**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**

**TEACHER'S GUIDE**

1. **Task overview**:

This performance task requires students to demonstrate their ability to read and analyze a short text as well as the ability to write an essay that requires them to take a position and support it with evidence. Before students complete the reading and writing assessments they will participate in some instructional activities including reading and analyzing texts, gaining background information on the topic, and understanding the expectations of the reading and writing assessments. The accompanying task material includes

* An introductory reading for background and essential terms
* Optional graphic organizers for students’ use in taking notes and organizing their ideas
* Student food journal
* Student checklist to be used individually or with peer review before finishing the project

The suggested articles to use for the task are listed in Section D. A reading comprehension assessment is built into Day 3.

1. **Aligned standards:**
2. **Primary Common Core State Standards**

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/1/) Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.B](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/1/b/) Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.C](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/1/c/) Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.D](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/1/d/) Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.E](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/1/e/) Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/4/) Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/11-12/7/) Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

1. **Secondary Common Core State Standards**

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1.A](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/11-12/1/a/) Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

1. **Critical abilities**

Analysis of Information**:** Integrate and synthesize multiple sources of information (e.g., texts, experiments, simulations) presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to address a question, make informed decisions, understand a process, phenomenon, or concept, and solve problems while evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

Communication in Many Forms**:** Use oral and written communication skills to learn, evaluate, and express ideas for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, and rewriting while considering the audience.

1. **Time/schedule requirements:**

This task will take approximately one week to complete. The following schedule is an estimate of the number of school days required for students to complete this task. Time requirements will vary based on grade level, schedule constraints, class size, class length, and academic readiness.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Day 1: Introduction | Introducing the topic of the Obesity Paradox  Read and analyze two texts:   1. Obesity in the United States 2. Obesity Hunger Paradox |
| Day 2:  Reading Comprehension & Building Understanding of the Topic | Continued Reading and Text Analysis |
| Day 3 | Reading Assessment |
| Days 4 and 5: Evidence-based Essay Writing | Writing Assessment |

1. **Materials/resources:**

* Documents:
  + 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
* Access to the following articles:
  + “The Obesity-Hunger Paradox” By Sam Dolnick (New York Times, March 14, 2010) <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/14/nyregion/14hunger.html?_r=0>
  + “Kimberly Garrison: Moms to blame for kids' obesity” By Kimberly Garrison (Philadelphia Daily News, June 23, 2011) <http://articles.philly.com/2011-06-23/entertainment/29694929_1_childhood-obesity-fast-food-chains-restaurants-and-food-manufacturers>
  + “Don't Blame the Eater” By David Zinczenko (New York Times, November 23, 2002) <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/23/opinion/don-t-blame-the-eater.html>
  + “Food Stamps Soda Ban: The Wrong Way to Fight Obesity” By Joel Berg (Huffington Post, December 6, 2010) <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joel-berg/food-stamps-soda-ban-the-_b_791863.html>
  + “Bad Food? Tax It, and Subsidize Vegetables” By Mark Bittman (New York Times, July 23, 2011) <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/24/opinion/sunday/24bittman.html?pagewanted=all>
  + “The Battle Against Fast Food Begins in the Home” By Daniel Weintraub (December 17, 2002) <http://www.sandi.net/cms/lib/CA01001235/Centricity/Domain/9905/WeintraubBattleBegins.pdf>
* Smart board or chart paper

1. **Prior knowledge:**

None listed.

1. **Connection to curriculum:**

None listed.

1. **Teacher instructions:**

**Day 1**

The purpose of Day 1 is to:

* Build background knowledge about the obesity paradox
* Set expectations for text analysis
* Practice text analysis

Activity 1: Read “Obesity within the United States: An Introduction” by Richard Dirksen (Item A)

Teachers should:

* Read the document aloud with students and help students to develop definitions of key vocabulary: obesity, food deserts, diabetes, heart disease
* Facilitate a discussion of the questions raised in the article. Here are some examples:
  + Will the addition of supermarkets and elimination of food deserts be enough to combat childhood obesity?
  + Is there a lack of education for people about how to eat healthily?
  + Is obesity always a direct result of poverty?
  + Is the fast food industry, marketing unhealthy foods to children and adults, to blame for obesity?
  + Or are parents and the individuals themselves to blame for the choices they make about what they eat?

Activity 2: Read the “Obesity Hunger Paradox” by Sam Dolnick (<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/14/nyregion/14hunger.html?_r=0>)

* Remind students that they are going to write short argumentative essays related to the causes and possible solutions to the rising rates of obesity within the United States. Those essays will draw on their reading and discussion of these texts, as well as their reflections on what they have experienced and observed.
* Help students to develop a definition of paradox.
* Ask students to read the text working in small groups. As they read they fill out the graphic organizer (Item B) with the major claims that Dolnick makes and the evidence he uses to support those claims.
* Discuss the article with the class:
* Were there points that were confusing?
* Were there points that were interesting or surprising?
* How well does Dolnick’s analysis describe their neighborhoods?
* Review Dolnick’s article as an argument:
* What is his position (thesis/main point)?
* What are his claims (his major points?)
* What evidence does he use to support each of his claims?
* What is his conclusion? What does he leave his readers thinking about?

**Day 2**

The purpose of Day 2 is to:

* Build additional background knowledge about what determines food choices and childhood obesity
* Practice text analysis

Activity 1: Food Journal (Item C)

* Have students describe what they ate for dinner last night, breakfast this morning, and lunch today (if they have had it or know what they will eat).
  + How healthy was it?
  + What other eating choices could they have made?
* Facilitate a short group discussion on the students’ food choices and any connections they can make to the article they read yesterday (Sam Dolnick article). Review the graphic organizer they completed.

Activity 2: Read and Analyze

Much contemporary research points to an epidemic in childhood obesity. To address that epidemic we have to figure out what can be done. The four attached articles each suggest a different solution as shown below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The Group** | **The Author** |
| Have families make better eating choices | [Garrison](http://articles.philly.com/2011-06-23/entertainment/29694929_1_childhood-obesity-fast-food-chains-restaurants-and-food-manufacturers) |
| Lawsuits against fast food companies | [Zinczenko](http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/23/opinion/don-t-blame-the-eater.html) |
| Make healthier foods more available | [Berg](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joel-berg/food-stamps-soda-ban-the-_b_791863.html) |
| Tax unhealthy foods | [Bittman](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/24/opinion/sunday/24bittman.html?pagewanted=all) |

* Assign groups of students to read a specific article.
* Ask them to mark their copies by underlining the solution the author proposes and any evidence the writer provides of why this solution would be important or effective. (Note: The articles vary in their complexity in the order listed, from basic (Garrison) to advanced (Bittman). This will allow readers at different levels to participate).
* Ask each group to select a spokesperson who will summarize the group’s reading.

Activity 3: Synthesizing Across Readings

* Ask the spokesperson for each group to summarize the article that they have read, focusing on the proposed solution and the strongest evidence for investing in that solution.
* Ask students from other groups listen carefully and raise questions.
* As students listen they fill out their own graphic organizer (Item D).

**Day 3**

The purpose of Day 3 is to:

* Assess students’ reading comprehension of informational text
* Provide students with additional support for the writing activity during Days 4 and 5

Reading Comprehension Task Administration:

* Distribute graphic organizer from Day 2 (Item B).
* Ask students to independently read the article (“[The Battle Against Fast Food Begins in the Home](http://www.sandi.net/cms/lib/CA01001235/Centricity/Domain/9905/WeintraubBattleBegins.pdf),” by Daniel Weintraub).
* Ask students to use the graphic organizer to analyze the text.
* Students may respond to the prompt when they are ready.
* Read aloud the following check-list and write on board to remind students what should guide their work:

1. State your position clearly.
2. Cite specific evidence that supports your position from at least two authors.
3. Use the conventions of standard written English.

* Read aloud the following guiding questions with students:

1. What do you have to read and write to complete this task? In other words, what is this task asking you to do?
2. Is your position exactly that of the authors you read?
3. Are there other points and evidence you think should be included?

* Remember to write intervals of remaining time on the board. Please don’t answer any questions regarding content, only process questions where students may be confused.

**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 for 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.

**Day 4**

The purpose of Day 4 is to:

* Provide planning time and writing time for the writing assessment

Writing Argument Task Administration:

* Pass out materials from Days 1, 2, and 3 to students.
* Read the prompt aloud with your students. Be sure to draw their attention to the student check-list version of the rubric (Item E)*.*
* Ask students to review the materials they have to draw on:
  1. Marked-up copies of all the texts they have read
  2. Their charts from Days 1 and 3
  3. Their answers to the reading comprehension task
* Ask students to begin working. Students should use the first ten (10) minutes to plan out their essay and create an outline. Students should use the remaining time to write.

**Day 5**

The purpose of Day 5 is to:

* Provide writing time for the writing assessment

Writing Argument Task Administration:

* Instruct students to complete their essays.
* Remind them of the materials that they can use.
* Students may use the checklist (Item E) as they write.

**Prompt:** 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.

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

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?

1. **Student support:**

When implementing the performance task with English Language Learners (ELLs) and Students with Disabilities (SWD), teachers should consider the following instructional supports.

Vocabulary Building

* Provide student-friendly definitions, examples, synonyms, antonyms, multiple meanings, roots, affixes, pictures, diagrams, and other items that support understanding prior to reading.
* Advise ELLs when words are cognates as cognate recognition is not always automatic when students are not proficient in both languages.
* Explicitly teach word origins, roots, prefixes, and suffixes.
* Teach academic language and create purposeful opportunities for students to practice using the words and phrases.
* Provide visual representations prior to teaching and reading of content area material.

Reading Comprehension

* Read or play a recording of the text.
* Elicit prior knowledge and build background knowledge to access content in reading.
* Have students complete the graphic organizers that accompany prompts. These will help them to summarize and analyze texts and organize the evidence they need for their essays.
* Discuss the connections between readings so that students can synthesize information and develop their own positions on issues.
* Discuss how the writing prompt draws on the readings so that students are able to see how the content can be used in developing their writing response(s).
* Ask students to analyze the prompts so that they understand thoroughly what is being asked.

Writing

* Provide writing frames and sentence starters.
* Explicitly teach the academic language associated with the writing genre being taught.
* Explicitly teach how to use information from a graphic organizer to create an essay.
* Note that cultural differences in writing discourse may influence ELLs’ approaches to writing in English.  For example, the order of ideas and arguments within an argument essay in English may be significantly different than that which is in the ELLs’ native languages. This can be taken into account when scaffolding writing instruction and providing feedback to student writing.
* Present alternate ways of communicating ideas other than writing: dictating, using speech-to-text software, and allowing a student with grapho-motor, fine motor, and/or visual perception challenges to use a computer instead of writing the essay by hand.
* Provide writing frames and sentence starters.

Native Language Support for ELLs:The strategic use of the native language can be incorporated into English instruction as a support structure to clarify, build prior knowledge, extend comprehension, and bridge prior learning and experiences. This can be integrated into a teacher’s instructional practice through the following: technology, human resources (e.g., paraprofessionals, peers, and parents), native language materials, and flexible grouping.

1. **Extensions or variations:**

* Student graphic organizers are optional; a stronger class may use individual organizing tools.
* The reading comprehension assessment could be eliminated from Day 3 for a class that does not need that support.
* Students may be asked to research additional information on their own. Such information might include one or more of the following:
  + Additional informational articles
  + Articles containing charts, graphs, or other graphic representations of data
  + Audio source (i.e., an interview with Mayor Bloomberg about banning supersize sodas)
* Peer review can be added after the initial essay, before or with the writing checklist.
* The assignment can be extended into a process essay, rather than a writing assessment.

1. **Scoring:**

Student work can be scored using the Reading Information/Writing Argument: Analytic Rubric (9-10).