

Writing

1 Read the article. What is the writer's main point of view?

- a People should eat more meat.
- b People should care more about how food affects their bodies.
- c People follow diet trends without considering the effects of it.

OPINION

Veganism is just a trend



Why is it that so many people are becoming vegan or vegetarian these days? Even my nephew who always loved a good steak has stopped eating red meat. It seems to me that people are too quick to follow trends without really thinking through the consequences.

Meat provides valuable nutrition that we all need. According to a report by nutritionist Dr Steven Peyton, we need meat in order to get protein, vitamin B, iron and zinc. Where else will we get these? They help us to build an immune system, maintain energy levels, create and repair healthy muscle, skin and hair, and manufacture and repair blood cells.

We need all of these things to remain healthy. I wonder if those who've changed their diets lately have considered that? I shouldn't get so frustrated about it, to be honest. No doubt another diet will come along in a few years and everyone will change to that. I just don't think that we should sacrifice our health for the sake of a trend.



2 Read the article again. What claims does the writer make?

- People make a choice about what they eat too quickly.
- Veganism is not a healthy lifestyle to lead.
- Meat is the only source of minerals and vitamins.
- Alternatives to meat are less effective.
- An alternative diet will replace veganism in the future.

3 Read the response below to the article in Exercise 1. Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 The writer believes that people should have a vegetarian diet.
- 2 The writer agrees with what the article says about Dr Peyton's report.
- 3 The writer says that meat is the only source of nutrients.
- 4 The writer outlines the potential health benefits of eating less meat.
- 5 The writer suggests that meat production has an impact on the planet.
- 6 The writer thinks that people should eat as much of whatever they want.

COMMENT

Comments 24

Alan, Sydney, 5 minutes ago

I am neither a vegan nor a vegetarian and I believe people should be able to choose what they eat. However, I also believe the article makes some claims that are incorrect. Firstly, the article claims that only meat provides valuable nutrients and cites Dr Peyton's report to prove it. In fact, what Dr Peyton's report said is that, while meat does provide those nutrients, there are alternative products which provide them, too. The report actually says that tofu and quinoa can help to provide protein; dark green vegetables provide vitamins and minerals, and certain nuts provide iron. Meat can be replaced. The article asserts that meat is necessary for our health, but ignores the fact that it can also be problematic for our health if eaten in very large quantities.

Like the writer's nephew, I have recently cut down the amount of meat I consume. By doing so, I've been able to reduce my cholesterol level. I am also aware of the fact that by eating less meat, I reduce my impact on the planet as meat production uses up considerable resources.

In short, I don't believe that people who become vegetarian or vegan are damaging their health, providing they eat the right foods. Similarly, I don't believe that everyone should be forced to become vegetarian or vegan. However, we should all consider the impact of what we eat on us and the world around us. In the end, when it comes to food, we should follow the rule of most things in life – everything in moderation, and not too much of anything.

REPLY

4 Read the Focus box. Match phrases a–d with points 1–4 in the box.

- a To support his opinion, the writer uses ...
- b Overall, this is incorrect, as ...
- c The writer says that ...
- d In actual fact ... says ...

Challenging evidence used in an article

To challenge the evidence used in an article, we often follow these steps.

1 Summarise the false claims

The article claims that ...

2 Give the source of the false claim

It cites ... to prove it.

3 Reject the false claim

In fact, what ... actually said is that ...

4 Summarise the truth

The report actually says that ...

Note that effective comments refer to the article or the report/research rather than the person who wrote it.

Prepare

5 You're going to write a response to an article. Read the article on sugar tax and the summaries of the research. What information from the research does the writer leave out or misrepresent?

A sugar tax may result in a change of product or consumer habits.

Not all drinks manufacturers will reduce sugar in their drinks.

Consumer habits are difficult to change.

A direct tax is more likely to be successful than an indirect one.

Consumers may replace drinks with an alternative high-sugar product.

6 Plan your response to the article. Which phrases can you use from the Focus box? Plan each paragraph and a conclusion.

Write

7 Write your response. When you have finished, check these things and edit your response if necessary.

The response clearly states what claims in the article are misrepresented.

You have explained why the writer's claims are misrepresented.

You have stated what the reports actually say, paraphrasing them.

Your summary is factually accurate.

Let's get rid of sugar

It's great that the government is finally introducing an indirect sugar tax on soft drinks. Some drinks have as many as seven teaspoons of sugar in them, something which is damaging the health of our young people. According to both the Yew Report and the Eddington Research Centre study, a sugar tax will either cause manufacturers to change their recipes and reduce the amount of sugar to avoid paying the tax, or they will pass the tax on to the consumers who will start to make healthier choices in order to pay less. In addition, the government will raise more taxes which can be set aside and used to educate people on the benefits of eating healthily and fighting rising obesity. Sounds like a win-win to me.

YEW REPORT

Impact of a sugar tax

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a detailed survey into the impact of sugar taxes in other countries. Using studies from around the world, it concludes that it is possible for a sugar tax to cause companies to reduce sugar in their products, or persuade consumers to change their habits. However, some of the most popular drinks companies will not change their recipes and some consumers are unlikely to change their habits based on a price increase.

EDDINGTON RESEARCH CENTRE REPORT

Sugar taxation and its impact

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report examines the potential effects of a sugar tax on drinks. It suggests that a tax directly paid by the consumer is more likely to have a positive impact than an indirect tax which is paid by the manufacturer. It also looks at the possibility that consumers may simply get their sugar intake by replacing drinks with other products with high sugar content.