Start Time Debate

Compare conflicting claims, reasons, and evidence.

8.RI.3.B "Compare and contrast how two or more authors present conflicting information on the same topic by assessing where the texts disagree in reasoning and evidence."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each columnist's conclusion, circle the evidence each columnist uses, and write R beside each reason that connects evidence to a conclusion.

Should School Start Later?

(1) Many middle and high schools begin before 8:30 a.m., even though teens often need more sleep than their schedules allow. In the town of Riverton, the school board is considering a 45-minute later start for middle school. Two newspaper columnists examined the proposal. Both agree that students need rest and that schedule changes would affect families. However, they reach different conclusions about whether the district should move the start time. Their columns use different kinds of evidence and make different assumptions about what would help students most.

(2) Columnist Maya Ortiz supports the later start. She points to attendance records from a nearby district that delayed its middle-school opening by 40 minutes. According to the records, tardiness fell during the first semester after the change. Ortiz also cites sleep researchers who connect regular sleep with attention and memory. She reasons that students who arrive more awake can learn more during class. Ortiz admits that bus routes may need revision, but she argues that the district should solve that problem because improved learning is the more important result.

(3) Columnist Daniel Cho opposes the later start. He uses a survey of Riverton parents in which 62 percent of respondents said a later opening would make morning child care harder. Cho also notes that the district's transportation office estimated that changing bus routes could cost $180,000 in the first year. He reasons that families facing costs or child-care problems may feel more stress, which could hurt students. Unlike Ortiz, Cho does not question whether more sleep can aid learning. Instead, he argues that the district should keep its current schedule because the proposal creates practical burdens.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do Ortiz's and Cho's final positions on the later start conflict?

2. What evidence does each columnist use? Compare the types of evidence they present.

3. How does each columnist reason from evidence to a conclusion? Explain one difference in their reasoning.

4. Which columnist offers evidence more directly related to whether students will learn more in class? Explain.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 55 to 75-word comparison paragraph for the school board. Use one piece of evidence from each columnist, explain how their reasoning differs, and assess which evidence better supports one part of the debate.

ANSWER KEY

Start Time Debate

GRADE 8 · 8.RI.3.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each columnist's conclusion, circle the evidence each columnist uses, and write R beside each reason that connects evidence to a conclusion. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do Ortiz's and Cho's final positions on the later start conflict?	**Ortiz supports moving the start time later, while Cho argues that the district should keep the current schedule.**
2	What evidence does each columnist use? Compare the types of evidence they present.	**Ortiz uses attendance records and sleep research. Cho uses a parent survey and a transportation cost estimate.**
3	How does each columnist reason from evidence to a conclusion? Explain one difference in their reasoning.	**Ortiz reasons that more sleep and less tardiness can improve learning, so schedule problems should be solved. Cho reasons that child-care problems and costs may create stress, so the schedule should not change.**
4	Which columnist offers evidence more directly related to whether students will learn more in class? Explain.	**Ortiz. Her sleep research connects rest with attention and memory, and she links being awake to learning in class.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Ortiz and Cho disagree about what the school board should prioritize. Ortiz uses attendance records and sleep research to argue that a later start could improve learning. Cho uses parent survey results and a cost estimate to show that the plan could create family problems. Ortiz's evidence is stronger for predicting classroom learning, while Cho's evidence is stronger for predicting logistical challenges.

Accept clear comparisons that accurately distinguish Ortiz's learning-focused reasoning from Cho's practical-burden reasoning. For the open response, accept either evidence assessment when the student explains how the cited evidence supports that assessment.