Writing a two-sided argument essay

Topic: Obesity

Argument: *'Is obesity a disease?'*
Type: Academic [9 sources]
Level: ★★★☆☆ [B2/C1]

Lesson Plan

Aim: *to develop the students' ability to generate main ideas with support and write a two-sided argument.*

3 types of lessons (writing x2 / reading)

1.Writing

- Ask Students to discuss *'Is obesity a disease?'*
- Write down the reasons for 'yes' and 'no'
- Feed in / check key vocabulary (see next page)

Free Writing #1: [give out Outline #1] Students choose 2/3 of the positives / negatives discussed and add support. Go to introduction and fill the ideas of general, specific, outline, thesis, then to conclusion. Write the essay and students check ideas against the text [they could do the Reading Exercise]

Guided Writing #2: [give out Outline #2] Students read the outline with the basic points and then write the essay around these ideas. Then compare to the text.

Marking Student's work:
Use marking code: www.academic-englishuk.com/error-correction

2.Reading

1. Give out text and Outline #3. Students read the essay and write down the key points and support in the structured outline [the bullet points relate to each piece of support]. Students check answers with Outline #4.

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Is obesity a disease?

C. Wilson (2017)

Key vocabulary

1. Overweight / obese / obesity
2. Epidemic
3. Virus / a disease
4. Sedentary lifestyle
5. To categorise
6. An impairment
7. Symptoms
8. Morbidity
9. inherited
10. Sickle-cell Anemia and Tay-sachs [google this]
11. Over-whelming support
12. An official stance
13. Preventable
14. Over-indulgence
15. Respiratory problems
16. Calories / Calorific intake
17. Genetic disorder
18. To disprove something
19. Convenience foods
20. Commuting
21. Moderate exercise
22. Genetic tendencies

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Is obesity a disease?

C. Wilson (2017)

In the last 60 years, western societies have changed significantly. Now, most people travel around in cars, families spend more time watching TVs, playing video games and eating out. All these new trends have resulted in individuals becoming more overweight. Obesity, defined as being overweight to the extent that it affects your health, has become an epidemic with one in three Americans being obese (TOS, 2015). Many people claim that obesity is the result of individuals eating too much and not doing enough exercise while others state that obesity follows the characteristics of a disease such as a virus or a cancer but also genetic so that genes are passed down through generation to generation. This essay will discuss the arguments on both sides and conclude that obesity is not a disease or genetic but solely connected to over eating and sedentary lifestyles.

There are three main arguments that provide evidence for obesity being a disease. The first main argument is that obesity meets the definition of 'disease'. This can be categorised from The American Medical Association's (2013), who identified three criteria to define disease: 1. ‘an impairment of the normal functioning of some aspect of the body’; 2. ‘characteristic signs and symptoms’; and 3. ‘harm or morbidity’. All these factors match obesity. In addition, government medical groups such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the American Heart Association, the American College of Cardiology, and the Obesity Society, have identified obesity as a disease (ibid). The second most popular argument is that obesity is a human inherited disorder known scientifically as sickle-cell anemia and Tay-Sachs, and as such is classified as a disease. Stunkard et al., (1990) research highlighted that obesity can be inherited like height. A more recent study by Tran et al (2013) linked higher rates of obesity to the ‘fat mass and obesity association’ (FTO) gene. A final supporting argument is obesity has always been historically referenced as a disease. For example, from as early as the 17th Century, evidence suggests that physician Thomas Sydenham (1624-1689) wrote, ‘Corpulency [obesity] may be ranked amongst the diseases arising from original imperfections in the functions of some of the organs.’ (Allison et al, 2008). Overall, there is over-whelming support for the definition of obesity as a disease.

Although the official stance on obesity is a disease, there are a significant amount of facts that suggest the complete opposite. The most important observation is that obesity is preventable. This concept is divided into three parts. Firstly, according to the Nestle (2000), obesity is comparable to smoking and drinking alcohol in that over indulgence can create a health risk. Overeating and lack of exercise increase all known associated risk factors such as heart disease, cancers and respiratory problems. Therefore, obesity alone is not a disease but the effects can be. Secondly, obesity is a result of eating too much. Bridges’ (2011) study into daily calorific intake of the average American man and woman found that people were 22% over the recommended figure of 1,800 calories for women and 2,200 calories for men. The study concluded that 1:3 people are overweight in the USA and 1:6 are obese, all of which was caused for over-consumption of food. In addition, a more recent study found no connection with genetic disorders and obesity, therefore disproving Stunkard’s original research that obesity was genetic (Greenhill, 2015). Finally, sedentary lifestyles are a major cause of obesity. A recent NHS survey and report suggests that recent rise of obesity in the

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UK is linked to an increased amount of sugar in food, more availability of convenience foods and a change in lifestyles**.** Compared to 40 years ago, people today spend more time commuting, sitting in front of a computer, watching television, playing video games, and generally exercising less (Rolls, 2007). In 1960 50% of jobs required moderate physical activity compared to just 20% of jobs in 2011. In sum, it seems reasonably clear that obesity is connected more to over eating, and sedentary lifestyle.

In conclusion, the arguments for obesity being a disease are valid in that professional bodies endorse this statement, it has genetic tendencies and has historical evidence, the arguments against are that it is easily preventable, people are eating far more today than in the past and our lifestyles have become more sedentary. This paper concludes that obesity is not a disease, the evidence highlights a clear correlation that in the last 60 years, changes in food and physical exercise have resulted in a significant increase of obesity cases. It is therefore recommended that more research is done in reducing sugar in foods and encouraging societies to exercise more.

[765 words]

Reference list

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Tran, B., Nguyen, N., Center, J., Eisman, J. and Nguyen, T. (2013). Association between fat-mass-and-obesity-associated (FTO) gene. *Clin Endocrinol*, 81(2), pp.210-217.

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Outline #1

Make notes using this outline to plan an essay on: 'Is obesity a disease?'

Introduction	
General	
Specific	
Outline	
Thesis	

No - *write your ideas and support*
1) **Point / idea:** support
2) **Point:** support
3) **Point** support

Yes - *write your ideas and support*
1) **Point / idea:** support
2) **Point:** support
3) **Point** support

Conclusion	
Summary:	
Thesis	
Recommendation	

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Outline #2

Use these ideas to write a two-sided argument on: 'Is obesity a disease?'

Introduction	
General	last 60 years, societies changed significantly /cars/ watching TVs, video games / eating out.
Specific Definition	New trends = more overweight. Obesity definition = being overweight =affects your health, 1:3 US obese (TOS, 2015). eating too much +not enough exercise. Others = a disease such as a virus or a cancer but also genetic .
Outline	This essay will discuss the arguments on both sides and conclude
Thesis	Obesity = connected to over eating and sedentary lifestyles.

Yes

1. Evidence of a 'disease'.

- The American Medical Association's (2013), three criteria: 1. 'an impairment of the normal functioning of some aspect of the body'; 2. 'characteristic signs and symptoms'; and 3. 'harm or morbidity'. Obesity is a disease.
- The government medical groups Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the American Heart Association, the American College of Cardiology, and the Obesity Society, = it is a disease

2.Genetic

- A disease= obesity is sickle-cell anemia and Tay-Sachs, human inherited disorders.
- Stunkard et al., (1990) research highlighted obesity can be inherited like height.
- Study by Tran et al (2013) linked "fat mass and obesity association" to genes.

3.Historically a disease

- 17th Century, physician Thomas Sydenham (1624-1689) wrote, "Corpulency [obesity] may be ranked amongst the diseases arising from original imperfections in the functions of some of the organs." (Allison et al, 2008).

NO

1.Preventable

- Nestle (2000), obesity = smoking and drinking alcohol = over- indulgence
- Overeating + no exercise = heart disease, cancers and respiratory problems.
- Obesity alone is not a disease but the effects can be.

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2.Eating too much. • Bridges' (2011) study calorific intake man and woman = 22% over the recommended figure • US 1:3 overweight & 1:6 are obese =over-consumption of food. (ibid) • No connection with genetic disorders and obesity, therefore disproving original research that obesity was genetic (Greenhill, 2015).
3.Sedentary lifestyle • NHS survey & report obesity = sugar in food, more availability of convenience foods and a change in lifestyles. • People spend time commuting, sitting in front of a computer, watching television, playing video games, and generally exercising less (Rolls, 2007). • In 1960 50% of jobs = physical activity compared to 20% 2011.

Conclusion	
Summary:	The arguments for valid = research genetic tendencies / historical evidence, the arguments against = easily preventable, eating more, & more sedentary.
Thesis	Obesity is not a disease, = in last 60 years, changes in food and physical exercise
Recommendation	Research in reducing sugar in foods and encouraging societies to exercise more

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Outline #3

Read the essay on: 'Is obesity a disease?' Fill in the outline (basic notes only

Introduction	
General:	
Specific:	
Outline:	
Thesis:	

Yes – *find the main points and support*
1)_____ • • •
2) _____ • • •
3) _____ • • •

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No– *find the main points and support*
1)_____ • •
2) _____ • • •
3) _____ •

Conclusion	
Summary:	
Thesis:	
Recommendation:	

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Outline #4 ANSWERS

Introduction	
General	last 60 years, western societies have changed significantly. people in cars, families watching TVs, video games & eating out.
Specific Definition	New trends have resulted in individuals becoming more overweight. Obesity, defined as being overweight to the extent that it affects your health, Epidemic with one in three Americans being obese (TOS, 2015). Many people = eating too much and not enough exercise. others= a disease such as a virus or a cancer but also genetic .
Outline	This essay will discuss the arguments on both sides and conclude
Thesis	Obesity is **not** a disease or genetic but solely connected to over eating and sedentary lifestyles..

Yes

1. Evidence of a 'disease'.

- The American Medical Association's (2013), three criteria: 1. 'an impairment of the normal functioning of some aspect of the body'; 2. 'characteristic signs and symptoms'; and 3. 'harm or morbidity'.
- The government medical groups Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the American Heart Association, the American College of Cardiology, and the Obesity Society, have identified obesity as a disease (ibid).

2.Genetic

- A disease= genetic (sickle-cell anemia and Tay-Sachs), and as such is classified as a disease.
- Stunkard et al., (1990) research highlighted that obesity can be inherited like height.
- recent study by Tran et al (2013) linked "fat mass and obesity association" (FTO) gene.

3.Historically a disease

- 17th Century, physician Thomas Sydenham (1624-1689) wrote, "Corpulency [obesity] may be ranked amongst the diseases arising from original imperfections in the functions of some of the organs." (Allison et al, 2008).

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NO
1.Preventable • Nestle (2000), obesity is comparable to smoking and drinking alcohol in that over indulgence can create health risk. • Overeating and lack of exercise increase all known associated risk factors such as heart disease, cancers and respiratory problems. • Obesity alone is not a disease but the effects can be.
2.Eating too much. • Bridges' (2011) study calorific intake man and woman = 22% over the recommended figure of 1,800 calories for women & 2,200 calories for men. • Concluded US 1:3 overweight & 1:6 are obese =over-consumption of food. • no connection with genetic disorders and obesity, therefore disproving original research that obesity was genetic (Greenhill, 2015).
3.Sedentary lifestyle • NHS survey & report obesity linked to sugar in food, more availability of convenience foods and a change in lifestyles**.** • Compared to 40 years ago, people today spend more time commuting, sitting in front of a computer, watching television, playing video games, and generally exercising less (Rolls, 2007). • In 1960 50% of jobs required moderate physical activity compared to just 20% of jobs in 2011.

Conclusion	
Summary:	the arguments for valid = professional bodies endorse this statement, it has genetic tendencies & has historical evidence, the arguments against = easily preventable, eating more, & more sedentary.
Thesis	Obesity is not a disease, the evidence = a clear correlation in last 60 years, changes in food and physical exercise have resulted in a significant increase of obesity cases.
Recommendation	more research is done in reducing sugar in foods and encouraging societies to exercise more

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