

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Guided Research Task: Fact-Check a Text

**Directions:** In the article below, fact-check the highlighted text—in other words, make sure that it is **accurate** and **credible**. (Hint: Some of it is not!) The boxes along the sides of the article will help you. Write your conclusions on a separate sheet of paper. Note that the words in bold can be found in *Scope's* "Glossary of News Terms."

## Are Junk-Food Commercials Making Us Unhealthy?

TV commercials bombard us with images of junk food. No wonder we're all stuffing our faces!

This weekend, when you're lounging on the couch watching the CW or ESPN, count the number of times you see a commercial for an unhealthy food. Super sugary breakfast cereal? That's one. Cheesy stuffed-crust pizza? That's two. Greasy fast-food burgers, candy bars . . . soon you'll lose count.

Most of these ads are for foods loaded with sugar and fat. Maybe these commercials don't bother you, but they do bother health experts. "Junk food commercials are really the worst. They are very damaging to young people," says one expert. In fact, many experts say that junk-food ads should be banned from TV shows that young people watch.

Why? All of those tantalizing commercials are designed to get you to eat the food advertised. And guess what? They work. Studies show that young people who watch a lot of TV are more likely to eat junk food than those who do not. In one study, five young people aged 9 to 11 watched a total of 10 ads for unhealthy snack food. Afterwards, the young people were 80 percent more likely to choose to eat unhealthy snacks.

1. There is a problem with this quote that affects its **credibility**. What is the problem? How does this problem affect the quotes' credibility?

2. Does the article state who conducted this study?

3. Think about the answer to Question 2. How does this affect the **credibility** of the information in the article?

4. According to the article, five people participated in this study. Do you think this study was large enough to produce **reliable** data?

Here's a link to the study: "[Food for Thought](#)."

5. Does "Are Junk-Food Commercials Making Us Unhealthy?" **accurately** report the results of the study?

6. Does the Kaiser Family Foundation seem like a **credible source**? (Hint: Scroll to the last page of "Food for Thought" for information about the Kaiser Family Foundation. You can also google the foundation.)

### An Even Greater Danger

Just how many food ads are young people watching? According to a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, kids aged 13 to 17 see an average of 17 foods ads per day, while kids aged 8 to 12 see an average of 21 food ads per day—and the vast majority of those ads are for unhealthy foods.

Some steps have been taken to reduce the large number of ads—at least those aimed at younger kids. In 2007, 11 big food companies, including McDonald's, Campbell Soup, and PepsiCo, agreed to stop advertising products that don't meet certain nutritional guidelines to kids under the age of 12. General Mills promised to stop advertising sugary cereals in places where children might see the ads.

But nothing has been done about the junk-food ads viewed by older kids and teens.

7. This information comes from a [New York Times](#) article. Was it reported correctly in *this* article? If not, what mistakes were made?

### The Occasional French Fry

High-calorie foods filled with salt, sugar, and fat are definitely not good for you. On the other hand, many factors besides diet—like physical activity, stress level, social activity, and genetics—contribute to a person's health. The occasional french fry probably isn't going to hurt you, as long as it's just that—occasional.

Commercials for unhealthy food may even offer a chance to learn important lessons: Take responsibility for what you eat and question the information in ads.

After all, just because commercials try to persuade you to eat unhealthy food, doesn't mean they have to succeed.

8. Can you confirm that these factors do affect health? Tell where you looked and what you found out.

9. You discovered some fact-checking errors in this article. Does that mean the big idea of the article is incorrect? How can the article be improved to make it more **credible**?