

Sample Paper: Analyzing a reading (Freeman)

Freeman 1

LaShawn Freeman
Professor Rubin
English 101
17 May XXXX

“One Lunch at a Time”:
Not as Simple as It Sounds

Former senators George McGovern and Robert Dole have written the newspaper article “One Lunch at a Time” hoping to generate public support for a bold initiative: creating a worldwide school lunch program for needy children. The authors skillfully gain the attention of readers and generate interest in their proposal; whether most readers will move beyond interest to actual support, however, is questionable. Although the authors successfully describe the benefits of the plan, they do not adequately demonstrate that it would be workable.

The fact that liberal Democrat McGovern and conservative Republican Dole have teamed up to write the article attracts readers’ attention and gains their respect. Knowing that the plan has bipartisan roots, conservative readers may be less inclined to dismiss it as just one more left-wing government program. Also, both authors have solid credentials. Each has a reputation for integrity, and together they bring experience to the subject. As they write in their opening paragraphs, in the 1970s they cosponsored legislation creating the U.S. school lunch program.

When describing the benefits of their plan, McGovern and Dole appeal to American idealism and self-interest. Their program’s goals are idealistic: feeding hungry children, boosting school

Title is centered.

Opening sentences describe the purpose of the article.

Thesis expresses Freeman’s evaluation of the article.

Freeman describes authors’ credibility.

Clear topic sentence announces a shift to a new topic.

attendance, increasing literacy rates, reducing population growth, and spurring economic opportunities. Citing studies, the authors show how these goals are intertwined: When free school lunches are offered in poor communities, “attendance often doubles within a year, and within two years, academic performance can improve by as much as 40 percent” (A23). In addition, educated women tend to have fewer children. Finally, with an educated populace, countries in the developing world have a better chance of moving toward economic self-sufficiency.

Quotation is cited with an MLA in-text citation.

McGovern and Dole make clear that their program is not merely idealistic: “We are not talking about ordinary charity” (A23). America as a whole benefits by promoting stable and economically thriving societies around the world. American farmers benefit by selling their surpluses to the government for shipment overseas.

Question serves as a transition to the second section of the analysis.

Would the McGovern-Dole plan be workable? The authors attempt to persuade us that it would be feasible. The title of the article, “One Lunch at a Time,” suggests simplicity, as does the sketch of a pair of hands clutching a full grocery bag. McGovern and Dole open their article with their most powerful evidence that the program might work: A similar school lunch program has been highly successful in the United States. Because this program was initiated by McGovern and Dole, readers are at least tempted to think that the authors might be able to take their plan worldwide.

Once the authors begin talking about specifics, however, many readers will become skeptical. McGovern and Dole focus primarily on costs, arguing that they would be reasonable. They

say that the initial cost would be \$3 billion, half paid by the United States, half by charities and other nations. They suggest that in the long run the countries receiving the food would take over the funding. Much of this seems like wishful speculation.

The authors pay little attention to the logistical problems their program would face. They do mention that the World Food Program, which has a long track record, might coordinate the efforts, but they devote only a few sentences to this topic. It is one thing to run a school lunch program in the United States, a single country that is generally well off. It is quite another to establish such programs in poor countries with varying cultural traditions and governmental structures. Imagine, for example, trying to work with the government in North Korea or coordinating a program in war-torn Liberia. The logistical problems would be a nightmare.

To be fair, one must acknowledge that McGovern and Dole have only a few columns in a newspaper in which to sell readers on their program. They do a fine job of generating public interest in their proposal; in future writings and speeches, perhaps they can make a better case that their program might actually work.

Freeman summarizes the authors' argument about costs.

Freeman asserts her own skepticism about the authors' plan.

Freeman treats the authors fairly.

Heading is centered.

Work Cited

Work cited list is
formatted according
to MLA style.

McGovern, George, and Robert Dole. "One Lunch at a Time."
Washington Post 1 May 2001: A23.