

Activity 4: Joining and Beginning Sentences with Coordinating Words

This activity is based on Mark Bittman, “Bad Food? Tax It, and Subsidize Vegetables.”

Writers commonly begin some sentences with coordinating words, except in very formal writing. Look at paragraphs 2 – 4 of “Bad Food? Tax It, and Subsidize Vegetables,” and circle the coordinating words that join independent clauses or begin a sentence. Then answer the question about Bittman’s rhetorical purpose.

Though experts increasingly recommend a diet high in plants and low in animal products and processed foods, ours is quite the opposite, and there’s little disagreement that changing it could improve our health and save tens of millions of lives.

And—not inconsequential during the current struggle over deficits and spending—a sane diet could save tens if not hundreds of billions of dollars in health care costs.

Yet the food industry appears incapable of marketing healthier foods. And whether its leaders are confused or just stalling doesn’t matter, because the fixes are not really their problem. Their mission is not public health but profit, so they’ll continue to sell the health-damaging food that’s most profitable, until the market or another force skews things otherwise. That “other force” should be the federal government, fulfilling its role as an agent of the public good and establishing a bold national fix.

Rhetorical purpose:

- Why does Bittman begin some sentences with coordinating words and in other cases use coordinating words to join independent clauses?
- Why does he use the dash (—) after “And”? How does he punctuate the coordinating words?