

PURPOSE

To give teachers an example of a “5” level of achievement on a ThinkCERCA assignment.

A “5” level of achievement is the goal students and teachers should be working toward throughout the year. This example represents what a student at Grade 8 should be able to do at the **END** (May) of Grade 8.

TEXT

What Role Should Government Play in Combating Obesity?

CERCA QUESTION

Are government regulations such as New York’s soda ban the best way to combat obesity in the United States?

Example Student Essay

New York City’s recent ban on large sugary drinks has put the issue of government regulations as a way to promote good health and combat obesity back in the news again. This article interviews three experts on the topic to get their perspectives on

whether or not such government regulations are actually a good way combat obesity in the United States.

The first of the three interviewees, Dr. Marion Nestle, argues that government regulations are necessary to get food and beverage companies to make changes to their products and marketing practices. In contrast, Dr. Brian Wansink claims that it is not the government’s responsibility to regulate people’s choices. Laws that call for bans have been unsuccessful in the past and people will eat what they want to eat. Finally, Michael Tanner contends that people are in control of making better food choices and it is not for the government to decide.

Nice introduction that hooks readers and gives them a sense of the argument you are addressing.

Good summary of the article.

CERCA Set: Government Role in Health Exemplar, Grade 11-12

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Interesting claim.

Taken together, these experts present a comprehensive picture of the controversy around government regulations on promoting public health. When considering all of the evidence that they present, it seems clear that government regulations have been tried, unsuccessfully, in the past, therefore government regulations are the not best way to combat obesity in the United States.

Good example evidence.

Good reasoning that ties your evidence back to your claim.

Dr. Wansink states that people will buy and eat what they want, regardless of the options presented to them. Research shows that 28% of Chicagoans ate more when given low-fat foods. The soft drink taxes in New York have led to households buying more beer. The article cites 150 years of research on human food behavior. According to Dr. Wansick, "Someone who buys a 32-ounce soft drink wants a 32-ounce soft drink," or, in other words, people are going to find their way around government regulations in order to meet their own needs and desires. This in and of itself proves that government regulations are not an effective way to combat obesity.

Good conclusion that reflects the significance of your claim.

Dr. Wansink instead recommends that the government should take responsibility for providing more health education to its citizens. "Show how parents could help preschoolers get over their food funks, how breast-feeding moms should eat, how a stressed-out parent of three can make a healthy meal after a 10-hour day," he suggests. This kind of practical education is an ideal solution because it gives consumers more information but ultimately leaves their personal choices up to them as individuals.

Good reasoning.

Michael D. Tanner, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, agrees that food choices should be a personal responsibility. He makes an additional point about why government regulations of health are not the correct solution to the obesity epidemic.

CERCA Set: Government Role in Health

Exemplar, Grade 11-12

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"One of the foundational principles of a free society is self-ownership," he says. He goes on to explain, "The state may have proper claim to limit my behavior if that behavior directly harms someone else. But my drinking a Big Gulp or eating fried food harms no one but myself." In essence, Tanner is arguing, **correctly**, that every individual has a personal responsibility to regulate their own consumption; it is improper for the government to regulate it for them. Government regulation is an intrusion on personal rights and responsibilities.

Good counter-claim from the text, but used to support your argument.

Nice pointed reminder of your claim.

One example of when government regulations were successful was when smoking led to a decrease in the number of smokers because smokers found that it was easier to quit than to live with the restrictions limiting where they could smoke or paying the higher sales taxes. According to Dr. Nestle, "smokers quit when the

sense, but it must be viewed in context. Smoking is a habit that a person can quit completely. People cannot just stop eating; they need to learn to eat healthfully and in moderation. So government regulations in this regard would be less effective than educational campaigns or other methods of combating obesity.

The experts interviewed for this article have mixed views on what government regulations can do on the fight against obesity in this country. When one considers all of the evidence, though, it is clear that what is best for the country is not more regulation, but simply educating consumers and then leaving them to make the decisions best for themselves. Citizens should encourage their governments to

educate consumers but otherwise leave individuals to make their own choices because that is the most effective and respectful way to achieve their goals of healthy citizens.

Good reasoning to address counter-argument.

Good way to point out weakness of claim.

Nice restatement of claim.

Good summary that introduces your conclusion and leads into your claim.