

# ISSUE 9

## Fast Food

The fast-food chains are gobbling up the restaurant segment of the economy. When they first began to appear a generation or so ago, they offered cheap, healthy products to people in a hurry. Consumers said they ate there because they “couldn’t fix that food at home for such a low price.” Well, that was then; now, most fast-food outlets feature expensive, unhealthy items. So, the “food” part of the description is in some doubt; and as waiting times grow, even the “fast” part seems to be inaccurate as well. Nevertheless, the major fast-food companies continue to proliferate and their profits just keep on growing.

Why do you think people buy fast food, even though they know it is not good for their health?

- (1) Convenient location
- (2) Quick service
- (3) Large portions
- (4) Taste
- (5) Cheap price
- (6) Advertising
- (7) Peer pressure



# Sample Answers

(A) At work, I only have a short time to eat and run personal errands, so I don't have the time to go to a nice, relaxing restaurant for a good meal. I save that luxury for the weekends. My office is in an area where there are dozens of small fast-food restaurants, so I have a wide choice of menus and I can finish my meal quickly.

(B) People eat in the popular fast-food places for the same reason that they listen to popular music and wear popular fashions: because it is "popular" to do so. The giant *corporations* understand very well the value of advertising and image-creation. Most people actually prefer high-quality food that is individually prepared, served to them by a friendly waiter or waitress, and consumed in a comfortable, relaxing environment; but they still spend most of their eat-out *budget* at the assembly-line food outlets.

## Speak Your Mind

1. What is your favorite fast food?
2. How often do you eat at a fast-food restaurant?
3. Are there any problems associated with fast food?
4. Why do many people, especially kids, seem to be addicted to fast food?
5. What should the fast-food producers do to help consumers?
6. Do you think parents are at fault for their children's bad eating habits, or are the kids themselves most responsible?

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F : I don't know what to do about my son.

M : Why? What's the matter?

F : No matter what I *fix* at home for him to eat, he hardly touches it. When he does eat, he's *listless*. It's like he has no appetite for good food.

M : Oh, he's probably just *infatuated* with somebody. Nobody who's "in love" feels like eating, you know.

F : No, I don't think so. Mainly, he only wants to eat fast food. He *loads up* on it before he gets home, and then of course he isn't hungry any more.

M : That should be an easy problem to fix. Just don't give him any money.

F : That wouldn't help. He would just borrow some cash from his friends, and I'd end up having to give him money to pay them back. And I don't want him to be a beggar; he needs to *stand on his own*.

M : But he's making terrible food choices. How did he get such bad habits?

F : It's probably my fault. When I used to take him out shopping, we'd stop at some fast-food place for lunch. It seemed like a good idea at the time, but now I'm sorry.

M : Don't be too hard on yourself. Everybody buys fast food now and then. Sometimes there just isn't any convenient *alternative*.

F : But it isn't good for him to make it his main source of meals. He needs to have a more balanced diet with fewer empty calories and less fat.

M : Have you talked to him about it?

F : Many times. But he doesn't even seem to think there's a problem. He says all his friends eat out, and he just wants to be with them.

M : Well, I guess ultimately he has to make his own choices in life. He's not your prisoner.

F : No, he isn't. But I can't help worrying about him.