



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 9

Answer Key

The Case for the Four-Day School Week

Across the country, a small but growing number of school districts have switched from a traditional five-day school week to a four-day schedule. Supporters argue that the change saves districts money on transportation, utilities, and staffing, while giving teachers an extra day for planning and professional development. In districts that have already made the switch, some administrators report improved staff morale and fewer teacher resignations, since a three-day weekend can make the profession more sustainable for educators balancing demanding workloads.

Critics, however, raise serious concerns. A shorter school week generally means longer school days to make up the required instructional hours, which can be exhausting for younger students with shorter attention spans. Working parents also face a real practical problem: what happens to their children on the day school is not in session? Districts that lack access to affordable childcare options risk placing an unfair burden on lower-income families, who may not have the flexibility to take an extra day off work or pay for additional care.

Research on the four-day week's effect on student achievement remains mixed. Some studies show no significant difference in test scores, while others suggest a slight decline, particularly in math performance among younger students. Supporters counter that the studies conducted so far are limited in scope and that better implementation, such as pairing the schedule change with extended learning time on remaining days, could close any gaps.

Ultimately, the decision to adopt a four-day school week involves weighing financial and staffing benefits against potential costs to families and student learning. As more districts experiment with the model, the growing body of evidence will likely shape whether the

four-day week becomes a lasting shift in American education or a short-lived experiment.

Circle the Correct Answer

1. According to the passage, what is one reason districts adopt a four-day school week?

Answer: b) To save money and improve teacher morale

2. What concern do critics raise about longer school days under a four-day schedule?

Answer: a) They can be exhausting for younger students

3. What does the passage say about research on student achievement under a four-day week?

Answer: b) It is mixed, with some studies showing a slight decline

4. What burden do critics say a four-day week might place on lower-income families?

Answer: b) The cost or difficulty of finding childcare on the day off

True or False

5. The passage claims that all research agrees the four-day week harms student achievement.

Answer: False

6. Supporters argue that a four-day week can reduce teacher resignations.

Answer: True

7. The passage takes a firm, one-sided stance in favor of the four-day week.

Answer: False

Fill in the Blank

8. Supporters say a three-day weekend can make teaching more _____ for educators.

Answer: sustainable

9. Critics worry that lower-income families may face an unfair _____.

Answer: burden

Think and Explain

10. Identify the author's central claim in this passage. Does the author appear to take a side, or present a balanced view? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers noting that the author does not take a strong side, instead presenting both benefits (cost savings, teacher morale) and drawbacks (longer days, childcare burdens, mixed achievement data) to let the reader weigh the evidence.

11. How does the author use counterarguments in this passage, and why might a writer choose to include opposing viewpoints in a piece like this? Explain using evidence from the text.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers noting that the author presents both supporter and critic viewpoints in each paragraph (for example, supporters countering the achievement research), which builds credibility and shows the issue is genuinely complex rather than one-sided.