

## UNIT 1: Argumentative Essay



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# Big Issues

## UNIT 1

# Argumentative Essay

STEP

1

### **ANALYZE THE MODEL**

*Evaluate an argumentative essay that offers reasons why high school should or should not begin later in the day.*

STEP

2

### **PRACTICE THE TASK**

*Write an argumentative essay that offers reasons for or against a business's right to ban teenagers from its establishment.*

STEP

3

### **PERFORM THE TASK**

*Write an argumentative essay that offers reasons for or against raising the minimum driving age.*

**H**ow do we relate to and interact with other people—friends, enemies, neighbors, strangers, and those with whom we disagree? And how does age affect the way that people act or react in difficult or controversial situations?

No doubt you have been involved in many arguments—squabbles with your friends, disagreements with siblings, and those times when you have tried to convince someone about something you want. This kind of informal, conversational give-and-take is different from a formal argument.

**IN THIS UNIT,** you will learn how to write an argumentative essay that is based on your close reading and analysis of several relevant sources. You will learn a step-by-step approach to stating a claim, and then organize your essay to support your claim in a clear and logical way.

# ANALYZE THE MODEL

*Should high school start an hour later?*



## You will read:

- ▶ **TWO INFORMATIONAL ARTICLES**  
*from Sleep Deprivation in Teenagers*  
*from School Start Time and Sleep*

## You will analyze:

- ▶ **A STUDENT MODEL**  
*We Need Our Sleep!*

## Source Materials for Step 1

The texts on these two pages were used by Mr. Louie’s student, Jon Attridge, as sources for his essay, “*We Need Our Sleep!*” As you read, make notes in the side columns and underline information that you find useful.

### NOTES

from  
**Sleep Deprivation in Teenagers**

*Medical Journal Today*

For the past 30 years, Dr. Smith and his research team have studied sleep patterns in high school students. These studies of 14 to 18-year-olds have shown that when students learn something new and are then deprived of REM sleep, their test scores go down dramatically. This comes as no surprise to Dr. Smith, who knows that certain kinds of memory are sensitive to sleep loss. He theorizes that, if 14 to 18-year-olds are susceptible to such affects when prevented from getting enough sleep, younger children might be affected more severely. Students in grade school need between 9 and 10 hours of sleep for optimal learning.

Although it may vary from person to person, most teenagers need 9.5 hours of sleep. Unfortunately, extracurricular activities, after-school jobs, and homework may result in teenagers getting no more than 7.5 hours of sleep a night. If teens consistently do not get enough sleep, their moods can be affected. They will have difficulty performing and reacting as usual.



from

## School Start Time and Sleep

*National Sleep Foundation*



“Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise,” said Ben Franklin. But does this adage apply to teenagers? Research in the 1990s found that later sleep and wake patterns among adolescents are biologically determined; the natural tendency for teenagers is to stay up late at night and wake up later in the morning. This research indicates that school bells that ring as early as 7:00 a.m. in many parts of the country stand in stark contrast with adolescents’ sleep patterns and needs.

Evidence suggests that teenagers are indeed seriously sleep deprived. A recent poll conducted by the National Sleep Foundation found that 60% of children under the age of 18 complained of being tired during the day, according to their parents, and 15% said they fell asleep at school during the year.

On April 2, 1999, Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), introduced a congressional resolution to encourage schools and school districts to reconsider early morning start times to be more in sync with teens’ biological makeup. House Congressional Resolution 135 or the “ZZZ’s to A’s” Act would encourage individual schools and school districts all over the country to move school start times to no earlier than 8:30 a.m.

### NOTES

### Discuss and Decide

You have read two sources about teenagers and sleep. Without going any farther, discuss the question: Should high school start an hour later each morning?

# Analyze a Student Model for Step 1

Read Jon's argumentative essay closely. The red side notes are the comments that his teacher, Mr. Louie, wrote.

Jon Attridge  
Mr. Louie  
English 10  
October 28

## We Need Our Sleep!

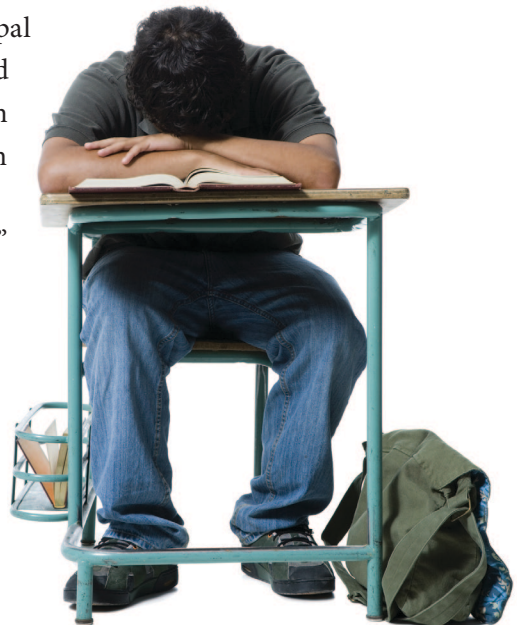
*Nice hook. The issue and your claim are both clear. Your audience is clear.*

Beep! You shut off the alarm. It's 6:00 A.M.—time to get ready for school, but you don't have the energy. According to a recent study, 85% of teens in America aren't getting the sleep they need. So you, like most of the teens in America, aren't getting the sleep you need. Is this the morning you want to experience for the rest of your school career? No. School should start later.

*Good paragraph.*

*Logical follow-up to your introduction. Valid reason, well-supported by sufficient evidence.*

Getting up too early has serious consequences. Studies from the American Psychological Association show that the frontal lobe (the section of the brain in charge of learning ability and memory) is still developing in many adolescents. Disturbing REM (rapid eye movement) sleep can slow the development of this vital portion of the brain. This can result in much lower test scores. Our principal said, "Students in first period classes tend to score lower on standardized math tests than their peers who take the same classes later in the day." We should be as concerned about disturbing students' natural sleep patterns as we are about skipping school.



Moreover, Trent University studies on sleep deprivation have shown that grades aren't the only thing that might improve. An additional hour of sleep can positively affect a student's mood and attitude. My grandfather says that when he was in school, students went to school later and were better rested. With students' moods boosted, teachers and students would get along in stress-free situations.

Some may argue that teenagers should simply adapt—go to bed earlier or otherwise adjust to the reality of an early school day. I refer them to research done in the 1990s, which found that later sleep and wake patterns in adolescents are biologically determined. Experts talked, and California Representative Zoe Lofgren listened. She introduced House Congressional Resolution 135, the “ZZZ's to A's Act,” to encourage schools to start no earlier than 8:30 A.M.

Now imagine that morning again. It's 7:00 A.M. You say to yourself, “Wow, I feel great, and I've got plenty of time to get ready.” Just one hour can make a huge difference in your mood and your day.

*You use an effective transition to create cohesion and signal the introduction of another reason. Your language is formal and non-combative. You remain focused on your purpose.*

*You anticipated and addressed an opposing claim that is likely to occur to your audience. Your answer to the opposing claim is well-supported with valid evidence.*

*Smooth flow from beginning to end. Clear conclusion restates your claim. Your evidence is convincing. Excellent use of conventions of English. Good job!*

### Discuss and Decide

Did Jon convince you that school should start an hour later? If so, which evidence was the most compelling?

# Terminology of Argumentative Texts

Read each term and explanation. Then look back at Jon Attridge’s argumentative essay and find an example to complete the chart.

Term	Explanation	Example from Jon’s Essay
<b>audience</b>	The <b>audience</b> for your argument is a group of people that you want to convince. As you develop your argument, consider your audience’s knowledge level and concerns.	
<b>purpose</b>	The <b>purpose</b> for writing an argument is to sway the audience. Your purpose should be clear, whether it is to persuade your audience to agree with your claim, or to motivate your audience to take some action.	
<b>precise claim</b>	A <b>precise claim</b> confidently states your viewpoint. Remember that you must be able to find reasons and evidence to support your claim, and that you must distinguish your claim from opposing claims.	
<b>reason</b>	A <b>reason</b> is a statement that supports your claim. (You should have more than one reason.) Note that you will need to supply evidence for each reason you state.	
<b>opposing claim</b>	An <b>opposing claim</b> , or <b>counterclaim</b> , shares the point of view of people who do not agree with your claim. Opposing claims must be fairly presented with evidence.	



## PRACTICE THE TASK

*Should a business have the right to ban teenagers?*

**You will read:**

- ▶ **A NEWSPAPER AD**  
*Munchy's Promise*
- ▶ **A BUSINESS ANALYSIS**  
*Munchy's Patrons, July and October*  
*Munchy's Monthly Sales, July–October*
- ▶ **A STUDENT BLOG**  
*Munchy's Bans Students!*
- ▶ **A NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL**  
*A Smart Idea Can Save a Business*

**You will write:**

- ▶ **AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY**  
*Should a business have the right to ban teenagers?*

## Source Materials for Step 2

**AS YOU READ** Analyze the ad, business analysis, blog, and editorial. Think about the information, including the data contained in the sources. Annotate the sources with notes that help you decide where you stand on the issue: Should a business have the right to ban teenagers?

### Source 1: Newspaper Ad

## Munchy's Promise

Aren't you tired of eating lunch surrounded by noisy high school students?

Aren't you fed up with endless cellphone conversations, loud music, messy tables?

Aren't you infuriated seeing teenage students taking over every restaurant downtown?

**We promise that you'll have the quiet lunch you deserve, because MUNCHY'S has the solution!**

**No music!  
No cellphones!  
NO STUDENTS!**

**Mr. Joe "Munchy" Jones and his team will make sure you get the midday break that YOU deserve!**

**COME TO A "QUIET LUNCH" AT MUNCHY'S!**

From noon to 3 pm, Monday through Friday, we will be a teen-free zone!



**Munchy's**  
**321 Main Street**  
**555-5252**

Use this coupon for a **10% discount** on your next "quiet lunch."

### Close Read

1. What assumptions is Mr. Jones making about teenagers?

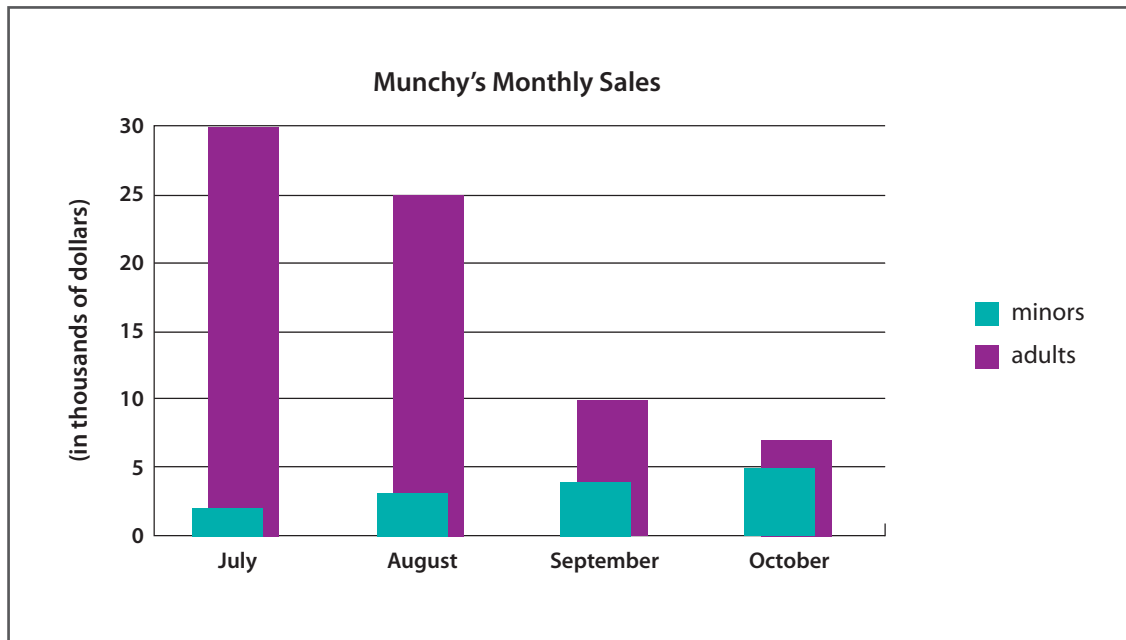
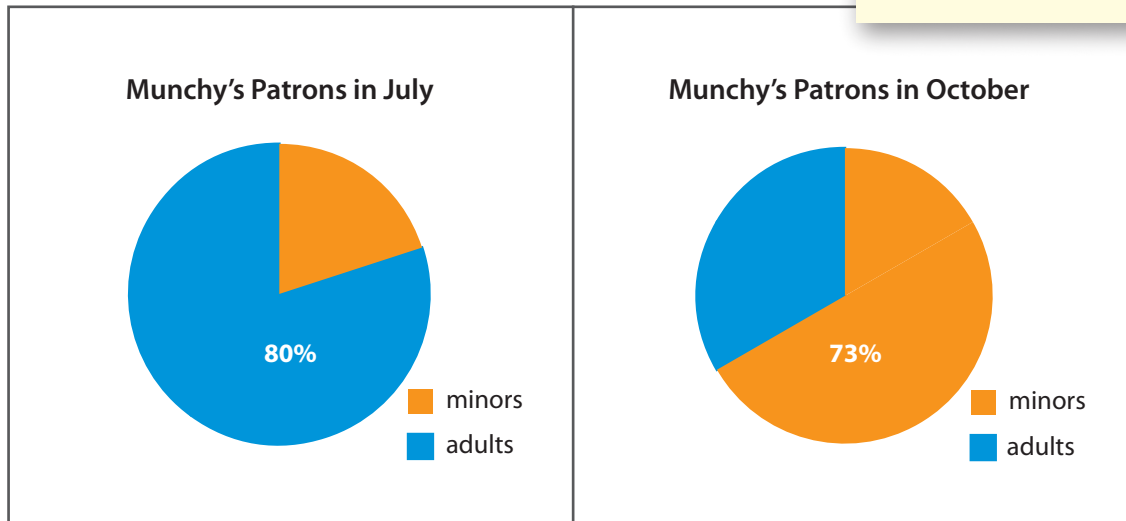
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2. What assumptions is he making about adults?

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## Source 2: Business Analysis

Mr. Jones,  
Here is the analysis of July  
vs. October data.  
Your Accountant,  
Hector Ramirez, CPA



### Discuss and Decide

1. Explain the data shown in the pie charts.
2. What is the implication of the data shown in the bar graph?
3. Explain the relationship between the two forms of data.