

Sample Outline for an MLA Paper (Harba)

Harba 1

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Header includes
writer's name,
instructor, course,
and date.

Outline

Word "Outline" and
title, centered.

What's for Dinner? Personal Choices vs. Public Health

Thesis: In the name of public health and safety, state governments have the responsibility to shape public health policies and to regulate healthy eating choices, especially since doing so offers a potentially large social benefit for a relatively small cost.

Outline begins with
Harba's thesis.

- I. Debates surrounding food regulation have a long history in the U.S.
 - A. The 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act guarantees inspection of meat and dairy products.
 - B. Such regulations are considered reasonable because consumers are protected from harm with little cost.
 - C. Consumers consider reasonable regulations to be an important government function to stop harmful items from entering the marketplace.
- II. Even though food meets safety standards, further regulation is needed.
 - A. The typical American diet—processed sugars, fats, and refined flours—is damaging over time.
 - B. Related health problems are diabetes, cancer, and heart problems.
 - C. Passing chronic-disease-related legislation is our single most important public health challenge.

Outline uses
standard format
and is written in
complete sentences.

Marginal annotations indicate **MLA-style formatting** and **effective writing**.

- III. Legislating which foods they can eat is not a popular solution for most Americans.
 - A. A proposed New York City regulation banning the sale of soft drinks greater than twelve ounces failed in 2012, and in California a proposed soda tax failed in 2011.
 - B. Many consumers find such laws to be unreasonable restrictions on freedom of choice.
 - C. Opposition to food and beverage regulation is similar to the opposition to early tobacco legislation; the public views the issue as one of personal responsibility.
 - D. Counterpoint: Freedom of “choice” is a myth; our choices are heavily influenced by marketing.
- IV. The United States has a history of regulating unhealthy behaviors.
 - A. Tobacco-related restrictions faced opposition.
 - B. Seat belt laws are a useful analogy.
 - C. The public seems to support laws that have a good cost-benefit ratio; the cost of food/beverage regulations is low, and most people agree that the benefits would be high.
- V. Americans believe that personal choice is lost when regulations such as taxes and bans are instituted.
 - A. Regulations open up the door to excessive control and interfere with cultural and religious traditions.
 - B. Counterpoint: Burdens on individual liberty are a reasonable price to pay for large social health benefits.

VI. Public opposition continues to stand in the way of food regulation to promote healthier eating. We must consider whether to allow the costly trend of rising chronic disease to continue in the name of personal choice, or whether we are willing to support the legal changes and public health policies that will reverse that trend.