

Start Time Case

Trace how a writer builds a policy argument.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 "Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence."

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 sentence that states the writer's claim, circle two pieces of evidence, and number the counterclaim and the response to it. These marks show how an argument uses evidence and reasoning.

Should Riverton Start Later?

- ① Riverton High School begins classes at 7:25 a.m., but its school board is considering an 8:30 start. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later because teenagers' biological clocks shift during puberty, making it harder for many of them to fall asleep early. This recommendation does not mean every student has the same sleep schedule. Still, it gives the board a research-based reason to examine whether the current timetable matches students' developmental sleep needs more closely.
- ② 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. The researchers could not prove that extra sleep alone caused the grade increase, since many factors can affect grades. Even so, the study supplies relevant evidence that a later schedule can improve sleep, an outcome closely connected to the board's decision about start times.

- ③ Opponents of a later start raise a practical concern: changing the bell schedule could disrupt bus routes, sports practices, and after-school jobs. That concern deserves a response, not dismissal. Riverton could survey transportation staff and students, then test revised routes before making a permanent change. Because the pediatric recommendation and the Seattle study point toward meaningful benefits, the board should adopt an 8:30 start if its planning shows transportation costs and activities can be adjusted reasonably without placing unfair burdens on families or school employees each day.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- ① What policy does the writer support? State the claim in your own words.

- ② Which finding from the Seattle study is relevant evidence for the writer's claim? Explain how it supports the claim.

- ③ What limit does the writer place on the Seattle study's grade result? Why does including this limit make the reasoning stronger?

- ④ What counterclaim does the writer acknowledge, and what response does the writer propose?

Write a 100 to 130 word recommendation to Riverton's school board. State a clear claim, use at least two accurate details from the passage as evidence, and address one practical concern with a reasonable response.

Write 100-130 words. Use the task's required evidence and explain your reasoning. Review your claim, supporting details and response to a concern before finishing.

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

Cited health guidance and Seattle research are real; local proposals and any pilot figures are fictional classroom examples. Underline the sentence that states the writer's claim, circle two pieces of evidence, and number the counterclaim and the response to it. These marks show how an argument uses evidence and reasoning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What policy does the writer support? State the claim in your own words.	The writer supports moving Riverton High School's start time to 8:30 a.m., if transportation and activity changes can be managed reasonably.
2	Which finding from the Seattle study is relevant evidence for the writer's claim? Explain how it supports the claim.	Median sleep on school nights was 34 minutes longer after the later start. This supports the claim because improved sleep is a possible benefit of a later schedule; the result is not an individual guarantee. Also accept the 4.5-percentage-point difference in median biology grades if the student explains its relevance and treats it as an association, not proof of causation.
3	What limit does the writer place on the Seattle study's grade result? Why does including this limit make the reasoning stronger?	The study could not prove that extra sleep alone caused grades to rise because many factors affect grades. Including this limit avoids claiming more than the evidence proves.
4	What counterclaim does the writer acknowledge, and what response does the writer propose?	The counterclaim is that a later start could disrupt bus routes, sports, and after-school jobs. The writer proposes surveys and revised-route testing before a permanent change.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Riverton's board should move the high school start time to 8:30 a.m. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 8:30 or later for adolescents because puberty can make early sleep difficult. In Seattle, a 2018 study found 34 more minutes of median school-night sleep after a later start, which suggests that the change could help Riverton students arrive better rested. Critics rightly worry that buses, practices, and jobs could become harder to schedule. However, the board can test new bus routes and survey students before committing to a permanent plan. Since the possible sleep benefits are substantial, Riverton should make the change if the trial shows reasonable costs for families and staff.

Accept equivalent statements of the claim, evidence, limitation, counterclaim, and response when they are supported by the passage. For the open response, look for a clear recommendation, at least two accurate passage details, relevant reasoning, and a response to a 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/> .