

In the article “Nutrition experts criticize new federal dietary guidelines,” Megan Scudellari writes against the vagueness of the most recent nutritional recommendations in place for the next five years. At the heart of her argument, Scudellari implies that government food recommendations need more transparency, pointing out how using terms such as “saturated fat” rather than more common language such as “red meat” confuses or deceives the public. The published version appeals more to the interests of big businesses than to the health of the public. In order to appease big business and the laws in place to protect big business, the USDA picks and chooses which scientific data they want to publish. However, the recommendations do encourage healthier patterns, particularly regarding sugar intake and fruit and vegetable consumption. Scudellari’s points seem valid because she calls attention to a “them” versus “us” mentality that seems realistic. Because her audience is part of the public, we can agree to the need for explicit, clear information about what our healthiest food options are.

What’s working here?

- This intro provides readers with pertinent details from the article, effectively summarizing the position taken by Scudellari
- It’s sized well for a shorter paper
- Most of the verbs and nouns are specific and clear
- grammar and mechanics: generally strong/correct

What could be better?

- The paragraph isn’t always clear that the points being presented are the opinions of Scudellari. At times, the points could easily be confused with or taken as general facts because of how they’re presented.
- Repetitive language sometimes becomes distracting.
- Clarity is an issue at times. For example, “The published version” has little to no context when we first read it because the clarification for that reference comes in the next sentence. Maybe reordering some of the sentences would make this paragraph stronger.
- The thesis/position at the end of the paragraph could be clearer and more direct.