



CUNYASSESSMENT TEST IN WRITING (CATW) Practice 7

Read the passage below and write an essay responding to the ideas it presents. In your essay, be sure to summarize the passage in your own words, stating the author's most important ideas. Develop your essay by identifying one idea in the passage that you feel is especially significant, and explain its significance. Support your claims with evidence or examples drawn from what you have read, learned in school, and/or personally experienced.

Calorie Information

Recently New York City began requiring chain restaurants to post the calorie content of their menu items. Under the new law, this information must be prominently posted on the menu boards—making it easy for calorie-conscious consumers to compare and make decisions.

The Big Apple's law is just months old, but there are signs that it's working. According to the city's health department, consumers are changing their buying habits.

And the new law also has led several chains to change the recipes for their menu items. According to the city, the buffalo wings at Kentucky Fried Chicken have lost 110 calories (down to 420) in the last year. A Starbucks blueberry muffin has dropped 20 percent, to 320 calories. Wendy's chicken club sandwich is down 110 calories, to 540. Restaurants seem to be working to appeal to consumers new wariness of high calorie items.

Several studies have shown that consumers choose lower calorie selections when presented with calorie information. One study, published this year in the *American Journal of Public Health*, found that Subway customers who ordered food from a menu board with calorie information averaged 53 fewer calories than those without the information.

While 53 calories may not seem like a lot, such a reduction—on a nearly daily basis, for millions of people—could go a long way toward slowing and even reversing this country's obesity crisis.

In California, 16 million people are overweight or obese, including one-third of all children. If a portion of these consumers could reduce their calorie intake by 50 or 100 calories per meal, the health benefits would be enormous.

Fast food restaurants aren't solely responsible for the obesity crisis, since Americans get more than half of their calories from food prepared at home. But studies also show that busy consumers are increasingly eating out. Fast food is a major source of their calories and nutrition.

Such consumers deserve to know what they eating.

Adapted from an editorial in *The Sacramento Bee*, August 17, 2008.