EXERCISE 2

Before you try to answer IELTS Reading short answer questions, it is a good idea to quickly read the text so that you understand what it is about.

Quickly read the text. Then answer the questions.

How our sweet tooth is hurting us

Over the last three centuries, the amount of sugar in the Western diet has continued to rise. Back at the start of the 18th century, a typical English family consumed less than 2 kg of sugar per year. By the end of that century, that amount had risen 400%. Compare that to the 40 kg that people now consume annually in the USA. In Germany, the second-most sugar-loving nation in the world, people eat roughly 103 grams on average per day. In the Netherlands, the country with the third-biggest sweet tooth, people eat 102.5 grams. Of course, there are some countries in the world where sweet food is less popular: in India, people eat only about 5 grams per day on average; in Indonesia, it's 14.5 grams; and in China, it's just under 16 grams. If you're not sure what 40 kg looks like, it means that the average person in the USA now eats approximately 22 teaspoons of sugar a day. The recommended limit, suggested by researchers from the World Health Organisation, is no more than 8 if you want to stay healthy, but just one can of soda contains around 10.

It is common knowledge that many drinks, in bottles or canned, contain a lot of sugar. Although advertisements say that they are 'energy-giving', professional athletes and sportsmen and women usually stay away from them. It is teenagers that are their greatest consumers. And – although advertisers promise that these drinks will make people feel energetic and active – because of the type of chemicals they have, once a person has drunk all the soda, they simply feel hungry instead. However, sugar is also in products that many shoppers find surprising, for example, cereal, which actually has a lot. Because they believe it is a healthy kind of food, parents buy it for their children's breakfast.

A large part of the problem, according to nutritionists, is that people find it hard to understand the labels on the back of food products. Nutritionists think this should be a lot easier for them. But at the moment, manufacturers don't have to write 'sugar' on them, but can use words like 'corn syrup' or 'dextran', which can result in confusion for consumers. But why should we be worried about our sugar consumption? Firstly, it is harmful to young children because it causes tooth decay; the pain from this can mean that children don't get the amount of sleep they need. As a result, they can't concentrate when they are in class. In this case, schools and

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governments have a duty to educate them about good and bad food choices. For adults, the problems increase. Eating too much sugar makes people quickly gain weight, it affects the heart and liver, and can lead to diabetes.

Which of the ideas in sentences 1–5 are mentioned in the text on page 1? Choose Yes or No. Read the text on page 1 again if you need to.

1. The increase in the amount of sugar we eat.
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No
2. The places in the supermarket where you can find sugary products.
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No
3. The way that advertising sugary products has changed.
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No
4. The health problems that sugar causes in children.
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No
5. The health problems that sugar causes in adults.
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No

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