

UNIT
14

Problem–Solution 2: Reporting Verbs; Adverb Clauses and Phrases with As; Vocabulary for Describing Information in Graphics

Children and Health

1 Grammar in the Real World

You will read an essay that focuses on the problem of childhood obesity. The essay is an example of problem–solution writing, in which the writer describes the problem and the reasons why the problem exists. At the end of the essay, the writer voices a need to find a solution to the problem.

A Before You Read In what ways have the lifestyles of children changed in the past 20 years? How have these changes affected their health? Read the essay. According to the author, what are the main causes of childhood obesity?

Fighting Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity is a major concern in the United States and in many other countries around the world. As shown in Figure 1, obesity in U.S. children has increased dramatically since the late 1980s. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011) state that an overweight or obese child has a Body Mass Index (BMI, a measure of weight in relation to the child's age, sex, and height) above the 85th percentile for his or her age and sex. As an example of this, a second grader whose weight is above the 85th percentile would weigh 95 pounds or more. While it appears that the rates of obesity are falling for younger children, this trend is still likely to persist and perhaps worsen in the future for older children.

Former President Bill Clinton, a supporter of stronger policy on childhood obesity, asserts that the causes of this health crisis range from overworked parents, with no time to prepare healthy food, to a lack of sidewalks and safe outside play areas for children (2010). Clinton also recognizes that a contributing factor is the marketing of inexpensive large-portion meals at fast-food restaurants. Companies make these meals for children even more attractive by giving away small toys and prizes with each meal.

Doctors are concerned about increased childhood obesity because of its health-related consequences. One consequence of obesity is cardiovascular disease.¹ Certain risk factors, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and high blood sugar, are present in people who develop this disease. A study of obese children and adolescents has shown that approximately 60 percent of the participants had at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease (A Change of Pace Foundation, n.d.).

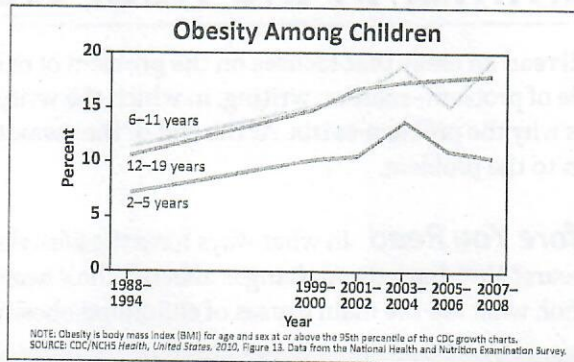
¹cardiovascular disease: heart disease

There are additional health risks associated with being overweight or obese. Though less common, they are serious health issues. They include asthma, sleep apnea (when breathing stops during sleep for at least 10 seconds), and Type 2 diabetes. While Type 2 diabetes has been a common health consequence of adult obesity, in recent years it has become a problem among children and adolescents (Bellows & Roach, 2011). Finally, other studies of obese children and teens have indicated that these young people are more likely to be obese when they are adults (American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 2011, para. 2).

Apart from physical issues, childhood obesity can also generate social problems. Puhl (2011) notes that overweight and obese children are often discriminated against socially, and that this can cause stress and low self-esteem. These feelings are likely to have an impact on children's academic and social lives.

Parents, doctors, scientists, and policy makers all believe that childhood obesity is a critical issue. It is clear that the reasons for the rise in childhood obesity are complex. Therefore, the solution must involve everyone – parents, doctors, the media, as well as the community. A committed response now will ensure that the obese child of today will not grow up to be an obese adult.

Figure 1.

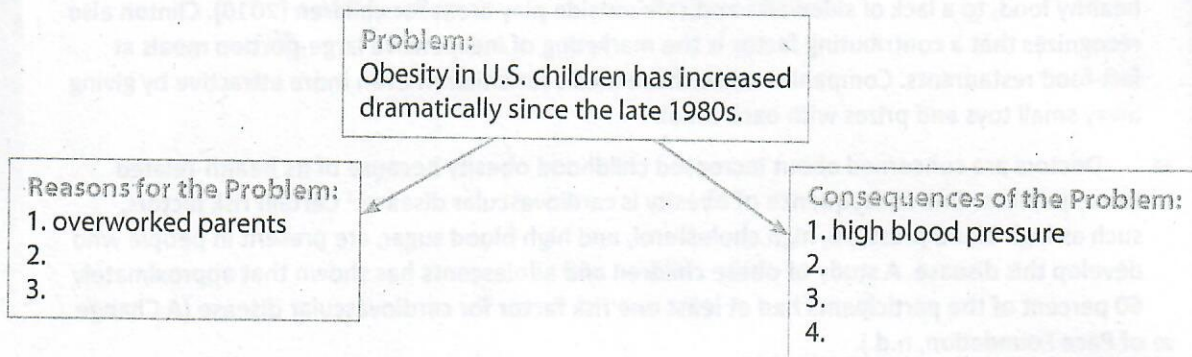


B Comprehension Check Answer the questions.

1. According to the essay, what are some health issues that result from children being overweight or obese?
2. What are the social concerns for children who are overweight or obese?
3. Why does the author say, "It is clear that the reasons for the rise in childhood obesity are complex"?

C Notice

1 Problem-Solution Writing Notice how the writer not only states the problem, but also explores the reasons for and consequences of the problem. Draw the chart below on a separate sheet of paper and complete it with information from the essay.



Problem–Solution 3: Adverb Clauses and Infinitives of Purpose; Reduced Adverb Clauses; Vocabulary to Describe Problems and Solutions

Health and Technology

1 Grammar in the Real World

You will read an essay about people who use the Internet to diagnose themselves and find information about illnesses. The essay is an example of problem–solution writing.

A Before You Read How often do you or people you know use the Internet to diagnose symptoms? Read the essay. According to the writer, what are some concerns that doctors have?

Patient–Doctor Relationships in the 21st Century

There was a time when a person with a medical problem would ask a family member, friend, or neighbor about their symptoms before visiting a doctor. Now, many people gather a great deal of information before their first visit. Their first source for this information is now the Internet. In fact, a survey by Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project (2011) found that 80 percent of American adults use the Internet for health-related information. This increased use of the Internet for health purposes has led to a new phenomenon, *cyberchondria*. Cyberchondria is a situation in which people with no medical background diagnose themselves by reviewing symptoms and other information online and determine that their situation is worse than it really is. Educating patients about using online information, identifying changes doctors could make, and using online medical information more effectively are all necessary in order to solve this problem of cyberchondria.

The term *cyberchondria* is based on the term *hypochondria*, a belief that one has a serious disease even though there is no medical confirmation. After gathering information online, cyberchondriacs often conclude that they have a disease or health issue that is worse than the one that their doctor diagnoses (Torrey, 2009, para. 2). While not being a real physical condition, cyberchondria can lead to problems. For example, patients often find it difficult to accept their doctor’s diagnosis, causing friction¹ between patients and doctors.

With patients self-diagnosing more often, a shift has occurred in the patient–doctor relationship. For example, patients may challenge doctors more aggressively and spend more time discussing topics that they had researched online. Another concern is that patients do not always use credible websites. As a result, they may find information that is based on out-of-date research. Most importantly, doctors are concerned that patients will

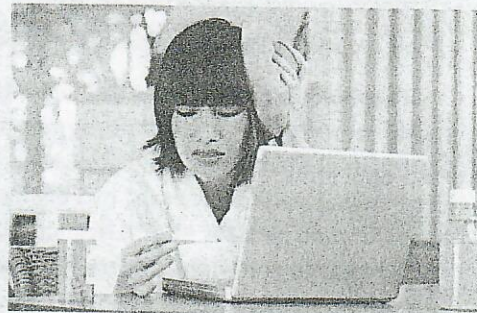
¹friction: unpleasant feelings caused by differences of opinion

scare themselves when reading symptoms online. As Brazilian cardiologist Dr. Fernando Botelho explains, "Patients read non-contextualized information and do not know how to process it. 25 This situation can bring anxiety" (personal communication, October 29, 2010).

While acknowledging these concerns, many doctors also see the benefit of having more actively engaged patients. Dr. Igor Barrios, a surgeon in Venezuela, believes that these changes will lead to better care. He feels that doctors will have to become more effective communicators (personal communication, October 29, 2010). Doctors should become more 30 sensitive to patients' more active role and learn to accept that they will have to be able to provide explanations for patients' questions about information they find on the Internet.

Using medical information available on the Internet wisely can also address the problem of cyberchondria. Health-care websites must state clearly that their information should be in addition to, rather than a replacement of, a consultation with a doctor and medical treatment. 35 For doctors, while it may be difficult, they need to acknowledge that the old rules have changed – they are no longer the only source of information. They should educate their patients on how to evaluate the health information they find on the Internet so that the process of diagnosing becomes collaborative rather than adversarial.² Finally, the last part of the solution involves patients. When searching for information on the Internet, patients should 40 remember that no website can replace a doctor's physical exam. Before approaching their doctor, they should check that the information they have is up-to-date and credible. In this way, they can avoid wasting time during appointments.

This cooperation will not be easy to implement. It will be difficult to persuade health-care website 45 providers to change information online. It will also be challenging for doctors and patients to change their roles, especially without additional training about these new relationships. However, when health-care website providers, doctors, and patients all realize that 50 these changes will benefit health care, they will be more likely to collaborate. This cooperation will help create a stronger twenty-first-century model for patient-doctor relationships.



²**adversarial:** opposing each other, like enemies

B Comprehension Check

Answer the questions.

1. What is cyberchondria?
2. What concerns do doctors have when patients use the Internet to self-diagnose?
3. What is the solution suggested in the essay?

C Notice

- 1 **Problem-Solution Writing** Draw a chart like the one on page 220. Use the information in the essay to complete the chart, which shows that the proposed solution has three parts. Write the proposed solution for each part.

UNIT 16

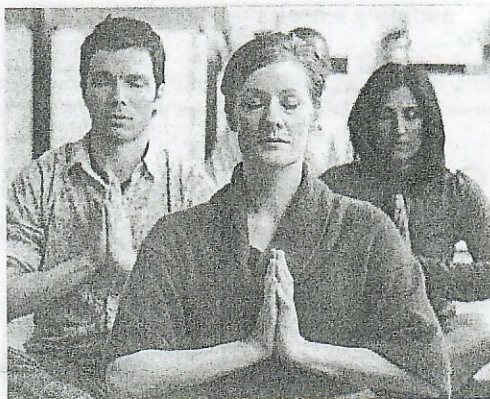
Problem–Solution 4: *It* Constructions; Transition Words to Indicate Steps of a Solution

Leading a Healthy Life

1 Grammar in the Real World

You will read an essay about changes that people can make in their lives in order to have a healthier lifestyle. In this problem–solution essay, the writer describes the process of implementing the solutions.

A Before You Read What are some things a person can do in order to live a healthy life? Why is it sometimes difficult in our modern world to do what is necessary to live a healthy life? Read the essay. What solutions to this problem does the writer suggest?



Leading a Healthy Life

In the last few decades, the average person's life has become increasingly unhealthy. The rules of modern society seem to have forced many into a stressful lifestyle. As individuals strive to meet the demands of their lives, they often overlook the multiple sources of stress and unhealthiness in their lives. Even though the task is challenging, it is not impossible to make
5 some changes that can lead to a healthier lifestyle.

Many factors can contribute to creating tension in everyday life. For most people, a busy work schedule usually prevents them from dedicating time to other stress-relieving activities. Lack of exercise and not enough sleep are only two of the consequences of such a lifestyle. Also, as time is consumed by work-related responsibilities, individuals tend to have less time to eat well. Many
10 people end up eating fast food as a strategy to save time, which adds to unhealthy practices.

Contrary to what many people may think, living a healthy life does not have to be difficult; nor does it have to be time-consuming. In terms of eating habits, a few changes can go a long way. First, individuals need to be committed to the challenge. Next, in order to have a healthier diet, they should buy low-calorie and low-fat foods that are easy to cook, such as
15 broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, chicken, and fish. Then they can cook more quantities of food over the weekend and freeze the leftovers in small containers so that the food can be consumed throughout the week. It has been argued that freezing the food destroys some of the nutrients. This may be true. However, this solution is certainly better than the fast-food option.

Just as with eating habits, it is a common belief that exercising takes away many hours of an
20 average person's week. However, first, it is important to find an activity that is enjoyable, such as playing a sport or hiking. Even simple activities, like taking the stairs, raking leaves, or

sweeping the floor, contribute to keeping someone active. Next, after finding an enjoyable activity, people need to commit to it. This means that people need to exercise regularly and make it part of their routine, just like brushing their teeth or combing their hair. Many people will agree that their level of stress tends to decrease once exercising becomes part of their daily lives.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle does not have to be challenging but can be accomplished with a series of small steps. Setting a few reachable goals can make a huge difference. Drastic diets, fasting,¹ or very demanding exercise routines are not that likely to generate permanent improvements (as cited in Wong, 2010). On the contrary, it is essential to take a holistic approach² to good health. Such an approach starts with healthy food and regular exercise. When these items are part of someone's life, lack of time becomes just an excuse for not adopting a healthier lifestyle.

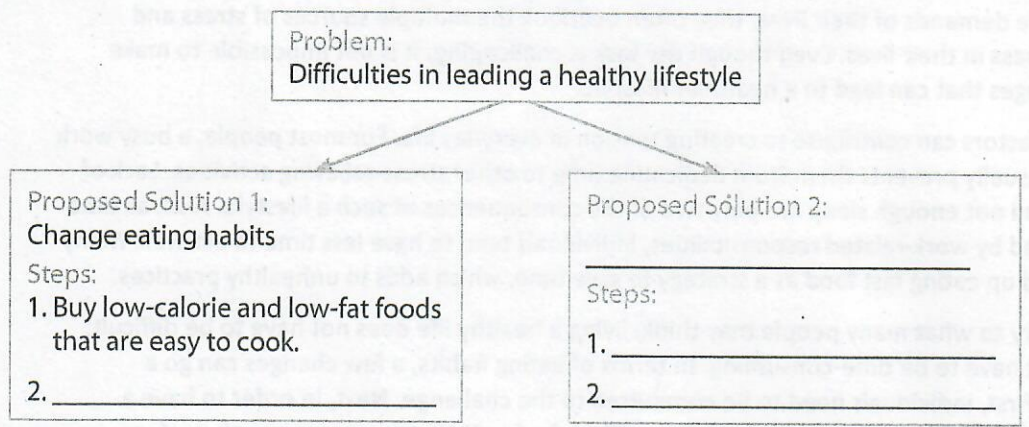
¹fasting: intentionally eating no food for a long period of time | ²holistic approach: a way of solving a health problem by looking at the social, psychological, and physical aspects of the problem

B Comprehension Check Answer the questions.

1. According to the essay, what is the main reason that people are prevented from leading a healthy life?
2. What are some of the beliefs that people have when it comes to healthy eating and exercising?
3. Do you think the writer would think that you have a healthy lifestyle? Why or why not?

C Notice

1 Problem-Solution Writing Reread the third and fourth paragraphs. Draw the chart and complete it with the missing information.



2 Grammar Follow the instructions below to help you notice how the writer uses *it* constructions:

1. Reread the sentence with the word *it* on lines 4–5 in the first paragraph and the sentence with the word *it* on lines 11–12. One *it* refers to a previously mentioned noun, but the other one doesn't. Which one doesn't refer to a previously mentioned noun?
2. Reread the sentence on line 17 with the word *it*. The writer uses the passive. Does the use of the passive and *it* make the sentence more subjective or objective?