

# Answer the Pushback

Read a model speech that anticipates concerns and responds with reasons and plans.

**11.C.2.A.v** "Report orally on a topic or text or present an opinion. This includes: Anticipating and addressing alternative or opposing perspectives and counterclaims using counter arguments and rebuttals, as appropriate."

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 READ AND MARK \_\_\_\_\_ Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline the speaker's main claim and each rebuttal. Circle each opposing perspective, then number the actions or reasons the speaker uses to answer it.

### A Later First Bell

- ① Members of the school board, I support moving our high school's first bell from 7:25 to 8:15 a.m. Teenagers' body clocks naturally shift later during adolescence, so an earlier schedule can make it harder for them to get the sleep they need. The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later. A later bell would not solve every sleep problem, but it would give students a schedule that better matches their biology. Better-rested students are more likely to arrive alert and ready to learn.
- ② Some families may object that a later start would disrupt bus routes, child care, or after-school jobs. Coaches may also worry that practices and games would end later, especially when daylight is limited. These concerns deserve planning, not dismissal. Our district could coordinate bus schedules with nearby schools, survey families before selecting a time, and reserve study hall or supervised spaces for students who must wait after classes. Athletic departments could receive scheduling flexibility, such as using lighted fields or arranging some events on weekends. These steps would reduce disruptions while protecting the goal of more sleep.
- ③ Others argue that students would simply stay up later, making a schedule change pointless. That response overlooks a key difference between opportunity and choice. A later bell does not force anyone to sleep, but it removes one barrier to adequate rest for students who are trying to do so. We should pair the change with clear information about sleep habits and review attendance, tardiness, and student feedback after one year. If results do not justify the adjustment, the board can revise the plan. Because the benefit is plausible and the concerns can be managed, I urge the board to adopt a later start time.

**2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE** \_\_\_\_\_ Use the passage

**1** What change does the speaker want the board to make? Give two reasons the speaker uses to support that change.

**2** How does the speaker answer the concern that a later start could disrupt bus routes? What does this response show about the concern?

**3** What opposing claim do some people make about students staying up later, and how does the speaker rebut it?

**4** What safeguard does the speaker propose after one year, and how does it answer skepticism about changing the schedule?

**3 YOUR TURN** \_\_\_\_\_ Your own words

Write a 120 to 150 word script for a one-minute speech to your school principal. Take a position on whether the school should create a phone-free lunch area, and include a clear claim, one opposing view, a fair counterargument, a rebuttal, and a closing request.

**PART 1 • READ AND MARK**

Underline the speaker's main claim and each rebuttal. Circle each opposing perspective, then number the actions or reasons the speaker uses to answer it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

**PART 2 • ANSWERS**

| # | QUESTION                                                                                                                             | ANSWER                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | What change does the speaker want the board to make? Give two reasons the speaker uses to support that change.                       | <b>Move the first bell from 7:25 to 8:15 a.m. Reasons include that adolescent body clocks shift later, an earlier schedule can limit needed sleep, and better-rested students are more likely to be alert.</b>  |
| 2 | How does the speaker answer the concern that a later start could disrupt bus routes? What does this response show about the concern? | <b>The speaker proposes coordinating bus schedules with nearby schools. This shows that the logistical concern can be addressed through planning rather than ignored.</b>                                       |
| 3 | What opposing claim do some people make about students staying up later, and how does the speaker rebut it?                          | <b>They claim students would simply stay up later, so the change would be pointless. The speaker says a later bell does not force sleep, but it removes a barrier for students trying to get adequate rest.</b> |
| 4 | What safeguard does the speaker propose after one year, and how does it answer skepticism about changing the schedule?               | <b>The speaker proposes reviewing attendance, tardiness, and student feedback, then revising the plan if results do not justify it. This makes the change testable and adjustable.</b>                          |

**PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)**

Principal Lee, our school should create a phone-free lunch area in the cafeteria. Students who choose this area could talk, play cards, or eat without the pressure to check messages. Some students may argue that phones help them coordinate rides, clubs, and family plans. That concern is reasonable, so the area should be voluntary, and students should be able to step out briefly to check important messages. However, a voluntary space would not take phones away from everyone. It would give students another choice, especially those who want easier face-to-face conversation. The school could pilot the area for one month and ask students whether it feels useful and welcoming. Please designate several tables as a phone-free lunch area next semester for students.

Accept answers that accurately identify the speaker's claim, opposing perspectives, and responses from the passage. For the speech, accept varied positions if the response is 120 to 150 words and includes a genuine counterargument followed by a logical rebuttal.