**Sugar: A Taxing Subject**

People have got themselves all frothed up about the tax on fizzy drinks. It’s not the fizz that’s the problem, of course – it’s the 9 cubes of sugar that each can contains. It’d be indefensible to argue that 9 cubes of sugar per can is no big deal; we know that sugar is bad for your teeth, bad for your blood pressure, bad for your liver, is linked to diabetes and cancer, and is physically addictive. What’s debatable is whether you should be taxed extra for choosing a can of fizzy pop as a treat; whether it’s the government’s business to interfere with your choices, and whether taxing is going to make any difference.

Let me lay my cards on the table: I’m no fan of sugar. And by that, I mean I love it... but I know it’s bad for me. I know that with every delicious mouthful of dopamine-triggering fizz, I’m hurting the body I love, the body that has faithfully carried me around the world for the last two decades, and which (I’m hoping) will continue to do so for many more. I know that, with every can of Coke I use to wash down my pizza, I’m probably cutting my life short, or something. I get it. But here’s the thing: we all do things that are bad for us. Heck, even breathing is bad for us; the oxygen that we need in order to stay alive is technically killing us (ask your Chemistry teacher. Or google it).

So here’s my first problem with the sugar tax. We all deserve to treat ourselves to something a bit naughty every now and again. Sure, the tax doesn’t mean that sugary drinks are banned, but it does mean that they’re harder to access for people. Poor people are the ones hit hardest by this, and life’s hard enough for them without taking away their pleasures, don’t you think?

Secondly, you might think it’s a noble thing for the government to intervene and prevent us from hurting ourselves, like blundering toddlers swinging a knife around a kitchen, but my question to you is: where do we stop? Lots of things contain sugar, including chocolate, fruit, ready meals – are we going to tax all of those, too? And then what? Tax staying in bed because it’s bad for your body? Taxing computer games because they make your brain have too much fun? Try as it might, the Nanny State can’t protect us from all of life’s harms. Far better to let people make educated decisions for themselves.

Lastly, taxing sugar might not even work. People who can afford these drinks are still likely to consume them in the same amount, but paying more, according to one nutrition expert. A better way to reduce people’s intake of these drinks is to educate them about what they are putting into their bodies. It’s people, not governments, who bring about real change – just look at the brouhaha about plastic straws, a noble cause started by a public awareness campaign. The government are getting behind it, but that’s where governments should be – *behind* the people, not in front.

So by all means cut down on your sugar if you want to live a healthier, longer life, and do your bit to keep our NHS afloat. It’s a great idea. Just don’t expect the government to do your thinking for you. After all, treats in moderation should be a privilege that we can all enjoy.

I’ll drink to that.

**Questions**

**Challenging**

1. Find THREE examples of rhetorical questions in the text.

2. Find ONE example of an opinion stated as a fact.

3. Find THREE examples of direct address to the reader in the text.

4. Which is the most effective technique used by the author in your opinion? Why?

**More Challenging**

1. Find TWO examples of imperative verbs in the text.

2. Write out a synonym for each of the following words:

brouhaha; indefensible; blundering; interfere

3. Name THREE language techniques that the writer has used in this text and explain how these techniques create interest for the reader.

**Mega Challenging**

1. Find an example of anaphora in the text.

2. How has the writer used tone in order to manipulate the reader?

3. Write your own paragraph about the sugar tax, stating whether you think it is a good idea or not. Your paragraph should include: a semi-colon; brackets; a colon; at least one abstract noun; at least four language techniques.