Sample Informative Outline

Name:

Date:

Title: Sweetness in Our Lives

Specific Purpose: To inform my audience about the refined sucrose, commonly called sugar.

Thesis: Sugar is a remarkable substance with far reaching effects.

Preview: In examining sugar we will study facts about sugar, the history of sugar usage, and some possible health concerns about sugar.

Type of Organizational Pattern: Topical/Categorical

Introduction

I. Bright-eyed, cheery Mary Poppins sang, "A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down!"

II. Apparently, Americans certainly have no problem subscribing to that theory.

III. Each year we consume approximately 114 pounds of sugar (Maynard 21).

A. If you do the math, that works out to be about 25 teaspoons per day per person (Maynard 21).

B. The sweet stuff appears in almost everything we eat.

1. It is present in packaged food.

2. Catsup, the mainstay of a college student's diet, is almost one-third sugar (Maynard 22).

3. It is an ingredient in ice cream, cakes, and pies.

C. Sugar consumption has been on the rise since 1987 (Shapiro 72).

IV. Recently, sugar has come under scrutiny from the medical community.

V. Let's discuss this fine granule, how it has sweetened the past, and what bitter aftertaste there is today.

Body

I. Initially, let's consider what sugar is and where it comes from.

A. Sugar is a simple carbohydrate.

1. Simple carbohydrates provide the body with energy (Maynard 21).
2. Sugar occurs naturally in every fruit and vegetable (*Sugar*).
    a. It is the end product of photosynthesis.
    b. The greatest concentrations of sugar are found in the sugar cane and the sugar beet (*Sugar*).

B. Sugar cane is a tropical reed perennial plant that accumulates sugar in its tissues (Cole 658).
1. It grows to a height between six and ten feet tall and is harvested approximately one year after it is planted (Cole 658).
2. When sugar is retrieved from the cane, the cane is stripped of its leaves, and the juice is extracted either by pressing or by diffusion (Cole 658).
3. The juice collected is boiled, purified with a limewater solution, and separated into sugar crystals and molasses by centrifugation (Cole 658).
4. "Sugar cane produces more calories per acre of human nourishment than any other plant" (Cole 658).

[show bar graph of world sugar cane production in 1996 (United States II-14-15)]

C. The sugar beet is usually white both inside and out and may be eaten as a cooked vegetable (FitzGibbon 459).
1. It is grown in the temperate regions of Asia, Europe, and the Red River Valley of northwestern Minnesota.
2. Sugar is made from beets by cutting the beet into strips and placing the strips in a diffusion cell with 175 degree water (Cole 659).
3. The water is evaporated to form thick syrup from which refined sugar is crystallized (Cole 659).

[show bar graph of world sugar beet production in 1996 (United States II-13)]

(Now that we know exactly what sugar is, let's examine its effect on the world.)

II. Sugar has a long, rich history.

A. Since ancient times people have been using crude, unrefined sugar (FitzGibbon 457).

1. The first definite reference to sugar comes from about 510 B.C.

a. The Persian emperor's soldiers observed sugar cane growing on the banks of the Indus River in Asia (*Irish*).

b. The soldiers called the plants "[r]eeds which produce honey without bees" (*Irish*).

2. During the Middle Ages, sugar was a precious commodity, but demand for it grew in conjunction with the growing world population (*Irish*).

3. With time, sugar became easier to produce because of technological advances (*Irish*).

B. For many years sugar had five principle uses: medicine, spice, decoration, sweetener, and preservative (Mintz 78).

1. Sugar was used as a medicine to treat fevers, dry coughs, chapped lips, stomach diseases, and the Black Death (Mintz 99-100).

2. When it was first introduced in Europe around 1100 A.D., sugar was considered a rare, expensive spice (Mintz 79-80).

a. As sugar spread through the lower classes, it lost its power to distinguish those who ate it (Mintz 95).

b. The rich turned to producing, shipping, refining, and taxing sugar instead of just consuming it (Mintz 95).

(It is quite obvious that sugar had a great effect on our past, but let's move forward in time and discuss its role in the present.)

III. Today, much of the talk about sugar is focused on how sugar affects our health.

A. Many critics believe that sugar is quite harmful to the body.

1. Sugar is the main substance that throws our bodies out of homeostasis, or balance (Appleton 4).

a. Excess sugar interferes with calcium absorption (Appleton 12).

b. Sugar reduces efficiency in body glands (Appleton 9).

2. A new diet book on the market called *Sugar Busters* includes claims that sugar is toxic to the body (Fontenot 31).
    a. The authors of the diet write that eating foods with a high sugar content causes more insulin to be released into the blood (Fontenot 31).
    b. The increase in insulin is harmful because insulin causes sugar to be stored as fat (Fontenot 31).
    c. The authors recommend a diet full of foods like butter, bacon, eggs, and sausage because these foods are low in sugar (Fontenot 32).

B. Other scientists believe that a moderate consumption of sugar is part of a healthy diet.
    1. In 1988, the Food and Drug Administration issued a report stating that sugar does not cause diabetes, heart disease, obesity, hypoglycemia, childhood hyperactivity, or nutrient deficiencies (*Sugar*).
    2. Some studies have refuted the information on which the *Sugar Busters* diet is based.
        a. The University of Colorado completed an eight-year study in 1997 which found that people whose diets are high in saturated and total fat and short in starch and fiber had abnormally high insulin levels (Thompson 89).
        b. This study also states that weight gain occurs when too much food is consumed, not when the wrong types of food are eaten (Fontenot 32).

C. One area of agreement is sugar's effect on dental health.
    1. All sugars and most cooked starches cause tooth decay (Larson 854).
    2. Teeth are more damaged by sweets eaten between meals than by eating a variety of foods during a meal (Larson 854).
    3. Combinations of foods can alter the effect that sugars have on tooth decay by neutralizing sugar's effects (Larson 854).

Conclusion

I. Today we have dug deep into the sugar bowl and come up with some answers to the questions what is sugar, what is its history, and how should the sweet stuff be used.

II. Sugar consumption in America is on the rise.

   A. We eliminate fat from our diet.

   B. We add sugar to preserve the flavor.

III. In a sense, we are doing exactly as Mary Poppins suggested.

   A. A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down.

   B. In this case, the medicine is “no fat.”

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