

In “Nutrition experts criticize new federal dietary guidelines,” Megan Scudellari presents evidence from nutritional experts that the government’s food guidelines are vague and potentially interfere with the public’s ability to make healthy food choices. She references absences in official dietary guidelines, noting how the USDA seems to purposely omit recommendations about limiting consumption of sugary beverages and red meat. However, the article points out that while nutritional recommendations are controlled by the USDA, the USDA may also be limited in what it can say. The evidence she presents implies that current dietary guidelines often protect the interests of big business rather than the public. Scudellari drives home the belief that current guidelines obscure information relative to the public’s health. On the other hand, Scudellari suggests that the newest dietary guidelines do include positive changes, encouraging people to focus on healthy dietary patterns rather than calorie intake. The author aligns herself with naysayers of the current dietary guidelines, and she makes several important points. However, her position suggests that the government’s recommendations dictate people’s food choices and fails to consider the public’s autonomy in and responsibility for making smart food choices for themselves.

What’s working here?

- This intro effectively summarizes the position presented in the article.
- Great opening sentence.
- It’s sized well for a shorter paper.
- Most of the verbs and nouns are specific and clear.
- Grammar/mechanics are generally strong/clear.
- The essay’s argument (the last two sentences of the intro) is specific and puts the student writer in a good position to present a relevant and interesting paper.

What could be better?

- Several sentences could be streamlined and simplified.
- A couple of sentences seem to present details already clear to the reader.
- Repetition of “however” could be addressed.
- Transitions between points could be improved at times.
- The language in the last sentence could be clearer, particularly because the verb phrasing “fails to consider” has an unclear referent.