

Bell Time Debate

Compare how opposing arguments use claims and support.

ELA.9.R.2.4 "Compare the development of two opposing arguments on the same topic, evaluating the effectiveness and validity of the claims."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB These are original practice speeches for a fictional Riverton hearing. Underline each speaker's policy claim and circle supporting evidence or examples. Mark a question beside an inference that needs more evidence; be ready to explain it.

Should Riverton Start Later?

- ① **Case brief.** Fictional Riverton is considering moving its high-school start from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Its buses are shared with younger grades, and changing the high-school bell would require route revisions. No local cost estimate, sleep survey or attendance comparison is available. The medical recommendation cited below is real; the district and speakers are invented. In its 2014 policy statement, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools aim to start at 8:30 or later, recognizing adolescents' later sleep timing. That general guidance does not itself measure the effects of a Riverton schedule change.
- ② **Supporter: Elena Cruz, parent.** Move our high-school bell to 8:30 next year. Teenagers' sleep timing shifts later; demanding an earlier bedtime cannot simply erase that biology. The Academy's recommendation gives us a strong reason to change the schedule we control. More opportunity to sleep should help students arrive ready to learn. Other districts have reported improvements after moving their bells, and I expect our attendance to improve too. I do not have those districts' results here, but we can study them while arranging our routes. Why make another class struggle through the same early mornings? Keep records before and after the change so we can see what improves.

- ③ **Opponent: Noah Price, coach.** Keep the current bell until we have a local plan with costs. I accept that sleep matters. But moving dismissal later may collide with practices, jobs and family duties, pushing bedtime later too. Our shared buses make this more than changing a clock. Ask families about their schedules and obtain a transportation estimate before voting. I cannot yet put a price on those changes; that is exactly why we should investigate. Cruz predicts better attendance, but she has supplied no local attendance study and no named comparison district. A worthy aim is not the same as a tested plan. Gather the missing information, then decide.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

- 1 State each speaker's policy claim. How does each connect it to a concern about students' lives?

- 2 Trace Cruz's reasoning from the Academy recommendation to her attendance prediction. Which step needs more evidence?

- 3 Which part of Price's case is established in the brief, and which parts are possibilities? How does this affect his argument?

- 4 Compare how Cruz and Price develop their arguments. Which is more persuasive now? Explain a difference in their support, a limit in each argument, and what new evidence could change your judgment.

Choose a school policy other than start times. Write two opposing claims about the policy, give one piece of evidence each side should use, and explain what local information would help decide which argument is stronger.

[illegible]

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

These are original practice speeches for a fictional Riverton hearing. Underline each speaker's policy claim and circle supporting evidence or examples. Mark a question beside an inference that needs more evidence; be ready to explain it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	State each speaker's policy claim. How does each connect it to a concern about students' lives?	Cruz wants an 8:30 start next year to give students more opportunity to sleep and learn. Price wants to retain the current bell while gathering local cost and scheduling evidence because a change may create competing demands.
2	Trace Cruz's reasoning from the Academy recommendation to her attendance prediction. Which step needs more evidence?	National sleep guidance supports concern about an early bell, but Cruz infers that the local change will improve attendance. She provides no local attendance comparison and does not identify the other districts or their results.
3	Which part of Price's case is established in the brief, and which parts are possibilities? How does this affect his argument?	Shared buses and the need for revised routes are given case facts. The size of costs and conflicts with jobs or activities are unmeasured possibilities. These support requesting information, but do not prove that costs outweigh benefits.
4	Compare how Cruz and Price develop their arguments. Which is more persuasive now? Explain a difference in their support, a limit in each argument, and what new evidence could change your judgment.	Accept either position with direct comparison. Cruz moves from medical guidance toward predicted local benefits; Price moves from known bus arrangements and possible conflicts toward a demand for a costed plan. Cruz lacks local or named outcome studies; Price lacks measured costs or conflicts. New outcome studies, schedule surveys or cost estimates could change the judgment.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Policy: Should the school replace printed event flyers with digital announcements? Supporters claim the switch would reduce paper use, and they could compare the number of flyers printed each month with the cost of posting online. Opponents claim that some families may miss digital notices, and they could survey families about internet and smartphone access. The stronger argument would depend on reliable local printing records and survey results, not assumptions about what all families can access.

Accept either policy judgment when supported by accurate comparison of claims, reasoning and evidence. These speeches and district details are fictional. The 2014 AAP recommendation is documented in *School Start Times for Adolescents, Pediatrics* 134(3), doi:10.1542/peds.2014-1697. The supporter's unspecified district results are deliberately unsubstantiated within the supplied argument, and students should identify that limitation. They are not a factual research citation supplied by the worksheet. The opponent's possible costs do not prove the current timetable is best. The open-response model proposes evidence that each side could gather; it does not invent completed research.