

I. READING COMPREHENSION (approx. 1½ hours)

1. Read the following text carefully. Words printed in *italics* are explained on page 2.

Fat is a consumerist issue: how a 'grease tax' may encourage healthier habits

Government will be urged to introduce a tax on high-fat foods as a means of

By Cahal Milmo

The Independent 16 July 2002

The shopping is finally packed into the trolley and the check-out assistant hands over a long receipt after an hour of battling through the supermarket *aisles* in search of a week's victuals.

Alongside the usual small print on the receipt – VAT, loyalty points, two for the price-of-one bargains – the eye is drawn to an item printed in bold type: "Fat Tax @10%: £6.70 – Eating Poorly Costs You More".

Welcome to the future of food shopping where, if a suggestion by one of Labour's favourite *think-tanks* on how to improve the nation's diet is accepted, grease intake will become the latest bonus for the taxman.

With half of all adults predicted to be *obese* and suffering associated illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes by 2040, medical experts are warning fat will soon become Britain's biggest killer.

In search for a solution, Demos, the influential left-leaning policy forum, will tomorrow urge the Government to consider the introduction of a new tax on unhealthy foods as a means of turning the tide on Britons' poor eating habits.

Foods with a high fat and sugar content, in particular processed and fast-foods, should be targeted with an additional *levy* which would significantly increase their cost to the consumer, it says. The money raised, which could reach billions, would then be ploughed into *subsidising* healthier foods such as fruit and vegetables or public health campaigns.

The *tariff*, dubbed a "fat tax", is contained in a study into the diet of low-income families which found that many are

Demos has yet to work out details of how such a fat levy might work or the likely cost to consumers but it says the tax system could be a useful way of *tackling* the *scourge* of "food poverty". A spokesman said: "Just as it has been used for discouraging smoking and drinking, so we could use tax to encourage people to eat more healthily by providing a disincentive for unhealthy foods.

"Also there is no incentive to eat fruit and vegetables, particularly for those on low incomes."

Driven by hectic lifestyles, the clamour of advertising and an *inherent* human weakness for something fried and crispy, Britons are far more likely to reach for a burger or chocolate bar than a salad or dried fruit.

The UK fast-food industry is now worth £9.1bn annually while the ready-to-eat market has grown by 66 per cent in the past decade, compared to 33 per cent for the food market as a whole.

Around 20 per cent of the adult population is already clinically obese and the cost to the *NHS* in treating associated health problems, from heart disease to strokes, is estimated to be £500m a year.

The Institute of Child Health warned last month that two-thirds of pre-school children eat a diet largely reliant on white bread, chips, crisps and sweets. The average 10-year-old eats his or her weight in chips every nine months.

Supporters of the use of *fiscal* food incentives point to glaring inconsistencies in the current system which could easily be *tweaked* to encourage healthier eating. At present, most food, apart from confectionery, attracts no VAT or other taxes.

Dr Mike Rayner, head of Oxford

Englisch

Klassen 4Da/4DB

<p>85 subsidies should be considered. He said: "At the moment, for example, you pay tax on a KitKat but your Jaffa Cakes come tax free – there is no tax on cakes and biscuits." As with many such debates, it would follow hot on the heels of similar moves in the US, where 61 per cent are overweight and at least three states are proposing taxes on unhealthy soft drinks. Fast-food chains, soft drink producers and other mass volume producers in the US are so worried about the prospect of court cases for damages that they are campaigning for healthy eating. Burger packets could soon carry cigarette carton-style health warnings. 95 In Britain, much of the finger of blame for poor eating habits is also being pointed at the food industry itself. A century ago, obesity was a problem restricted to the rich. Now in Britain, it is the poor who are likely to be overweight and the ability to eat healthily, and stay slim, 105 depends, at least partly, on the <i>girth</i> of the consumer's wallet. A study by the Food Commission, an independent research charity, has found that rather than narrowing, the gap in cost between healthy and ordinary foods is increasing. Sally Cavanagh, of Sustain, a charity campaigning on food poverty, said: 110 "It looks very much like food producers are <i>exploiting</i> the desire of most of us to want to eat more healthily. The balance needs to be redressed." Other experts say Britons themselves are the root of the problem, having become too used 120 to cheap food produced at a cost to the environment and their health. Critics of the food industry say the case for financial disincentives is further</p>	<p>by "<i>pester-power</i>" marketing and the doubtful nutritional value of some brands. 125 The Food Commission, an independent charity, yesterday criticised McDonald's and conglomerate Procter&Gamble for their Happy Meals and Sunny Delight products. The fast-food chain was singled out by a 130 "parents' jury" for having a large proportion of its marketing budget aimed at children while Sunny Delight, a soft drink, was described as "thickened, artificially sweetened, expensive water" with 15 per cent fruit juice. 135 McDonald's insisted its advertising was "decent and truthful" while Procter&Gamble said the claims were part of a long-running campaign against the product. 140 Food producers as a whole declared themselves flatly opposed to any additional levy. Martin Paterson, Deputy Director General of the Food and Drink Federation, said: "A so-called 'fat tax' would hit lower income families, be patronising to consumers, and be a tax on choice." 145 It is a dilemma recognised by Demos. "It is a very difficult balancing act – encouraging healthy eating without punishing the less well off," said the spokesman. 150 Some nutritionists argue that slapping a punitive premium on cream cakes while making a virtue of Brussels sprouts would be regressive and unlikely to discourage people from their eating habits. Dr Wendy Doyle, of the British Dietetic Association, said: "We don't want to turn ourselves into a police state where the Government tells us 160 what to eat. The best way of changing habits is through educating people to cook properly and eat well."</p>
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WORD EXPLANATIONS

diet	the food that a person normally eats
aisle	passage between the rows of shelves in a supermarket
VAT	Value Added Tax (Mehrwertsteuer)
think-tank	a group of experts who provide advice and ideas on political, social or economic issues
obese	(of people) very fat, in a way that is not healthy
levy	an extra amount of money that has to be paid, especially as a tax to the government
to subsidise	(used about a government, etc) to give money in order to to keep the cost of a service or of goods low
tariff	a tax that has to be paid on goods

to tackle	to make a determined effort to deal with a difficult problem or situation
scourge	a person or thing that causes trouble or suffering
inherent	that is a basic or permanent part of sth and that cannot be removed
NHS	National Health Service; the NHS is the public health service in Britain that provides medical treatment and is paid for by taxes
fiscal	connected with government or public money, especially taxes
tweaked	made slight changes
girth	the measurement around sth, especially a person's waist; here: the size
to exploit	to use sth unfairly for your own advantage
pester-power	is the name given to marketing techniques which encourage children to force their parents to purchase a particular product.

2. Choose 7 of the following expressions and give a synonym or define/explain them in English. (2 points each)

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|------------|-------------|------------|-----------|
| a. line 3 | receipt | f. line 50 | incentive |
| b. line 5 | victuals | g. line 53 | clamour |
| c. line 23 | to urge | h. line 61 | decade |
| d. line 30 | to increase | i. line 71 | crisps |

3. Paraphrase two of the following expressions. (3 points each)

- a means of turning the tide (line 25)
- worried about the prospect of court cases (line 95)
- marketing budget aimed at children (line 132)

4. Answer the following questions in your own words.

- Point out why the British government should consider a "fat tax" according to this article! [6 points]
- In what ways has the problem of too much weight shifted since 1900? [2 points]
- What role do children play in this issue? [3 points]

II. COMMENTARY (approx. 1/4 hour)

Choose one of the following tasks. Use your own words as far as possible. (About 100 words; 6 points for content, 6 points for language = 12 points)

- What are the three central points that the article wants to make?
- "The best way of changing habits is through educating people to cook properly and eat well."
Do you think that this will be easy **taking into account the facts that are put forward in the article**?
- Do you think the author of the article is in favour of a fat tax? Base your answer on

III. GRAMMAR (approx. 1/2 hour)

1. Put the parts in *italics* in the following text into reported speech, starting as suggested below. (6 points)

A new campaign to encourage restaurants to serve more environmentally friendly food is proving a big success in Switzerland.

The "Goût Mieux" or "Taste Better" campaign, is organised by the World Wide Fund for Nature, and is the first of its kind in Europe.

Jennifer Zimmermann, project manager for WWF, says the goal of the campaign is to make both restaurateurs and customers more aware of how their choice of food affects the environment.

"When we eat we have a very big influence on our environment," she told swissinfo. "So if we choose products that protect the environment we can have a positive effect."

"We are not supposed to be eating apples from New Zealand or asparagus from Mexico," said Zimmermann, "and we really don't need strawberries in February. In summer we can eat cucumbers, tomatoes, zucchini and so on, and in winter things like carrots, potatoes, or cabbage."

"Our customers are delighted," restaurant manager Regula Minder told swissinfo. "And we've even had other restaurants phoning us up asking how they can join the project."

"We started this project in Switzerland because we know Swiss consumers are very aware of the environment," said Zimmermann.

"But obviously we hope Goût Mieux will spread across Europe and even the world. For the moment though, we are happy that it is doing so well here in Switzerland."

Start like this: Jennifer Zimmermann told swissinfo that ...

2. Put the verbs in brackets into the correct form; you are supposed to write your answers into the gaps on this task sheet. (10 points)

Last Saturday, while we **(to have)**breakfastand**(look)**
..... forward to **(spend)** a quiet
weekend, somebody **(ring)** the doorbell. Our dog started
(bark) because he hates **(be)**
disturbed when he **(have)** his morning nap. We **(know)**
..... immediately that this ring at the door **(mean)**
.....trouble.Myhusband**(get)**up,his
face looking grave. After he **(open)** the door I **(hear)**
.....him**(talk)** to our neighbour who
(say):"Oh,you**(only just get)**
up. If I **(know)**that**(call)**later.
He went on **(say)** that our Auntie Celestine **(phone)**
..... him because she **(not can)**ge
through to us as nobody **(pick)**upthephone."She**(arrive)**

with joy on **(hear)** that she is going to pay us a visit. And she
(never really announce) her visits which **(make)**
.....them even more difficult **(stand)**

- Auntie Celestine **(live)** on her own ever since her husband
(die) twenty years ago. For all these years she **(travel)**
..... around the country. She doesn't own a house or a flat, she
prefers **(sleep)** in hotels and **(stay)**
..... with relatives. That's why she **(always carry)**
..... all her belongings around with her, and **(pick)**
..... her up at the station with a Mini Cooper is not a good idea. If it
(be) possible to ban her from visiting her relatives at short
notice all her family **(be)** very grateful. But as she is very rich
and we **(inherit)** all her money some time, we all put up with
her whimsies.

3) Complete the following gap text. Decide:

- which *preposition*,
- which form of the *adjective* or the *adverb* is asked for and
- whether an *article* is necessary or not.

You are supposed to write your answers into the gaps on this task sheet. (4 points)

(c: = comparative, s: = superlative e.g. good, c: better, s: best)

Europeans love protesting against McDonald's – almost as much as they enjoy eating there

In Europe, a continent troubled unemployment, McDonald's provides 250'000 jobs. Some critics insist calling them "McJobs".

In a part of the world that's (increasing) having to learn to live a little (fast: c), McDonald's is popping up everywhere, offering (the?) service and convenience – but at (the?) cost of steering local diets away from (the?) tradition and toward processing foods, a strategy typical McDonald's. And, not (surprising), the company is keen repeating its success story also in Europe.

Back in (the?) 1950s, a milk-shake-machine salesman named Ray Kroc bought out the McDonald brothers' burger stand in California with the idea of

IV) COMPOSITION (approx. 1½ hours)

Choose one of the following topics:

1. Obesity: a problem that affects us all, or a private matter? Discuss.
2. Mc Donald's: an American success story. Comment on the reasons.
3. Life is like a merry-go-round which keeps spinning faster and faster. Discuss.
4. "I expect that Woman will be the last thing civilized by Man."
George Meredith (Engl. Author, 1828-1909)