



CUNYASSESSMENT TEST IN WRITING (CATW) Practice 9

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.

Childhood Obesity

For years, we've known about the problem of childhood obesity in America. We've heard the statistics—how one third of all kids in this country are either overweight or obese. We've seen the effects on how our kids feel, and how they feel about themselves. And we know the risks to their health—obesity-related conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

But we also know that it wasn't always like this. Back when many of us were growing up, we led lives that kept most of us at a pretty healthy weight. We walked to school every day, ran around at recess and gym and for hours before dinner, and ate home-cooked meals that always seemed to have a vegetable on the plate.

For many kids today, those walks to school have been replaced by car and bus rides. Afternoons playing outside have been replaced with afternoons inside with TV, videogames, and the Internet. And with many parents working longer hours, or multiple jobs, they don't have time for family meals around the table anymore.

It's now clear that between the pressures of today's economy and the fast pace of modern life, the well-being of our kids has too often been neglected.

And let's be honest with ourselves: our kids didn't do this to themselves. Our kids don't decide what's served in the school cafeteria or whether there's time for gym class or recess. Our kids don't choose to make unhealthy food products in supersize portions. And our kids shouldn't be the ones calling the shots at dinnertime. We're in charge. We make these decisions.

That's actually the good news—that we can decide to solve this problem.

We need to make changes to keep our families healthy and fit. We need more nutritious food in our nation's schools. We need new ways to help our kids stay physically active in school and at home. We've got a long way to go to reach our goals. But I'm confident that we can help our kids live more healthy lives.

Adapted from “How we Can Empower Parents, Schools and the Community to Battle Childhood Obesity” by Michelle Obama, *Newsweek*, March 13, 2010.