

Bell Time Case

Analyze how a policy argument uses evidence, reasoning, and structure.

ELA.11.C.1 “Communicating Through Writing”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Local people, proposals, records and observations are fictional classroom examples; named research and health guidance are real. Underline the writer’s claim and reasons, circle each piece of source-based evidence, and number the transitions that move the argument forward. These choices show how the writer builds a clear, credible proposal.

A Later Start for Riverton High

- ① To the Riverton School Board: Riverton High should begin classes at 8:30 a.m. rather than 7:35. This change would give teenagers a schedule that better matches their sleep needs while preserving rigorous learning. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 or later because adolescent sleep cycles shift later during puberty. A later bell would not make school easier. Instead, it would give students a more realistic chance to arrive alert, participate in discussion, and complete demanding work well.
- ② Research also suggests that sleep and school outcomes deserve investigation. 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. Although one study cannot settle every local question or establish sole causation, its findings support a careful pilot. Riverton could compare attendance, course performance, and student sleep surveys before and after a one-year change. That evidence would allow the board to revise the schedule using results, rather than guesses.

- ③ Critics may reasonably worry that a later dismissal would complicate bus routes, athletics, and after-school jobs. Those concerns deserve planning, not dismissal. For example, the district could test revised bus routes during the pilot and coordinate game times with nearby schools. It could also publish the transportation changes early so families can respond. Therefore, the board should authorize a one-year 8:30 start pilot and review the results publicly. A transparent review would let the community weigh benefits against costs with evidence at the pilot's conclusion.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- ① What specific action does the writer ask the Riverton School Board to take?

- ② What two numerical findings from the Seattle study does the writer use, and how do they support the proposal?

- ③ How does the sentence beginning “Although one study” strengthen the writer’s reasoning?

- ④ What concern does the writer address in the final paragraph, and what response does the writer provide?

Write a 120-150-word proposal to a school decision maker about a different school policy. State a clear claim, give two reasons, support at least one reason with a specific observation, data point, or credible source, use a transition, and address one reasonable concern with a response.

Write 120-150 words. Include every element in the task and review how your evidence serves your audience.

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

Local people, proposals, records and observations are fictional classroom examples; named research and health guidance are real. Underline the writer's claim and reasons, circle each piece of source-based evidence, and number the transitions that move the argument forward. These choices show how the writer builds a clear, credible proposal. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What specific action does the writer ask the Riverton School Board to take?	Authorize a one-year pilot in which Riverton High starts at 8:30 a.m.
2	What two numerical findings from the Seattle study does the writer use, and how do they support the proposal?	Median school-night sleep was 34 minutes longer and median biology grades were 4.5 percentage points higher afterward. These associations support testing a later start locally, without guaranteeing individual gains or proving causation.
3	How does the sentence beginning "Although one study" strengthen the writer's reasoning?	It acknowledges that one study is limited, then argues for a careful local pilot that would gather Riverton-specific evidence.
4	What concern does the writer address in the final paragraph, and what response does the writer provide?	The writer addresses concerns about buses, athletics, and after-school jobs. The response is to test bus routes, coordinate game times, publish changes early, and review the pilot publicly.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

To the Riverton principal: pilot numbered phone caddies during lessons, with access outside class and appropriate exceptions. First, putting phones away could reduce interruptions. Common Sense Media's 2023 study of American Android users ages 11-17 found a median of 237 daily notifications in the tracked sample. That is not a measure of every teenager or our school, but it gives us a reason to investigate distractions. Second, a shared routine would make classroom expectations more consistent. Some families may worry about urgent communication, and some students need medical access. Therefore, establish and test an office contact procedure and individual access exceptions before the pilot begins. Compare interruption records and student and family feedback after one month. This trial would help the school judge whether the benefits justify the routine.

Accept equivalent statements of the claim, evidence, limitation, and rebuttal when they accurately reflect the passage. For the open response, accept varied policy topics if the response is 120-150 words and includes a claim, two reasons, support, a transition, and a counterclaim response. Smartphone source: Common Sense Media, Constant Companion (2023), <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/research/constant-companion-a-week-in-the-life-of-a-young-persons-smartphone-use> . The voluntary sample used Android phones; its median is not a national estimate. Local people, proposals, records and observations are fictional classroom examples; named research and health guidance are real. Seattle compared separate cohorts, not individual gains, and did not establish sole causation. The paper's Results explicitly labels the grade values as medians: 77.5% before, 82% afterward, a difference of 4.5 percentage points. Sources: AAP (2014), <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25156998/> ; Dunster et al. (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aau6200> .