

The Bell Debate

Read a model argument and trace the writer's craft choices.

8.11.C "compose multi-paragraph argumentative texts using genre characteristics and craft; and"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the writer's main claim and each supporting reason. Circle the counterclaim and its response, then number three facts or examples that strengthen the argument.

A Later Bell for Middle School

- ① To the School Board: Our middle school should begin at 8:30 rather than 7:40. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that teens ages 13 to 18 sleep eight to ten hours each night, yet an early bell makes that goal difficult. A later start would not solve every tired morning, but it would give students a fairer chance to arrive alert, learn safely, and participate fully. The board should test the new schedule for one year.
- ② First, sleep affects the work students do in class. When students are exhausted, they may struggle to focus during a lab, follow a discussion, or remember directions. Extra morning sleep can help students come prepared to think, not simply stay awake. A later bell could also improve safety. Many students walk, bike, or ride with family members before sunrise in winter. Starting fifty minutes later would place more of that travel in daylight, when drivers and students can see more clearly.
- ③ Some families may worry that a later dismissal would interfere with sports, jobs, or child care. Those concerns deserve planning, not dismissal. The school could adjust practice times, coordinate bus routes, and ask local programs to shift their schedules during the trial. In return, students would gain a stronger opportunity to meet a basic health need. Our school asks students to do demanding work every day. It should set a schedule that supports that work. Board members should approve a one-year, 8:30 start-time trial and review its results.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the writer's main claim and each supporting reason. Circle the counterclaim and its response, then number three facts or examples that strengthen the argument. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the writer's main claim, and what action does the writer ask the board to take?	The writer claims that middle school should begin at 8:30 instead of 7:40 and asks the board to test the schedule for one year.
2	Identify two reasons the writer gives for a later start time. Include one supporting detail for each reason.	One reason is that students need more sleep to focus, follow discussions, and remember directions. Another reason is safety because students who walk, bike, or ride before sunrise in winter would travel more in daylight.
3	What concern does the writer acknowledge in paragraph 3? How does the writer respond to that concern?	The writer acknowledges that a later dismissal could interfere with sports, jobs, or child care. The response is to adjust practice times, coordinate bus routes, and ask local programs to shift schedules during the trial.
4	How do the final two sentences strengthen the argument?	They connect the schedule to students' demanding work and end with a specific call for a one-year 8:30 trial that can be reviewed.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should install more water refill stations near classrooms. First, students often have only a few minutes between classes, so stations in each hallway would make refilling bottles quicker. Ready access to water can also help students avoid buying sugary drinks when they are thirsty. Some people may argue that new stations cost too much. However, the school can add them gradually, beginning with the busiest hallways, and use durable stations that reduce waste from disposable bottles. The principal should ask the facilities team to price a first phase and present the plan to students and families.

Accept equivalent claims and accurately explained reasons, evidence, counterclaims, responses, and conclusions from the passage. For the writing task, look for one focused paragraph with all required argumentative parts and a specific final action.