



The purpose of these sample test materials is to orient teachers and students to the appearance of passages and prompts on paper-based accommodated B.E.S.T. Writing tests. Each spring, students in grades 4–10 are administered one text-based writing prompt for the B.E.S.T. Writing test. Students will respond to either an expository prompt or to an argumentative prompt. An example of a text-based writing prompt for each grade is available for practice. To familiarize students with the response formats, teachers may encourage students to practice with each type of prompt within a grade band.

The following B.E.S.T. Writing sample test materials are available on the Florida Statewide Assessments Portal as shown below:

**Elementary Grade Band**

Grade 4 - Expository

Grade 5 - Argumentative

**Middle Grade Band**

Grade 6 - Expository

Grade 7 - Argumentative

Grade 8 - Expository

**High School Grade Band**

Grade 9 - Argumentative

Grade 10 - Expository

The sample test materials are not intended to guide classroom instruction.

To offer students a variety of texts on the B.E.S.T. Writing tests, authentic and copyrighted stories, poems, and articles appear as they were originally published, as requested by the publisher and/or author. While these real-world examples do not always adhere to strict style conventions and/or grammar rules, inconsistencies among sources should not detract from students' ability to understand and answer questions about the texts.

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# Writing Prompt

Write an argumentative essay about whether schools should have a later start time.

Your argumentative essay must be based on this prompt and topic, and it must incorporate ideas and evidence found in the sources provided.

Use your best writing to complete an essay that

- is focused on your claim;
- combines evidence from multiple sources with your own elaboration to develop your ideas;
- is organized and includes transitions within and among ideas;
- provides citations for quoted material and source ideas; and
- demonstrates correct use of grammar and language appropriate to the task.

Write your multiparagraph essay to an academic audience in the space provided.

Read the “School Start Times” sources.

## School Start Times

### Source 1: Survey finds U.S. schools start 'too early'

by Ashley Yeager

1 It’s 8 a.m. and the first school bell rings. Some students zip through the halls. Others bumble along. It’s a common scene starting again across the United States. And it’s happening a bit too early in the morning for most tweens and teens, a new survey finds.

2 Starting school too early is not just a student complaint. It’s an observation backed by science, says Anne Wheaton. She works at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, [GA]. As an epidemiologist, she [examines] the causes behind health problems. Her focus has been health problems linked with teens’ lack of sleep.

3 For a new study, she and her **colleagues** looked at the start times of an estimated 39,700 U.S. public schools during the 2011–2012 school year. The average start time was 8:03 a.m. . . .

4 That’s too early, Wheaton says. Tweens and teens are experiencing shifts in their natural sleep cycles. Their bodies’ inner “clocks” make it hard for them to go to bed before 10:30 or 11:00 p.m. But to get to school on time, they have to wake up as early as 5:30 a.m. A first school bell just after 8 a.m. slices into the 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep tweens and teens need to be healthy and perform at their best, she says. . . .

5 Indeed, Wheaton’s colleagues at CDC published a major **analysis** in *Pediatrics* last year about all of the problems teens can experience if they get too little sleep. Janet Croft of CDC (a coauthor on the new paper, as well) concluded: U.S. schools “start at such an early time that most teens are essentially brain dead when they go to these early classes.” . . .

6 The call for later school start times is an essential movement for keeping tweens and teens healthy. . . .

7 Wheaton says she and her colleagues understand that the change in school start times is not going to happen overnight. The goal, she

says, is to make sure everyone knows how important sleep is and that school start times can greatly affect how much sleep **adolescents** get each night.

**Glossary**

colleagues: people who work together

analysis: a careful study or explanation

adolescents: teenage boys and girls

Excerpt from "Survey finds U.S. schools start 'too early'" by Ashley Yeager. Copyright © 2019 by the Society for Science and the Public. Reprinted by permission of the Society for Science and the Public via Copyright Clearance Center.

**Source 2: Nature resets body's clock**

by Meghan Rosen

*The system in the body that controls when a person needs to sleep, eat, and perform other basic functions is called the internal clock. It is controlled by the brain.*

8        A short camping trip could help people rise and shine, researchers report. After a week living in tents in Colorado's Rockies, campers' internal clocks shifted about two hours earlier. It transformed even night owls into early birds. . . .

9        A master clock in the brain controls the release of melatonin. This **hormone** prepares the body for sleep. Melatonin levels rise in the early evening and then **taper off** in the morning before a person wakes up.

10       But many people today spend their days indoors and their nights [absorbed] in the glow of electric lights (including the light emitted by TVs and computers). Too little early morning light and too much evening lighting can throw the body's clock out of sync. This unnatural lighting can trigger the body to ramp up melatonin levels later at night. It can also lead the hormone levels to fall later than normal in the morning—often after a person has woken up. Lingering levels of this sleep hormone can make people groggy.

- 11 Kenneth Wright Jr., a sleep researcher at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and colleagues whisked eight volunteers away for a summer camping trip. After nightfall, the campers used only campfires for lighting. No flashlights (or cellphones) allowed.
- 12 Each day, the campers soaked up four times as much light as they got indoors. They also went to sleep and naturally woke up more than an hour earlier than they had before the trip.
- 13 Tests done after the volunteers got home again showed that their melatonin levels now climbed around sunset. They also **petered out** at sunrise—two hours earlier than before they had gone camping. . . .
- 14 “Start your day off with a morning walk, and open the [window] shades to expose yourself to sunlight,” Wright advises.

### Glossary

hormone: a substance produced naturally inside the body that affects how a body grows

taper off: gradually become weaker or smaller

petered out: came to an end

Excerpt from “Nature resets body’s clock” by Meghan Rosen. Copyright © 2013 by the Society for Science and the Public. Reprinted by permission of the Society for Science and the Public via Copyright Clearance Center.

## Source 3: Sleep In, and Stay Up Late

by Brian Brown

- 15 Many students don’t get enough sleep. Sleep is an important part of one’s physical and mental health. One solution, some people say, is to delay school start times. People point to science that says kids’ biological, natural “brain clocks” run a little slow. It has been suggested that letting students sleep in later will put them in tune with their bodies’ inner clocks.
- 16 This solution, though, may not be that simple. Recent studies from the University of Surrey and Harvard Medical School suggest that later

## B.E.S.T. Writing Sample Items

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start times in schools may not do much to improve kids' sleep. Researchers used math to predict how different school start times would affect kids' sleep. They found that unless schools are starting extremely early, moving a school's start time from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., for example, would not give kids a better night of rest.

- 17 Why? This answer actually is pretty simple. If kids know they can sleep in a little later in the morning, they are likely to stay up even later the night before. This creates two problems. First, most kids' body clocks will simply get used to a new bedtime and wake time. Within weeks, they will find it just as hard to get up. This leads to the second problem. Staying up later means kids see more artificial light, such as computer screens and cell phones. Research suggests that the biological clocks of children are especially sensitive to the effects of artificial light. This, researchers say, is the real reason kids are not getting enough sleep. A much better solution, they suggest, would be to dim lights and limit screen time in the evenings.
- 18 "Any district considering a delay in school start times should therefore also be educating its students on the impacts of using artificial light at night," one author of the study says. Any advantage of a later start to the school day could be lost unless nighttime use of artificial light is cut back, too.
- 19 Another thing to consider is the extra problems that delaying school start times would cause. Later start times would cost districts more money. Narrowing the bus pickup window would mean picking up more kids in a shorter time. This means buying more buses and hiring more drivers.
- 20 Yet another issue is that a later start to the school day would mean a later end to the school day. This could be a problem for students who want or need to work. It also limits the amount of time available for scheduling afterschool activities. Time for things like sports practice, tutoring, or music lessons would be reduced. Additionally, a late start time could be difficult for parents' work schedules. This could be really inconvenient for students who have no bus service but need to get to and from school.
- 21 Although extra sleep time for students is an important goal, making schools start later may not be the best way to achieve it. Perhaps a better focus would be finding ways to pay attention to what keeps kids from going to sleep on time in the first place.

"Sleep In, and Stay Up Late" by Brian Brown. Written for educational purposes.

# Writing Prompt

Write an argumentative essay about whether schools should have a later start time.

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Write your multiparagraph essay to an academic audience in the space provided.

Lined writing area with 25 horizontal lines.



A large rectangular area containing 25 horizontal lines, intended for writing or drawing.



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Florida Department of Education, Tallahassee, Florida  
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