**Subject area/course**: English/Language Arts

**Grade level/band**: 10

**Task source**: Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE); Inquiry by Design

**Obesity Paradox**

**STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS**

1. **Task context**:

Among adults and children alike, the numbers reflect that more and more people are becoming obese – and this increase affects everyone. But all too frequently the voice of those most directly affected by this issue is neither heard nor listened to – you. This task provides an opportunity for young people to voice their opinions about how best to combat the rise of obesity. In your opinion, what should our country do to best fight the rise of obesity among our citizens?

1. **Final product:**

**Overview**

For this task, you will read an introductory text that gives background and definitions on obesity and discuss the article in class. Next, you will break into groups to read related texts and chart the authors’ claims. After a class discussion, you will break into groups again to read, summarize, and present information for additional articles. You will be given a reading comprehension assessment based on one of the articles. Finally, using the articles provided, as well as personal information you supply, you will plan, draft, and revise an argument paper that presents your personal view on a solution to obesity in the United States.

**Reading Comprehension Task**

**Prompt:** In the article “The Battle against Fast Food begins at Home,” the author, Daniel Weintraub, uses a report from the Center for Public Health Advocacy to explore his position that “Parents… are in the best position to fight the epidemic of overweight children in our schools.” Weintraub then provides a number of reasons why he believes the best approach to ending childhood obesity is found within a child’s home.

Think about the Weintraub article critically and write a short (250 word/3 paragraph) response in which you:

* Summarize Weintraub’s argument (the specific claims and evidence he provides).
* Evaluate the strengths and/or weaknesses of his evidence.
* Discuss what other factors may be involved. Cite specific evidence from the other readings you have done and your own experience as documented in your food journal.

**Writing Task**

**Context**: Over the last few days you have seen and read work by authors concerned with the rise of obesity within the United States. It is also clear from these readings that there are many causes for obesity among people of all races and socioeconomic classes.

**Prompt:** Write a short (500 word) essay in which you take a clear position (make an explicit argument) about how to fight the rise of obesity in your neighborhood.

Within your essay you must:

* State your position clearly
* Use evidence from the readings to highlight 2-3 causes for the rise of obesity
* Propose what could be done in your neighborhood
* Explain why your solution would work
* Address what critics of your might say about your ideas

Focus on a particular strategy or set of strategies that you believe would be especially effective. For example, you may argue that:

* Young people have to take personal responsibility for their own eating habits and what they model for their younger siblings, cousins, and neighbors
* Parents need to take a more active role in their children’s healthy eating
* New York City needs to tax unhealthy foods
* New York City needs to insure that all neighborhoods have access to fresh food
* You may also choose to make an argument based on a combination of the factors above, OR other factors you’ve learned from reading the texts

Your teacher will score your essay based on how well you:

* **State your position** clearly and fully
* **Make specific claim(s)** or point(s) that support your position
* **Develop your claim(s)** using your own ideas and evidence (such as data, quotes, and observations)
* **Cite, analyze, and connect the evidence** to your argument
* **Address claims or viewpoints that differ** from your position or argument
* **Write a conclusion** that summarizes your argument and helps your readers to think (for instance, what future implications or consequences might result from government involvement in obesity?)
* **Organize your essay clearly** using words, phrases, transitions, and clauses to show how the parts of your argument are related

# Use a formal style and objective tone

Preparing to Write: Think about the following questions:

* What is your position?
* What is the best evidence from the texts to support your position?
* What might people who disagree with you claim or question about your claims?

**Additional Information**

1. **Knowledge and skills you will need to demonstrate on this task:**

* Read, annotate, and summarize an article
* State and support a position with relevant evidence, based on a group discussion
* Demonstrate reading comprehension of a text by responding to a prompt
* Organize an essay to present a logical argument
* Use the writing process

1. **Materials needed:**

* Item A: “Obesity within the United States: An Introduction” by Richard Dirksen
* Item B: Graphic Organizer – Position
* Item C: Food Journal
* Item D: Graphic Organizer – Different Solutions to the Obesity Epidemic
* Item E: Writing Checklist

1. **Time requirements:**

This task will take approximately one week to complete. Your teacher will provide details regarding a timeline and due dates.

1. **Scoring:**

Your work will be scored using the Reading Information/Writing Argument: Analytic Rubric (9-10). You should make sure you are familiar with the language that describes the expectations for proficient performance.