

Reading Level 3: Soda ban in New York

9th July 2012

Topics: fast food, health, advertising

Learning points:

- two-part verbs
- as
- --ing as subject

1 In New York City, more than half the adult population are obese¹. Across the USA, over one-third of adults
2 and nearly a fifth of children have put on too much weight. Sugary drinks have been blamed for some of the
3 increases in obesity rates. How can people be put off eating and drinking too many calories?
4

5 The mayor of New York City has recently put forward a proposal to prohibit the selling of large sugary drinks
6 in restaurants, cinemas and sport stadiums. How many sodas ('soda' is the American English word for 'fizzy
7 drinks' like coke or fanta) have you drunk in the last week? In New York City, a third of the inhabitants drink
8 at least one per day. The mayor said that too many public officials just wring their hands and do nothing
9 about the public health issue.
10

11 The ban on sugary drinks would apply to any drink larger than a medium coffee (500ml) which contains more
12 than 50 calories. Large diet sodas and low-calorie drinks would still be permitted, as would free re-fills.

13 The idea is to deter people from overconsumption by making it more inconvenient² for them to drink large
14 volumes. Nevertheless³, large sugary drinks would still be able to be purchased in grocery⁴ shops and
15 supermarkets. The soft drinks industry claims it is being unfairly targeted, and that the measures wouldn't
16 curb⁵ obesity as people will still drink plenty.

17 Do you think that cracking down on drinking large sodas will work?
18

19 Smoking in restaurants and parks has already been prohibited⁶ in New York City, as have some kinds of
20 artificial fat in restaurant food. New York was also the first city to force restaurants to publish how many
21 calories were in their meals. Selling sugary drinks has already been banned in several cities in the USA. If
22 these laws are now common across America, perhaps the 'large soda ban' will catch on, too. If politicians
23 wanted to bring in this law in your country, would it be a good idea?
24

25 At the same time, Disney has brought in new nutritional⁷ standards for advertising food and drink on its TV
26 channels⁸ and at its theme parks – taking the moral high ground in the battle over calories and obesity.

27 It may be down to the fact that children who see adverts as they watch TV are up to 17% more likely to eat
28 fast food. In the future, children won't be exposed to as much advertising for fast food. Reducing unhealthy
29 advertising is surely a good thing, but shouldn't adults in New York have the right to choose how large their
30 drinks are?

¹ obese = fettleibig

² inconvenient = lästig, ungelegen, ungünstig

³ nevertheless = trotzdem, nichtsdestoweniger

⁴ grocery = Lebensmittelgeschäft

⁵ to curb = zügeln

⁶ to prohibit = verbieten

⁷ nutritional = Ernährungs-

⁸ channel = Kanal

Level 3 questions

Two-part verbs

The English language is full of duplicate verbs, often one that derives from Latin and another that derives from Old German. Two-part verbs (some of which are phrasal verbs) often come from Old German, and sound more 'everyday', in contrast to the more formal Latin vocabulary.

1. What are i) the meanings, and ii) the alternatives for these two-part verbs:

- a. put on (line 2)
- b. put off (line 3)
- c. put forward (line 5)
- d. crack down (line 17)
- e. catch on (line 22)
- f. bring in (line 23 & 25)
- g. (put) down to (line 26)

as

2. The word 'as' has several different meanings.

For each of the uses of 'as' below, can you explain the meaning?

- a. line 12
- b. line 16
- c. line 19
- d. line 27
- e. line 28

--ing as a subject

The -ing form is often a verb. However, it can be used to make an action the subject of a sentence. When this happens, it is often used with other words to form a multi-word subject.

3. In the following sentences, can you identify the subject and also the verb?

- a. line 19
- b. line 21
- c. line 28-29

