

The Case, Sequenced

Trace how a model letter builds a unified argument.

12.W.2.A.ii "Plan and organize writing to address a specific audience and purpose using the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing). This includes: Organizing claims, counterclaims..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the main claim, circle the counterclaim, and number 1, 2, and 3 the key support or response moves in the order they build the argument.

A Later Bell Time

- ① To the Cedar Valley School Board: Our high school should begin at 8:30 a.m. next year. This change would give teenagers a schedule closer to their biological sleep patterns and would support learning. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later. Because the board sets district schedules, it can weigh this health guidance alongside transportation and budget needs before approving a revised bell time for students.
- ② Later starts are linked to more sleep because adolescents' internal clocks commonly shift later during puberty. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that insufficient sleep among high school students is associated with risks such as poor mental health, injuries, and lower academic performance. A later bell would not solve every sleep problem, but it would remove one school-created barrier. Therefore, the board has a practical reason to test a schedule that better matches students' developmental needs.
- ③ Some families may worry that a later dismissal would interfere with jobs, sports, or child-care routines. That concern deserves a direct response, not dismissal. The district could consult bus providers and activity leaders, then publish revised practice times before the change begins. It could also review attendance, grades, and transportation costs after one semester. By addressing the strongest objection with a workable plan and a clear review point, the board can make a responsible decision.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Who is the audience, and what action does the writer request?

2 What health guidance supports the writer's claim?

3 What counterclaim does the writer address, and what response is offered?

4 How does paragraph 3 strengthen the letter's unity?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Draft a three-paragraph letter to a school decision-maker about one school policy you want changed. State a clear claim, develop two supporting reasons or pieces of evidence, address one counterclaim with a response, and end with a logical next step.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the main claim, circle the counterclaim, and number 1, 2, and 3 the key support or response moves in the order they build the argument. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Who is the audience, and what action does the writer request?	The Cedar Valley School Board, and the writer asks it to move the high school start time to 8:30 a.m.
2	What health guidance supports the writer's claim?	The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later.
3	What counterclaim does the writer address, and what response is offered?	Families may worry about jobs, sports, or child care. The writer proposes consulting providers and leaders, publishing new times, and reviewing results after a semester.
4	How does paragraph 3 strengthen the letter's unity?	It answers the main objection and returns to the claim that the board can make a responsible decision.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

To the principal: Our school should install a covered bike rack near the east entrance. A protected place to lock bicycles would keep seats and backpacks drier during rain. The rack would also give student riders one clear parking area, reducing bicycles left near doorways. A designated rack could make arrival safer for people walking into the building. Some may argue that construction costs too much. The school could begin with a small rack and compare its cost with student use after a semester. This pilot would test the idea before the school commits to a larger project.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the claim, evidence, counterclaim, and response when they point to the correct passage details. For the draft, look for a sustained sequence in which support develops the claim and the counterclaim is answered rather than ignored.