

The Bell Debate

Analyze how a model argument builds a clear, evidence-based case.

10.W “The student will write in a variety of forms for diverse audiences and purposes linked to grade ten content and texts with an emphasis on argumentative writing...”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the thesis, circle each reference to an authoritative source, and bracket the counterclaim with its refutation. These marks will help you trace how the writer builds and defends an argument.

A Later First Bell

- ① At 7:20 a.m., many high school students are on buses or in first period, even though their bodies may still be primed for sleep. Our district should move high school start times to 8:30 a.m. or later to improve learning, protect student health, and make the school day safer. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later, citing adolescents’ biological sleep rhythms. A later bell would not solve every problem students face, but it would align the schedule more closely with what sleep research shows.
- ② First, extra morning sleep can strengthen students’ ability to learn. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that insufficient sleep among high school students is associated with poorer academic performance and mental health. Students who arrive more alert can follow a lab procedure, contribute to a discussion, or revise an essay with greater focus. Later starts may also improve safety. The CDC notes that drowsy driving is a serious risk for teen drivers, and sleep loss can slow reaction time. Therefore, a schedule that gives teenagers more opportunity to sleep supports both classroom learning and the commute before class.

- ③ Some families worry that a later start would disrupt bus routes, athletics, jobs, and younger students' schedules. Those concerns deserve planning, not dismissal. However, inconvenience alone is weaker than evidence about students' well-being. The American Academy of Pediatrics acknowledges that districts may face transportation and activity challenges, yet it still recommends later starts because adolescents need adequate sleep. Our district could survey families, coordinate practice times, and phase in changes before adopting a final schedule. In conclusion, moving the high school start time to 8:30 a.m. or later is a practical health and learning policy, provided leaders plan carefully with the community.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

- 1 Copy the thesis statement. What three outcomes does the writer preview in that statement?

- 2 How does paragraph 2 use CDC information and concrete examples to reason from evidence to the claim? Answer in two sentences.

- 3 State the counterclaim in paragraph 3 and explain how the writer refutes it. Answer in two sentences.

- 4 What organizational job do the transitions "Therefore" and "In conclusion" perform in the argument?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-paragraph, 130-170-word recommendation to the district school board about seeking funding to replace diesel buses with electric buses. Introduce a thesis and preview reasons; use at least two cited facts, refute a counterclaim, and conclude. Source notes: EPA says diesel exhaust can harm health. DOE says all-electric buses have no tailpipe emissions, though producing electricity can create emissions. EPA has awarded clean-school-bus grants and rebates; check current program rules before applying. Use these notes and name each source you use.

1. Plan the argument

Plan the thesis, two cited supports, an objection/response and three paragraph roles.

2. Write three paragraphs

Use three paragraphs with blank lines. Revise and edit directly here.

This image shows a blank 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

Underline the thesis, circle each reference to an authoritative source, and bracket the counterclaim with its refutation. These marks will help you trace how the writer builds and defends an argument. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Copy the thesis statement. What three outcomes does the writer preview in that statement?	Thesis: "Our district should move high school start times to 8:30 a.m. or later to improve learning, protect student health, and make the school day safer." The three outcomes are improved learning, protected student health and a safer school day.
2	How does paragraph 2 use CDC information and concrete examples to reason from evidence to the claim? Answer in two sentences.	The CDC links insufficient sleep with poorer academic performance and mental health, supporting the claim that later starts can improve learning and health. The examples of labs, discussions, essays, and drowsy driving show where alertness and reaction time matter.
3	State the counterclaim in paragraph 3 and explain how the writer refutes it. Answer in two sentences.	The counterclaim is that later starts could disrupt bus routes, athletics, jobs, and younger students' schedules. The writer responds that these logistical issues require planning, while the American Academy of Pediatrics still recommends later starts and the district can use specific planning steps.
4	What organizational job do the transitions "Therefore" and "In conclusion" perform in the argument?	"Therefore" connects the evidence about sleep and drowsy driving to the claim that later starts support learning and safety. "In conclusion" restates the position and adds the condition that leaders must plan carefully with the community.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Plan: Thesis: explore funding for a small electric-bus pilot. Paragraphs: health reason; emissions evidence; cost objection and conditional next step. Sources: EPA diesel guidance, DOE emissions guidance, EPA bus program.

Revised draft: Our district should explore funding for an electric-bus pilot to reduce diesel exhaust near students while testing costs before a larger purchase. The Environmental Protection Agency explains that diesel exhaust can harm health. Reducing that exhaust around bus stops is a practical reason to investigate a change.

The Department of Energy states that all-electric vehicles have no tailpipe emissions. Electricity production can still create emissions, so this does not mean the buses are pollution-free. However, removing exhaust from the buses themselves would address pollution where riders wait and board.

Some residents may object to purchase and charging costs. EPA has awarded clean-school-bus grants and rebates, but leaders must check current rules and availability. A small pilot should proceed only after funding, charging and route needs are assessed. Therefore, the board should request an eligibility and cost report before committing to replacement buses.

Review note: The cost response now requires checking funding and charging before purchase. I checked that both agency names and the distinction between tailpipe and electricity-production emissions are accurate.

Local school situations and sample observations are invented classroom examples. Label imagined observations; do not present them as collected research. Require three visible paragraphs, a thesis with previewed reasons, at least two accurate cited facts, a counterclaim with a reasoned response and a conclusion. Accept supported positions for or against seeking funding. Grant availability is not guaranteed; model requests an eligibility/cost review before commitment. Reading background: <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/134/3/642/74175/School-Start-Times-for-Adolescents> ; <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6703a1.htm> ; <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6513a1.htm> . Source notes: <https://www.epa.gov/dera/learn-about-impacts-diesel-exhaust-and-diesel-emissions-reduction-act> ; <https://afdc.energy.gov/vehicles/electric-emissions> ; <https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus> .