

# Fast Food: Who's to Blame?

Reading selections for this module:

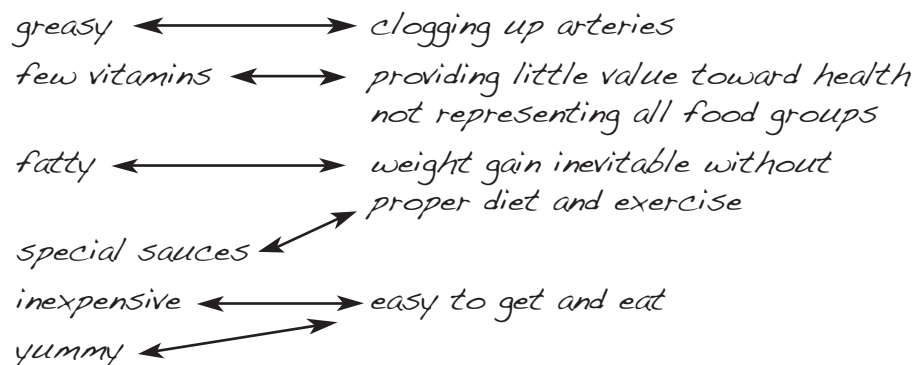
- Brownlee, Shannon. "It's Portion Distortion That Makes America Fat." *Sacramento Bee*. 5 Jan. 2003.  
Barboza, David. "If You Pitch It, They Will Eat." *New York Times*. 3 Aug. 2003.  
Weintraub, Daniel. "The Battle Against Fast Food Begins in the Home." *Sacramento Bee*. 17 Dec. 2002.  
Zinczenko, David. "Don't Blame the Eater." *New York Times*. 23 Nov. 2002.  
Ching, Roberta. Letters to the editor in response to "Don't Blame the Eater." 2003.

## Reading Rhetorically

### Prereading

#### Introducing Key Concepts

To introduce the key concepts, one option would be to pass around french fries from a fast-food restaurant in class. Ask your students to brainstorm words that describe the fries. List the words on the board or on an overhead projector, then have the students discuss their views on the relationship between fast food and obesity. Create a cause-and-effect diagram, using colored markers and arrows to connect the words that your students think share a relationship. The diagram might resemble the following:



*Note:* The activities for students provided in the Student Version for this module are copied here in the Teacher Version for your convenience. The shaded areas include the actual activities the students will see. The use of italics in the shaded areas generally indicates possible student responses and may be interspersed with notes to the teacher that are not shaded. If there are notes to the teacher within the shaded areas, they are indicated by italics and parentheses.

#### English–Language Arts (ELA) Content Standards: Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

- 1.0 Students apply their knowledge of word origins to determine the meaning of new words encountered in reading materials and use those words accurately.
- 1.3 Discern the meaning of analogies encountered, analyzing specific comparisons as well as relationships and inferences.

**Writing Applications  
(Genres and Their  
Characteristics)**

- 2.3 Write reflective compositions:
- Explore the significance of personal experiences, events, conditions, or concerns by using rhetorical strategies (e.g., narration, description, exposition, persuasion).

**Reading Comprehension  
(Focus on Informational  
Materials)**

- 2.1 Analyze both the features and the rhetorical devices of different types of public documents (e.g., policy statements, speeches, debates, platforms) and the way in which authors use those features and devices.

## Getting Ready to Read

Have the class complete the quickwrite in Activity 1.

**Activity 1: Getting Ready to Read**

Now that you have brainstormed words that you associate with french fries, write for 10 minutes on this topic:

Who's at fault for America's growing weight problem?

Then have your students discuss their views on the relationship between fast food and obesity.

An alternative to the quickwrite would be to have your students write a brief reflective composition on a topic related to the text. Have the students use rhetorical strategies (e.g., narration, description, exposition, persuasion) to explore the significance of personal experiences, events, conditions, or concerns as they write their compositions.

*A Text-Based Grammar for Expository Writing*

If you are using *A Text-Based Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing* with your class, begin Chapter 1 (Sentence Fundamentals for Expressing Ideas) now. Then do Exercise 1 (Guided Composition).

## Surveying the Text

When you are ready to assign the Brownlee, Barboza, Weintraub, and Zincenko articles and the letters to the editor, engage your students in Activity 2.

**Activity 2: Surveying the Text**

Before you read Brownlee's "Portion Distortion" and Barboza's "If You Pitch It," discuss the following questions:

- What do the titles "It's Portion Distortion That Makes America Fat" and "If You Pitch It, They Will Eat" tell you about the authors' positions on who is responsible for America's growing weight problem?

*Both titles suggest that it is the fault of the American people that they are getting fat. The first title suggests that Americans are eating too much and the second that they'll eat anything the advertisers try to sell them.*

- What do you think is the purpose of these articles?

*The articles probably want to make people aware of their own responsibility for weight gain and also make them aware of the ways that restaurants' marketing strategies have helped to make Americans fatter.*

3. “Portion Distortion” was published in *The Sacramento Bee*, and “If You Pitch It” was published in *The New York Times*. What similarities do you think the articles might have? What differences? Do you think they will be equally reliable?

*I think that both articles will be written in a fairly similar style based on their audiences, and both should be similar in their messages based on their titles. Both should be equally reliable since they were printed in reputable newspapers.*

4. What else can you tell about the articles just by looking at them?

*I'd say that both articles will give general overviews of the issue rather than in-depth analyses because neither one of them is very long.*

When you read Weintraub, Zinzchenko, and the letters to the editor, discuss the following questions:

1. On the basis of the title of his article, what do you think Weintraub's position will be? In what ways do you think his article will be similar to those of Brownlee and Barboza? In what ways do you think it will be different? What do you think his purpose is?

*The title of Weintraub's article suggests that he blames America's weight problem on parents who don't teach their children how to eat properly or who don't feed them properly at home. His article may have a similar message overall to those of Brownlee and Barboza, but I think it will differ in that he will focus on children's weight gain and parental responsibility for it. His purpose is probably to educate parents and also scold them a bit.*

2. On the basis of the title of his article, what do you think Zinzchenko's position will be? Which of the other authors do you think he might agree with?

*It sounds like Zinzchenko will take the position that fast-food food companies are to blame for America's weight problem. The title indicates that he doesn't think individuals are responsible for being overweight.*

3. What do you expect is the purpose of the letters to the editor written in response to Zinzchenko? How will they be different from Zinzchenko's article?

*Some people may have written letters to praise Zinzchenko for his article, but others have probably written to disagree with him, putting more blame on individuals than on companies. The letters will be different from the article because they'll be much shorter and to the point. They may also be more passionate sounding than the article since people who take the time to write letters to the editor likely feel strongly about whatever they're writing about.*

4. What else can you tell about the letters just by looking at them?

*All but one of the letters were written by men!*

**Reading Comprehension  
(Focus on Informational  
Materials)**

- 2.1 Analyze both the features and the rhetorical devices of different types of public documents (e.g., policy statements, speeches, debates, platforms) and the way in which authors use those features and devices.
- 2.3 Verify and clarify facts presented in other types of expository texts by using a variety of consumer, workplace, and public documents.

## Making Predictions and Asking Questions

When you assign the Brownlee and Barboza articles, engage the students in Activity 3.

### Activity 3: Making Predictions and Asking Questions

Discuss the following items about Brownlee’s “Portion Distortion” and Barboza’s “If You Pitch It”:

1. Read the first three and the last paragraphs of Brownlee’s article. What is the point of comparing burgers, fries, and cigarettes? What arguments do you think she will make?

*All three are things that many people enjoy but that can be dangerous to our health. I think she’ll argue that we have to be more careful and more responsible about what we put into our bodies. She may also argue that people can’t blame fast-food restaurants like McDonald’s for getting fat since people choose to eat at those places.*

2. Read the first three and the last paragraphs of Barboza’s article. According to Barboza, who is responsible for America’s weight problem? What arguments do you think he is going to make?

*The first and last paragraphs of Barboza’s article seem to suggest that it’s the food corporations that are responsible for America’s weight problem. I think he is going to argue that by marketing so heavily, especially with advertisements directed at children, corporations are using their money and influence to lure people into unhealthy eating. These paragraphs make it sound like he is going to put less blame on consumers and more on the fast-food corporations.*

3. Who is the intended audience for these articles? How do you know?

*The intended audience is probably the average American adult, “average American” because the articles were published in mainstream American newspapers, and “adult” because they discuss the role that adults and parents should play in making sure that they and their children eat healthily.*

4. What information and ideas are the authors likely to draw on to convince you of their positions?

*They will probably cite statistics from different studies that show the percentages of Americans who are overweight, and they may discuss the caloric and nutritional information of fast food. Barboza’s article may cite revenues for the major fast-food corporations as well as advertising costs.*

5. Reword the titles and subtitles and turn them into questions for you to answer after you have read the full articles.

*“Is it portion distortion that is making America fat?”*

*“Will Americans eat whatever advertisers pitch?”*

Now discuss the following items about Weintraub’s “The Battle Against Fast Food,” Zinczenko’s “Don’t Blame the Eater,” and the letters to the editor:

1. Read the first two and the last paragraphs of Weintraub’s article. According to Weintraub, who is responsible for America’s obesity problem?

What arguments do you think he will make?

*Based on these paragraphs, it sounds like Weintraub only blames parents for America's obesity problem because they are not teaching their kids good eating habits at home. I think that he will argue that no matter how much the advertisers try to sell their products or how little regulation the government does, the ultimate responsibility lies with parents because they aren't teaching their kids to make good choices.*

2. How do you think he will respond to the arguments raised by Brownlee and Barboza?

*I think Weintraub will agree with Brownlee about personal responsibility. However, I think he will disagree with the argument of Barboza that corporate marketing strategies are to blame because Weintraub seems to believe that people should be taught at an early age how to make decisions for themselves.*

3. Read the first two and the last paragraphs of Zinczenko's article. Why does he bring up Jay Leno's monologue? According to Zinczenko, who is responsible for America's obesity problem? What arguments do you think he will make?

*He brings up Jay Leno because people's first reaction will be to laugh about some fat kids' suing McDonald's over their weight, but I think that he is going to argue that the fast-food restaurants, not the kids, are to blame because he says that he used to be a "portly fast-food patron" himself.*

4. Zinczenko and Weintraub both argue in part from personal experience. How do their viewpoints differ?

*Zinczenko argues from the point of view of a child who was overweight but learned to control his diet after joining the Navy Reserves and starting to write for a health magazine. He contrasts his experience with most teenagers, who are likely to be obese for life if the marketing of fast food isn't changed.*

*Weintraub is a busy parent who uses his own experience as an example of how parents can set limits on junk food and TV and provide home-cooked meals and exercise opportunities for their children.*

5. Read the last paragraph of each of the letters to the editor. In each case, identify who the writer thinks is to blame. How do you know?

*The overwhelming majority of the writers seem to take the position that corporations shouldn't be blamed for America's obesity because each individual is responsible for what he/she eats and for his/her lifestyle. A couple writers suggest that Americans are too quick to file lawsuits to blame others for their own behaviors.*

## Introducing Key Vocabulary

There are many ways to teach vocabulary, and each will enhance the students' reading comprehension. This module offers three strategies: (1) the categorization and connection of words that are similar by concept through semantic mapping (or webbing); (2) the use of vocabulary self-

### Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

- 1.0 Students apply their knowledge of word origins to determine the meaning of new words encountered in reading materials and use those words accurately.
- 1.1 Trace the etymology of significant terms used in political science and history.
- 1.2 Apply knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Anglo-Saxon roots and affixes to draw inferences concerning the meaning of scientific and mathematical terminology.

### COLLEGE EXPECTATIONS

In addition to responding to the ELA standards, these activities are designed to develop the vocabulary skills assessed by college placement exams, such as the California State University English Placement Test and the University of California Analytical Writing Placement Exam. Students should be able to do the following:

- Recognize word meanings in context.
- Respond to tone and connotation.

assessment charts, whereby your students see the words that will be in the articles and predict their meanings; and (3) increasingly in-depth practice at using words correctly and using them in additional forms. Simply put, if your students grasp the general concept of the module and then explore the textual words that may cause comprehension difficulties, they will need to know how to find out more about the unknown words.

### First Vocabulary Strategy: Semantic Maps

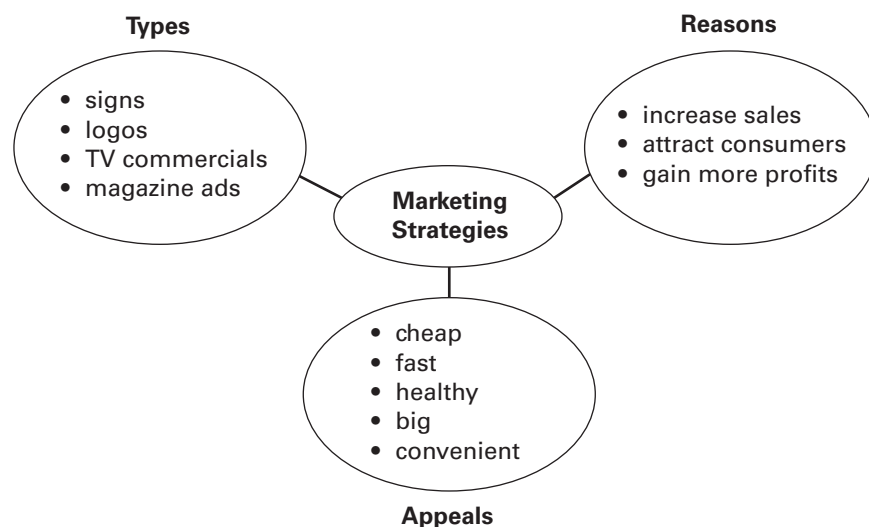
To use this strategy, divide the class into four groups to create semantic maps for “fast food,” “marketing,” “portions,” and “obesity.” Assign a word or term to each group, and have your students create a poster or overhead of a semantic map for their assigned word or term. The students will need to generate related categories (or you may suggest them) and then specific examples. Semantic maps help students remember word meanings and understand the passages in which the words are used. Mapping works best when, instead of working individually, students work as a whole class or in small groups. In doing so, students will learn additional words generated by the class in the process of constructing the maps. Have your students list those words conceptually in their notebooks and encourage them to add to their lists throughout the module.

### Activity 4: Introducing Key Vocabulary

#### Semantic Map

Your teacher will divide you into groups and assign a word to your group. Your teacher will give categories that relate to the word or ask you to create more categories. You will list specific examples for each category as a group.

Here is an example of a Semantic Map:



Remind your students that as they learn new words, they will learn the words most effectively by making connections to those words as well as by connecting them to other words in the articles. The semantic map is one way for your students to connect new words; that is, if they can find and

make the connections. As the students look at the words listed, ask them to draw connections between the words or concepts and to identify which words seem to go together.

### Second Vocabulary Strategy: Vocabulary Self-Assessment Charts

Students' acquisition of vocabulary occurs on a continuum. With repeated exposures, your students will gradually refine their understanding of the meaning of words and the circumstances under which they can be used correctly. The vocabulary self-assessment chart in Activity 5 will help your students determine whether a word is familiar and to what degree. It will also help draw their attention to particular words that are important to know in order to understand the article. After your students have filled out the chart, ask them to share with the class their knowledge of the words. Identify which words the students do not know and teach those words to them. One way to do this is to introduce them to word families, such as "distort" and "distortion." Point out that suffixes, such as "-ion," show that a word is a noun and indicate how the word can be used in a sentence.

Now have your students complete Activity 5.

### Activity 5: Assessing Key Vocabulary

#### Vocabulary Self-Assessment Chart

Word	Definition	Know It Well	Have Heard of It	Don't Know It
<b>Vocabulary from Brownlee's "Portion Distortion" and Barboza's "If You Pitch It"</b>				
portion	<i>a serving of food</i>			
distortion	<i>when something is pushed out of shape</i>			
manipulation	<i>to make someone do what you want by deceiving them</i>			
revenue	<i>income</i>			
induce	<i>to make someone do something</i>			
promotional	<i>something done to advertise something</i>			
marketing	<i>activities done to sell products</i>			
class-action	<i>a lawsuit for a whole group of people</i>			
proliferation	<i>spread or expansion</i>			
<b>Vocabulary from Weintraub's "The Battle Against Fast Food"</b>				
epidemic	<i>a sudden increase in something bad happening</i>			
step up to the plate	<i>take charge of something</i>			
face up to the fact	<i>admit that something is true</i>			

Word	Definition	Know It Well	Have Heard of It	Don't Know It
crunched data	<i>calculated numbers</i>			
implement	<i>cause to happen</i>			
prevalence	<i>large amount</i>			
incentives	<i>things that encourage you do to something</i>			
sloth	<i>laziness</i>			
opiate	<i>drug that dulls pain</i>			
purveyors	<i>sellers</i>			
<b>Vocabulary from Zirczenko's "Don't Blame the Eater" and the letters to the editor</b>				
latchkey kid	<i>child left home alone by working parents</i>			
prepared food	<i>food that has been cooked and is ready to eat</i>			
alternatives	<i>choices</i>			
launching	<i>starting something new</i>			
vulnerable	<i>easily harmed</i>			
litigious	<i>eager to file lawsuits</i>			
liability	<i>legal responsibility for something</i>			
entitled	<i>owed something</i>			
defendant	<i>person being accused in a lawsuit</i>			
plaintiff	<i>person bringing a lawsuit</i>			
clogging	<i>blocking something so it doesn't run freely</i>			
credibility	<i>believability</i>			

### *A Text-Based Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing*

If you are using *A Text-Based Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing* with your class, continue with Chapter 1 (Sentence Fundamentals for Expressing Ideas) now. Teach mini-lessons and assign exercises 2–10 as you move through the Reading and Postreading sections of this unit.

# Reading

## Writing Strategies

- 1.7 Use systematic strategies to organize and record information (e.g. anecdotal scripting, annotated bibliographies).

## Reading Comprehension (Focus on Informational Materials)

- 2.2 Analyze the way in which clarity of meaning is affected by the patterns of organization, hierarchical structures, repetition of the main ideas, syntax, and word choice in the text.

## First Reading

Your students are now ready for Activity 6.

### Activity 6: First Reading

Read each article as your teacher assigns it. As you read, think about the predictions you made. You may notice words you worked with in the previous activities. As you look at these words, think about personal connections you can make with them and with the other words. Try to group them together if they relate.

## Rereading the Text

For activities 7, 8, and 9, divide the class into two groups, Group A and Group B. Assign Group A to work with “Portion Distortion” and Group B to work with “If You Pitch It.”

Have your students work individually to answer the questions in Activity 7 for their assigned article.

### Activity 7: Rereading the Text

Your teacher will divide the class into two groups. If you are in Group A, you are assigned Brownlee’s “Portion Distortion.” If you are in Group B, you are assigned Barboza’s “If You Pitch It.”

#### Group A

Now that you know what “Portion Distortion” is about, answer the following questions:

1. Think back to your original predictions. Which were right? Which did you have to modify as you read “Portion Distortion”?
2. What is the main idea of “Portion Distortion”? Who does Brownlee think is to blame for America’s obesity problem? Underline or highlight the sentence that most clearly indicates who is to blame.
3. What does Brownlee think is the solution to the problem?

#### Group B

Now that you know what “If You Pitch It” is about, answer the following questions:

1. Think back to your original predictions. Which were right? Which did you have to modify as you read “If You Pitch It”?
2. What is the main idea of “If You Pitch It”? Underline or highlight the sentence that most clearly indicates why food companies aim their advertisements at children.
3. What does Barboza think is the solution to the problem?

## Annotating the Text

Your students are now ready to annotate the text as specified in Activity 8.

### Activity 8: Annotating the Text

#### Group A

Reread Brownlee’s “Portion Distortion,” and annotate it as you go along. Underline, highlight, draw arrows, and write comments in the left-hand margin about the main ideas, questions or objections, and connections between the ideas. Write your reactions to what Brownlee says in the right-hand margin.

Compare your annotations with a classmate in Group A. Then, if you choose, revise your annotations.

#### Group B

Reread Barboza’s “If You Pitch It,” and annotate it as you go along. Underline, highlight, draw arrows, and write comments in the left-hand margin about the main ideas, questions or objections, and connections between the ideas. Write your reactions to what Barboza says in the right-hand margin.

Compare your annotations with those of a classmate in Group B. Then, if you choose, revise your annotations.

Now that your students have worked in pairs to compare their annotations to the same article, have them move on to Activity 9.

## Looking Closely at Language

Your students have been challenged with a significant amount of unfamiliar vocabulary in the Fast Food assignment. Now is a good time to assess their understanding of that vocabulary. You can now use focused questions that will take your students beyond simple memorization or matching techniques and require them to demonstrate a deeper understanding of new academic words and terms.

The following exercise will give your students a chance to pronounce and use the academic language contained in the articles as they focus on the meaning of that language in context. If you ask your students to write their answers to the questions, make sure they share their answers orally afterward so they can practice saying the new words.

### Activity 9: Looking Closely at Language

Answer the following questions:

1. According to Zinzchenko’s “Don’t Blame the Eater,” why are kids suing McDonald’s?
2. According to Zinzchenko, what are the choices for American kids to get an affordable meal? Use the word “option” in your answer.

#### Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

- 1.0 Students apply their knowledge of word origins to determine the meaning of new words encountered in reading materials and use those words accurately.

**Reading Comprehension  
(Focus on Informational  
Materials)**

- 2.1 Analyze both the features and the rhetorical devices of different types of public documents (e.g., policy statements, speeches, debates, platforms) and the way in which authors use those features and devices.
- 2.2 Analyze the way in which clarity of meaning is affected by the patterns of organization, hierarchical structures, repetition of the main ideas, syntax, and word choice in the text.

3. What causes 30 percent of the new cases of childhood diabetes in America?
4. Give an example of an alternative to fast food. How easy is it for kids to purchase that alternative?
5. Do people who buy fast food know how many calories they are eating? Use the word “consume” or “consumer” in your answer.
6. What do you think of kids who file lawsuits against the fast-food industry?
7. Do you agree with Zinzchenko that the fast-food industry is vulnerable?
8. Do you make informed choices when you buy fast food?

## Considering the Structure of the Text

In the following activities, your students will map out or otherwise graphically represent various aspects of the text so they can gain a clearer understanding of the writer’s approach to the content of the essay. The activities will lead to more questions that will help your students analyze what they have read.

### Activity 10: Considering the Structure of the Text

Reread Zinzchenko’s “Don’t Blame the Eater,” and then do the following:

- Draw a line across the page where the introduction ends. Is it after the first paragraph, or are there more introductory paragraphs? How do you know?
- Draw a line across the page where the conclusion begins. Is it the last paragraph, or are there several concluding paragraphs? How do you know?
- Discuss in groups or as a class why the lines were drawn where they were. In this activity, thinking and reasoning about organizational structure is more important than agreeing on where the lines should be drawn.
- Further divide the body of the text into sections by topics (what each section is about).
- Write a short description of what each section is about, what it says about that topic, and why you think the writer put it there (the *rhetorical function* of the section).

Now answer the following questions:

- How does each section affect the reader? What is the writer trying to accomplish?
- What does each section say? What is the content?
- Which section is the most developed?
- Which section is the least developed? Does it need more development?
- Which section is the most persuasive? The least persuasive?
- On the basis of your chart of the text, what do you think is the main argument? Is that argument explicit or implicit?

**Word Analysis, Fluency,  
and Systematic Vocabulary  
Development**

- 1.0 Students apply their knowledge of word origins to determine the meaning of new words encountered in reading materials and use those words accurately.

Make a map of the ideas in the article by doing the following:

- Draw a circle in the center of the page and label it with the text's main idea.
- Record the text's supporting ideas on branches that connect to the central idea.
- Ask yourself how the ideas are related to one another.

Compare your map with a partner's. Make any changes needed to make your map reflect the ideas of the article more accurately.

## Revisiting Key Vocabulary

Now have your students move on to Activity 11.

### Activity 11: Revisiting Key Vocabulary

Discuss the denotations (literal meaning) and connotations (emotional associations) of these words from Barboza's "If You Pitch It":

- blitzkrieg: *[den.] A swift, sudden military offensive, usually by combined air and mobile land forces. [con.] Since it's a military term, particularly a German one used during WWII, it gives a sense of a hostile attack.*
- perverts (verb): *[den.] To bring to a bad or worse condition. [con.] Because of common usage, it has a sexual connotation.*
- assault: *[den.] A physical or verbal attack. [con.] Suggests criminality.*
- threatening: *[den.] Announcing the possibility of something. [con.] Suggests physical violence or danger.*
- lock out: *[den.] To withhold work from employees during a labor dispute. [con.] Brings to mind incarceration and terms such as lock up and lockdown.*

Discuss the vocabulary further with your class as follows:

What does the use of these words imply about the author's view of fast-food marketing?

*All of these words have negative connotations and imply the author's own disapproving views of fast-food marketing.*

If you are in Group A, work with a Group A member to identify "loaded" words in Brownlee's "Portion Distortion."

*Sniggering, litigious, ludicrous, manipulation, fast-food joints, hard-core, induced, slashed, creeping, mountain, slab, stroke of genius, extracts, oceanic, gargantuan, self-cannibalizing, saturated, killing.*

If you are in Group B, work with a Group B member to identify other "loaded" words in Barboza's "If You Pitch It."

*Fiercest, ban, staggering, epidemic, dominate, breach of duty, kickback, pitch-man, reveled, scapegoat, backlash, exploited, gatekeeper, captive audience.*

Now share with the class the words you have found.

### Third Vocabulary Strategy: Vocabulary for Getting Ready to Write

Students draw on their receptive vocabulary as they read. They may not know the precise meaning of a word (or the other words that must be used with that word), but they can understand what that word means in the context of what they are reading. When your students write, they will need to use their active vocabulary; they will need more precise knowledge of what a word means and how it is used in a sentence with other words (e.g., “project” is not followed by a preposition, but “discriminate” is).

Activity 13 is designed to help your students become aware not only of word meanings but of word forms as well.

*Note:* Depending on your students’ vocabulary knowledge, you may decide to have them choose appropriate synonyms rather than giving them a list of words from which to select. Suggested vocabulary words follow:

obesity	advertisements
responsible	portion
claim	unhealthy
provide	ban

#### Activity 12: Refining Key Vocabulary

##### Getting Ready to Write

This exercise is designed to help you become aware not only of the word meanings but of word forms as well.

1. Some critics of the fast-food industry claim that it intentionally tries to make us eat too much.
2. Increasing portion sizes while keeping costs down induces customers to eat more.
3. Parents are responsible for making sure their children eat nutritious food and get enough exercise.
4. The lack of physical education in the schools is contributing to the epidemic of childhood obesity.
5. It’s the fault of parents who let their children eat unhealthy food.
6. We shouldn’t ban junk food until we encourage more personal responsibility for one’s own health.
7. Advertisements for fast food should carry warning labels, such as those for tobacco and alcohol.
8. Fast-food restaurants need to provide nutrition information to consumers.

**Prerequisite Seventh Grade: Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)**

- 2.5 Write summaries of reading materials:
- Include the main ideas and most significant details.
  - Use the student's own words, except for quotations.
  - Reflect underlying meaning, not just the superficial details.

**Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)**

- 2.2 Write responses to literature:
- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas in works or passages.

## Postreading

### Summarizing and Responding

In Activity 13, your students will summarize and respond to the article they have reread. The class will work again in two groups.

#### Activity 13: Summarizing and Responding

##### Group A

Write a summary of Brownlee's "Portion Distortion" following the guidelines below. Then write your response to Brownlee's views.

Now exchange your summary/response with a partner from Group B. Use the Peer Response form to evaluate your partner's summary/response to "If You Pitch It."

##### Group B

Write a summary of Barboza's "If You Pitch It" following the guidelines below. Then write your response to Barboza's views.

Now exchange your summary/response with a partner from Group A. Use the Peer Response form to evaluate your partner's summary/response to "Portion Distortion."

#### Peer Response to Summary

1. Does the writer include the author's name in the first sentence of the summary? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
*Writer: Include the author's name.* No \_\_\_\_\_

2. Does the writer include the title of the essay in the first sentence of the summary? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
*Writer: Include the title of the essay.* No \_\_\_\_\_

Is the title in quotation marks? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
*Writer: Punctuate the title using quotation marks.* No \_\_\_\_\_

3. Does the first sentence clearly state the main idea of the article? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
*Writer: State the main idea in the first sentence. Make sure it is clear and accurate.* No \_\_\_\_\_

You can improve your first sentence by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Does the writer include all of the important ideas or supporting points from the essay? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
*Writer: You left out an important point (specify which):* No \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Does the writer use his/her own words? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
*Writer: You used the author's words instead of your own.*  
 (Tell where—give paragraph or line number.) \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
6. Does the writer keep his/her own opinions out of the summary? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
*Writer: You mentioned your opinion in the summary.*  
 (Tell where—give paragraph or line number.) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Remember to save your opinion for your response! No \_\_\_\_\_

(From *LS 15 Course Materials*, California State University, Sacramento; copyright 2003)

Now have the class discuss both articles. Ask your students whether they agree or disagree with the authors' views about marketing and its relationship to obesity.

## Thinking Critically

Assign Activity 14 as homework, instructing your students to be prepared to discuss their answers with the class the following day. They should choose one article in question one and answer all the questions that follow about that article.

### Reading Comprehension (Focus on Informational Materials)

- 2.4 Make warranted and reasonable assertions about the author's arguments by using elements of the text to defend and clarify interpretations.
- 2.5 Analyze an author's implicit and explicit philosophical assumptions and beliefs about a subject.
- 2.6 Critique the power, validity, and truthfulness of arguments set forth in public documents; their appeal to both friendly and hostile audiences; and the extent to which the arguments anticipate and address reader concerns and counterclaims (e.g., appeal to reason, to authority, to pathos and emotion).

### Activity 14: Thinking Critically

Think about the following questions, and then write your answers.

#### Questions about Logic (Logos)

- Which article is the most convincing?  
*I think Zinzchenko's "Don't Blame the Eater" is most convincing. I believe him because he talks about his own experience. He's not just a reporter looking for a topic for a story.*
- What are the major claims presented in that article?  
*He claims that consumers, especially teenagers, can't find alternatives to fast food and that information about fast food is hard to find too.*
- Are there claims in the article that are weak or unsupported? What are they?  
*No, he provides support for both his claims.*
- What other counterarguments could the author consider?  
*He doesn't consider the argument that health agencies should encourage parents, including working parents, to set limits on junk food and TV and prepare healthy home-cooked meals. He also doesn't consider the role of schools in failing to provide healthy lunches and snacks as well as physical education*
- Has the author left out an argument on purpose?  
*Zinzchenko hasn't talked about the role of advertising and marketing in making consumers want to buy fast food. That's where the articles by Brownlee and Barboza are stronger.*

**COLLEGE EXPECTATIONS**

In addition to responding to the ELA standards, these questions are designed to develop the skills assessed by college placement exams, such as the English Placement Test and the Analytical Writing Placement Exam. Students should be able to do the following:

- Identify important ideas.
- Understand direct statements.
- Draw inferences and conclusions.
- Detect underlying assumptions.
- Recognize word meanings in context.
- Respond to tone and connotation.

**Questions about the Writer (Ethos)**

1. What is the author's background?

*(As he tells us in the article, Zinzchenko was overweight as a child. His parents divorced when he was six, and his mother had three jobs to support the two of them. His father smoked, ate too much, and didn't exercise. He died of a stroke when he was 52. Zinzchenko was in the Naval Reserve while he was in college. [Kinetz, Erica. "Who's the Man? Dave." The New York Times. 3 Sept. 2006]).*

2. Is this author knowledgeable? Smart? Successful?

*(David Zinzchenko is the editor in chief of Men's Health, a magazine with a circulation of almost 1.8 million readers that specializes in articles about men's lives. He is an expert on diet and health and the author of The Abs Diet, a best-seller in 2004 [Kinetz, Erica. "Who's the Man? Dave." The New York Times. 3 Sept. 2006]. He's an expert who has written books, and his magazine is widely read, but I'm also impressed by his personal experience. He has firsthand knowledge of what it's like to be overweight and how exercise and healthy eating can lead to good health. It's the combination of experience and expertise that makes me believe what he has to say.)*

3. What does the author's style and language tell you about him or her?

*His style is informal. He sounds like a real person and writes about his personal experiences, not just scientific studies. He also talks straight at the reader: "Whatever happened to personal responsibility," he asks. "And the problem isn't just theirs—it's all of ours." "Make fun if you of these kids . . ."*

4. Do you trust this author? Why or why not?

*I trust him because he's willing to talk about himself, but he also uses good arguments. Also, he's young and he's the editor of a health magazine so he probably knows what he's talking about.*

5. Do you think this author is deceptive? Why or why not?

*No, I think he's being really straight with us.*

6. Do you think this author is serious? Why or why not?

*Yes, even though he starts out talking about Jay Leno, he ends up talking about how important it is for people to know about the unhealthiness of fast food. He says if we don't, "we'll see more sick, obese children and more angry, litigious parents." Even though he ends with a jab, "let the deep-fried chips fall where they may," I think he really cares about this topic.*

**Questions about Emotions (Pathos)**

1. How does the article affect you emotionally? Which parts?

*Zinzchenko's. He appeals to me emotionally when he says he was a latchkey kid, and his parents were split up.*

2. Do you think the author is trying to manipulate your emotions? How?

*He's trying to make me feel sympathetic for him and his parents. He probably also hopes I'll identify with him because my experiences are probably pretty much like his.*

3. Do your emotions conflict with your logical interpretation of the arguments?

*No, but they makes it easier for me to accept his argument that the fast-food companies are responsible for childhood obesity. Even if you believe adults are responsible for themselves, it's pretty clear that a kid like he was isn't really to blame for being overweight.*

4. Does the author use humor? How does this affect your acceptance of his or her ideas?

*Yes, he does use humor, and it definitely makes me like him and think that what he says is true.*

Later, ask your students to share and discuss their answers in small groups. You might choose to assign each group just one or two questions, or you might ask your students to work in groups to come up with more answers. In either case, review the answers with the whole class and guide the students toward identifying the most likely correct answer to each question on the basis of evidence from the text.

## Connecting Reading to Writing

### Writing to Learn and Using the Words of Others

Your students have already been “writing to learn” through the act of writing as they take notes, make marginal notations, chart the text, and answer discussion questions. Now they are ready to use what they have learned to produce more formal assignments that can serve as outcomes of the reading process.

One of the most fundamental academic tasks is incorporating the words and ideas of others into the writer’s own text. Your students will need to learn how to quote, paraphrase, and summarize materials they have read and to respond to and use those materials as they make and support their own arguments.

#### *A Text-Based Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing*

Chapter 8 in *A Text-Based Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing* provides extensive practice in the process of incorporating the words of others into one’s own writing. Although it is based on Module 8, Into the Wild, you might want to adapt some of the instruction and activities to use with your students at this point in this module.

#### **Prerequisite Ninth and Tenth Grade ELA Standards: Writing Strategies**

- 1.4 Develop the main ideas within the body of the composition through supporting evidence (e.g., scenarios, commonly held beliefs, hypotheses, definitions).
- 1.5 Synthesize information from multiple sources and identify complexities and discrepancies in the information and the different perspectives found in each medium (e.g., almanacs, microfiche, news sources, in-depth field studies, speeches, journals, technical documents).
- 1.6 Integrate quotations and citations into a written text while maintaining the flow of ideas.

# Writing Rhetorically

## Prewriting

### Writing Strategies

- 1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the elements of discourse (e.g., purpose, speaker, audience, form) when completing narrative, expository, persuasive, or descriptive writing assignments.

### Reading the Assignment

Many students have trouble with writing assignments because they don't read the assignment carefully. Here are some strategies that might help your students overcome this problem:

Read the assignment carefully with your students. Many problems with student work, particularly in timed, high-stakes writing situations, arise because students fail to completely understand what the writing assignment asks them to do. The explanations in Appendix C in the Assignment Template can help clarify some key assignment words. On-demand essay assignments require students to do three tasks:

1. Explain a writer's argument. This should be a paraphrase that demonstrates that your student understands the argument (not simply quotations). The student must decide if the argument the writer makes is convincing and if the conclusion is justified.
2. Take a position on the writer's conclusion to the argument.
3. Construct an argument in response. Your student can agree with the writer, disagree with the writer, or agree in part but not fully with the writer.

### Activity 15: Reading the Assignment

#### On-Demand Writing Assignment

You will have 45 minutes to plan and write an essay on the topic assigned below. Before you begin writing, read the passage carefully and plan what you will say. Your essay should be as well-organized and carefully written as you can make it.

As Americans add pounds, critics are increasingly blaming the fast-food industry. Teenagers have filed lawsuits blaming McDonald's for their health problems, and a public health group in California has asked the governor to declare childhood obesity a state of emergency. But parents—not the fast food companies, not the government—are in the best position to fight the epidemic of overweight children. Parents are responsible for teaching healthy eating and exercise habits. Parents are to blame if they let their kids eat unhealthy foods and sit in front of the television or computer for hours at a time. We have laws against parents leaving a loaded weapon where children can find and use it to hurt themselves or others. It's time to get parents to take

the same responsibility to protect their children from unhealthy foods and lack of exercise.

Adapted from Daniel Weintraub's  
 "The Battle Against Fast Food Begins in the Home"  
*The Sacramento Bee*, December 17, 2002

Explain Weintraub's argument and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with his analysis. Support your position, providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Take the following steps for this exercise:

- Read the assignment carefully.
- Decide which issue you are going to discuss.
- Discuss the purpose of the assignment. What will you try to accomplish in your essay?

### Writing Strategies

- 1.0 Students write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument. The writing demonstrates students' awareness of the audience and purpose and progression through the stages of the writing process.

## Getting Ready to Write

The following activity will help your students read an on-demand writing topic. A modified version of the "Ethos, Logos, and Pathos" questions provides a tool for students to analyze arguments such as the assignment above and generate ideas to write about.

### Activity 16: Getting Ready to Write

As you think about what you will write, answer the following questions about the passage included in the writing assignment.

1. What are the author's major claims?  
*Weintraub claims that parents are in the best position to control their children's weight. He says that they are responsible for teaching their children healthy eating and exercise habits.*
2. Which claim is the strongest? The weakest? Has he or she left any out?  
*Weintraub is right that parents need to provide healthy food for their children and monitor their TV and computer time; however, he ignores the argument that schools play a big role. He also doesn't talk about the lack of availability of healthy food or outdoor exercise opportunities in poor communities. Finally, he skips over the argument that the fast-food and advertising industries have put profits ahead of the health of consumers.*
3. How credible is the author on this topic?  
*Weintraub is a journalist and may also be a parent and speaking from personal experience. He is not an expert such as a scientist or a policy maker. After reading the articles in this unit, I probably know as much as he does.*
4. How does the argument affect you emotionally?  
*I'm a little overweight myself, but I don't think it's my mom's fault. She works long hours and doesn't have time to do a lot of cooking. I eat a lot of*

*fast food, but if anybody's responsible, it's me. I happen to like donuts more than oatmeal. I don't agree that parents are to blame, or at least not completely.*

5. Has the author tried to manipulate your emotions? How?

*Weintraub is trying to manipulate me by comparing parents' lack of involvement in their children's eating and exercise to parents leaving a loaded gun around. He makes the issue seem too simple—it's just the fault of irresponsible parents. I know the responsibility for childhood obesity is way more complicated than that since it involves schools, neighborhoods, the fast-food industry and advertising and the media.*

Once the student has concluded that “the responsibility for childhood obesity is way more complicated than that,” he or she can use an invention strategy designed to generate ideas, points, and arguments to develop ideas about who is responsible. Typical strategies include brainstorming, informal outlines, quickwrites, and “webbing” or “clustering.” (Appendix D in the Assignment Template contains descriptions of several prewriting options.)

Your students also need to consider the audience for their essays. The students should think about what most people know and think about the topic of their papers, remembering that their audience will not have read the same articles that they have. When your students refer to the readings, they need to identify the source of the argument and briefly summarize it. If your students want to change the opinions of the audience, they need to think about persuasive techniques, both logical and emotional.

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## Formulating a Working Thesis

Most students will find it helpful to formulate a working thesis statement at this point. Your students can go through their “invention” work to decide what statement or assertion they want to support. Although students can be successful with different approaches to writing, a strong, focused thesis statement can keep the writer on track.

You might encourage your students to answer the following questions in their journals.

### Activity 17: Formulating a Working Thesis

Writing down a tentative thesis at this point is a good habit to develop in your writing process. Your thesis should be a complete sentence and can be revised several times. But a focused thesis statement will keep your writing on track.

Record your responses to the following questions in preparation for writing your tentative thesis statement:

#### Writing Strategies

- 1.3 Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained, persuasive, and sophisticated way and support them with precise and relevant examples.

- What specific question will your essay answer? What is your response to this question? (This is your tentative thesis.)
- What support have you found for your thesis?
- What evidence have you found for this support? For example, you can use facts, statistics, quotes from authorities, personal experience, anecdotes, stories, scenarios, and examples.
- How much background information do your readers need to understand your topic and thesis?
- If readers were to disagree with your thesis or the validity of your support, what would they say? How would you address their concerns (what would you say to them)?

Now draft a possible thesis for your essay.

*Sample working thesis for “Fast Food” essay: Although individuals share some responsibility, the main cause of America’s obesity epidemic is the fast-food industry.*

After your students formulate a working thesis, giving them feedback (either individually or as a class activity) before they begin to write is important. Potential writing problems can be averted at this stage—before the students generate their first drafts.

## Writing

### Composing a Draft

The first draft of an essay written under timed conditions needs to be a nearly finished essay. This does not mean that it could not be further revised and edited to produce a more polished final draft, but it does mean that it must fully respond to the writing prompt and reflect the writer’s best effort to create a convincing argument. The writer needs to write the essay using notes from the prewriting process and the working thesis. Time spent recopying is not time well-spent.

#### Activity 18: Composing a Draft

When you write an argument essay, choose an approach to the subject that matters to you. If you have strong feelings, you will find it much easier to gather evidence and convince your readers of your point of view. Keep in mind, however, that your readers might feel just as strongly about the opposite side of the issue. The following guidelines will help you write a good argument essay.

1. **State your opinion on the topic in your thesis statement.** To write a thesis statement for an argument essay, you must take a stand for or against an action or an idea. In other words, your thesis statement should

#### Writing Strategies

- 1.3 Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained, persuasive, and sophisticated way and support them with precise and relevant examples.

be debatable—a statement that can be argued or challenged and will not be met with agreement by everyone who reads it. Your thesis statement should introduce your subject and state your opinion about that subject.

Daniel Weintraub’s thesis is the third line of the passage: “But parents—not the fast-food companies, not the government—are in the best position to fight the epidemic of overweight children.” This is Weintraub’s position, and it is a debatable thesis. Some other statements about fast food and the epidemic of overweight children would not be debatable and therefore would not be effective theses.

**Not debatable:** The number of obese children has more than doubled since 1980.

**Not debatable:** Many people blame the fast-food industry for making them fat.

The first example is a statistic (a fact based on research). It is not an opinion and cannot be used as a thesis. The second example is a statement about other people’s opinions, but it is not the writer’s opinion.

2. **Take your audience into consideration as you write your essay.** When you write your essay, assume that your audience is well-informed generally but may not have the specific knowledge that you have gained by reading and discussion as you moved through the Fast Food unit. You need to provide your readers with information and your sources for that information whether you are citing statistics or paraphrasing someone else’s argument. In a true timed-writing situation, you will not have access to sources, but you can still refer to information you learned in a class, read in an article, or found on a Web site. Just be sure to mention where you found it (not a formal reference but an acknowledgment that it comes from another source).

You may also want to let your readers know who you are. Think about the information that Zinczenko provided about his development from “a typical mid-1980s latchkey kid” to a writer for a health magazine. That information helped us to decide how credible his opinions were. In the same way, you can let your readers know, for example, that you are a high school student so that when you talk about the easy access you have to junk food at school, they know you are in a good position to know this. You also need to assume that some of your readers will disagree with you (remember, your thesis is going to be debatable). If you acknowledge some possible alternative positions and explain why they are not as strong as your own, that will strengthen your argument. For example, Weintraub acknowledges that some people blame fast-food companies and other people blame the government for America’s weight problem. He gets those arguments on the table before he goes on to his own argument that parents are the ones who bear the greatest blame.

3. **Choose evidence that supports your thesis statement.** Evidence is probably the most important factor in writing an argument essay.

Without solid evidence, your essay is nothing more than opinion; with it, your essay can be powerful and persuasive. If you supply convincing evidence, your readers will not only understand your position but may agree with it.

Evidence can consist of facts, statistics, statements from authorities, and examples or personal stories. Examples and personal stories can be based on your own observations, experiences, and reading, but your opinions are not evidence. Other strategies, such as comparison/contrast, definition, and cause/effect, can be particularly useful in building an argument. Use any combination of evidence and writing strategies that supports your thesis statement.

In the readings for the Fast Food assignment, you can find several different types of evidence. Here are some examples:

#### Facts

As early as 1972, McDonald's introduced its large-size fries (Brownlee, paragraph 13).

An existing law requires an average of at least 20 minutes per day of physical education (Weintraub, paragraph 9).

#### Statistics

Since 1980, the number of obese children has more than doubled to 16 percent (Barboza, paragraph 9).

About 20 percent of the nation's schools now offer brand-name fast food (Barboza, paragraph 21).

Diabetes accounts for \$100 billion a year in health-care costs today (Zinczenko, paragraph 5).

#### Statements from Authorities

Statement by Lisa Young, a nutritionist at New York University (Brownlee, paragraph 21).

Quote by Susan Linn, a Harvard psychologist who studies children's marketing (Barboza, paragraph 5).

Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Barboza, paragraph 9).

#### Examples and Personal Stories

Zinczenko's personal story (Zinczenko, paragraphs 2–4)

- 4. Anticipate opposing points of view.** In addition to stating and supporting your position, anticipating and responding to opposing views are important. Presenting only your side of the argument leaves half the story untold—the opposition's half. If you acknowledge that there are opposing arguments and answer them, your argument is stronger.

In paragraph 13 of "The Battle Against Fast Food Begins at Home," Weintraub acknowledges the argument that busy parents, especially single parents, don't have the time to cook healthy meals or the energy

to restrict TV and video games. He counters the argument in the next paragraph where he describes the strategies used in his own home. By acknowledging the argument (more fully developed in Zinzchenko’s opinion piece), he increases his own credibility.

- 5. Find some common ground.** Pointing out common ground between you and your opponent is also an effective strategy. Common ground refers to points of agreement between two opposing positions. For example, one person might be in favor of gun control and another strongly opposed. But they might find common ground—agreement—in the need to keep guns out of teenagers’ hands. Locating some common ground is possible in almost every situation. When you state in your essay that you agree with your opponent on certain points, your reader sees you as a fair person.

Weintraub advocates making individuals responsible for their children’s health rather than having government intervene, but he suggests a middle ground between individual responsibility and government intervention. He advocates having health agencies do “more to encourage these kinds of simple policies in the home” (paragraph 16).

- 6. Maintain a reasonable tone.** Just as you probably wouldn’t win an argument by shouting or making mean or nasty comments, don’t expect your readers to respond well to such tactics. Keep the “voice” of your essay calm and sensible. Your readers will be much more open to what you have to say if they think you are a reasonable person.

Weintraub maintains a reasonable tone throughout his article. He believes that parents are endangering their children’s health and makes the analogy to leaving a loaded gun where children can use it, but he doesn’t say parents are stupid or lazy. Instead, he suggests that they are uninformed, and he acknowledges the difficulties they face in raising healthy children. We are more ready to accept his conclusion that more education is needed because he makes a reasonable argument rather than a strident appeal.

- 7. Organize your essay so that it presents your position as effectively as possible.** By the end of your essay, you want your audience to agree with you. So you want to organize your essay in such a way that your readers can easily follow it. The number of your paragraphs will vary depending on the nature of your assignment, but the following outline shows the order in which the features of an argument essay are most effective:

#### **Introduction**

Background information

Introduction of subject

Statement of your opinion

#### **Body Paragraphs**

Common ground

Lots of evidence (both logical and emotional)

Opposing point of view  
Response to opposing point of view

### **Conclusion**

Restatement of your position  
Call for action or agreement

The arrangement of your evidence in an argument essay depends to a great extent on your readers' opinions. Most arguments will be organized from general to particular, from particular to general, or from one extreme to another. When you know that your readers already agree with you, arranging your details from general to particular or from most to least important is usually most effective. With this order, you are building on your readers' agreement and loyalty as you explain your thinking on the subject.

If you suspect that your audience does not agree with you, reverse the organization of your evidence and arrange it from particular to general or from least to most important. In this way, you can take your readers step by step through your reasoning in an attempt to get them to agree with you.

Weintraub's essay follows the general outline just presented. Here is a skeleton outline of his essay.

### **Introduction**

Background about the recommendations of the California Center for Public Health Advocacy's recommendations to reduce childhood obesity.  
Weintraub's own position that parents, with some help, can and should teach their children healthy eating and exercise habits.

### **Body Paragraphs**

The Center's report

- Data on childhood obesity
- Analysis of causes: fast food, portion sizes, junk food at school, advertising of junk food, and lack of PE
- Recommendations: required PE, nutritional standards for schools, working water fountains

Recommendations ineffective unless parents accept their roles

- Loaded gun analogy
- Reasons parents resort to fast food and TV
- Strategies used in the Weintraub home: limit junk food at home; eat home-cooked meals, limit TV time; encourage organized sports and outdoor activities

### **Conclusion**

Organizations such as the Center for Public Health Advocacy need to encourage parents to take an active role in monitoring their children's eating and exercise habits.

**Writing Strategies**

- 1.3 Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained, persuasive, and sophisticated way and support them with precise and relevant examples.

## Organizing the Essay

Following are some guidelines for helping your students organize the material they have gathered into a coherent essay.

### Activity 19: Organizing the Essay

The following items are traditional parts of all essays:

- An introduction (usually one or two paragraphs) that “hooks” the reader and provides a thesis statement or road map for the reader
- The body (as many paragraphs as necessary), which supports the thesis statement point by point
- A conclusion (usually only one paragraph) that summarizes the main points and explains the significance of the argument

The number of paragraphs in an essay depends on the nature and complexity of your argument.

Here are some additional hints for helping you organize your thoughts:

#### Introduction

- Students might want to include the following in their introductory paragraphs:
  - A “hook” to get the reader’s attention
  - Background information the audience may need
  - A thesis statement, along with some indication of how the essay will be developed (“forecasting”). *Note:* A thesis statement states the topic of the essay and the writer’s position on that topic. You may choose to sharpen or narrow your thesis at this point.

#### Body

- Paragraphs that present support of the thesis statement with topic sentences supported by evidence. (See “Getting Ready to Write”.)
- Paragraphs that include different points of view or address counter-arguments
- Paragraphs or sentences where you address those points of view by doing the following:
  - Refuting them
  - Acknowledging them but showing how your argument is better
  - Granting them altogether but showing they are irrelevant
- Evidence that you have considered the values, beliefs, and assumptions of your audience as well as your own values, beliefs, and assumptions. Evidence that you have found some common ground that appeals to the various points of view of readers is also necessary.

#### Conclusion

- A final paragraph (or paragraphs) that includes a solid argument to support the thesis and indicates the significance of the argument—the “so what” factor

**Writing Strategies**

- 1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the elements of discourse (e.g., purpose, speaker, audience, form) when completing narrative, expository, persuasive, or descriptive writing assignments.

**Prerequisite Ninth and Tenth Grade ELA Standard: Writing Strategies**

- 1.9 Revise writing to improve the logic and coherence of the organization and controlling perspective, the precision of word choice, and the tone by taking into consideration the audience, purpose, and formality of the context.

**Writing Strategies**

- 1.4 Enhance meaning by employing rhetorical devices, including the extended use of parallelism, repetition, and analogy; the incorporation of visual aids (e.g., graphs, tables, pictures); and the issuance of a call for action.
- 1.5 Use language in natural, fresh, and vivid ways to establish a specific tone.

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## Developing the Content

Your students need to understand that body paragraphs explain and support their thesis statements as they move their writing from writer-based to reader-based prose.

### Activity 20: Developing the Content

Here are a few highlights about developing your essay:

- Most body paragraphs consist of a topic sentence (or an implied topic sentence) and concrete details to support that topic sentence.
- Body paragraphs give evidence in the form of examples, illustrations, statistics, and so on and analyze the meaning of the evidence.
- Each topic sentence is usually directly related to the thesis statement.
- No set number of paragraphs makes up an essay.
- The thesis dictates and focuses the content of an essay.

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## Revising and Editing

### Revising the Draft

Even an essay that is written in class should subsequently be revised to improve the focus, organization, and development. This practice will make your students more proficient writers when they are in “one chance” writing situations such as college placement tests. Provide your students with a copy of the editing checklist from the Evaluation Form (Appendix F in the Assignment Template).

Your students should produce these drafts based on systematic feedback from others. These drafts will be more “reader-based” than the first draft because students will take into consideration the needs of the readers as they respond to the text.

#### *A Text-Based Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing*

If you have been integrating Chapter 1 of *A Text-Based Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing* throughout this unit, you should be ready to assign Exercise 11 (Editing Sentences for Missing Subjects, Verbs, and Connecting Words) and Exercise 12 (Editing Your Guided Composition). Your students will select paragraphs from their essays and identify subjects and verbs, main and subordinate clauses, and coordinating and subordinating words.

### Activity 21: Revising the Draft

You now need to work with the organization and development of your draft to make sure that your essay is as effective as possible.

- 1.9 Revise text to highlight the individual voice, improve sentence variety and style, and enhance subtlety of meaning and tone in ways that are consistent with the purpose, audience, and genre.

### Peer Group Work

In groups of three or four, each of you should read his or her essay aloud to other members of the group. Then complete Part I of the Evaluation Form for each essay.

### Paired Work

Work in pairs to decide how you want to revise the problems that group members identified.

### Individual Work

Revise the draft based on the feedback you have received and the decisions you have made with your partners. Consider these additional questions for individual work:

- Have I responded to the assignment?
- What is my purpose for this essay?
- What should I keep? What is most effective?
- What should I add? Where do I need more details, examples, and other evidence to support my point?
- What could I get rid of? Did I use irrelevant details? Was I repetitive?
- What should I change? Are parts of my essay confusing or contradictory? Do I need to explain my ideas more fully?
- What should I rethink? Was my position clear? Did I provide enough analysis to convince my readers?
- How is my tone? Am I too overbearing or too firm? Do I need qualifiers?
- Have I addressed differing points of view?
- Does my conclusion show the significance of my essay?
- Have I used key vocabulary words correctly to represent the ideas from the article? Have I used words that refer to specific facts from the text?

### Teacher Feedback

Sometimes it is most beneficial to give feedback on the first rather than the final draft (the response to the final draft can simply be a summary grade). When responding to a first draft, your guidance can come in the form of suggestions for improving the essay—a formative evaluation—rather than a final, summative evaluation. Feedback at this stage does not need to include a grade at all.

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### Editing the Draft

Your students now need to focus on grammar and mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, and spelling) to make sure that their language is effective and conforms to the guidelines of standard written English.

- In this case, your students will benefit most from specific instructor or tutor feedback rather than from peer evaluation.
- This work can be preceded by mini-lessons on common issues in grammar and mechanics.

**Prerequisite Ninth and Tenth Grade ELA Standards: Written and Oral English Language Conventions**

- 1.1 Identify and correctly use clauses (e.g., main and subordinate), phrases (e.g., gerund, infinitive, and participial), and mechanics of punctuation (e.g., semicolons, colons, ellipses, hyphens).
- 1.2 Understand sentence construction (e.g., parallel structure, subordination, proper placement of modifiers) and proper English usage (e.g., consistency of verb tenses).
- 1.3 Demonstrate an understanding of proper English usage and control of grammar, paragraph and sentence structure, diction, and syntax.

**Written and Oral English Language Conventions**

- 1.1 Demonstrate control of grammar, diction, and paragraph and sentence structure and an understanding of English usage.
- 1.2 Produce legible work that shows accurate spelling and correct punctuation and capitalization.
- 1.3 Reflect appropriate manuscript requirements in writing.

### *A Text-Based Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing*

If you have been integrating Chapter 1 of *A Text-Based Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing* throughout this unit, you should be ready to assign Exercise 13 (Editing Your Own Writing). Your students will edit their entire essays, focusing on using complete and varied sentences rather than on general editing as described below.

#### **Activity 22: Editing the Draft**

You now need to work with the grammar and mechanics of your draft to make sure that your use of language is effective and conforms to the guidelines of standard written English.

##### **Individual Work**

Edit your draft based on the information you have received from your instructor or a tutor. Use the editing checklist provided by your teacher. The suggestions below will also help you edit your own work.

##### **Editing Guidelines for Individual Work**

- If possible, set your essay aside for 24 hours before rereading to find errors.
- If possible, read your essay out loud so you can hear your errors.
- Focus on individual words and sentences rather than overall meaning. Take a sheet of paper and cover everything except the line you are reading. Then touch your pencil to each word as you read.
- With the help of your teacher, figure out your own pattern of errors—the most serious and frequent errors you make.
- Look for only one type of error at a time. Then go back and look for a second type and, if necessary, a third.
- Use the dictionary to check spelling and confirm that you've chosen the right word for the context.

### **Reflecting on the Writing**

When you return the essays to your students, a good practice is to ask them to reflect in writing about the process of writing the essay: what they learned that they can apply to their next assignment or how they feel about the comments that you gave them on the essay.

#### **Activity 23: Reflecting on the Writing**

When you have completed your own essay, answer these six questions.

1. What was most difficult about this assignment?
2. What was easiest?
3. What did you learn about arguing by completing this assignment?
4. What do you think are the strengths of your argument? Place a wavy line by the parts of your essay that you feel are very good.

5. What are the weaknesses, if any, of your paper? Place an X by the parts of your essay you would like help with. Write any questions you have in the margin.
6. What did you learn from this assignment about your own writing process—about preparing to write, writing the first draft, revising, and editing?

## Evaluating and Responding

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### Grading Holistically

Reading student papers holistically is also called “general impression” grading. It allows you to give a single score or grade based on your impression of your students’ management of the entire writing assignment. The basis of this type of evaluation is a rubric or scoring guide, which is used along with sample papers to “norm” the readers before they read student papers. In the “norming” process, readers score sets of sample essays. The leader asks how many readers gave each score on each paper, and those who gave a certain score raise their hands when it is announced and are counted. This process is repeated for each score point for each essay. The process continues until almost all the hands are consistently going up at the same time. In a holistic reading, readers then read and score papers very quickly, without marking errors or making comments. You might consider using the English Placement Test (EPT) Scoring Guide printed in Appendix G in the Assignment Template as your grading criteria for this exercise. Alternatively, you can use the rubric printed at the end of the unit, which is adapted from the EPT Scoring Guide.

Grading a set of papers holistically with other faculty members lets you discuss the grading criteria and “norm” yourselves to a single set of scores. This is an excellent exercise to keep a conversation going among department faculty about grades and assessment.

Assigning students to grade a set of papers holistically gives you the opportunity to have your students work in groups to explain why a paper received a certain grade. Then you might have your students revise their papers based on their group’s assessment.

### Responding to Student Writing

Responding to your students’ writing is the final stage of the writing process. You have several ways to respond.

- Use a preprinted evaluation form to respond to your students’ writing. (See Appendix F in the Assignment Template and the rubric that follows)

this page.) Make sure you include notes in the margin to support the marks on the evaluation form.

- Annotate the paper and make a summary comment at the end of the paper. In this case, make sure the comment explains the marks on the paper.
- Meet one-on-one with each student and review the strengths and weaknesses of their paper. In this situation, you might keep an index card on each student with your personal notes on each paper.

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## Using Portfolios

Asking your students to keep all their writing in a folder so you can discuss it throughout the term is a very good way to get the students to see their own progress as writers. You might even consider assigning some portfolio activities.

- Ask your students to explain their progress through the course, using pieces of their own writing to support their claims.
- Ask your students to find their best and worst papers and explain the difference between the two pieces of writing.
- Ask your students to revise their worst papers and summarize the pattern of their changes.

## Rubric

# Fast Food Essay

Writer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Focus and Content

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Does the writer clearly explain Weintraub's argument?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 2. Does the essay demonstrate an understanding of the issues in the reading passage?                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 3. Does the essay indicate the extent to which the writer agrees or disagrees with Weintraub's position?                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4. Do the essay paragraphs provide specific evidence to support the writer's position?                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 5. Is there enough commentary (examples, explanations) to help the reader understand why the writer holds this position? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 6. Does the writer provide enough details about each of these examples?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7. Does the writer use other sources effectively to support the thesis?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

### Organization

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Does the essay have an effective introduction, an adequate body, and a solid conclusion?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 2. Does the introduction state the specific topic and have a clear thesis?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 3. Does each body paragraph include a topic sentence, supporting details, and an analysis of the significance of the ideas presented? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4. Are coherence devices used effectively within and between paragraphs?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 5. Does the conclusion support the thesis and tie together the ideas of the essay?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

### Grammar and Mechanics

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Are verbs correct (in correct form, in agreement with the subject, in the correct tense)?    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 2. Are nouns accurate (articles, plurals, possessives)?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 3. Is word choice precise? Are correct word forms used?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4. Does the writer use effective and varied sentence structure and avoid fragments and run-ons? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 5. Other: _____   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

### Comments:

### Priorities for your revision:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.