

Introduction

Download the LearnEnglish Themes podcast. You'll find more information on this page:
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-podcasts-themes.htm>

This support pack contains the following materials:

- The article that you can listen to in the podcast
- An optional comprehension activity based on the article
- Links to other activities on the LearnEnglish website on this theme (food).

Read the article

Food

by Julie Bray

When I was at school, our teacher told the class "You are what you eat." My friends and I would laugh and call each other 'hamburger' and 'biscuits'. Our teacher was trying to show us the importance of eating the right food to stay healthy.

This was a few decades ago when there were big campaigns to make British people healthier. We decided to throw out our chip pan which we had used until then to make chips every day for dinner. We replaced our chips with boiled potatoes. We also started using semi-skimmed milk instead of whole milk in our cups of tea and bowls of cornflakes. At first I felt like I was eating my cornflakes in water and my potatoes had no taste at all. But after a while I started to prefer healthier food because I felt stronger and I didn't get sick so often.

Japanese people are reputed to be the healthiest in the world because of the food they eat. The healthiest Japanese people eat rice and fish and vegetables every day. They drink green tea or water when they're thirsty, and snack on dried fish, fruit or ginkgo nuts. The traditional Japanese diet is famous for helping you to live a longer and healthier life.

So we have proof that you become what you eat. Can you tell what your friends eat just by looking at them? When you know the effects of different types of food, you can use your knowledge well and eat what you want to become.

Food has an impact on our physical and emotional health. Have you ever heard any of the following advice?

Lettuce or milk can make you sleepy.
To stop feeling sleepy you should eat peanuts or dried fish.
To keep your teeth clean you should eat apples often.
Garlic helps you not to catch a cold.

Everyone has their own advice to give, which they have read about or have been told by older relatives. Some of these pieces of advice seem to contradict each other.

Eating chocolate makes you fat and gives you spots.
Chocolate contains the essential minerals iron and magnesium

What we need to figure out is what type of chocolate to eat to get the benefits and how much of it to eat. We can do this by reading the list of ingredients on the chocolate bar wrapper. Exactly how much real chocolate is in there? And how much of that do we need to eat to get the benefits of the minerals it contains?

Future restaurants might be named after the physical or emotional state they hope to create. Their menus will list the benefits of each dish and drink. Some restaurants have already started this concept, and list the nutritional content of their dishes on the menus.

Let's take the restaurant 'Winners' as an example. Their menu would list dishes specifically designed to help you win sports competitions. There would be Night-before Vegetable lasagne, a pasta dish with extra layers of spinach pasta for slow-burning energy, rich tomato sauce full of vitamin C and soft, easy-to-

digest vegetables. All this would be topped with a little fresh cheese – just enough to help you get a good night's sleep, but not enough to give you nightmares!

Or you could choose the Go-faster salad, which is a large bowl of mixed raw vegetables in a light salad dressing, giving you energy without making you gain weight. The vegetables are carefully chosen to include plenty of natural vitamins and minerals.

What kind of dishes do you think would be on the menu at the 'Clever Café' (which sells food that's good for your brain)?

So what's going to happen to hamburgers and biscuits? Will the concept of eating food because it's tasty go out of fashion? Of course not! Junk food is also changing. If ice-cream is not good for children, can't we give them fat-free, sugar-free tofu ice-cream? Unhealthy food is going out of fashion, so brands are changing. We are told not to drink cola because of the sugar and caffeine content so cola companies are making sugar-free and caffeine-free drinks. We are told dried fruit is a healthier snack than biscuits so some biscuit companies are making biscuits with added vitamins. Snacks might soon be changing their names to "Skinglow" and "Chocomineral"! So in the future you might be able to eat your way to your idea of perfection!

After reading

Exercise: For each of the 7 questions below choose the best answer, depending on the information in the text above.

1. Why did the teacher say "You are what you eat"?
 - a) Because we can be eaten.
 - b) Because our food affects us.
 - c) Because it is important to make your own food.
2. Why did the author stop drinking whole milk?
 - a) Because she wanted to drink milk with less fat.
 - b) Because she only wanted half a glass.
 - c) Because it tasted bad.
3. Why are Japanese people said to be the healthiest in the world?
 - a) Because their parents were healthy.
 - b) Because they don't drink milk.
 - c) Because of their traditional diet.
4. What should we read if we want to know how much real chocolate is in a chocolate bar?
 - a) The newspaper
 - b) The list of ingredients
 - c) The recipe
5. If you have an important exam but you only want to sleep, what should you eat?
 - a) Dried fish
 - b) The exam paper
 - c) Lettuce
6. Why should we eat chocolate?
 - a) Because it gives you spots.
 - b) Because it has good minerals in it.
 - c) Because it melts in your mouth.
7. How does the author think junk food will change in the future?
 - a) It will get bigger.
 - b) It will have added vitamins and minerals.
 - c) It will be cheaper.

More activities on this topic

You'll find links to all the following activities connected to the theme of food at:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-central-themes-food.htm>

- **UK Culture: Food.** In this issue we take a look at food. Long derided as bland and overcooked, the UK now boasts some of the finest restaurants in the world and the transformation of what and how we eat has been phenomenal.
- **Magazine articles:** There is another article: *Food "Do we live to eat or eat to live? That is the question."*
- **Word games:** There are 5 word games: **Food & drink idioms; Staple foods; Vegetables; Recipe and Restaurant.**
- **Story: The Chaplet.** In this amusing story by Saki find out what happens when two big egos - one belonging to a chef and the other to an orchestra conductor - meet head on!
- **Poems: Food poetry.** 10 short poems about food from famous and not so famous poets, and an activity in which you compare them.
- **Trivia:** Everything you (n)ever wanted to know about food.
- There are also 5 food-related cartoons, a poll, and carefully selected external links.

Answers to comprehension activity: 1. b); 2. a); 3. c); 4. b); 5. a); 6. b); 7. b)

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