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[Experience](#), [Responsibility](#)



Kelsey Randall Essay 2 Professor Nilton Gomes In 2002 a series of complaints were filed against the McDonald's corporation. The plaintiffs who filed the complaints claimed that McDonald's caused their obesity (USDC). This lawsuit raised a surprisingly controversial question of corporate versus personal responsibility. Is McDonalds really to blame for these teens weight problems? The answer is no, obesity is absolutely a matter of personal responsibility. Mcdonalds advertising did not force the plaintiffs into their restaurant or force feed them double cheeseburgers. It certainly did not eradicate the plaintiffs knowledge about the importance of eating right and living a healthy lifestyle. The idea that obesity could be considered a matter of corporate responsibility threatens to undermine the American people's right to choose how they will live their lives. People who believe that McDonalds unfairly advertises to children to not realize that it is within the companies rights to advertize freely. The first amendment of the constitution protects freedom of speech, and this includes commercial advertising (Briant). The vast majority of companies advertises to children to a certain extent. This is because it works. Children are very easy to advertise to with the use of toys or characters, and they are very susceptible to it (BrandConsultant). Also, companies are trying to build lifelong consumers. This is a marketing strategy, not manipulation. Whether or not the advertised item is appropriate for the child is the job of the parent. They are the ones who are responsible for the child, and it is their job to monitor what their child is getting, or in this case eating (York). Parents also should be the ones who teach their children how to live a healthy and active lifestyle. It is a fact that children's decision making skills are poorly developed, and that is

why they are cared for until they are adults (JJDP). Until that point, it is the parents job to look out for the best interest of the child. McDonalds also has advertizing that is geared towards older people, such as the Monopoly game pieces and various sweepstakes. These contests are for adults, people who have full control of their mental faculties and are capable of deciding whether or not to participate. It is common fact that food in moderation plays a key part in a persons health (Freese). This is something that is being taught to children from an early age (8). It is obvious that in order to get proper nutrition, one cannot eat the same thing everyday, and McDonalds has never stated that it is. There is no evidence that suggest that small portions of McDonalds when paired with an otherwise healthy lifestyle would be detrimental to ones health. Also, it is common knowledge that fast food is not beneficial to a person's health. It is full of fat and calories, and eating to much of it is not good (9, 7). Eating McDonalds cannot be directly linked to obesity, which is one of the things that the plaintiffs lawyers would have to prove if they want to make a legitimate case. There are many factors that can lead to obesity. Genetics and a sedentary lifestyle are a few of them. McDonalds cannot be blamed for their customers other life choices (Freese, MightyMom) . Interestingly, a filmmaker named Soso Whaley did a documentary called Downsize Me, that went against many ideas in the film Super Size Me. Like the man in Super Size Me, she ate off only the McDonalds menu for 30 days and actually lost 10 pounds and cut down her cholesterol. She says all she did was limit calorie intake and exercise moderately a few times a week (Soso). The average person knows that the only way to combat obesity is with diet and exercise (Freese). If one limits

their intake of calories and increases the calories that they burn, they will lose weight. People know when they are gaining weight. It is each person's responsibility to take care of their own health and this includes controlling their weight and changing their lifestyle habits. McDonalds should not be held responsible for the average Americans unwillingness to take responsibility for themselves. There is also a question of motive surrounding this issue. The lawyers that are suing food corporations like McDonalds are only doing it for the hope of a big payout in the end. That is why they are going after successful corporations that have a lot of money instead of small businesses (Freese). It is not McDonalds that is exploiting its customers but lawyers who are exploiting McDonalds. These lawyers are not concerned with the well being of American. That is not why they take these cases. The lawyers are doing this just for the money they can earn from it. McDonalds makes food, jobs, and opportunities for many people that they would not otherwise have. They provided over 650, 000 jobs for people in the United States in 2011 and that number has only increased. (Smith). There is a big problem with blaming corporations for fattening America. If people are going to court and making the case that they are too weak to decide for themselves what they are going to eat, how can they expect anyone to take them seriously again? As Duane Freese, author of the article Frankensuits says " personal responsibility is the foundation on which all liberty is built". If people give in to the promise of money and the chance to blame someone else for their irresponsibility, they begin down a very slippery slope. These people are admitting to the government that they cannot choose for themselves. If that is true, then the real solution is to outlaw all junk food.

Twinkies, Doritos, and potato chips should be banned, because they are tempting the nation that has no self-control. People need to take responsibility for their own actions. This claim that fast food is responsible for making America obese is ridiculous and harmful to society. McDonalds is not manipulating children with their advertisements, they are just catering to what their customers want. They cannot be blamed for that. The McDonalds corporation would not be as successful as it is today if people did not give it their business. The bottom line is, people have brains for a reason, they should put them to better use than just figuring out ways to hand off blame to big corporations. If people really want to shirk their responsibilities as individuals then they should be prepared for the backlash- ultimate control for the government.