

The Wellness Industry: Helping People or Selling Dreams?

Advanced (C1-C2)



WARM UP

Part 1. Read the quote below and then discuss the questions.

“The wellness industry is selling a lifestyle, not necessarily health.”

1. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever bought into wellness products or trends (apps, supplements, retreats)? Were they useful?
3. Should governments regulate the wellness industry more strictly?
4. Is wellness mainly about genuine health, or about image and aspiration?



READING TEXT

Part 1. Read the following text.

The Wellness Industry: Helping People or Selling Dreams?

The global wellness industry is valued at trillions of dollars, covering everything from fitness classes and mindfulness apps to supplements and luxury retreats. Supporters argue it empowers individuals to take charge of their health, promotes preventive care, and offers tools for stress management in an age of burnout.

Critics, however, point out that much of the industry relies on marketing dreams rather than delivering evidence-based benefits. From detox teas to miracle diets, many products lack scientific support and feed on insecurity. The rise of “aspirational wellness” often blurs the line between genuine care and commercial exploitation.

The central debate is whether the wellness industry genuinely improves health and wellbeing, or whether it sells a carefully packaged fantasy. Should we celebrate its growth, regulate it more closely, or rethink what “wellness” should mean in the first place?

Part 2. Discuss the questions below based on the text.

1. What reasons are given for the popularity of the wellness industry?
2. Why do critics say much of it is about “selling dreams”?
3. What risks are associated with unregulated wellness products?
4. How does the text suggest wellness is tied to aspiration and image?
5. What question does the text raise about the future of wellness?



DEBATE

Part 1. Match the terms to their meanings.

Aspirational wellness

Commercial exploitation

Consumer scepticism

Evidence-based practice

Health commodification

Holistic wellbeing

Lifestyle branding

Preventive care

1. _____ The marketing of wellness as a status symbol or ideal lifestyle.
2. _____ The transformation of health into products to be bought and sold.
3. _____ The integration of physical, mental, and social wellbeing.
4. _____ Interventions designed to stop illness before it occurs.
5. _____ The use of research and science to justify treatments or products.
6. _____ Taking advantage of people for financial gain.
7. _____ Doubt or mistrust towards the claims of products or companies.
8. _____ Selling an image of success, luxury, or beauty linked to wellness.

Part 2. Complete the sentences with the correct terms.

1. Many critics see detox products as a form of _____, preying on people's insecurities.
2. Mindfulness and exercise can be considered part of _____ because they reduce illness risks.
3. Some wellness influencers blur science with _____, leaving consumers confused.
4. Luxury yoga retreats often market themselves as _____ to wealthy clients.
5. The concept of _____ recognises that wellbeing involves body, mind, and community.
6. Many argue that supplements should follow _____ rather than promises.
7. The rise of _____ has turned health into a multibillion-dollar business.
8. A rise in _____ shows people are questioning the value of expensive wellness products.

Part 3. Look at the useful expressions. Rewrite the sentences using these expressions to make them sound more formal and persuasive for a debate.

Hedging: It could be argued that... / To some extent, I agree, although...

Challenging: Doesn't that overlook the fact that...? / Isn't it possible that...?

Speculating: What might happen if...? / Suppose we consider the opposite view...

Weighing trade-offs: We need to balance X with Y. / The benefits are clear, but we must also consider the risks.

Conceding then refuting: That's a fair point; however... / I agree up to a point, but I'd argue that...

1. The wellness industry only helps rich people. ->
2. Most products don't actually work. ->
3. People are wasting their money on supplements. ->
4. Wellness is more about marketing than health. ->

Part 4. Take part in a structured debate with your teacher/partner. Use the vocabulary and debate expressions from this lesson. Speak fluently, challenge ideas politely, and support your opinions with clear reasons and examples.

Aspirational wellness

Commercial exploitation

Consumer scepticism

Evidence-based practice

Health commodification

Holistic wellbeing

Lifestyle branding

Preventive care

Round 1: Argue that the wellness industry genuinely helps people and improves health.

Round 2: Argue that the wellness industry mostly sells dreams and false promises.

Round 3: Free debate — propose whether wellness should be celebrated, regulated, or redefined.



REFLECTION

Part 1. Discuss the following questions.

1. Have you ever been disappointed by a wellness product or service? What happened?
2. What role should science and regulation play in the industry?
3. How can we balance holistic wellbeing with consumer protection?

WRAP-UP TASK (OPTIONAL HOMEWORK)

Part 1. Write a short editorial (180–220 words):

“Is the wellness industry helping people or selling dreams?”

- Use at least 4 vocabulary items (e.g., aspirational wellness, commercial exploitation, preventive care, evidence-based practice).
- Use at least 2 debate expressions.
- Present one counterargument and refute it

