

Activity 1 – Forming an Opinion

Fast-food chains face obesity lawsuit

Man claims he was misled over nutritional content of meals
By Sharon Krum

If Caesar Barber dreamed of winning fame, he probably didn't think it would be due to his obesity. But, since the 120kg maintenance worker filed a lawsuit against McDonald's, Wendy's, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Burger King last month - seeking damages for selling him food that made him obese - Barber's 15 minutes of fame are proving as painful as the two heart attacks he has already had. "Does anyone really believe that Mr Barber was too dumb to know that eating saturated fat was less healthy than having, say, a fruit dish or a chef salad?" said Steve Dasbach, who is the executive director of the Libertarian party.

Barber says that he was in the dark about the nutritional content of the fast food he was eating up to five times a week from the 50s onwards. Incredibly, he didn't stop gobbling burgers and salty fries after he had his first heart attack in 1996. He is now a diabetic with high blood pressure.

In his lawsuit - the first of its kind in the United States - he contends that deceptive advertising misled him about the nutritional value of the food, until a doctor pointed it out. "Those people in the advertisements don't tell you what's in the food," he says. "Now I'm obese. The fast-food industry has ruined my life. They said 100% beef. I thought that meant it was good for you." Attacks on Barber's character and perceived IQ became a sport in the US media. Barber wasn't stupid, columnists and radio hosts joked, just out to make money by failing to take responsibility for his diet. More than 75 million Americans eat fast food every day. But who, the journalists asked, doesn't know that too much will make you overweight? "Mr Barber honestly didn't know what the dangers were when he started eating fast food in the 50s," says his lawyer, Samuel Hirsch. "The fast-food chains made no effort then, and little today, to inform consumers about the dangerously high fat, cholesterol or salt content of their food." Hirsch says that his client, who has now gone into hiding, is not trying to make money but to get the chains to inform customers that their food is guilty of expanding their waistlines. However, not everyone in the US thinks Barber's case is a joke. The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine applauded the lawsuit.

The committee's research coordinator, Brie Turner-McGrivey, says that whether Barber wins or loses, the hype surrounding the case has been good for doctors, spotlighting America's obesity epidemic and the role that fast food plays in it.

The Guardian Weekly 12-9-2002, page 21

Answer the following questions:

- A) Do you think eating at fast food restaurants sometimes is OK? How often? Why?
- B) What is your favorite fast food? Explain why.
- C) When you are parents, will you let your children eat fast food? Why or why not?
- D) Do fast food restaurants have a responsibility to make their products healthy and non-fattening?
- E) Should fast food restaurants advertise honestly about contents of their food? For example, should fast food restaurants tell consumers how many calories, protein, etc. the food has? Why?
- F) Should consumers take full responsibility to decide whether to eat fast food or not? Why? If people become obese, is it the fast food companies' fault?

IELTS WRITING 2 – LESSON 23

Activity 2 – Expressing an Opinion

IELTS WRITING 2 – LESSON 23

Activity 3 – Evaluate your expression.

Model sentences structure: Read each version of the five sentences below. Check the version from each sentence that is most like something you wrote.

sentence 1	IELTS 5	Fast food is now much more widely available than it was 50 years ago
	IELTS 6	in the past 50 years the availability of fast food has increased dramatically
	IELTS 7+	The past 50 years have seen a dramatic increase in the availability of fast food
sentence 2	IELTS 6	some people feel that this kind of food plays a positive role in the world because it is convenient and cheap
	IELTS 7+	Some people believe that this kind of food has a positive role to play in the world because of its convenience and low cost
sentence 3	IELTS 5	But I believe that this kind of food is bad for the people who eat it and also for society
	IELTS 6	however, in this essay I will argue this kind of food is harmful both to individuals who eat it and to society in general.
	IELTS 7+	however, in this essay I intend to argue that this kind of food is detrimental both to the individuals that consume it and to society at large
sentence 4	IELTS 5	As everybody knows, fast food is very unhealthy
	IELTS 6	firstly, it is a well-known fact that eating too much fast food causes serious health problems.
	IELTS 7+	first of all, it is an undeniable fact that eating fast food to excess results in serious health problems
sentence 5	IELTS 5	Food like fried chicken, hamburgers and chips contain large amounts of fat and salt. They cause illnesses like high blood pressure, weight problems and heart disease.
	IELTS 6	Foods such as fried chicken, hamburgers and chips are very high in fat and salt. These foods are responsible for ailments like high blood pressure, obesity and heart disease.
	IELTS 7+	foods such as fried chicken, hamburgers and chips which are incredibly high in fat and salt are responsible for such ailments as high blood pressure, obesity and heart disease.