

Euro junk food warning (Fri 21 Jan)

WARM UPS

1. CHAT: Talk in pairs or groups about junk food / soft drinks / obesity / food labeling / health warnings / cigarette advertising / balanced diets ...

Change topic / partner frequently to energize the class.

2. JUNK FOOD BRAINSTORM: Brainstorm types of junk food and write them on the board. Use these words as a springboard for conversation.

Extension 1: Put the junk foods on the board into different categories (they choose their own).

Extension 2: In pairs / groups, agree on which are the three healthiest and three least healthy junk foods. Find a new partner and explain your reasons / convince them of their choices.

Extension 3: Pretend to be junk food marketing executives. Choose one junk food and think of an advertising campaign to promote the health benefits of that food. Present to new partners.

3. MY JUNK DIET: Talk about how much junk food you have eaten today, in the past week, in your lives; how it affects your mood / feeling / weight; and how you would feel without any junk food.

4. 2-MINUTE DEBATES:

(a) Chocolate is good for you. vs. Makes you fat.

(b) Candy gives you energy. Your body needs energy. vs Bananas. Eat bananas.

(c) McDonalds is healthy. vs Have you seen the movie Supersize Me??? (see links).

(d) Chocolate and potato chip (crisp) companies shouldn't target kids. vs. Why not?

(e) Free toys with burger sets is junk food blackmail. vs. It's a great idea.

(f) All junk food should have health warnings. vs. Nutritional info is enough.

(g) All junk food should be banned. vs. But I like junk food.

(h) Junk food advertising should be banned. vs. It's not dangerous like cigarettes.

(i) Obese kids and their parents need counseling. vs. That's too much.

(j) Other teacher / student created mini-debates – dependent on cultures of students.

PRE READING EXERCISES

WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries, or a search engine, to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'junk' and 'food'.

TRUE / FALSE: Predict from the headline whether these statements are true or false:

- (a) The European Union has threatened to ban all junk food. T / F
- (b) The junk food industry has six weeks to tighten its rules. T / F
- (c) Less than 5% of European kids are obese. T / F
- (d) Food labeling standards will soon be compulsory. T / F
- (e) Chocolate manufacturers will be placed under particular scrutiny.. T / F
- (f) Europeans are now more obese than Americans. T / F
- (g) Many European countries want health warnings on junk food similar to those on cigarette packets. T / F
- (h) The EU health commissioner said sugar should be eliminated from children's' diets.
T / F

SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| (a) clampdown | advertising |
| (b) tighten | observation |
| (c) stance | overweight |
| (d) obese | strengthen |
| (e) ultimatum | use |
| (f) scrutiny | precise |
| (g) marketing | crackdown |
| (h) accurate | threat |
| (i) exercise | sensible |
| (j) balanced | position |

PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases based on the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (a) The European Union has threatened | of obesity seen in the USA |
| (b) tighten | ultimatum |
| (c) tough new | their judgment |
| (d) a one year | its rules |
| (e) placed under particular | labeling |
| (f) food | scrutiny |
| (g) Europeans may reach levels | a clampdown on advertising |
| (h) exercise | diets |
| (i) balanced | the right amount |
| (j) a question of | stance |

GAP FILL

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bNE: The European Union has _____ a clampdown on advertising junk food and alcoholic drinks to children if the food industry does not _____ its rules. The tough new stance is an attempt to _____ obesity in Europe, particularly amongst children. About 25% of Europe's kids are obese. EU health commissioner, Markos Kyprianou, has _____ food companies a one year ultimatum to voluntarily improve its standards, especially of food labeling, or be _____ with bans on advertising similar to those put on cigarettes. Chocolate and soft drinks manufacturers will be _____ under particular scrutiny.

Kyprianou is afraid Europeans may _____ levels of obesity seen in the USA, “ [we] considered obesity to be a US problem...we _____ fun of Americans ... It is a European problem now. ... We have to protect children from marketing because they are _____, but at the same time we have to promote accurate information to all consumers so they can _____ their judgment.” Many European countries want health _____ on junk food similar to those on cigarette packets. Kyprianou prefers better information about balanced diets, “It's not a question of eliminating sugar and other things from the diet; it's just a question of the right _____ of consumption.”

*tighten
faced
threatened
issued
placed
battled*

*made
exercise
vulnerable
warnings
reach
amount*

DISCUSSION: Ask each other the following questions:

- (a) What do you think of this article?
- (b) Is the EU right to clamp down on the junk food industry?
- (c) Should the EU have gone further and imposed laws on food manufacturers?
- (d) Should health warnings be placed on junk food?
- (e) Should companies like McDonalds be allowed to advertise their food as healthy?
- (f) Isn't it the responsibility of parents to ensure a balanced diet?
- (g) In some countries obese kids must take extra exercise lessons after school. What do you think of this idea?
- (h) Junk food should have age limits just like cigarettes and alcohol. What do you think?
- (i) Are you a junk food junkie?
- (j) Is it wrong for food companies to target kids by advertising free toys with their products?
- (k) Is chocolate good for you?
- (l) How about Coke or Pepsi?
- (m) Can you live without junk food?
- (n) What will / do you tell your children about junk food ?
- (o) Teacher's / Students' additional questions

INTERNET / WEB LINKS:

What are junk foods?:

<http://www.fatfreekitchen.com/junkfoods/junkfoods1.html>

A dietician's look at junk food:

<http://www.dietitian.com/junkfood.html>

Obesity issues:

<http://www.nationalobesityforum.org.uk/>

The story of the Mars bar:

http://www.mars.com/about_us/the_mars_story.asp

The nutritional value of a McDonald's breakfast:

<http://www.fatfreekitchen.com/junkfoods/mcdonald-nutrition-breakfast.html>

An anti-McDonalds site:

<http://www.nostatusquo.com/stopmcdonalds/>

The movie Supersize Me:

<http://www.supersizeme.com/>

HOMEWORK

POSTER: Create a poster about the benefits of a balanced diet.

LETTER TO RONALD: Write a letter to Ronald McDonald explaining what you think of their food and advertising campaigns.

FULL TEXT

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BNE: The European Union has **threatened** a clampdown on advertising junk food and alcoholic drinks to children if the food industry does not **tighten** its rules. The tough new stance is an attempt to **battle** obesity in Europe, particularly amongst children. About 25% of Europe's kids are obese. EU health commissioner, Markos Kyprianou, has **issued** food companies a one year ultimatum to voluntarily improve its standards, especially of food labeling, or be **faced** with bans on advertising similar to those put on cigarettes. Chocolate and soft drinks manufacturers will be **placed** under particular scrutiny. Kyprianou is afraid Europeans may **reach** levels of obesity seen in the USA, "[we] considered obesity to be a US problem...we **made** fun of Americans ... It is a European problem now. ... We have to protect children from marketing because they are **vulnerable**, but at the same time we have to promote accurate information to all consumers so they can **exercise** their judgment." Many European countries want health **warnings** on junk food similar to those on cigarette packets. Kyprianou prefers better information about balanced diets, "It's not a question of eliminating sugar and other things from the diet; it's just a question of the right **amount** of consumption."