

Sample Paper: Summarizing a reading (Freeman)

Freeman 1

LaShawn Freeman
Professor Rubin
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Summary of "One Lunch at a Time"

Title is centered.

In "One Lunch at a Time," George McGovern and Robert Dole propose that the United States help fund a worldwide school lunch program for poor children similar to the one in our country. The authors argue that in addition to feeding children, such a program would benefit poor countries in general. Lunches would attract children to schools, and education results in economic self-sufficiency. In addition, the education of girls leads to lower birth-rates. American farmers would benefit from the program too, say the authors, since the government would purchase their surpluses. McGovern and Dole suggest that although their plan is ambitious, it is workable. They point to the fact that it has worked in the United States, and they argue that the costs would be reasonable. Start-up costs would be about \$3 billion, with the U.S. paying only half of that, since charities and rich countries could be persuaded to cover the balance. The World Food Program, which has a successful track record, would coordinate the efforts. McGovern and Dole believe not only that the program would work: They think that its benefits would far outweigh its costs.

The article that Freeman summarized is presented on the following pages. It originally appeared in the Washington Post on May 1, 2001, p. A23.

One Lunch at a Time

George McGovern and Robert Dole

In the summer of 1968, CBS television broadcast a powerful hour-long documentary titled "Hunger: USA." The cameras peered into the dismal pockets of hunger and misery populated by poor American families. Hollow cheeks and rickety legs plagued children and adults alike.

The most moving scene was filmed in a school where all students—even those who were too poor to pay for a meal—were required to go to the cafeteria at lunchtime. One 9- or 10-year-old boy was asked how he felt standing at the rear of the room watching his better-off classmates eat. Lowering his head, the boy confessed softly, "I'm ashamed."

Thirty years later, a child going hungry in an American school is practically unheard of. That's because of the overwhelming success of bipartisan legislation we sponsored in the 1970s, while we were both U.S. senators, which ensures a nutritious meal at school for all children, including America's poorest. While hunger has not yet been eradicated in the United States, the lives of a whole generation of American schoolchildren have been improved thanks to that program.

Now we have the opportunity to reach an even higher goal: to implement a similar plan for the 300 million poor children in the world who either receive no meal at school or do not even attend class.

Once again we have jointly made a proposal, this time to establish a global school feeding program. It is currently being

discussed among Washington policymakers and will soon be introduced in Congress. Building on a pilot program initiated this year, the bill commits an annual amount of American agricultural surpluses to provide nutritious meals to already enrolled students and to attract poorer children to school.

Studies show that when food is provided at schools in the developing world, attendance often doubles within a year, and within two years, academic performance can improve by as much as 40 percent. Students remain in school longer, and more of them graduate. Long-term studies indicate that increased literacy rates among girls and women mean they have fewer children. Of the estimated 130 million children who currently do not attend school, 60 percent are girls.

We are not talking about ordinary charity. Feeding children at school yields tangible results in their lives as well as long-term benefits for society as a whole. And in contrast to questionable mega-projects for development, school feeding focuses on the individual child. Reducing children's hunger and improving their educational opportunities creates the human infrastructure needed by nations if they are to prosper and become self-reliant.

This global challenge can once again be met in the spirit of bipartisanship. By committing annual funds for a global school lunch program, we will not only dramatically improve the lives and futures of millions of poor children. We will also be helping out American farmers by increasing purchases of surplus food commodities.

To use these surpluses, especially in periods when prices are down, strengthens our farmers' markets and takes some of the

burden off storage capacities or selling surpluses off at rock-bottom prices. Overseas shipments of U.S. agricultural products also generate business for American processors, packers, shippers, railroads, stevedores and ocean carriers.

Start-up costs to cover the first two years of a global program would be about \$3 billion. As the leader of the effort, the U.S. government should commit half of that amount, the bulk of it in purchased surplus commodities.

As the program grows and more students enroll in participating schools, costs will increase, but it is hoped and expected that other countries will join in to help. Discussions with other governments have already begun. Rich nations that do not have farm surpluses could contribute cash, shipping, personnel, utensils and other educational inputs. Government costs could be further reduced or supplemented with contributions from private foundations, corporations, labor unions and individuals.

In order for the program to be sustainable, the benefiting governments should be expected to take over financing within five to 10 years. In the meantime, the initiative would be under the instructional and monitoring eyes of the World Food Program, which has nearly 40 years of school feeding experience. Working with other charities and aid groups, WFP can ensure that the other necessary aspects such as teacher training, sanitation and health inputs are coordinated.

In an era of cynicism and weariness about Third World problems, using food surpluses to feed and help educate poor children may seem like a surprisingly simple way to make an impact. But

a hot meal to a poor student today is key to helping him or her become a literate, self-reliant adult tomorrow. This could become the first generation in human history that is finally free from the scourge of hunger.

Former senator McGovern, the Democratic presidential nominee in 1972, was U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture in Rome at the time he wrote this article. Former senator Dole was the Republican presidential nominee in 1996.