

PURPOSE

To give teachers an example of a “3” level of achievement on a ThinkCERCA assignment.

TEXT

FDA-Required Calorie Counts for Fast Food Restaurants Will Not Curb the Obesity Epidemic

CERCA QUESTION

Should the FDA require fast-food restaurants to display calorie counts?

EXAMPLE STUDENT ESSAY

This is not a complete sentence.

Lots of people in the United States are obese. Adults and kids. Obesity can cause all kinds of health problems. Being obese is super bad for your health. Government agencies are trying to make it easier to not eat so many calories so that not so many people are obese but it only applies to restaurants with more than 20 locations so it doesn't do a lot of good since there are so many exceptions so it's not going to change anything. So why bother?

The FDA requirement has too many exceptions to be useful. Food is sold in plenty of places besides restaurants, like bowling alleys, amusement parks, and street vendors. Maybe people would eat less calories if they knew how many calories were in the junk food they get at these places. Groceries store sell food, too, but they don't have to list calories. People get lunch at grocery store delis sometimes, so it's just like a restaurant, but they don't have to tell how many calories are in there food. People only pay attention to how many calories are in things when they go to places like Starbucks anyway, not to chain restaurants, so labeling at these places makes no difference.

However, the labeling idea isn't new. Packages have shown how many calories the food has for years, but people still buy candy and junk food. New York City tried something like this and it didn't seem to matter. It didn't change how and where people ate, so a federal requirement won't make any difference, either.

Giving statistics is a powerful way to start an essay, but you need real numbers, not just a vague description like “lots.”

There is a lot of useful information here, but it is a run-on sentence. Try to limit sentences to one idea. This could be 2 or 3 good sentences.

“their”

While transition words are an effective way to let readers know what is coming next in your essay, this one doesn't seem to work here.

Try “also” or “In addition” or “Another reason the requirement will be ineffective...”

Showing that similar previous efforts were ineffective is a logical way to support your claim.

Though we often say this, in writing, “super” can only be used as an adjective. Try using an adverb such as “extremely” instead.

Be more specific. What is “it?”

The reader will probably assume that this means you are claiming the FDA should NOT require calorie counts, but the reader shouldn't have to assume. Your claim should be clearly stated.

Because you can count calories, there are “fewer” calories, not “less.”

“People” is overused in this essay. Try using other words such as “consumers.”

Try to avoid “things.” Be more specific. What types of “things?” If you mean “food” or “drinks” or “what they consume” then write that, instead.

This paragraph is about the exceptions to the requirement, so this sentence doesn't fit here.

CERCA Set: Government and Health

Worked Example, 9

Not being obese is about more than not eating calories. People need to pay attention to how much sodium and fat they eat. They need to exercise more and just eat less. They don't need a label that tells them how many calories are in something to know they need to eat less. People should already know that fast food is bad for you anyway, so they shouldn't be eating it, whether they know how many calories are in it or not. The problem isn't not knowing how many calories they are eating, the problem is they don't care.

Your conclusion should include a strong, clear restatement of your claim. If your claim is that the FDA should not require calorie counts, be sure to specifically write that, both in your introduction and in your conclusion.

While all of this is true, it isn't written in a way that supports your claim. It seems to be random opinion rather than evidence from the reading.