

2022 MCAS Sample Student Work and Scoring Guide

Grade 7 English Language Arts

Question 13: Essay

Reporting Categories: Language and Writing

Standard: L.PK-12.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Standard: L.PK-12.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Standard: L.PK-12.3 - Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Standard: W.PK-12.1 - Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Standard: W.PK-12.4 - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Item Description: Write an argument to support a given claim; use information from two articles to support the argument.

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Essay Prompt

For this question, you will write an essay based on the passage(s). Your writing should:

- Present and develop a central idea.
- Provide evidence and/or details from the passage(s).
- Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Based on “The Teen Who Woke Up Her School” and “Why Schools Are Struggling to Let Students Sleep In,” write an essay arguing that middle schools and high schools should have later start times. Be sure to use information from **both** articles to develop your essay.

Continue to the following page to see the scoring guides for this question. Sample student responses begin on page 3. The annotations that appear above each sample response describe elements of the response that contributed to its score for Idea Development and Standard English Conventions.

Scoring Guide for Idea Development

Select a score point in the table below to view the sample student response.

Score*	Description
<u>5</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central idea is insightful and fully developed Skillful selection and explanation of evidence and/or details Skillful and/or subtle organization Rich expression of ideas Full awareness of the task and mode
<u>4</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central idea is clear and well-developed Effective selection and explanation of evidence and/or details Effective organization Clear expression of ideas Full awareness of the task and mode
<u>3</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central idea is general and moderately developed Appropriate selection and explanation of evidence and/or details Moderate organization Adequate expression of ideas Sufficient awareness of the task and mode
<u>2</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central idea may be present and is somewhat developed Limited selection and explanation of evidence and/or details Limited organization Basic expression of ideas Partial awareness of the task and mode
<u>1</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central idea is not developed Insufficient evidence and/or details Minimal organization Poor expression of ideas Minimal awareness of the task and mode
<u>0</u>	The response shows evidence the student has read the text, but does not address the question or incorrectly responds to the question.

Scoring Guide for Standard English Conventions

Select a score point in the table below to view the sample student response.

Score*	Description
<u>3A</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent control of a variety of sentence structures relative to length of essay Consistent control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or length of essay
<u>3B</u>	
<u>3C</u>	
<u>2</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly consistent control of sentence structures relative to length of essay Mostly consistent control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or length of essay
<u>1</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little control and/or no variety in sentence structure and/or Little control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or insufficient length
<u>0</u>	Sentences are formed incorrectly with no control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and/or insufficient length.

*In both Scoring Guides, letters are used to distinguish between sample student responses that earned the same score (e.g., 5A and 5B).

Idea Development—Score Point 5

An engaging introduction reveals full awareness of the task, connecting both passages to the idea that teens should have later school start times. A variety of transitions carry the central idea through the essay: “Good sleep has been proven to improve your well-being”; “As well as enhanced learning, athletes perform better”; and “Students also feel emotionally and mentally better.” Each body paragraph balances evidence with explanation, contributing to a rich expression of ideas such as “Sleep can be the difference between winning and losing, qualifying and not qualifying.” The explanation that “schools . . . can get . . . a good reputation for churning out top athletes” argues beyond the benefits to the teens alone and makes further connections between the details and the argument for later start times. By delving into several aspects of stress, grades, performance, and “strengthen[ed] social ties,” the argument makes an insightfully developed case for later start times in middle and high schools. Although the conclusion is not strong, overall, the organization supports a clearly developed argument that builds upon ideas from both passages.

Standard English Conventions—Score Point 3A

A variety of sentence structures and mechanics are used throughout the essay. Parentheses and periods are correct when citing passages. Control of comma usage as well as spelling is evident, despite minor errors: “Injuries also prevent the athlete from practicing, and instead, they have to regain their strength and do excercises to prevent further injuries” and “Middle schools and high schools should delay their start times because it is proven that students perform better, whether it’s school, work, or sports.” The essay’s length provides opportunity to demonstrate control of grade-level standard English conventions.

Do you ever feel like you're not getting enough sleep? Or that you don't have enough energy to focus and get through school? Teen bodies are hardwired to fall asleep and wake up later. A growth hormone in your body helps your bones and tissues to grow, however, when this hormone is released, it blocks melatonin, a different hormone that makes you sleepy. "The Teen Who Woke Up Her School" by Jane Bianchi, and "Why Schools Are Struggling to Let Students Sleep In" by Alexandra Sifferlin both argue that middle and high schools should have later start times.

Good sleep has been proven to improve your well-being. Dr. Helene A. Emsellem, author of *Shooze ... or Lose!*, says, "Sleep is a simple yet powerful potion with the ability to enhance learning, boost creativity, fight infection, feul growth, and balance mood" (Bianchi 6). A school's main goal is to teach their students as best as possible. Sleep can help students do better in school, everything a school wants its students to do. If students don't get enough sleep, they'll do worse in school, which would cause problems with the school. The school could get a bad reputation for churning out zombie-like students who did bad at school. Bianchi also writes, "Plus, when you're not exhausted 24/7, you feel better emotionally. Sleep boosts your mood and lowers anxiety, meaning you're less likely to stress about exams, snap at your parents, or fight with friends" (Bianchi 13). This is important because students are already under lots of stress. Even more stress just from not enough sleep is easily preventable. In addition, getting good grades and learning a lot makes it easier for you to get into good colleges and jobs. As proven, later start times mean more sleep, which means better learning.

As well as enhanced learning, athletes perform better when well-rested. Bianchi states, "... sleep also matters on the playing field. In fact, researchers suggest that well-rested teen athletes... get injured less often too" (Bianchi 14). Less injuries is important for teams because with healthy players means better scores. Also, it means no hospital costs if the injury is severe. Injuries also prevent the athlete from practicing, and instead, they have to regain their strength and do excercises to prevent further injuries. The author reports, "Jilly's high school football team went to the state championships last year for the first time in 11 years. Sure, it could just be a coincidence" (Bianchi 19). Sleep can be the difference between winning and losing, qualifying and not qualifying. This important for schools because if the athletes can perform better, their students can get on better teams and colleges, and even a good reputation for churning out top athletes. Therefore, schools should delay their starts so that athletes can perform better.

Students also feel emotionally and mentally better when they get their sleep. The American Academy of Pediatrics confirms, "[Earlier start times] can contribute to sleep deprivation, making it harder for students to concentrate and even increasing their risk for obesity and depression" (Sifferlin 5). Students can feel emotionally ready and good if they get a good sleep. Without that good sleep, students might skip school which affects their learning. This also affects teachers who have to deal with students not paying attention and falling asleep. Elizabeth Ende, mom of a freshman at Mclean High School, says, "My daughter used to feel tired all the time, ... Now she gets through homework more quickly, and when she's working, she looks more alert" (Sifferlin 9). This example proves the effects of good sleep. Getting good sleep and being alert at work can get you more money for your job. Getting your homework done early means that students can help around the house, explore hobbies, and hang out with their friends. This could help strengthen social ties. As shown, students feel better when they get their good night's sleep.

Middle schools and high schools should delay their start times because it is proven that students perform better, whether it's school, work, or sports.

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Idea Development—Score Point 4

The central idea that “there are many different reasons why students should be able to have later start times” is clear throughout the essay and supported with several details from both passages. Body paragraphs are primarily focused on direct benefits to the students; each is effectively organized around details from both passages and an explanation connecting back to the central idea. By addressing specific examples, such as “help[ing] their mental and physical health including decreasing the risks for obesity and depression” and “be[ing] energized instead of drowsy,” the writer makes a case that supports the conclusion that more sleep results in “creative thinking, more energy, more growth.” Throughout the essay, the writer argues that overall performance, whether socially, academically, or athletically, is positively affected by later school start times. The essay is well-developed and maintains a clear expression of ideas about the benefits of sleep for teens.

Standard English Conventions—Score Point 3B

The essay demonstrates consistent control of grammar, usage, and mechanics, given its complexity. Minor spelling errors, such as “scheduale” and “father” instead of farther, are not distracting, and other vocabulary words such as “guaranteed,” “decreasing,” and “energized” are spelled correctly. Commas are mostly used correctly: “This is a significant amount of benefits, and later start times would help increase the amount of sleep times for students” and “Overall, schools should have later start times because it would benefit students in many ways.” Given its length and the variety of sentence structures presented, the essay shows command of standard English conventions for the grade level.

As shown in "The Teen Who Woke Up Her School" and "Why Schools Are Struggling to Let Students Sleep In", schools should have later start times for their students. In "The Teen Who Woke Up Her School", it explains how different students used their voices to advocate why there should be later start times, and why that would be beneficial for everyone. Also, in "Why Schools Are Struggling to Let Students Sleep In", it explains both sides of the debate for why students should have later start times. Overall, there are many different reasons why students should be able to have later start times, and there are many benefits.

Later start times improve teens behaviors, and mental health. In paragraph 13 of "The Teen Who Woke Up her School", it explains the benefits of longer sleep times. "Plus, when you're not exhausted 24/7, you feel better emotionally. Sleep boosts your mood and lowers anxiety, meaning you're less likely to stress about exams, snap at your parents, or fight with friends." This is a significant amount of benefits, and later start times would help increase the amount of sleep times for students. Also, in paragraph 5 of "Why School Are Struggling to Let Students Sleep In", it explains how less sleep impacts teens. "In the U.S., more than 4 in 5 middle and high schools begin at or before 8:30 a.m. That can contribute to sleep deprivation, making it harder for students to concentrate and even increasing their risk for obesity and depression." This is a major loss for students, since their sleep schedule is messed up, and that contributes to many health concerns. Students should be guaranteed later start times because it helps their sleep schedules, and that helps their mental and physical health including decreasing the risks for obesity and depression.

Later start times help increase both academic and athletic performance. In paragraph 12 of "The Teen Who Woke Up Her School", it explains the improvements of athletic and academic performance. "After a good night's rest, you're more alert, and it's easier to solve problems, process and remember information, and be creative. Research has also linked sleep to higher test scores." This is important because teens now might be feeling drowsy in school due to their lack of sleep, and their performance goes down. In paragraph 6 of "The Teen Who Woke Up Her School", it explains the effects of higher sleep times. "Sleep is a simple yet powerful potion with the ability to enhance learning, boost creativity, fight infection, fuel growth, and balance mood," says Dr. Helene A. Emsellem, the author of *Shooze... Or Lose!* This is significant because it can help students get farther in life, since they would actually be energized instead of drowsy. Students should gain later start times because it would help their academic and athletic performance, including more creativity, better growth, and enhanced learning.

In conclusion, schools should have later start times because as shown in "The Teen Who Woke Up Her School", and "Why Schools Are Struggling to Let Students Sleep In, they would have many benefits. Later start times would increase sleep times, which helps academic and athletic learning, and better emotional and physical health. This includes creative thinking, more energy, more growth, and it would enhance learning. Also, more sleep boosts your mood and lowers anxiety. Overall, schools should have later start times because it would benefit students in many ways.

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Idea Development—Score Point 3

The central idea is moderately developed and supported by appropriate details from the passages. There is sufficient awareness of the task; the focus is more on the benefits of sleep for teens and less specifically on why schools should start later, but appropriate details to support the argument are selected. Some explanations are provided but not elaborated on: “Higher test scores would be good for the school also because they would get more money.” While there are some important arguments made about students being “better able to participate in school” and the idea that “well rested athletes are less likely to get injured,” the explanations are not developed, consistent with only an adequate expression of “why schools need to have classes starting later.” Overall, the essay is organized with functional transitions and shows a general understanding of the task of argument writing.

Standard English Conventions—Score Point 3C

The essay lacks some complexity at times but correctly punctuates quotations. There are minor errors, such as the usage of “there” versus “their,” incorrect capitalization of “Athletic reasons,” and a lack of capitalization to begin the sentence “this proves that it helps students. . .” However, complexity is evident in “Those are just three of the examples that demonstrate how sleep can help you socially” and “Students are now more energized and are better able to participate in school.” Overall, control of a variety of mechanics and sentence structures is evident, and the length of the essay is sufficient to demonstrate command of standard English conventions for the grade level.

Workplaces across the country typically start much later than the average middle or high school. Schools need to make classes start later even though they need more time for sports and it might be expensive, schools need to make the change because according to the articles, "The Teen That Woke Up Her School" and "Why Schools are Struggling To Let Students Sleep In" teens need more sleep to help them socially, academically and because of the hormones in their body.

The first reason why starting school later is good for you is because studies have shown that when kids get more rest they are more likely to be happier emotionally. According to paragraph 13 in "The Teen That Woke Up Her School" "Sleep boosts your mood and lowers anxiety meaning you're less likely to stress about exams, snap at your parents or fight with your friends." Those are just three of the examples that demonstrate how sleep can help you socially.

Another reason why sleep is essential for teens is because it has been found to help children academically, which should always be the top priority for schools. The first article states "Research has also linked sleep to higher test scores." Higher test scores would be good for the school also because they would get more money. One mom of a student at McLean high school says "Now she gets through homework more quickly, and when she's working she seems more alert." If kids are drowsy and tired while doing their homework chances are they are not doing a very good job on it. A social studies teacher, named Eric Welch said that he noticed a change as well, "I can see the changes in kids in the hallways," "They are not dragging as much." Students are now more energized and are better able to participate in school.

The final reason why students need to start school later is because of Athletic reasons. Jilly's high school finally went to state champs after not going for 11 years, because the athletes were well rested. It is also scientifically proven that well rested athletes are less likely to get injured to, according to paragraph 14 in "The Teen Who Woke Up Her School." this proves that it helps students athletically too, even if they might have a little less time for practice.

This concludes the argument on why schools need to have classes starting later for the sake of the students, athletes, and everyone's mood and well-being.

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Idea Development—Score Point 2

The central idea that “schools should have a later start time” is somewhat developed using limited details to convey the difficulties students face. The idea that “a later start time . . . would help get at least [an] extra hour of sleep” is basic. A brief discussion of hormones and mood contributes to an argument that if schools started later, “Teens would be able to get more sleep and focus in school without getting easily distracted.” The essay lacks an adequate conclusion, but there is partial awareness of the task and an attempt to present evidence and explanation.

Standard English Conventions—Score Point 2

A lack of complexity reveals mostly consistent, rather than sustained, control of standard English conventions. Sentence patterns are similar throughout: “This shows”; “it shows”; “If they”; “If you.” Although the essay begins in third person (“If they had a later start time”), it shifts halfway through the second paragraph to second person (“you will be in a much better mood”), showing limited control of overall structure of the essay. In general, spelling and punctuation are correct with a few minor errors such as “funtion” instead of “function.” There is enough argument presented in the writer’s own words to show some command of conventions, but a disproportionate number of direct quotations are included in the essay, given its length. Overall, there is only mostly consistent control of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

High schools and Middle schools should have a later start time. Teens need sleep to funtion and they aren't getting enough of it. With a later start time some problems could be fixed. In the passage The Teen WHO Woke Up Her School it says, "It all has to o with something called growth hormone, which helps your bones and tissues grow during puberty. When this hormone starts coursing though your system around midnight, it also blocks melatonin, the hormone thats ment to kick in and make you drowsy." This shows that it isn't always teens faults that they aren't getting enough sleep. They can't control of the melitonin kicks in our not. If they had a later start time at school that would help get at least and extra hour of sleep.

Another reason why teens should have a later start time is because without enough sleep they won't funtion as well. Their brain will start to shut down and not work as well if they don't get enough sleep. In the text it says, "When you're not exhausted 24/7, you feel better emotionally. Sleep boosts your mood and lowers anxiety, meaning you're less likely to stress about exams, snap at your parents, or fight with your friends." This quote shows that you will be in a much better mood and be able to focus better if you get enough sleep. If you don't get enough sleep you could very possibly not be in the greatest mood and not get any work done. The later start time would help a lot with this. Teens would be able to get more sleep and focus in school without getting easily distracted.

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Idea Development—Score Point 1

The essay is minimally developed and uses evidence from only one passage. An introduction and conclusion are missing, showing minimal awareness of both organization and the task. While there is a claim that “teens need to be well rested in order to function properly,” it is not supported; the selected quotation is not connected with an explanation about why teenagers are classified as “walking zombies” or how this contributes to the argument that schools should start later. Overall, the writing does not express the argument clearly.

Standard English Conventions—Score Point 1

Although there are not many distracting errors, the essay is not developed sufficiently to show grade-level control of sentence structures or features of mechanics. Simplicity is also evident in repetition, especially given the short length of the essay: “teens need to be well rested”; “We need to be well rested”; “Us kids and teens also need to be well rested”; “awake and rested.” Overall, there is little opportunity to demonstrate consistent control of standard English conventions.

Schools should start later because kids and teens need to be well rested in order to function properly. We need to be well rested to function properly because in The Teen That Woke Up Her School it says " " About 95 percent of teenagers are walking zombies," says psychologist James Maas, a leading sleep expert." Us kids and teens also need to be well rested to be more focused and awake during school. Being more awake and rested has also proven the teens have been getting higher grades than when they were more tired.

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Idea Development—Score Point 0

The response makes a brief, unsupported reference to a class schedule with no connection to an argument about middle and high schools having later start times. The writing may show evidence the student has read the text, but it does not address the task.

Standard English Conventions—Score Point 0

The brevity of the response contributes to both a lack of clarity and incorrect sentence formation. The phrase “to 7:20 A.M to 7:50 AM” is confusing and employs incorrect, inconsistent punctuation. Given grade-level expectations for a full-length essay, this response does not show control of standard English conventions.

They both have to change the schedule to 7:20 A.M to 7:50 AM.

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