

Bell Time Debate

Compare claims, evidence, reasoning, and rhetoric in two related arguments.

ELA.12.R.2.4 "Compare the development of multiple arguments in related texts, evaluating the validity of the claims, the authors' reasoning, use of the same information, and/or the authors' rhetoric."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB The district, writers, survey and budget figures are invented for this exercise. Read both original practice arguments. Underline claims, circle shared information, and mark the reasoning each writer uses to reach a different recommendation.

Two Plans for Riverton's High Schools

- ① **Shared case brief.** Fictional Riverton has three high schools, all starting at 7:35 a.m. An invented district survey found that 62 percent of high-school respondents reported fewer than eight hours of sleep on school nights. It did not measure causes, grades or attendance. A fictional audit estimates \$180,000 in first-year transportation changes for moving all three schools to 8:45, within a \$96 million annual district budget; no pilot cost is supplied. Both writers cite the real American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation for middle and high schools to start at 8:30 or later. Their arguments below are written for this worksheet.
- ② **Text A: Lena Ortiz, pediatrician.** Move all three high schools to 8:45 next fall. The Academy recommendation recognizes a biological problem: adolescent sleep timing shifts later. Our 62 percent survey result shows why that concern belongs here. The current bell is a daily tax on attention. We can reorganize bus routes and practices; the audit's \$180,000 estimate is less than one percent of our annual budget. A cheaper timetable can carry hidden costs when tired students struggle to learn. No change will eliminate every cause of short sleep, but the board controls this one. Plan the transition carefully and compare attendance and grades afterward. Waiting for a perfect answer leaves another cohort paying the same daily tax.

- ③ **Text B: Marcus Hale, board member.** Start with a one-year 8:45 pilot at Riverton High, keeping the other two schools at 7:35 during the trial. I accept the Academy recommendation and the same 62 percent result. Neither tells us how much this particular change will improve local grades or attendance. The survey did not distinguish homework, jobs, phones and the early bell. Measure before we move. Track sleep, attendance, grades and bus costs before and during the pilot, using the other schools as a comparison while considering their differences. We have no pilot budget yet, so obtain one before approval. A districtwide rollout might help, but calling it inexpensive does not demonstrate that it will work.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- ① Compare how Ortiz and Hale develop their main claims. State each claim and identify at least two moves each author uses to support it.

- ② What two pieces of information do both authors use? Explain how each author interprets that information differently.

- ③ Identify a limit in the evidence for Ortiz's predicted benefits. How could Hale's pilot address it, and what would still make interpretation difficult?

- 4** How does Ortiz's phrase "daily tax on attention" differ from Hale's phrase "measure before we move"? Explain the effect of each phrase on the reader.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

In 110 to 140 words, recommend either Ortiz's districtwide change or Hale's one-school pilot. Compare their use of shared evidence, identify a limitation, and explain how one rhetorical phrase affects your judgment.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

The district, writers, survey and budget figures are invented for this exercise. Read both original practice arguments. Underline claims, circle shared information, and mark the reasoning each writer uses to reach a different recommendation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Compare how Ortiz and Hale develop their main claims. State each claim and identify at least two moves each author uses to support it.	Ortiz favors changing all three schools next fall, combining national guidance, local survey concern, budget comparison and urgency. Hale favors a one-school pilot, accepting shared evidence but questioning local causal conclusions, proposing comparisons and demanding a pilot budget.
2	What two pieces of information do both authors use? Explain how each author interprets that information differently.	Both use the Academy recommendation and the 62 percent short-sleep result. Ortiz treats them as enough reason for districtwide action; Hale treats them as grounds for a limited test because they do not establish local academic effects.
3	Identify a limit in the evidence for Ortiz's predicted benefits. How could Hale's pilot address it, and what would still make interpretation difficult?	The case has no local causal evidence about grades or attendance. Before/during measurements and other schools as comparisons could help test effects, but school differences and other changes could affect outcomes. A pilot is evidence gathering, not guaranteed proof.
4	How does Ortiz's phrase "daily tax on attention" differ from Hale's phrase "measure before we move"? Explain the effect of each phrase on the reader.	Ortiz's phrase makes the current schedule sound harmful and creates urgency for change. Hale's phrase presents caution and data collection as responsible decision-making.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Riverton should begin with Hale's one-school pilot. Ortiz connects the Academy recommendation with the survey's 62 percent result to establish a serious concern. Her budget comparison suggests the change might be affordable, but neither affordability nor reported short sleep proves that a later bell will improve local grades. Hale accepts the same guidance and survey while asking for evidence of those effects. His phrase 'measure before we move' presents testing as responsibility; Ortiz's 'daily tax on attention' makes delay feel harmful. Comparing attendance, grades and sleep before and during the pilot could inform a later decision. Still, the other schools may differ from Riverton High, so their results need careful interpretation. The board also needs the missing pilot budget before approving this recommendation.

Accept either recommendation when supported by accurate comparison, a real evidence limitation and analysis of rhetoric. The district, authors, survey and costs are fictional. The Academy recommendation and adolescent sleep timing are documented in its 2014 policy statement, School Start Times for Adolescents, Pediatrics 134(3), doi:10.1542/peds.2014-1697. Do not infer pilot costs from the districtwide estimate. Neither a budget percentage nor this survey proves the proposed change's local academic effects. A comparison between schools is useful but does not automatically remove confounding factors.