

Session 3:

The Reading Comprehension Task

Prompt:

Reading Assessment

In the article “The Battle against Fast Food begins at Home,” the author, Daniel Weintraub, uses a report from the Center for Public Health Advocacy to explore his position that “Parents... are in the best position to fight the epidemic of overweight children in our schools.” Weintraub then provides a number of reasons for why he believes the best approach to ending childhood obesity is found within a child’s home.

Prompt:

Think about the Weintraub article critically and write a short (250 word/3 paragraph) response in which you:

- Summarize Weintraub’s argument (the specific claims and evidence he provides)
- Evaluate the strengths and/or weaknesses of his evidence
- Reflect on what other factors may be involved using your own experience

In order to help plan and organize their response, ask students to answer the “Prepare to Write” questions.

What do you have to read and write to complete this task? In other words, what is this task asking you to do?	
What are the parts of the task you need to answer?	
How do you want to organize your response?	

As you write:

- State your position clearly
- Cite specific evidence, from both authors of the provided texts, that supports your position.
- Use the conventions of standard written English.

Students write their responses in the provided student assessment booklet.

STOP. DO NOT LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING PAGES UNTIL INSTRUCTED BY YOUR TEACHER.

Writing Assessment

Obesity in the United States

Context: Over the last few days you have seen and read work by authors concerned with the rise of obesity within the United States. It is also clear from these readings that there are many causes for obesity among people of all races and socioeconomic classes.

Assignment: Write a short (500 word) essay in which you take a clear position (make an explicit argument) about how to fight the rise of obesity within the United States. Within your essay you must use evidence from the readings to highlight 2-3 causes for the rise of obesity and what the country can do to counteract those causes. You must also ensure you address what critics might say about your ideas.

For example, you may argue that:

- More supermarkets should be built in low-income neighborhoods
- Parents need to take an active role in their children’s health
- The city should tax unhealthy foods
- You may also choose to make an argument based on a combination of the factors above, OR other factors you’ve learned from reading the texts

No matter what position you take, it is important to:

- State clearly where you stand
- Back up your position with claims and evidence
- Consider why people might disagree with you (make counterclaims) and defend your position against their objections
- Use the conventions of standard written English, and vocabulary relevant to the topic

Your teacher and other readers will score your essay based on how well you: (Checklist provided below)

- **State your position** clearly and fully.
- **Make specific claim(s)** or point(s) that support your position.
- **Develop your claim(s)** using your own ideas and evidence (such as data, quotes, and observations).
- **Cite, analyze, and connect the evidence** to your argument.
- **Address claims or viewpoints that differ** from your position or argument.

- **Write a conclusion** that summarizes your argument and helps your readers to think (for instance, what future implications or consequences might result from continuing or not continuing to sanitize literary works?)
- **Organize your essay clearly** using words, phrases, transitions, and clauses to show how the parts of your argument are related.
- **Use a formal style and objective tone.**
- **Use the conventions of standard written English and vocabulary relevant to the topic.**

Preparing to Write: Think about the following questions:

- What is your position?
- What is the best evidence from the texts to support your position?
- What might people who disagree with you claim or question about your claims?

You will have two days to complete your final essay.

Students write their responses in the provided student assessment booklet.

Use the following checklist to help guide you through your writing.

Argument Check List	
Dimensions for Writing Prompt	
Using Evidence and Reasoning	
<input type="checkbox"/> I stated my position clearly	
<input type="checkbox"/> I summarized the readings carefully and fairly	
<input type="checkbox"/> I analyzed the readings and stated where I disagreed or had questions	
<input type="checkbox"/> I wrote a conclusion that summarizes my argument and makes my readers think	
Being Clear and Organized	
<input type="checkbox"/> I used words and phrases that help a reader follow my argument	
<input type="checkbox"/> My writing is clear and my ideas develop from the introduction to the conclusion	
<input type="checkbox"/> I used paragraphs to organize information and ideas that belong together	
Using Standard English	
<input type="checkbox"/> I wrote in a formal style	
<input type="checkbox"/> I have checked my grammar and spelling	
<input type="checkbox"/> I used the vocabulary that is appropriate for this topic	