

The Bell Debate

Analyze how a model argument builds a credible policy recommendation.

11.W.1 “Modes and Purposes for Writing Write extended pieces that: Introduce a topic clearly by providing context, presenting well-defined theses, and previewing what follows...”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence that states the writer’s position. Circle each detail that names a source or gives a specific research finding, then draw a line from each circled detail to the claim it supports.

A Case for Later Starts

- ① Many high school students begin class before their bodies are ready for alert learning. The American Academy of Pediatrics explains that puberty shifts many adolescents’ natural sleep cycles later, while early bells still require early waking. High schools should begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. because later schedules give teenagers more opportunity to sleep and can strengthen academic performance. The evidence below compares health guidance with results from a schedule change, then considers a practical objection about transportation and activities in local school planning decisions.
- ② Medical guidance supplies one reason to change the clock. In its 2014 policy statement, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later to help students obtain enough sleep. Evidence from an actual change adds support. In 2016, two Seattle public high schools delayed their starts by 55 minutes. Researchers reporting in Science Advances found that students slept 34 minutes longer on average, and their median grades rose 4.5 percent. These findings do not prove that sleep alone caused every grade increase, but they make the proposal more credible.
- ③ Critics reasonably note that a later bell may complicate bus routes, after-school jobs, and sports practices. That concern matters, yet it does not require schools to keep a schedule that conflicts with adolescent sleep needs. A district could phase in a later start, coordinate bus routes with nearby schools, and move some practices to mornings or weekends. School leaders should also collect local sleep and grade data before and after the change. Because the health recommendation, research results, and workable planning steps point in the same direction, districts should pursue later high school start times.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the writer’s central position, and what two kinds of support does the opening paragraph preview?

2 What specific finding from the Seattle study supports the claim that later starts can strengthen academic performance?

3 Why does the writer state that the Seattle findings do not prove sleep alone caused every grade increase?

4 How does the writer respond to the concern about transportation, jobs, and sports?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 180 to 220 word recommendation to a school board about later high school start times. State a clear position, use the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Seattle study as evidence, address one counterclaim with a practical solution, and end with a conclusion.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence that states the writer's position. Circle each detail that names a source or gives a specific research finding, then draw a line from each circled detail to the claim it supports. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the writer's central position, and what two kinds of support does the opening paragraph preview?	High schools should start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. The writer previews health guidance and results from a school schedule change.
2	What specific finding from the Seattle study supports the claim that later starts can strengthen academic performance?	After the 55-minute delay, students' median grades rose 4.5 percent.
3	Why does the writer state that the Seattle findings do not prove sleep alone caused every grade increase?	The writer acknowledges that the study shows a relationship but cannot prove that sleep was the only cause of higher grades.
4	How does the writer respond to the concern about transportation, jobs, and sports?	The writer accepts that the concern matters and proposes phased implementation, coordinated bus routes, adjusted practice times, and local data collection.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

To the School Board: Our district should move high school's opening bell to 8:30 a.m. or later next year. This change would better match adolescent sleep patterns while supporting learning, and the district can manage transportation through deliberate planning. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommended in 2014 that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later so students can get sufficient sleep. Its guidance matters because pediatric specialists study adolescent health. Research also points to academic benefits. After two Seattle public high schools delayed start times by 55 minutes in 2016, a Science Advances study reported that students slept 34 additional minutes on average and that median grades rose 4.5 percent. Although that study cannot show that sleep caused every grade increase, its measured results support a carefully evaluated local change. Some families may worry about bus schedules, jobs, and sports. The district could coordinate routes with nearby schools, phase in the new schedule, and review local sleep and grade data before and after implementation. A later start is a practical policy that responds to credible health guidance, relevant research, and community concerns.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the thesis, evidence, evidence limitation, and response to the counterclaim. In the open response, accept different positions if the student uses accurate evidence from both named sources, addresses a counterclaim, proposes a workable solution, and meets the word count.