

Response to "don't blame the eater" essay sample

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Response to “ Don’t Blame the Eater” Essay Sample

In the essay, “ Don’t Blame the Eater”, David Zinczenko, editor-in-chief of Men’s Health magazine, discusses the recent lawsuits against fast-food chains. He does not deny that there should be a sense of personal responsibility among the public, but has sympathy for the kid consumers because he used to be one. Zinczenko argues that due to the lack of nutritional facts and health warnings, it’s not so ridiculous to blame the fast-food industry for obesity problems.

My feelings on Zinczenko’s article are mixed. I agree with his arguments that consumers are oblivious to the true horrors of the impact of a fast-food diet, but I do not agree that they should go so far as to sue the fast-food industry. There needs to be a greater sense of personal responsibility.

Zinczenko begins his argument by talking about how he was a latchkey kid who became obese, but grew up and eventually learned to maintain a healthy lifestyle. He argues that going out to eat was and is the easiest, most affordable choice. I agree that fast food is the easiest option because my own experience confirms it. Living away from home has really put things in perspective. I never realized how much it costs and how much effort it takes to go to the grocery store and then cook for yourself; it’s so much easier just to eat out. In “ Remarks to the NAACP” Michelle Obama (2010) states, “...a lot of people today are living in communities without a single grocery store” (p. 423) this proves that there are challenges in trying to provide the healthiest food choices for one’s family, and that it is more convenient to eat out.

Zinczenko mentions that there are not any alternatives for fast food. He states that it is much easier to just stop and pick up fast-food that is conveniently located in almost every city, rather than finding a more nutritious alternative. I agree with Zinczenko, everywhere you go there's a fast-food restaurant close by. Once again, I can agree with this from my personal experience growing up in a city with four McDonald's restaurants. In Pekin, Illinois, it seems that no matter where you live whether it be Catherine Street or Sheridan Road, there is an array of fast food choices available. At the same time, there are only two grocery stores. Why go spend money on food and then take time to prepare it when there is a McDonald's down the street with a dollar menu and it only takes a few minutes for someone else to prepare it? It's not that the food is better my any means, it's just more convenient.

Zinczenko complains that unlike many other hazardous items, fast food does not come with warnings on how terrible the food is for one's health and its future effects. He emphasizes that even if the customers were able to obtain the nutritional facts, they are not palpable, but rather obscure. He points out that the fast-food companies make the nutrition labels vague and misleading; they calculate the calories for every separate part of the meal, and they make it so the consumer must pay attention to serving size as well. He observes that the fast-food industry can get away with confusing labels because there are not any Food and Drug Administration labeling requisites (Word Smart, p. 220) covering fast food. Zinczenko complains that there is not any sort of nutritional labeling on the menus at fast-food restaurants. Now, nine years later, there are some changes, but his point is still valid.

McDonald's menu now states the calories of each meal, but as Zinczenko points out, it is very difficult to understand.

The menus give a range of calories for each meal, so how do you really know how many calories are actually in the meal you choose? For example, a number one meal, whatever it may be, might say 500-875 calories; so which is it? Does it account for the different condiments that could come on it? The menu also excludes important details such as carbohydrates, serving size, and total fat. Though the menus have been improved in the past few years, they still could use some work. Zinczenko claims that the fast-food industry is engaging in jeopardous practices. He believes that if it does not put an end to this risky behavior, it will foment consumers and the lawsuits will become incessant. Although I agree with Zinczenko up to a point, I disagree that consumers have the right to sue the fast-food industry.

Yes, everything that Zinczenko has said up until this point has had logic behind it; the convenience, the lack of alternatives, and the recondite health warnings. What about the personal responsibility? No one could possibly be that unwitting to believe that eating delicious, greasy french fries from McDonald's is healthy and good for you. Yes, it is faster and easier to eat like that, but wouldn't it also be faster and easier to just go forty five miles an hour on city roads rather than thirty? No, we don't do that because we don't want to pay for it. There should be the same sense of responsibility; individual people don't want to pay for obesity and its dangerous side effects either. It all comes down to the individual. No one is there force feeding someone a " Whopper" nor is anyone restricting that person's food choices. If there is anyone to blame, it is still the consumer.

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Zinczenko suggests that “ the [fast-food] industry is vulnerable”, which I agree. If it is not prudent (Word Smart, p. 210) and does not change something, whether it be offering a healthier menu or revealing the truth about what consumers are eating, the repercussions will be finding themselves with more problems than money.

Overall, Zinczenko makes a great argument. I agree that people are prone to eat out and that fast-food chains do need to change how they convey important health information to the public. I still believe that it is not all up to the fast-food industry to change, the consumers need to change as well.