Evidence Under the Bell

Assess how well an editorial's evidence supports its proposal.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.8 "Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Cited health guidance and Seattle research are real; local proposals and any pilot figures are fictional classroom examples. Underline the author's main claim, number each piece of evidence, and circle words that show a limit or concern. Use these marks to judge how strongly the evidence supports the proposal.

A Later First Bell

(1) At 7:20 each morning, students at Riverton High hurry into first period. The school board is considering a later start time, and I believe classes should begin at 8:30. Teenagers' body clocks naturally shift later during puberty, making it harder for many of them to fall asleep early. The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that middle and high schools start at 8:30 or later. This recommendation supports a later schedule because it comes from a medical organization that studies adolescent health. A later opening would give students a better chance to arrive alert and ready to learn.

(2) Research from Seattle adds evidence. A 2018 study compared different groups of biology students at two Seattle high schools before and after a 55-minute start-time delay in 2016. Median sleep on school nights was 34 minutes longer after the change. Median biology grades were 77.5 percent before and 82 percent afterward, a difference of 4.5 percentage points. These results support the claim that a later start can help students, but they do not prove that every school will see identical results. The study involved only two schools, and changes other than schedule might have affected grades. Still, the sleep finding directly fits the argument about alertness.

③ Opponents point out that a later bell could create problems. Riverton buses carry elementary, middle, and high school students in separate runs. If high school begins later, the district may need more buses or may have to shift younger students' schedules. Athletes could also miss more class time for afternoon games. These are relevant concerns, yet they do not show that later starts harm learning or health. Before voting, the board should ask the transportation office to estimate costs and survey families about schedule conflicts. The health recommendation and sleep research strongly support trying a later start, while the practical concerns show that the plan needs careful planning.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1 Which Seattle research result most directly supports the author's claim that students would arrive more alert? Explain why it is relevant.

2 What two details limit the strength of the Seattle grade result as evidence for a later start?

3 Identify one practical concern raised by opponents. Does it directly disprove the author's claim about learning or health? Explain.

4 Overall, how strongly does the passage support trying a later start at Riverton? Use two pieces of evidence and one limitation or concern in your answer.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90 to 120 word recommendation to the Riverton school board. State whether the board should try a later start, use at least two pieces of evidence from the passage, and address one limitation or practical concern.

Develop your response

Write 90-120 words. Use the task's required evidence and explain your reasoning. Review your claim, supporting details and response to a concern before finishing.

Evidence Under the Bell

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Cited health guidance and Seattle research are real; local proposals and any pilot figures are fictional classroom examples. Underline the author's main claim, number each piece of evidence, and circle words that show a limit or concern. Use these marks to judge how strongly the evidence supports the proposal. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which Seattle research result most directly supports the author's claim that students would arrive more alert? Explain why it is relevant.	**Median sleep on school nights was 34 minutes longer after the later start. This evidence of more sleep supports the claim that students may be more alert; it does not mean every student gained exactly 34 minutes.**
2	What two details limit the strength of the Seattle grade result as evidence for a later start?	**The study involved only two schools, and changes other than the schedule might have affected grades.**
3	Identify one practical concern raised by opponents. Does it directly disprove the author's claim about learning or health? Explain.	**Possible concerns include needing more buses, changing younger students' schedules, or athletes missing more class time. These concerns do not directly disprove a health or learning benefit, but they show that implementation could be difficult.**
4	Overall, how strongly does the passage support trying a later start at Riverton? Use two pieces of evidence and one limitation or concern in your answer.	**The passage strongly supports trying a later start because the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 8:30 or later and Seattle students slept longer after a later bell. However, the grade evidence is limited to two schools, and transportation conflicts still need planning.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I recommend that Riverton pilot an 8:30 start for one year. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 8:30 or later for secondary schools, so the proposal matches advice from an organization focused on adolescent health. In Seattle, median school-night sleep was 34 minutes longer after two high schools delayed their bells, which directly supports the goal of improving alertness. The grade increase is less certain evidence because only two schools were studied and other changes may have influenced results. Riverton should request transportation cost estimates and survey families before the pilot. Those steps address real scheduling concerns without ignoring the strong sleep evidence.

Accept responses that accurately distinguish direct evidence, such as the sleep finding, from weaker or limited evidence, such as the grade result. For the open task, accept a supported recommendation in either direction if it uses passage evidence and addresses a limitation or practical concern. Seattle findings compare separate cohorts, not individual gains: median school-night sleep differed by 34 minutes and median biology grades by 4.5 percentage points. The observational study does not establish that the schedule alone caused the grade difference. Local proposals and pilot examples are fictional; students should evaluate their reasoning. Sources: AAP (2014), https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25156998/ ; Dunster et al. (2018), https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30547089/ .