

Grade 7 Informational Mini-Assessment

High School Start Times Set

This grade 7 mini-assessment is based on two articles, “High Schools Starting Later to Help Sleepy Teens,” by Michelle Trudeau and “High schools will keep starting too early. Here’s why.” by Dan Weissmann, as well as an audio recording of the second text. These texts and the recording are considered to be worthy of students’ time to read and also meet the expectations for text complexity at grade 7. Assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will employ quality, complex texts and audio recordings such as these.

Questions aligned to the CCSS should be worthy of students’ time to answer and therefore do not focus on minor points of the texts. Individual questions also may address several standards because complex texts tend to yield rich assessment questions that call for deep analysis, thus aligning to multiple standards. In this mini-assessment there are twelve questions that address the Reading Standards listed below. Additionally, there is an optional writing prompt, which is aligned to Reading, Writing, and Language Standards.

We encourage educators to give students the time that they need to read closely and write to the source. While we know that it is helpful to have students complete the mini-assessment in one class period, we encourage educators to allow additional time as necessary.

*Note for teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs): This assessment is designed to measure students’ ability to read and write in English. Therefore, educators will not see the level of scaffolding typically used in instructional materials to support ELLs—these would interfere with the ability to understand their mastery of these skills. If ELL students are receiving instruction in grade-level ELA content, they should be given access to unaltered practice assessment items to gauge their progress. Passages and items should not be modified; however, **additional information about accommodations you may consider when administering this assessment to ELLs is available in the teacher section of this resource.***

RI.7.1	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RI.7.2	Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
RI.7.3	Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).
RI.7.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
RI.7.5	Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.
RI.7.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.
RI.7.7	Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words).
RI.7.8	Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.
RI.7.9	Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.

W.7.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
W.7.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
W.7.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
L.7.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
L.7.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
L.7.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading or listening.

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The assessment questions in this document align with the CCSS and reflect the instructional shifts implied by the standards. To learn more about these topics, please go to the following link:

www.achievethecore.org

Grade 7 Mini-Assessment

“High Schools Starting Later to Help Sleepy Teens”

by Michelle Trudeau and

“High schools will keep starting too early. Here’s why.”

by Dan Weissmann

Today you will read two articles, “High Schools Starting Later to Help Sleepy Teens” by Michelle Trudeau and “High schools will keep starting too early. Here’s why.” by Dan Weissmann and then listen to an audio recording of the second text. You will then answer several questions based on the articles. I will be happy to answer questions about the directions, but I will not help you with the answers to any questions. You will notice as you answer the questions that some of the questions have two parts. You should answer Part A of the question before you answer Part B, but you may return to Part A if you wish.

The questions on this mini-assessment are based on two articles, linked below. (*Teachers will need to provide these articles for students. It would be beneficial if teachers number the paragraphs of each text.*) I have printed copies of the two articles for you.

[Text 1: “High Schools Starting Later to Help Sleepy Teens” by Michelle Trudeau](#)

[Text 2: “High schools will keep starting too early. Here’s why.” by Dan Weissmann](#)

Finally, when the class is ready, we will listen to the audio recording of “High schools will keep starting too early. Here’s why.” together. To signal that you are ready to listen, please turn your mini-assessment face down on your desk.

The recording is available at: <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/education/learningcurve/high-school-will-keep-starting-too-early-heres-why>

We will listen to the recording twice, as some of the questions later in the mini-assessment will ask you to remember specific information from it.

Take as long as you need to read and answer the questions. If you do not finish when class ends, come see me to discuss when you may have additional time.

Now read the passages and answer the questions. I encourage you to write notes in the margin as you read the passages.

QUESTIONS:

1. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: What is the best definition of *anecdotal* as the word is used in paragraph 15 of Text 1, “High Schools Starting Later to Help Sleepy Teens?”

- A. Evidence based on personal experiences
- B. Evidence that comes from many years of research
- C. Evidence based on unlikely theories
- D. Evidence that is unrelated to the author’s claims

Part B: Which detail from Text 1 helps the reader determine the meaning of *anecdotal*?

- A. “...overwhelmingly endorsed...”
- B. “...Wolak adds...”
- C. “...teachers especially wanted...”
- D. “...supports Wolak’s observations...”

2. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: Based on information in Text 1, which sentence states the author’s primary claim?

- A. The main reason schools should adjust start times is to save money on transportation.
- B. Students in elementary school also benefit from changing school start times because they have more energy in the morning.
- C. An increasing body of research supports the idea that starting school later in the day has significant benefits for teenagers.
- D. Teenagers miss fewer classes when they begin school later in the day.

Part B: How does the author of Text 1 most effectively develop her primary claim? Choose two options.

- A. She includes stories from individual students who have experienced later start times.
- B. She cites experts who track the effects of school start times on teenagers.
- C. She explains the negative effects later start times have on transportation companies.
- D. She explains how different age groups of students would be impacted by changing school start times.
- E. She highlights the positive effects later start times have had in specific school districts.
- F. She includes quotations from teachers who have been advantaged by later start times.

3. How does the author structure her argument regarding the possibility of adjusting start times for high school students?

- A. She introduces common arguments against changing start times and explains how individual districts have addressed those challenges.
- B. She highlights research supporting the importance of changing start times and explains the ways schools have applied that research.
- C. She introduces scientists who study the issue of teenage sleep and then explains how these scientists conduct research related to the issues of school start times.
- D. She describes different school districts who have changed their start times and then explains their motivations for doing so.

4. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: Based on the information in Text 1, which sentence explains how the sleep habits of teenagers are impacted by school start times?

- A. Teenagers need more sleep than younger students, so when school starts too early, students of all ages suffer.
- B. It is natural for teenagers to stay awake late at night and sleep late in the morning rather than go to bed early and wake up early, so teens do not get enough sleep when school starts early.
- C. Teenagers often find themselves with too many activities, so they are forced to stay awake late into the evening and have trouble staying awake during early classes when school starts earlier.
- D. It is hard for teens to wake up in the morning, regardless of the time, so delaying school start times allows them to wake up more naturally.

Part B: Which sentence from Text 1 supports the correct answer to Part A?

- A. "To help sleepy teens, some school districts have tried delaying the opening of the high school day."
- B. "The result was that high schoolers could start school later but end their school day at about the same time, without disrupting the athletic schedule."
- C. "Wolak adds that teachers especially wanted the change because, 'They were concerned about student attendance and student readiness to learn that first period of the day.'"
- D. "Research on the sleep needs of adolescents and their ability to pay attention and learn in the early morning hours supports Wolak's observations."

5. In Text 1, the author describes some concerns related to changing high school start times. Complete the table below by writing one “Real-Life Solution” the author uses to contradict each concern changing start times. You will not use all of the details from the “Real Life Solutions” box.

Concerns Related To Changing Start Times	Real-Life Solutions
1. Having high schools start later is expensive because it requires schools to run more busses each day. 2. Having high schools start later results in students getting home from school and activities too late in the evening.	1. 2.
Real-Life Solutions	
<p>In Minneapolis, Minnesota, the high school start time was moved back to 8:40 am.</p> <p>In Jessamine County, Kentucky, the schools switched start times for elementary and high school students.</p> <p>In West Des Moines, Iowa, the district changed the start time for all three tiers of schools.</p> <p>In Mahtomedi, Minnesota, high schoolers cut passing time between classes.</p>	

6. The following question has two parts. First answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: Which word best defines *economics* as the author uses the word in paragraph 4 of Text 2: “High schools will keep starting too early. Here’s why.”?

- A. importance
- B. reasons
- C. price
- D. factors

Part B: Circle two of the underlined groups of words from paragraphs 3-5 of Text 2 that best help the reader understand the meaning of the word *economics* as it is used in this passage.

However, early start times aren’t going away quickly, and probably won’t, because of the costs.

That’s surprising, because, from the outside, the economics of a later start-time seem pretty good. A 2011 study from the Brookings institution looked at three ways school districts could improve just by getting better organized. Starting school later for teens was number one.

“Among all the things schools could do to increase student performance, this is one of the less expensive ones,” says Brian Jacob, an economics and public policy professor at the University of Michigan, one of the study’s co-authors. “This is not like hiring extra teachers to reduce class size, or building a big new expensive building.”

7. Which sentence provides the best summary of Text 2?

- A. There are many reasons schools will not change their start time.
- B. Despite research showing the positive effects of adjusting high school start times, schools have found it difficult to make the change.
- C. Research recently released supports the decision many high schools have made to adjust their start time to better reflect teenage sleep cycles.
- D. Changing school start times is relatively easy compared to other proposed school reforms.

8. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: Based on information from Text 2, which sentence best states the author’s perspective regarding high school start times?

- A. He wants school leaders to figure out a cost-effective way to change start times for all students.
- B. He believes that schools should consider moving start times back.
- C. He understands that there are expenses preventing schools from changing their start times.
- D. He hopes that schools will begin to use more busses so that all children can start at a reasonable hour.

Part B: Which two sentences explain the most effective ways the author develops his perspective?

- A. He highlights the research supporting adjusting start times.
- B. He provides graphs that show the numbers of schools starting before 8:00 am.
- C. He includes quotations that explain why schools are unable to move start times back.
- D. He describes the different expenses associated with changing school start times.
- E. He notes places where school start times are more likely to change.

9. How do Figures 1 and 2 contribute to the meaning of Text 2?

- A. They describe the different types of schools that have appropriate start times, emphasizing the claim that it is easier to move start times back in rural districts.
- B. They reveal the different times schools start, which emphasizes the claim that ending later has a negative impact on extracurricular activities.
- C. They highlight the claim that it is incredibly expensive to move start times back.
- D. They emphasize the claim that it will be challenging to move start times because a significant percentage of American schools start too early.

10. Which sentence best explains how the recording clarifies the information provided in Text 2?

- A. In the recording, the introduction from David Guerra provides additional detail about the students most impacted by early high school start times, an idea mentioned in Text 2.
- B. In the recording, the quotations from those actually involved in the debate add credibility to the claims Weissman makes in Text 2.
- C. In the recording, the note about where Weissmann is located reveals that high school start times is a national issue, a fact cited in the research in Text 2.
- D. In the recording, the addition of Amundson’s laughter emphasizes how ridiculous it is to have elementary schoolers start earlier, a suggestion only briefly mentioned in Text 2.

11. The table below represents a proposed schedule being considered by a school district. Which quotations from the texts could parents use as evidence to convince the district to adopt this schedule for the good of the students? Complete the table by writing one quotation from each text that supports the proposed start time into each box. You will not use all quotations.

	8:00 AM Start Time	9:00 AM Start Time
	Elementary School	High School
Quote from Text 1		
Quote from Text 2		
	Quotes from Text 1	Quotes from Text 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The problem: Teenagers need a lot of sleep – about 9 hours each night, experts say.” • “According to the National Sleep Foundation, more than 80 school districts around the country have made the change to start their high schools later.” • “Research shows that young children aren’t sleepy in the early morning, unlike the typical teenager.” • “Another challenge some school districts grapple with is the concern that after-school sports schedules would be affected by starting high schools later.” • “Wolak adds that teachers especially wanted a change because, ‘They were concerned about student attendance and student readiness to learn that first period of the day.’” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The school day should start later for teenagers because they aren’t wired to go to bed early — and they need their sleep.” • “School boards often hear objections about disruptions at the other end of the school day: Kids getting home really late from sports practice or chess club.” • “Asked why little kids, who tend to be early risers, couldn’t start early, Amundson laughs.” • “‘Oh, no, that was a non-starter,’ she says.” • “‘There were exactly zero of us who were prepared to have five year-olds on the street in the dark.’”

Information for Teachers: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses of the Texts

Regular practice with complex texts is necessary to prepare students for college and career readiness, as outlined in Reading Standard 10. The texts for this mini-assessment have been placed at grade 7, and the process used to determine this grade level placement is described below. “Appendix A of the Common Core” and the “Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity” lay out a research-based process for selecting complex texts.

1. Place a text or excerpt within a **grade band** based on at least one¹ quantitative measure according to the research-based conversion table provided in the Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity (www.corestandards.org/resources).
2. Place a text or excerpt at a **grade-level** based on a qualitative analysis.

Text	Quantitative Measure 1: FK	Quantitative Measure 2: Lexile
“High schools starting later to help sleepy teens” (in orange)	9.6	1080
High schools will keep starting too early. Here’s why.” (in blue)	9.3	970

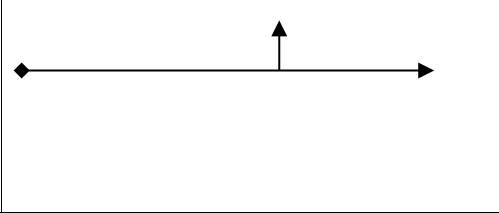
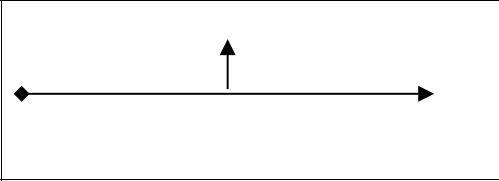
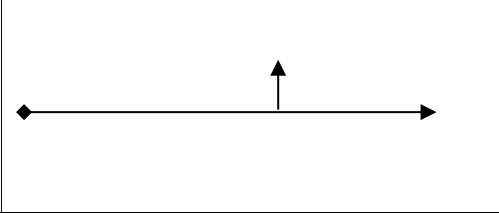
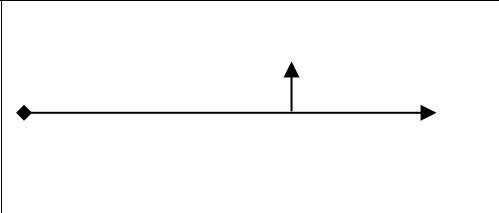
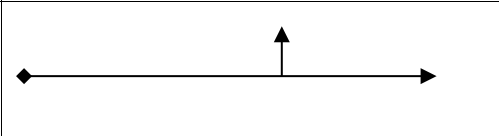
After gathering the quantitative measures, the next step is to place the quantitative scores in the Conversion Table found in the Supplement to Appendix A (www.corestandards.org/resources) and determine the **grade band** of the text. Figure 1 reproduces the conversion table from the Supplement to Appendix A, showing how the results from the FK and the Lexile measures were converted to grade bands.

Figure 1: Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges from Multiple Measures⁷

Common Core Band	ATOS	Degrees of Reading Power®	Flesch-Kincaid ^d	The Lexile Framework®	Reading Maturity	SourceRater
2 nd – 3 rd	2.75 – 5.14	42 – 54	1.98 – 5.34	420 – 820	3.53 – 6.13	0.05 – 2.48
4 th – 5 th	4.97 – 7.03	52 – 60	4.51 – 7.73	740 – 1010	5.42 – 7.92	0.84 – 5.75
6 th – 8 th	7.00 – 9.98	57 – 67	6.51 – 10.34	925 – 1185	7.04 – 9.57	4.11 – 10.66
9 th – 10 th	9.67 – 12.01	62 – 72	8.32 – 12.12	1050 – 1335	8.41 – 10.81	9.02 – 13.93
11 th – CCR	11.20 – 14.10	67 – 74	10.24 – 14.36	1185 – 1385	9.57 – 12.00	12.30 – 14.50

¹ For higher-stakes tests, it is recommended that two corresponding text complexity measures be used to place a text in a grade-band. When two measures are used, both placing the text in the same **band**, the results provide additional assurance that the text selected is appropriate for the band.

To find the **grade-level** of the text within the designated grade-band, engage in a systematic analysis of the characteristics of the text. The characteristics that should be analyzed during a qualitative analysis can be found in Appendix A of the CCSS. (www.corestandards.org)

Qualitative Analysis	“High Schools Starting Later to Help Sleepy Teens” by Michelle Trudeau	Where to place within the band?					
Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Too low for grade band	early to mid-6	mid 6 to early 7	mid 7 to early 8	mid to end 8	Too high for grade band
Structure (both story structure or form of piece)	The structure of the text is straightforward: The author begins by noting some key research associated with teen sleep and then launches in to a discussion of different ways that school districts address the problem. The author adds some complexity to the structure by noting common arguments relating to the challenges of changing school start time, and following up with specific examples of schools who have overcome these hurdles.						
Language Clarity and Conventions	The author uses a variety of sentence structures throughout the text, which adds some complexity. However, the language of the text is largely conventional, and there are only a few instances of complex vocabulary (stakeholders, obstacles, impact, potential, and anecdotal). These words, however, are all surrounded by sufficient context to allow students to determine meaning.						
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	The text explores a single topic, how the time that high schools start impacts teenagers. This is a topic that should be largely familiar to all middle school students, as they also attend school. Though a basic understanding of research process and how school districts function to make decisions would aid comprehension, the text provides sufficient background that a lack of understanding of these topics will not hinder comprehension.						
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	The purpose of the text is slightly complex in that the author sets out to both present information on a topic, but also, much more subtly, persuade readers that adjusting school start times is not as difficult as one may initially think. The author highlights research that support the idea that a later start time is better for teens, but her acknowledgement of the challenges, and discussion of how these challenges can be overcome, reveals this dual purpose.						
Overall placement: Grade 7	The relatively straightforward structure, language, and knowledge demands coupled with the more complex purpose make this text most appropriate for seventh grade students.						

Qualitative Analysis	“High schools will keep starting too early. Here’s why.” by Dan Weissmann (both text and audio recording)	Where to place within the band?					
Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Too low for grade band	early to mid-6	mid 6 to early 7	mid 7 to early 8	mid to end 8	Too high for grade band
Structure (both story structure or form of piece)	The author organizes the article by highlighting research supporting the claim that it is better for teens to start school later in the day, then explaining the challenges districts face in addressing this issue.						
Language Clarity and Conventions	The language of the text is straightforward and simple: the author uses mostly conversational language to address his audience. Some terms may be challenging to some readers (economics, objections), but the author provides sufficient context to allow students to make meaning of the terms. There is some complexity added in that the author uses a variety of sentence structures to build the piece.						
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	The text explores a single issue, one that will be largely familiar to students, as it directly relates to schooling. Some background knowledge of school transportation issues may be beneficial, but the text provides significant explanation, so a lack of experience in this area will not hinder students.						
Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary)/ Purpose (chiefly informational)	The purpose of the text is simple and directly stated in the text: The author intends to inform his audience about the reasons that, despite research, high schools have not adjusted their start times to reflect teenage sleep habits.						
Overall placement: Grade 7	The accessible structure, language, and limited knowledge demands, coupled with the clear purpose, make this text most appropriate for seventh grade students.						

Question Annotations: Correct Answer and Distractor Rationales

Question	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Distractor Rationales
1 Part A	A	RI.7.4, RI.7.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. <i>Anecdotal</i> evidence is evidence that is based on one’s own experiences.</p> <p>B. <i>Anecdotal</i> evidence is not based on research, but rather individual experience.</p> <p>C. Although <i>anecdotal</i> evidence may support unlikely theories, this does not define the term. <i>Anecdotal</i> means based on personal or individual experience.</p> <p>D. <i>Anecdotal</i> evidence may or may not support the author’s claim, but this does not define the term. <i>Anecdotal</i> means based on one’s own experience.</p>
1 Part B	D		<p>A. In the text, teachers, not anecdotal evidence, endorsed the plan to move start times to later in the day. This does not provide context to help students understand what anecdotal means.</p> <p>B. This describes how Wolak’s quotations are used; it does not describe the type of evidence Wolak is using to make his claims.</p> <p>C. This describes what it is that teachers wanted, not the type of evidence they used to support their ideas about school start time.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. Wolak’s observations are a type of <i>anecdotal</i> evidence.</p>
2 Part A	C	RI.7.8, RI.7.6, RI.7.1	<p>A. Although the author mentions transportation, specifically that it is often an obstacle to changing start times, she argues that reduced transportation costs are a side benefit, not the primary reason to adjust start times.</p> <p>B. Although the author notes that elementary school students are more likely to be early risers, she does not make the claim that they also benefit from later start times.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. The author cites the research, including specific examples of individual schools, to show that it is better for teenagers if high schools start later in the day.</p> <p>D. Although the author mentions that teens are less likely to miss class if school starts later in the day, this is a detail to support her claim that teens experience a variety of benefits from later school start times.</p>

Question	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Distractor Rationales
2 Part B	B, E		<p>A. Although the author includes quotations from researchers and individual principals who have experience with later start times, she does not include quotations from individual students.</p> <p>B. This is a correct answer. The author gives several examples of schools and districts where teens have experienced positive results when the high school start time was moved back to later in the morning.</p> <p>C. Although the author mentions that one school district was able to save money by adjusting school start times (implying that the transportation company lost money), she focuses on the benefits for students, not the negative impact on the bus company.</p> <p>D. The author focuses her argument on the impact of delaying start times on high school students. She does not discuss how younger students are impacted when schools change start times.</p> <p>E. This is a correct answer. The author cites several different examples of districts that have come up with ways to meet the challenges associated with changing school start times and explains the different positive effects these districts saw.</p> <p>F. Although the author includes quotations for researchers and principals, she does not include quotations from teachers.</p>
3	A	RI.7.5, RI.7.8, RI.7.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. The author structures her argument in favor of later start times for high school students by explaining some of the common arguments (e.g., transportation expenses, students getting home to late), and then describing how individual districts met these challenges.</p> <p>B. Although the author begins the article by noting that much research supports the idea that teens need more sleep, she ultimately builds her argument around how individual districts deal with the challenges of moving start times, not the research districts applied.</p> <p>C. Although the author does mention one expert, Kayla Wahlstrom, she does not focus on how Wahlstrom actually conducts her research.</p> <p>D. The author does describe districts that have changed their start time, but she does not focus on why these districts made the change. Rather, she discusses some challenges the districts faced, and how they addressed these challenges.</p>
4 Part A	B	RI.7.3, RI.7.1	<p>A. Although the author makes it clear that teenagers need a lot of sleep, she does not discuss their sleep needs relative to younger students.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. The author discusses the fact that teens are more likely to stay awake later in the evening and wake later in the morning. As such, it is easier on teens to start school later in the morning.</p> <p>C. Although the author discusses the fact that teenagers often participate in a variety of activities, it is within the context of a common argument against adjusting school start time. She does not make the claim that the activities teenagers participate in force them to stay awake too late.</p> <p>D. The author explains that it is actually harder for teens to wake up early in the morning, and that they have an easier time waking up later. So, it is easier for teens to wake up later in the morning, not equally as difficult.</p>

Question	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Distractor Rationales																	
4 Part B	D		<p>A. This sentence explains how schools attempt to help teenagers; it does not discuss why this move is necessary.</p> <p>B. This sentence shows how one school was able to adjust its start time without also ending later in the day. It does not show why teens benefit from a later start time.</p> <p>C. This sentence describes why teachers wanted the change; it does not explain why the change reflects teenage sleep cycles.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. This quotation highlights the research supporting the idea that teens are more naturally inclined to wake up later in the morning.</p>																	
5	See right column.	RI.7.8, RI.7.1	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="720 475 1083 553">Concerns related to Changing Start Times</th> <th data-bbox="1083 475 1444 553">Real-Life Solutions</th> <th data-bbox="1444 475 2007 553">Rationale</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="720 553 1083 735">1. Having high schools start later is expensive because it requires schools to run more busses each day.</td> <td data-bbox="1083 553 1444 735">1. In West Des Moines, Iowa, the district changed the start time for all three tiers of schools.</td> <td data-bbox="1444 553 2007 735">The author explains that, by changing when all three tiers of schools started, the West Des Moines school district was actually able to save money.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="720 735 1083 954">2. Having high schools start later results in students getting home from school and activities too late in the evening.</td> <td data-bbox="1083 735 1444 954">2. In Mahtomedi, Minnesota, high schoolers cut passing time between classes</td> <td data-bbox="1444 735 2007 954">The author explains that this approach allowed the district to adjust the start time without also adjusting the time in which school let out.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="720 954 1083 1138">Incorrect Answer</td> <td data-bbox="1083 954 1444 1138">In Minneapolis, Minnesota, the high school start time was moved back to 8:40 am.</td> <td data-bbox="1444 954 2007 1138">The author uses this information as an initial example of a large district that adjusted its start time. The fact does not serve to contradict either argument against changing start times.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="720 1138 1083 1321">Incorrect answer</td> <td data-bbox="1083 1138 1444 1321">In Jessamine County, Kentucky, the schools switched start times for elementary and high school students.</td> <td data-bbox="1444 1138 2007 1321">The author uses this information as an example of a solution that one district came to, not as an argument against common complaints related to changing school start times.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Concerns related to Changing Start Times	Real-Life Solutions	Rationale	1. Having high schools start later is expensive because it requires schools to run more busses each day.	1. In West Des Moines, Iowa, the district changed the start time for all three tiers of schools.	The author explains that, by changing when all three tiers of schools started, the West Des Moines school district was actually able to save money.	2. Having high schools start later results in students getting home from school and activities too late in the evening.	2. In Mahtomedi, Minnesota, high schoolers cut passing time between classes	The author explains that this approach allowed the district to adjust the start time without also adjusting the time in which school let out.	Incorrect Answer	In Minneapolis, Minnesota, the high school start time was moved back to 8:40 am.	The author uses this information as an initial example of a large district that adjusted its start time. The fact does not serve to contradict either argument against changing start times.	Incorrect answer	In Jessamine County, Kentucky, the schools switched start times for elementary and high school students.	The author uses this information as an example of a solution that one district came to, not as an argument against common complaints related to changing school start times.
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6 Part A	C		<p>A. Although <i>importance</i> works within the context of the sentence, it does not define <i>economics</i>, which has to do with the cost of something.</p> <p>B. Although the author states that the <i>economics</i> of changing start times are an important argument in favor of adjusting high school start times, <i>economics</i> relates to the value of something, not the reason to do (or not do) something.</p> <p>C. This is the correct answer. The <i>economics</i> of something describe its costs.</p> <p>D. <i>Factors</i> are considerations, which does not define <i>economics</i>.</p>
6 Part B	Because of the costs Less expensive ones	RI.7.4, RI.7.1	<p>“Because of the costs” is a correct answer. <i>Economics</i> relates to the costs or value of something.</p> <p>“From the outside” describes how people look at the issue of adjusting school start times. It does not hint that <i>economics</i> has to do with the cost or price of something.</p> <p>“Getting better organized” describes ways that schools could improve, not how those ways relate to the cost of something.</p> <p>“Schools could do” describes actions schools can take to impact student achievement, not the <i>economics</i> of those actions.</p> <p>“Increase student performance” describes the goal of actions schools take, not their economic impact.</p> <p>“Less expensive ones” is a correct answer. It hints that <i>economics</i> relates to the cost of the proposed solutions.</p> <p>“Public policy professor” describes Brian Jacob’s profession; it does not give context for the meaning of <i>economics</i>.</p> <p>“Reduce class size” describes a different potential action schools could take to improve student achievement. It does not hint at the cost of such changes.</p>
7	B	RI.7.2, RI.7.1	<p>A. Although the author of Text 2 describes several reasons school districts will not change the start time for high schools, the article highlights several other issues, including research explaining why this is important and one reformers experience with the issue.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. The article begins by describing the importance of allowing teens to start their school day later in the morning, then highlights the experience of one school district in attempting to change its start time.</p> <p>C. The author begins the article by describing the research associated with teen sleep cycles, but this statement does not capture the entire text, but rather the initial paragraphs.</p> <p>D. Although the author mentions that changing school start times is one relatively cost-effective reform, he makes it clear that this is not an easy change. Further, this statement captures a detail, and not the entire text.</p>

Question	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Distractor Rationales
8 Part A	B		<p>A. Although the author is clearly in favor of adjusting school start time at the high school level, he does not mention adjusting start times at the middle school level.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. The author acknowledges the complexities of adjusting start times, but he cites research to show that it is something schools should consider as they attempt to improve educational outcomes for high school students.</p> <p>C. The author actually argues that changing start time is one of the least expensive school reforms a district can undertake.</p> <p>D. The author does not argue for more busses; rather, he argues that transportation is the key issue to resolve as districts attempt to adjust their start times.</p>
8 Part B	A, E	RI.7.6, RI.7.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. In addition to beginning the article by noting the AAP position, the author also highlights some of the benefits related to a later start time.</p> <p>B. Although the author does provide graphs showing the breakdown of high school start time in the US, these graphs do not develop the perspective that schools should adjust their start time. Rather, they simply inform the reader as to what time most schools start.</p> <p>C. Although the author includes some quotations, they are from researchers and those associated with the history of the start time debate. They do not explain why schools cannot change the start time.</p> <p>D. Although the author explains the relationship between transportation, which is the “expensive” issue, and start times, he does not talk about the variety of costs associated with changing start times.</p> <p>E. This is a correct answer. The author concludes the text by noting that smaller districts are more likely to have success changing the high school start time.</p>
9	D	RI.7.8, RI.7.7, RI.7.1	<p>A. Although Figure 2 does break down start time by type of school, the information does not show how it would be easier or harder to adjust school start times based on location.</p> <p>B. Although the charts do reveal different start times for high schools, they do not show the relationship of these varied start times to the time of day activities end.</p> <p>C. Although the figures reveal the variety of times schools throughout the country start, this information is not related to the cost of moving start times back.</p> <p>D. This is the correct answer. The figures show the number of schools, in a variety of places, that start too early for teenagers.</p>
10	B	RI.7.7, RI.7.1	<p>A. The introduction by David Guerra sets the context for the article, but it does not, however, provide additional information about which students are most impacted by start times.</p> <p>B. This is the correct answer. The quotations, also included in the article, allow students to hear the voices of those actually involved in the debate.</p> <p>C. The note about Weissmann’s location is not related to the fact that this issue impacts students across the country.</p> <p>D. Amundson’s laughter reveals her feelings about the suggestion to move start times up, but it does not suggest she believes that all elementary school students cannot start early.</p>

Question	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Distractor Rationales				
11	See right column.	RI.7.9, RI.7.1		8:00 AM Start Time	<i>Rationale</i>	9:00 AM Start Time	<i>Rationale</i>
			Quotation from Text 1	“Research shows that young children aren’t sleepy in the early morning, unlike the typical teenager.”	This quotation shows that it is easier for young children to start early.	“The problem: Teenagers need a lot of sleep – about 9 hours each night, experts say.”	This quotation shows that teens should start later, given their natural inclination to need a lot of sleep.
			Quotation from Text 2	Asked why little kids, who tend to be early risers, couldn’t start early, Amundson laughs.”	This quotation shows that young children have an easier time waking up early, so it is a logical thought to have them start earlier in the day.	“The school day should start later for teenagers because they aren’t wired to go to bed early — and they need their sleep.”	This quotation shows that teens are more likely to sleep late in the morning, because they go to bed later in the evening.
12	A	RI.7.9, RI.7.1	<p>A. This is the correct answer. The author of Text 1 notes that the Minneapolis school district, a large district, was able to move start times back to later in the day.</p> <p>B. Although this states that many districts have been able to adjust their start times, it does not show the size of the districts.</p> <p>C. This quotation discusses how one school was able to invest the community in the plan to change start times; it does not show the size of the district, or if the district was successful.</p> <p>D. This quotation shows one district moving their start time back, but it does not show the size of the district.</p>				

Question	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Distractor Rationales
13	See right column.	RI.7.9, RI.7.1, W.7.9, W.7.4, W.7.2, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3	<p>A strong student response will include most or all of the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text 1: The author believes that schools should move start times back to support students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The author highlights the research of Kyla Wahlstrom, who found many positive effects of moving start times back, including: fewer dropouts, less depression, parents noticing children were easier to live with, and teachers reporting students were more eager to learn. ○ The author highlights the case of Jessamine County, where swapping the elementary school and high school start times “had a big impact at the high schools.” ○ The author indicates that bussing is a problem, but that it can be overcome by creative solutions (e.g., cutting the time for passing periods etc.) • Text 2: The author believes that schools should move start times back because it is a cost effective way to improve student performance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The author cites the American Academy of Pediatrics research to show that when teens are sleep deprived, they have many issues, including “...are more likely to crash cars, get depressed, and become obese. Also, they do not do well in school.” This occurs early in the article, which sets the stage for making the case to move start times back. ○ The author emphasizes the cost savings of moving school start times back. He notes that this is one of the least expensive ways to impact student performance in a positive way. ○ The author indicates that the major obstacle to overcome is bussing, which for many districts is too big of a hurdle.

Using the Mini-Assessments with English Language Learners (ELLs)

Mini-Assessment Design and English Language Learners

Each mini-assessment is designed using the best practices of test design. English Language Learners will benefit from the opportunity to independently practice answering questions about grade-level complex texts.

Prior to delivering the mini-assessment, teachers should read through each item. If there is language in the question stems specific to the standards (e.g., plot, theme, point of view), make sure that students have been introduced to these concepts prior to taking the assessment. Teachers should not pre-teach specific vocabulary words tested in the assessment (e.g., words students are asked to define) and should only pre-teach language that would impede students from understanding what the question is asking.

The mini-assessments attend to the needs of all learners, and ELLs specifically, by including texts that:

- *Are brief and engaging:* Texts vary in length, but no individual text is more than three pages long.
- *Embed student-friendly definitions:* Footnotes are included for technical terms or words that are above grade level when those words are not surrounded by context that would help students determine meaning.

Informational text sets, such as those included in the mini-assessment, specifically attend to the needs of ELLs by:

- *Building student knowledge:* Mini-assessments often include multiple texts or stimuli on the same topic:
 - For sets with two texts or stimuli, the first text is generally broader, providing a foundation in the content and introducing key vocabulary, and the second text provides more detail or contrast on the same topic. This allows ELLs to dig into the features of the passage being assessed rather than being inundated with dissimilar content and vocabulary.
 - For sets with more than two texts or stimuli, there is an “anchor” text that provides introductory information on the topic.
- *Containing ideas that lend themselves to discussion from a variety of perspectives:* Often these pairs or sets of texts present multiple perspectives on the same topic.

The mini-assessments attend to the needs of all learners, and ELLs specifically, by including questions that:

- *Feature a variety of academic words:*
 - Each mini-assessment contains at least one vocabulary item. Items assessing vocabulary test one of the following:
 - The meaning of Tier 2 academic words in context.
 - The meaning of a figurative word/phrase in context.

- The impact of word choice on meaning and/or tone.
- MOST vocabulary items test Tier 2 words.
- All tested words are chosen because:
 - They are central to the meaning of the text.
 - They are surrounded by sufficient context to allow students to determine meaning.
- *Highlight “juicy” sentences that feature grade-appropriate complex structures, vocabulary, and language features:* Most mini-assessments include at least one item assessing Reading for Literature or Reading: Informational text standard 5. These items point students to analyze the structure of the text. While standard 5 items specifically focus on the structure of the text, other items require the analysis of language features, vocabulary, and relationships between ideas, all of which build student understanding of texts.
- *Provide graphic organizers to help students capture and reflect on new knowledge:* Most mini-assessments include at least one item mimicking a “technology enhanced item.” These items include things like tables and charts.
- *Provide writing activities that allow students to use new vocabulary and demonstrate knowledge of new concepts:* Most mini-assessments include an optional writing prompt that allows students to write about the text(s).

Administration Guidelines for ELLs

When assessing ELL students, appropriate accommodations may be considered. Modifications to the assessment itself should not be made.

According to the *Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of English Language Learners, First Edition*:

- “Modifications refer to practices or materials that change, lower, or reduce state-required learning expectations. Modifications may change the underlying construct of an assessment.”
- “Accommodations are accessibility supports [that] do not reduce learning expectations. They meet specific needs of students in instruction and assessment and enable educators to know that measures of a student’s work produce valid results.”

Teachers **may** choose to make accommodations that meet the unique needs of ELLs. Prior to delivering any practice assessment, especially if the mini-assessment is to be used in a more formal setting (e.g., as part of a district benchmark assessment), teachers should research what accommodations will be available to students during their state’s summative assessment. For example, some states allow ELLs to use a bilingual dictionary during an assessment; other states do not allow this. Ensure your ELLs are practicing with the accommodations they can expect to see on the summative. Some examples of appropriate accommodations include:

- Reading the directions aloud to students multiple times.
- Providing student directions in student native language.
- Allowing students additional time to complete the mini-assessments.
- Exposing students to item types prior to the assessment.

- Reading the scoring expectations for the writing prompt aloud to students.

Because the goal of literacy mini-assessments is to measure grade-level literacy as students progress toward college- and career-readiness, teachers must be careful **not** to make modifications that may be commonly used in classroom instruction. Examples of modifications that should **not** be used include:

- Reading passages aloud for students.
- Adding student glossaries of unfamiliar terms.
- Pre-teaching tested vocabulary words.

In any testing setting, teachers must be careful to choose accommodations that suit the needs of each individual student.

Additional Resources for Assessment and CCSS Implementation

Shift 1 – Complexity: *Regular practice with complex text and its academic language*

- See Appendix B for examples of informational and literary complex texts:
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf
- See the Text Complexity Collection on www.achievethecore.org

Shift 2 – Evidence: *Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational*

- See Close Reading Exemplars for ways to engage students in close reading on <http://www.achievethecore.org/steal-these-tools/close-reading-exemplars>
- See the Basal Alignment Project for examples of text-dependent questions:
<http://www.achievethecore.org/basal-alignment-project>

Shift 3 – Knowledge: *Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction*

- See Appendix B for examples of informational and literary complex texts:
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf

Sample Scoring Rubric for Text-Based Writing

Prompts: http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Scoring_Rubric_for_Text-Based_Writing_Prompts.pdf