in paragraph 2. In paragraph 3, acknowledge a concern, respond to it, and end with a specific action the school should take.

This image shows a single 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 writer's main claim and each supporting reason. Circle the counterclaim and its response, then number three facts or examples that strengthen the argument. 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, and what action does the writer ask the board to take?	The writer claims that middle school should begin at 8:30 instead of 7:40 and asks the board to test the schedule for one year.
2	Identify two reasons the writer gives for a later start time. Include one supporting detail for each reason.	One reason is that students need more sleep to focus, follow discussions, and remember directions. Another reason is safety because students who walk, bike, or ride before sunrise in winter would travel more in daylight.
3	What concern does the writer acknowledge in paragraph 3? How does the writer respond to that concern?	The writer acknowledges that a later dismissal could interfere with sports, jobs, or child care. The response is to adjust practice times, coordinate bus routes, and ask local programs to shift schedules during the trial.
4	How do the final two sentences strengthen the argument?	They connect the schedule to students' demanding work and end with a specific call for a one-year 8:30 trial that can be reviewed.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should install water refill stations near classrooms. Students carry reusable bottles, but the only refill station is beside the gym. A hallway station would make drinking water easier during the school day.

First, students have only a few minutes between classes. A nearby station would let them refill a bottle without rushing across the building. Second, refill stations can reduce waste. Students could bring the same bottle each day instead of throwing away a new plastic bottle after lunch. A station near the cafeteria would be a useful first step.

Some families may worry about the cost. The school could start with one station and measure how often students use it before buying more. The principal should ask the facilities team to price that first station and share the proposal with students and families.

Accept equivalent analysis of the model passage. For student arguments, check three organized paragraphs, a clear claim, two developed reasons with details, a counterargument and response, and a specific concluding action. The sample is one possible argument; other well-supported school changes are valid.