

The issue at hand is whether or not parents are to blame for childhood obesity, which can be taken easily from the affirmative or the negative. On the 21st of July, 2006, Bruce Love's opinion piece titled 'Regulating us into a nation of fatties' appeared in the Age, contending quite plainly that it is due to the new regulations enforced by the government that children are becoming overweight and facing health issues. Posted in The Australian by Michelle Bockmann, the piece 'Parents blamed for fat kids' contends that the fast food industry is not to blame for weight issues in children, but rather that the responsibility lies with the parents. Thirdly, a cartoon by Mark Knight was published in the Herald Sun, titled 'The little couch potatoes' contends that the apathy of parents in raising their children is the cause of their negative attitude towards outdoor activity and healthy eating. All three pieces use various language/ visual techniques to argue their differing contentions.

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**Comment:** Don't say 'the issue at hand'.

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**Comment:** This sentence is meaningless. Do not use it!

Although the pieces have differing contentions, each of the authors have used similar language techniques to make the reader see their point of view. Firstly, Love's use of repetition creates a memorable impact on the reader, allowing them to follow exactly what Love's contention is outlining. Repeating words such as "obesity" reminds the reader of the state in which many parents find their children, and by repeating "regulation" the blame is shifted solely onto the shoulders of the government. "Fear" is also repeated in the context of targeting the government's hold on parents with their "regulations that make playground equipment no more than 1.5 metres from the ground". The cadence of Love's piece is consistent due to alliteration in terms such as "adventure activities", or parent's fear of their children "playing in parks". By creating a steady flow for the reader to follow in the words themselves, the point is understood better. Similarly, Knight's metaphor of children actually turning into potatoes persuades the reader to see the effect of junk food in their children's lives. Although portrayed visually rather than through language, Knight evokes a simple path for the reader to follow to his contention, as was done by Love. However, Bockmann uses an expert's opinion throughout her entire piece with constant references to the actual words of Dr. Peter Clifton. The author's own language mixed with the undeniable words of an "internationally recognises scientist with the CSIRO" convinces the reader that the parents are in fact to blame for their overweight kids. The differing means to achieve similar ends is a common thread among the three authors.

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**Comment:** Good topic sentence

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**Comment:** excellent

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**Comment:** outstanding vocab

The language choices used by the authors are in direct contrast, as is seen by Love's emotive language and Knight's use of metaphor. Again using words like "fear" and "stupid", Love creates emotion that gives the reader

a more familiar sentiment towards the author's opinion. The audience will find it easy to understand the point being made with subjective terms such as "stupid regulations" and "fear of litigation". Love's contention that the government is to blame for childhood obesity is easier to follow with words that spark emotion in his argument's favour, persuading the reader to his cause. However, Knight's metaphor is again used to give emotion to the reader, particularly if they happen to be parents of young children. Seeing the two kids in cartoon as "couch potatoes" will rouse an alarm for parents, who will then strive to see to it that they're children do not follow the same path. Steps to avoiding this are outlined quite clearly b Knight in his cartoon, as junk food and video games are prevalent icons. In contrast, the sun outside appears to be going to waste on these children. Part of Knight's contention is that outdoor activity is also a key to cutting down hours spent eating unhealthy food and playing video games. This solution, however, contrasts Love's contention that the government is to blame, stating that the responsibility rests with the parents.

Both Knight and Bockmann condemn the parents of overweight children for their lack of responsibility. Knight's portrayal of this is again in the presence of junk food and video games in lieu of healthy food and outdoor activity and exercise. The parent's laziness in raising their children is seen as the second 'couch potato' asks the other, "'Outside?' Is that available on Playstation?" Rather than activity and exercise, the healthy upbringing has been replaced with apathy and responsibility for children laid upon a machine rather than their parents. The key point made by Knight is that children are wasting away into vegetables in front of the television, and it is the parent's fault. This condemnation of the parents will rouse a change to parents whose kids resemble the 'couch potatoes', or spur on those whose children are already engaged in sporting activities and outdoor exercise, all done with a simple cliché that drives home a truly disturbing image. Likewise, Bockmann lays the blame upon the parents; however this is done through statistics. The author uses "an Australian study that showed children ate 37 percent of their daily energy intake at school, but only 14 percent was lunch bought at the school tuckshop" to show that "higher calorie intake" was the primary cause of childhood obesity, and that it is mainly due to the parents. Bockmann's use of statistics shows the reader the truth of how the "sugar-laden drinks and high-fat snacks that children were eating at home" were the actual cause of their obesity, "rather than lower physical activity". By using statistics, Bockmann has enforced the undeniable, proven fact upon the reader, stating their contention as what is indisputably the truth and therefore gaining the reader's support. Both

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Comment: excellent analysis

authors have declared the parents to be at fault for underage obesity, yet by different means.

The issue of overweight children and unhealthy diet is the reason for the contrasting attitudes about who is to blame for the state of children. Bruce Love condemns the government for its regulations that sugar-coat children with safety, as well as their food. He uses repetition and alliteration, which provide a steady flow for the reader to follow, as well as emotive language to reinforce his contention. The cartoon by Mark Knight is drawn as direct social satire towards the apathy of parents who allow their children to become 'couch potatoes', wasting away in front of a machine instead of playing outside with parents or friends. This point is made with the blatant metaphor of children literally becoming vegetables in the absence of exercise and proper as well as the presence of junk food, laziness and stupidity on behalf of the parents. Michelle Bockmann also blames the parents for overweight children, as is done quite explicitly in the title of her Opinion Piece. Her point is made through the opinion of Dr. Peter Clifton of the CSIRO, coupled with statistical evidence to prove that parents are to blame, not the schools.