

Analyzing an Argument, Evidence, and Revision

Grade: 8 **Subject:** Reading / Language Arts **Time:** ~45 min core + ~15 min extension **Work mode:** Independent · pencil only RLA

Start Here

This is a **reading and writing task**. You will read a short persuasive passage, then answer questions and write a short response using a pencil. You do **not** need a computer or any device. Work by yourself and do your best thinking. Every question about the passage can be answered **from the passage itself** — the answers are on the page. Write in complete sentences where you are asked to explain. If a question is hard, skip it, keep going, and come back. Reading the passage aloud quietly to yourself is allowed and encouraged.

Start Notice & Predict 5 min

Look only at the title and the first sentence of the passage before you read the rest.

1The passage is titled "**Later Bells: Why Our School Day Should Start at 9:00.**" From the title alone, **predict the author's position** — what does the writer want to happen, and what side of the issue are they on?

2**Retrieval (read to find it).** Skim paragraph [1] once. According to the author, what **time** does the school day currently begin?

Build Read the Argument 10 min

Words to know (for analyzing an argument)

claim

the main point or position the writer is trying to prove.

evidence

facts, data, examples, or expert statements used to back up a claim.

reasoning

the thinking that explains how the evidence supports the claim.

counterargument

a point on the other side that an opponent might make.

relevance

how directly a piece of evidence connects to the claim; whether it truly matters here.

"Later Bells: Why Our School Day Should Start at 9:00" — an original argument

[1] Our school day begins at 7:45 in the morning, which means most students set an alarm before the sun is even up. I believe Franklin Middle School should move its start time to 9:00. A later start would leave students healthier, more alert, and better prepared to learn. This is not about laziness; it is about matching the schedule to how eighth-grade bodies actually work.

[2] The strongest reason is biological. According to a 2014 report from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the natural sleep rhythms of teenagers shift later during adolescence, so most teens cannot fall asleep before about

11:00 p.m. The report recommends that middle and high schools start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. so students can get the 8 to 10 hours of sleep their growing brains need. When the science of teenage sleep points one direction, our bell schedule should not point the other.

[3] There is also evidence that later start times help students do better in school. In a study of several districts that pushed their start times later, researchers found that attendance improved and the number of students who were late to first period dropped. Students who sleep enough are simply more able to focus, remember, and participate. A rested student is a ready student.

[4] Some people say a later start is impossible because of the bus schedule. But buses are a solvable problem, not a reason to keep tired students in early classes. Districts across the country have redesigned bus routes to fit later bells, and if they can do it, so can we.

[5] Besides, mornings are just unpleasant. Nobody I know enjoys waking up early, and my cousin, who is in college, says her classes never start before ten. The cafeteria also serves a better breakfast on the days it offers pancakes, which proves mornings could be improved in many ways.

[6] Moving the first bell to 9:00 is a change that fits the science, supports learning, and treats students like the growing young people they are. The alarm clock should work with our brains, not against them. It is time for later bells.

3In paragraph [2], what does the author say happens to teenagers' sleep rhythms during adolescence? Answer using details from the passage.

Apply Analyze the Argument 20 min

Every answer in this section is in the passage. Point to the paragraph in your head before you write.

4**Identify the claim.** In one sentence, state the author's main **claim** — the position the whole passage is trying to prove. (paragraph [1])

5**Evaluate evidence quality.** Paragraph [2] and paragraph [5] each try to support the claim. One uses **strong** evidence and one uses **weak** evidence. Decide which is which, and explain **why** — think about whether the support is factual, relevant, and reliable.

Paragraph [2] — strong or weak? Why?

Paragraph [5] — strong or weak? Why?

6**Spot the irrelevant support.** Paragraph [5] contains a sentence that does **not** actually help prove the claim about start times. Copy that sentence (or describe it) and explain why it is **irrelevant** to the argument.

7**Revision task — strengthen a weak point.** Paragraph [5] tries to support the claim with weak reasons ("mornings are just unpleasant," a cousin's college schedule). Rewrite that support so it is **stronger**: replace one weak reason with a piece of **real evidence from the passage** (from paragraph [2] or [3]) that genuinely supports the 9:00 start. Write your improved sentence.

8**Which evidence best supports the claim?** The claim is that the school day should start at 9:00. Which piece of evidence from the passage **best** supports that claim? Fill in the circle for ONE choice.

- "The cafeteria also serves a better breakfast on the days it offers pancakes."
- "My cousin, who is in college, says her classes never start before ten."
- "The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start no earlier than 8:30 a.m."
- "Nobody I know enjoys waking up early."

8b. In one sentence, explain why the evidence you chose is stronger than the others.

Explain State a Revised Claim & Judge Your Evidence 5–10 min

Question 9. Now build your own short argument response. Write a **revised, focused claim** about the school start time (you may agree with the author, disagree, or narrow the claim — for example, "Franklin Middle School should start at 8:30 because that fits the pediatricians' recommendation"). Support your claim with **two pieces of evidence from the passage**, and for each one **judge its quality** — explain why it is strong (or note that it is the strongest available).

Sentence stems you may use: "My revised claim is..." · "One strong piece of evidence is... (paragraph ____)." · "A second piece of evidence is... (paragraph ____)." · "This evidence is strong because it is factual / from an expert / directly relevant..."

Claim (revised & focused)

Evidence (two pieces, with paragraph #)

Reasoning (why each piece is strong / high quality)

Close ACE Wrap-Up 5 min

Articulate

Say the author's **claim** in your **own words**, in one sentence, as if telling a friend the point of the passage.

Connect

Point to **one piece of strong evidence** in the passage (name the paragraph) that best backs up that claim.

Extend

Name **one weak spot** in the argument and, in a sentence, tell what the author could add to make it stronger.

Continue Early Finisher optional · ~15 min

If you finish early (no new materials needed):

Write a counterargument. On the back of this page, write one paragraph from the **opposite** side — an argument that the school day should **not** move to 9:00. Include at least one reason someone might give (for example, after-school jobs, sports schedules, or working parents). Then write one sentence explaining how the author of "Later Bells" could **respond** to that counterargument.

Turn in: Hand in this whole packet with your name, class period, and date filled in. Make sure questions 1–9 and the ACE box are answered. The early-finisher counterargument is optional but turn it in too if you did it.

G08_RLA_Argument_01 — Analyzing an Argument, Evidence, and Revision Student Packet