

Substitute Guide: Analyzing an Argument, Evidence, and Revision

Grade: 8 **Subject:** Reading / Language Arts **Time:** ~45 min core + ~15 min extension RLA

Learning goal (plain language)

Students read a short original persuasive passage, "Later Bells," and figure out its **claim** (the author's position), tell apart **strong and weak evidence**, spot a statement that does not really support the argument, and **revise** a weak point using real evidence from the passage. They finish by writing a short response that states a revised claim and backs it with two pieces of evidence, judging how good that evidence is. **You do not need an English or reading background to run this.** Everything students need — including the whole passage — is printed in their packet, and every question can be answered directly from that passage.

Standards alignment

Framework: 19 TAC §110.24 (Grade 8 English Language Arts and Reading).

- **Argument analysis:** analyze the author's claim and how it is developed in an argumentative text.
- **Evaluating evidence:** evaluate whether the evidence used to support a claim is relevant, sufficient, and credible.
- **Revision:** revise a draft to strengthen support and improve clarity and focus.

Provisional — pending educator verification against the current official TAC source.

(Standards are paraphrased here, not quoted. Please confirm codes and wording against your official source.)

Setup Before class (5 min)

- Count and hand out one **student packet** per student.
- Confirm each student has a **pencil**. No devices or other materials are needed.
- Write the date on the board and remind students to fill in the name line.
- Keep the **answer key** with you — it is a separate file and is **not** in the student packet.

Materials What's needed

- Printed student packet (4–6 pages) per student.
- Pencil per student.
- This guide and the separate answer key (teacher only).
- No technology, no calculator, no special materials.

Timing Suggested pacing (~45–60 min)

Segment	Time	What students do
Start — Notice & Predict	5 min	Q1–Q2 (predict position + retrieval)

Segment	Time	What students do
Build — Read the argument	10 min	Read "Later Bells," word bank; Q3
Apply — Analyze the argument	20 min	Q4–Q8 (claim, evidence quality, irrelevant statement, revision, best-evidence choice)
Explain — Claim + evidence response	5–10 min	Q9 revised claim + two pieces of evidence, judged
Close — ACE	5 min	Articulate / Connect / Extend
Continue — early finishers	optional ~15 min	Write a counterargument

Script Read aloud to start

"Today's assignment is a reading and writing activity called *Analyzing an Argument, Evidence, and Revision*. You will work by yourself with just a pencil — no computers. First read the short persuasive passage called *Later Bells*, which argues the school day should start later. Your job is to find the writer's main point, decide which of their reasons are strong and which are weak, and then improve a weak part. Every question can be answered from the passage, so if you're unsure, go back and reread. Answer the questions in order; if one is tricky, skip it and come back. Write in complete sentences where it asks you to explain. You may quietly read the passage aloud to yourself. Put your name, class period, and date at the top now. You have about 45 minutes; raise your hand if you need a word read to you or explained."

Support When students ask for help

- **You may read any part aloud** — the passage or any question — to a student or the class.
- If they are stuck, point them to the **paragraph numbers** [1]–[6]; every answer is in the passage.
- Remind them a **claim** is the writer's main position, and **evidence** is the facts/examples used to back it up (definitions are in the packet word bank).
- For "strong vs. weak," prompt: "Is that a *fact* from a reliable source, or just someone's *opinion*? Does it actually connect to the school start time?"
- Encourage the printed **sentence stems** for Q9 and ACE.
- Do **not** give answers; prompt with "Which paragraph shows that?" or "Is that reason really about start times?"
- It is fine if a student cannot finish the optional early-finisher task.

Access Accommodations & language support

- **Read-aloud** of the passage or any question is allowed for all students.
- Point students to the **sentence stems** and the **word bank** (definitions provided).
- Extended time is fine; the core can stop after Q9 if time runs short.
- Students may answer in phrases if writing full sentences is a barrier, as long as the idea is clear.
- The packet is grayscale-safe — it prints and reads clearly in black and white.

Tools Allowed & not allowed

Allowed: pencil, the printed packet, quiet self-read-aloud. **Not needed / not allowed:** phones, computers, outside sources (everything is in the passage).

Collect at the end: Collect every packet, whether finished or not, with names on them. Stack them for the teacher. Note on a sticky how far most students got and any questions that caused confusion.

Answer key: The **answer key is a separate file** (answerkey.html) and is for the teacher only. Please do not hand it to students.

Teacher follow-up (for the returning teacher)

Watch for the common mix-ups of *evidence quantity* vs. *quality* (treating paragraph [5]'s many weak reasons as strong because there are more of them) and *opinion stated as evidence* ("mornings are just unpleasant"). A quick next-day mini-lesson sorting sample sentences into fact/data/expert vs. opinion/anecdote/off-topic would reinforce this well. The evidence-quality item (Q5) and the best-evidence choice (Q8) quickly show who can judge support; the revision task (Q7) and the Q9 response show who can state a focused claim and strengthen it with well-chosen evidence.

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