

NEWS BREAK

Article: **Mexico bans junk food sales in schools SALT, SUGAR**

Section: **MAIN, A3**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, March 30, 2025**, of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

****Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.***

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will explore a recent law in Mexico banning junk food in all of its schools. They will learn about the high rates of obesity and diabetes among their children and the heavy reliance on junk food in the country. They will explore discussion questions around economic and cultural habits around food, should government intervene when specific “unhealthy” habits have become a public health crisis and negatively impacts the healthcare system, etc.

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

A government-sponsored junk food ban in schools across Mexico took effect Saturday, officials said, as the country tries to tackle one of the world's worst obesity and diabetes **epidemics**.

Epidemic Guess:

Epidemic Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. A government-sponsored _____ ban in schools across Mexico took effect Saturday, officials said, as the country tries to tackle one of the world's worst obesity and diabetes epidemics.
2. The health guidelines, published in fall, take a direct shot at salty and sweet processed products that have become a staple for generations of Mexican schoolchildren, including what?
3. Announcing the ban had become law, Mexico's Education Ministry posted what post on X?
4. Mexico's ambitious attempt to remake its food culture and reorient the next generation is being watched closely around the world as governments struggle to ease what?
5. In the United States, for instance, the Trump administration's health secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., has vowed to upend the nation's food system and "Make America Healthy Again " by targeting what?
6. Mexico's new order, schools must phase out any food and beverage displaying even one black warning logo marking it as what?
7. Mexico implemented that compulsory front-of-package labeling system in _____.
8. Enforced from Monday morning, the start of the school week, the junk food ban also requires schools to serve what?
9. Mexico's children consume more junk food than anywhere else in Latin America, according to UNICEF, which classifies the nation's childhood obesity epidemic as what?
10. Sugary drinks and highly processed foods account for _____% of the calories that children consume in a day, the agency reports.
11. _____ - _____ of Mexican children are overweight or obese, according to government statistics.

12. School administrators found in violation of the order face fines, ranging from \$_____ to \$_____.
13. But enforcement poses a challenge. Why?

Class Discussion Questions:

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first, I thought _____, but now I think _____?

How often do you eat junk food at school?

Do you see a lot of students eating junk food?

How do you think junk food impacts your body?

Deeper-Dive comprehension questions for small groups, entire classes or journal entries and/ or essay prompts for extended enrichment assignments:

- Mexico has implemented a ban on junk food in schools to combat obesity. What factors do you think will determine the success or failure of this policy? Consider enforcement, cultural habits, and economic factors.
- To what extent should governments intervene in citizens' dietary choices? Discuss the balance between public health concerns and individual freedoms.
- How does this ban reflect the government's role in protecting its citizens' health? Is it a justified use of government power?
- The article highlights that junk food has become a "staple for generations" of Mexican schoolchildren. How can a government effectively change deeply ingrained cultural eating habits?
- How does the easy access of junk food outside of school grounds impact the effectiveness of the ban inside schools?

- The article mentions that one-third of Mexican children are overweight or obese. How does this public health issue affect different socioeconomic groups in Mexico?
- How does the lack of water fountains and reliable electricity in many schools pose an equity issue, and how does it relate to the success of this ban?
- The article mentions the United States' interest in addressing ultraprocessed foods. How does Mexico's approach compare to potential strategies in other countries?
- Beyond banning junk food, what role should schools play in educating children about healthy eating habits and nutrition?

- What steps should the Mexican government take to ensure that the alternatives offered, like bean tacos, are accessible and appealing to students?
- What are the benefits and drawbacks of using warning labels on food packaging?

News Break is posted to the Web on Tuesday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please [register online](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.
Copyright © 2025 The Seattle Times Company