Start Time Evidence

Judge claims with relevant, reliable evidence.

11.RI.1.C "Evaluate the relevance and quality of an author's premises, claims, counterclaims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the central claim, circle each piece of evidence, and number the counterclaim and the author's response 1 and 2 so you can judge which information is relevant and how strong it is.

Should Riverbend Start Later?

(1) Riverbend School Board is considering moving high school start times from 7:25 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. Supporters argue that the change would improve learning because teenagers need more sleep than their current schedules allow. A 2022 district survey of 1,184 students found that 61 percent slept fewer than eight hours on school nights. The proposal also cites the American Academy of Pediatrics, which recommends that middle and high schools begin at 8:30 a.m. or later to support adolescent sleep. The survey did not ask why students slept less.

(2) Supporters point to a 2018 study by researchers at the University of Washington. After Seattle shifted high school start times later, students reported about 34 more minutes of sleep per night, and median grades rose by 4.5 percent. The study strengthens the proposal because it examines a similar change in a real district. Still, Riverbend serves more rural students than Seattle, and the study cannot prove that the new schedule alone caused higher grades. Bus routes, homework loads, and family work schedules could also affect sleep and achievement.

(3) Opponents say a later opening would create costly transportation problems and reduce time for after-school jobs or sports. The transportation director estimates that changing bus routes would require 14 additional drivers, costing about $420,000 each year. This evidence is relevant to the budget question, but the estimate does not compare that cost with possible savings from fewer student absences or reduced demand for substitute teachers. A stronger decision would compare Riverbend's transportation plan with schedules in nearby districts and collect local data on sleep, attendance, activities, and family needs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What premise connects the proposed later start time to improved learning, and how does the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation support that premise?

2. How relevant is the Seattle study to Riverbend's proposal? Give one strength and one limitation of using it as evidence.

3. How well does the Riverbend student survey support the claim that a later start time would improve learning? Explain what the survey shows and what it does not show.

4. Evaluate the transportation director's cost estimate as evidence for the opponents' counterclaim. What makes it relevant, and what important information is missing?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write 3 or 4 sentences stating whether Riverbend should test a later start time. Use two pieces of evidence from the passage and one reliable outside source or local fact, then explain how that outside information corroborates or challenges the argument.

ANSWER KEY

Start Time Evidence

GRADE 11 · 11.RI.1.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the central claim, circle each piece of evidence, and number the counterclaim and the author's response 1 and 2 so you can judge which information is relevant and how strong it is. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What premise connects the proposed later start time to improved learning, and how does the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation support that premise?	**The premise is that teenagers need more sleep and that later starts can help them get it. The recommendation supports this premise because it advises middle and high schools to begin at 8:30 a.m. or later for adolescent sleep.**
2	How relevant is the Seattle study to Riverbend's proposal? Give one strength and one limitation of using it as evidence.	**It is relevant because it studied a real high school start-time change and measured sleep and grades. Its limitation is that Seattle differs from more rural Riverbend, and the study cannot prove the schedule change alone caused higher grades.**
3	How well does the Riverbend student survey support the claim that a later start time would improve learning? Explain what the survey shows and what it does not show.	**The survey supports the concern that many students get too little sleep because 61 percent reported fewer than eight hours. It does not show why they sleep less or prove that the current start time causes the problem or that later starts would improve learning.**
4	Evaluate the transportation director's cost estimate as evidence for the opponents' counterclaim. What makes it relevant, and what important information is missing?	**The estimate is relevant because bus costs matter when judging whether a later start is practical. It is incomplete because it does not compare the added cost with possible savings from fewer absences or less need for substitute teachers.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Riverbend should pilot the later start time for one year. The Seattle study is useful because it examined an actual schedule change, although its different setting limits how well it predicts Riverbend's results. Riverbend's survey shows that many students report short sleep, but it does not show that the 7:25 start time is the cause. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that middle and high schools should start at 8:30 a.m. or later to help students get enough sleep, so that recommendation corroborates the sleep premise; the district should also measure local attendance and bus costs during the pilot.

Accept reasonable evaluations that distinguish relevant evidence from evidence that proves causation. For Part 3, accept either position if the student uses two accurate passage details, a credible outside source or local fact, and a clear explanation of corroboration or challenge.