

Mid Stage 5 English student work sample – Grade A

Letter to the Minister for Health and Ageing Parliament House, Canberra

Dear Minister for Health

I write this letter to draw your attention to the quickly rising levels of child obesity in Australia. I also hope to convince you to take certain action against child obesity. As you probably know, obesity is one of the leading preventable causes of death worldwide. In my opinion it is the most serious public health problem in Australia as it also is in many other countries in the western world. More and more children are becoming obese in Australia each year. The number of obese children has tripled since the 60's. The children of Australia have started to give up on sports and live sedentary lives, some of them have given up on all physical activity except for those that require only the use of their thumbs. The percentage of overweight and obese children is at an all time high, with more than 25% of Australia's children falling into this category.

Statistics used as supporting evidence

It is a proven fact that 50% of all obese children will continue to become obese as adults. This will greatly increase the chances that they will contract some of the diseases that come hand in hand with obesity like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, breathing difficulties during sleep, certain types of cancer and osteoarthritis.

It is exceedingly hard for children in the 21st century not to be drawn to or affected by unhealthy food because fast food advertising is everywhere – on our television, at the cinema, on the radio, in magazines. There are even signs at the bus stop as they wait to go to school!

The level of advertising by fast food companies during children's programs on the television is astronomically high and extremely worrying. It draws young children in like a moth to a flame. The frequency of these adverts must suggest to young children that fast food and junk food are the only kind of food available.

But where is the healthy alternative being promoted? Children are smart customers; they too are capable of making smart choices if they are given the right information. I propose a government funded advertisement campaign to run on all television channels during children's viewing hours that promotes healthy lifestyle choices and also warns of the long impact of too much junk food.

Confidently uses a rhetorical question

The other thing that is required is that the government restricts the time that fast food companies can advertise so that they have less of an impact on young children and healthy adverts have a chance to do their work. If young children do not actually see the food then hopefully they will not want to eat it either, and this at least gives parents a chance to offer them a healthy alternative. I recognise that parents always have the power to say “no” to their children when they demand only unhealthy food, but not all parents can stand to be in constant conflict with their children, and at best the situation is always difficult.

Past public awareness and education campaigns have been shown to change community behaviour in so many ways. Think of the campaigns against smoking, drink driving, speeding, domestic violence, etc. All of these things were quite acceptable not so long ago, but now they are frowned upon. I think if we actively promote a healthy lifestyle while informing people of the dangers of junk food, then over time we can bring about a significant reduction in obesity levels in children and by extension, the adults of the future. I hope I can count on your support now and in the future to promote these initiatives. I and the other children of Australia will be in your debt.

Persuasively summarises argument

Yours sincerely,

A Year 9 student

Grade Commentary

Jody has demonstrated a very high level of competence in composing a persuasive text, a letter, to raise public awareness. The letter is well written and fluent showing a clear sense of confidence and personal style with a perceptive and insightful understanding of audience expectations. A range of persuasive techniques have been used effectively, such as emotive language and a suitable personal tone, to raise awareness of the issues. The argument is well outlined and sustained and there is evidence of critical interpretation of information as appropriate specific examples have been provided as supporting evidence.

Jody's response demonstrates characteristics of work typically produced by a student performing at a grade A standard midway through Stage 5.