The Later Bell

Read how a writer weighs evidence on both sides of a school decision.

9-10.W.1.b "Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying valid and sufficient evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the main claim and the counterclaim. Circle evidence for each side, then number one limitation of each side so you can see how the writer treats both fairly.

Should School Start Later?

(1) Imagine Cedar Ridge High is deciding whether to move its first bell from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. The school should make the change because a later start would give more teenagers a chance to sleep enough. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says teenagers ages 13 to 18 need eight to ten hours of sleep each day. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. These recommendations do not prove every student will sleep longer. Still, they show that the proposed bell time fits expert guidance rather than an arbitrary preference.

(2) Families may reasonably object that a later first bell could disrupt transportation and activities. In this imagined district, the same buses take high school students to school first and then pick up elementary students. Moving only the high school bell could leave buses unavailable when younger students need them. Classes currently end at 3:00 p.m., and the activity bus leaves at 5:00 p.m. A later dismissal could shrink the time available for practice. These concrete scheduling conflicts make the objection stronger than a general dislike of change, although they do not establish that a new schedule is impossible.

(3) Before voting, the school board should ask transportation staff whether buses could run in a different order and ask coaches whether practice times could shift. If those changes require more drivers or later rides home, families deserve to know the costs. A trial schedule could measure bus arrival times and ask students when they actually go to sleep; bell time alone cannot guarantee more rest. Supporters have strong health guidance, while opponents have a real scheduling concern. The best case for the change admits both limits and explains what evidence would help families judge its effects on safety and schedules.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the writer's claim, and how does one expert recommendation support it?

2. What can the expert recommendations support, and what can they not prove?

3. State the families' counterclaim. Which two details make it a serious concern?

4. How does the writer address families' concerns without dismissing the counterclaim? Name one proposed check and one question it would help answer.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

At another school, the library closes at 3:00 p.m., 30 students signed a request for a 4:00 closing, one staff member would need to supervise, and the last school bus leaves at 3:20 p.m. Write five or six sentences arguing for or against the later closing, using these facts to support a claim and counterclaim, explaining one strength and one limitation of each side, and addressing a school board member's concern.

ANSWER KEY

The Later Bell

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the main claim and the counterclaim. Circle evidence for each side, then number one limitation of each side so you can see how the writer treats both fairly. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the writer's claim, and how does one expert recommendation support it?	**The writer argues for an 8:30 a.m. first bell. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m.**
2	What can the expert recommendations support, and what can they not prove?	**They support choosing a bell time that fits expert guidance. They cannot prove that every student will sleep longer.**
3	State the families' counterclaim. Which two details make it a serious concern?	**A later bell could disrupt transportation and activities. The same buses serve high school and elementary students, and a later dismissal could reduce practice time before the 5:00 p.m. activity bus.**
4	How does the writer address families' concerns without dismissing the counterclaim? Name one proposed check and one question it would help answer.	**The writer proposes asking transportation staff whether buses could run in a different order. This would help determine whether the district can change the bell time without disrupting elementary pickups.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The library should stay open until 4:00 p.m. because 30 students have signed a request for more study time. Those signatures show interest, but they cannot prove that 30 students would use the extra hour. Opponents could reasonably argue that the school would need a staff member to supervise and that the last bus leaves at 3:20. Those facts make staffing and transportation serious concerns, although students who can walk or arrange rides could still benefit. Before approving the change, the board should estimate staffing costs and ask signers how they would get home. A short trial could test demand without assuming the request guarantees success.

Accept either position in Part 3 if the response uses the given facts fairly, identifies a strength and limitation for each side, and addresses a school board concern. For the passage questions, accept equivalent wording grounded in the text.