

IELTS Writing Sample #177

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Present a written argument or case to an educated reader with no specialist knowledge of the following topic.

In some countries an increasing number of people are suffering from health problems as a result of eating too much fast food. It is therefore necessary for governments to impose a higher tax on this kind of food.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples and relevant evidence.

You should write at least 250 words.

IELTS Writing Tip

In many cases, when you give your view in the introduction of an opinion essay, your ideas may be more complicated than 'I completely agree' or 'I completely disagree'. It's a good idea to learn some phrases to explain your opinion in a more sophisticated way.

Sample answer

The growth of the fast food industry has, without doubt, impacted on the eating habits and the health of many societies around the world. Diabetes, high cholesterol, heart and respiratory problems are all on the rise due to fatty and sugar-rich food. However, the question is whether higher tax would improve this situation or not.

From an economic point of view, higher tax might seem sensible. In countries such as the USA, Australia and Britain, the healthcare system spends a large part of its budget on people with diet-related health problems. It could be argued that these people have caused their own illnesses because of their choice of food. In this case, why should they expect the state to pay for their treatment? The tax could help fund the healthcare system.

However, we also need to consider which socio-economic group consumes fast food as the main part of their diet. Statistics indicate that lower income groups eat more of this food than wealthier people. One possible reason for this is that fast food is far cheaper than fresh produce. This is because many governments offer large subsidies to farmers who provide products for the fast food industry, such as corn, wheat and beef. Fruit and vegetables, on the other hand, are not subsidised. Research suggests that many families simply cannot afford to buy healthy food or pay higher taxes on fast food. For them, fast food is not a choice but a necessity.

In conclusion, imposing a higher tax on fast food does not seem to be the answer. If the government chose to do this, it would only lead to greater poverty and families facing further hardship.

(278 words)