

Reasoning through Language Arts Extended Response Prompt:

An Analysis of Daylight Saving Time *(from GED Sample Test, ged.com)*

Twice a year, most Americans adjust their clocks before bedtime to prepare for Daylight Saving Time (DST). Every spring, clocks are moved ahead one hour. In the fall, they are moved back one hour, and all to maximize the benefits of the sun. DST was first implemented in the United States in 1918 to conserve resources for the war effort, though proponents encouraged its adoption long before then. Benjamin Franklin, for example, touted the idea of DST to citizens of France way back in 1784!

DST in America

For years following DST's U.S. debut, cities could choose if and when they wanted to participate. However, by the 1960s, the open choice resulted in various cities throughout the United States using different times. These varying times created confusion, particularly for entertainment and transportation schedules. Imagine traveling across several states, each adhering to its own little time zone!

In order to remedy the confusing situation, Congress established a start and stop date for DST when it passed the Uniform Time Act of 1966. Although this act helped clarify when DST went into effect around the country, cities were not required to use DST. To this day, parts of Arizona and all of Hawaii, for example, do not use DST.

Benefits of DST

Many studies have investigated the benefits and costs of DST. Research in the 1970s found that DST saved about 1% per day in energy costs. On average, most electricity used is for lighting and appliances. It makes sense that more sun at the end of the day meant less need for electricity. This follows right along with Ben Franklin's argument over 200 years ago.

Supporters of DST also claim that more sunlight saves lives. Studies have indicated that traveling home from work or school in daylight is safer. Nearly three decades of research shows an 8-11% reduction in crashes involving pedestrians and a 6-10% decrease in crashes for vehicle occupants after the spring shift to DST.

Other studies reveal that, following a similar logic, DST reduces crime because people are out completing chores after their business or school day in sunlight, lessening their exposure to crimes that are more common after dark.

Arguments Against DST

Opponents of DST cite other studies that disagree with these outcomes. A 2007 study in California indicated that DST had little or no effect on energy consumption that year. A three-year study of counties in Indiana showed that residents of that state spent \$8.6 million more each year for energy, and air pollution increased after the state switched to DST. The researchers theorized that the energy jump was caused in part by increased use of air conditioning as a result of maximizing daylight hours.

Recent research has also brought into question the safety aspect of the yearly switch to and from DST. In one study pedestrian fatalities from cars increased immediately after clocks were set back in the fall. Another study showed 227 pedestrians were killed in the week following the end of DST, compared with 65 pedestrians killed the week before DST ended.

The adjustment period drivers endure each year is a dangerous time for pedestrians, and Daylight Saving Time may be the reason. Instead of a gradual transition in the morning or afternoon by just minutes of sunlight each day, the immediate shift of one hour forward or backward fails to provide drivers and pedestrians time to adjust.

When you also consider the cost of the abrupt transition in terms of confusion caused by people who forget to adjust their clocks, opponents say, any benefits gained by DST are simply not worth the trouble.

PROMPT

The article presents arguments from both supporters and critics of Daylight Saving Time who disagree about the practice's impact on energy consumption and safety. In your response, analyze both positions presented in the article to determine which one is best supported. Use relevant and specific evidence from the article to support your response.

**You can make your own copy of the article by going to the menu above and selecting
FILE
then
MAKE A COPY**

Once you see the document, where it says "Copy of RLA Prompt...." Replace the "copy of" part (top left, above the menu) with your name. Then type your essay below.