

TOPIC AREA: FOOD AND DIET

READING

1. Read the text and say if the following statements are true or false. Give reasons for your answers.

- a It is fairly common to find British people who don't eat meat.
- b There are more delicatessens than health food shops in Britain.
- c The British government now spend more on school dinners than they used to.

*On the Continent people have good food, in England people have good table manners.
(George Mikes, humourist)*

*You can't trust people who cook as badly as that.
(Jacques Chirac, President of France 1995 - 2007)*

As the two quotes above exemplify, Britain and good food are two things which are not commonly associated. Visitors to Britain often have varying opinions about all sorts of aspects of the country but seem to agree that the food is terrible.

One explanation for this is that life and habits in Britain are simply not oriented to food very much. The country has neither a widespread "restaurant culture" nor "café society". In the middle of the day, people just want to eat up quickly (the lunch break is an hour at most).

When the British do pay attention to food, it is most frequently not to appreciate it but to consider its health implications. There are quite large numbers of vegetarians in Britain and an even larger number who are aware of food from the point of view of health. Health food shops are as abundant in the country's high streets as delicatessens. When in 2005 the TV chef Jamie Oliver showed how the food in a city school could be improved, and also highlighted what rubbish the kids were getting, there was a public outcry and Jamie soon found himself presenting a petition signed by 270,000 parents to Downing Street demanding more money for school dinners. As it had recently also been revealed that France spent three times more per child than Britain on its school meals, the government was quick to oblige. But changing habits is hard work. At least, British people seem to be showing an increasing interest in the pure enjoyment aspect of food. There are numerous cookery and food programmes on TV, all of them watched with close enthusiasm. It is possible, then, that the negative reputation of British food will eventually become a historical hangover.



2. Match the following definitions with words from the text.

- a** To help somebody by doing what they ask or what you know they want. _____
- b** A reaction of anger or strong protest. _____
- c** A feeling, custom, idea, etc. that remains from the past, although it is no longer practical or suitable. _____
- d** To emphasize something, especially so that people give it more attention. _____

* These definitions are taken from the bestselling *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, now in its new, eighth edition.

3. Answer the following questions in your own words using information from the text.

a What aspect of food do British people usually take into account?

b What did Jamie Oliver do?

c How was the government "quick to oblige" and why?

4. Read the text and do the following multiple choice lexical cloze exercises.

These exercises test your knowledge of individual words, verb patterns, prepositions, phrasal verbs collocations and fixed phrases. To do them you should follow the advice below:

- Read the text quickly to get a general idea of the meaning.
- Read again and carefully consider the options for each gap.
- The word you choose must fit both the meaning of the text and the grammar of the sentence.

The modern story of tea in Britain

Tea made its first appearance in Britain some 350 years ago and by the end of the seventeenth century tea-drinking was well established. However, during the eighteenth century, its growing popularity was **1** _____ by the breweries who, concerned by this competition, successfully lobbied for a series of tax rises on all tea imports. It was only in nineteenth-century Britain that polite society's ritual of afternoon tea was born.

For most of the twentieth century, tea reigned **2** _____ in Britain. To this day, "standard" (black) tea, served strong and with milk, remains an indispensable aspect of most British households. However, it is in slow decline. This started in the 1970s, when it first saw serious competition from **3** _____ soft drinks. It continued in the 1990s, when bottled water became popular, and continues today with the increasing popularity of green tea and herbal teas. And through all this time, coffee has been gradually **4** _____ the rise. In town centres, the number of "tea rooms" **5** _____ while the number of cafés specializing in coffee has risen.

These days, turnover from sales of coffee is larger than that of standard tea. However, the British tea industry can proudly point to the fact that tea still accounts **6** _____ a third of all liquid refreshment taken in Britain – far more than any other drink. In fact, there is a sense in which the industry's problem is a result of standard black tea's absolutely central place in British habits. It is regarded as a basic staple, so that British consumers expect to be able to buy it in supermarkets very **7** _____.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 A. halted | B. stopping | C. increased |
| 2 A. absolute | B. beyond | C. supreme |
| 3 A. bubble | B. fizzy | C. alcoholic |
| 4 A. on | B. at | C. to |
| 5 A. has been fallen | B. have been fallen | C. has fallen |
| 6 A. for | B. with | C. on |
| 7 A. cheaper | B. cheaply | C. cheap |

5. Answer the following questions in your own words using information from the text.

a Why did it take so long for tea drinking to become established as a typical British custom?

b How can the decline in "standard" tea drinking be explained?

c Coffee seems to be more profitable than tea. Why?

6. Look at the underlined part of the words below. Three of the words in each line (A, B, C, D) contain the same sound. Circle the word which contains a different sound:

- | | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 A. <u>ch</u> ease | B. <u>m</u> eat | C. <u>st</u> eak | D. <u>p</u> each |
| 2 A. <u>h</u> oney | B. <u>p</u> otato | C. <u>m</u> elon | D. <u>c</u> arro <u>t</u> |
| 3 A. <u>s</u> oup | B. <u>f</u> lour | C. <u>f</u> ruit | D. <u>j</u> uice |
| 4 A. <u>s</u> alt | B. <u>s</u> auce | C. <u>r</u> ice | D. <u>s</u> ugar |
| 5 A. <u>ch</u> ocolate | B. <u>ch</u> ampagne | C. <u>ch</u> ewing gum | D. <u>ch</u> illi |
| 6 A. <u>j</u> am | B. <u>s</u> law | C. <u>h</u> am | D. <u>s</u> nack |
| 7 A. <u>f</u> ork | B. <u>f</u> ont | C. <u>f</u> orm | D. <u>f</u> orce |
| 8 A. <u>ch</u> icken | B. <u>r</u> ice | C. <u>p</u> ie | D. <u>f</u> ries |

GRAMMAR

Find more grammar exercises like this in *Oxford Practice Grammar Advanced*.

Reporting orders, requests and advice.

1. Complete each sentence in such a way that it is as similar as possible in meaning to the sentence above it.

1 Professor to her students: 'Please do not eat or drink during lectures.'

The professor asked _____

2 Guard to the prisoner: 'Stand up when the judge comes in.'

The guard ordered _____

3 Worker to his boss: 'Can I leave early on Friday?'

The worker asked _____

4 Scott's mother to Scott: 'You should apply to several universities.'

Scott's mother recommended _____

2. Change each piece of advice to an appropriate reported form and add it to the text.

'Place your napkin in your lap.'

'Don't put a lot of food on your plate all at once.'

'Don't rest your elbows on the table.'

'Don't take more food until it is offered.'

'Chew your food with your mouth closed.'

'Ask somebody.'

'Don't talk with your mouth full.'

'Please pass the salt.'

My friend Karen Currie and I were huddled beside the small heater in her room, eating slices of pizza from a cardboard PizzaLand container. She was telling me about an old book she had been reading, called 'Table Manners for Young Ladies'. It instructed the reader, when she is sitting at the table before the meal, **(1)** _____ and **(2)** _____. It told her, while she is eating, **(3)** _____ and **(4)** _____. Certain things were bad manners and the book advised her **(5)** _____ and **(6)** _____. It also said that, when she needed something, such as salt, she **(7)** _____ **(8)** _____ rather than reach across the table for it. 'Ah, the good old days,' she sighed as she reached into the box for another slice.

SPEAKING

Describe and compare the pictures below. Talk about them for 3 minutes.



TIP

In this activity you may think of relevant questions and try to give them an answer. F.ex.

Which restaurant do you like most? Why?

How often do you eat out?

Do you prefer fast food or traditional food?

WRITING

Write about 100 to 150 words on one of the following topics:

- Have you / someone you know ever gone on a diet? Describe your / their eating habits and experience.
- Write a recipe.

ANSWER KEY**READING EXERCISES****1.****a True.** "There are quite large numbers of vegetarians in Britain"**b False.** "Health food shops are as abundant in the country's high streets as delicatessens."**c True.** "(...) demanding more money for school dinners. (...), the government was quick to oblige."**2.****a** oblige**b** outcry**c** hangover**d** highlight(ed)**3. Students' own answers reflecting the following points:****a** When the British do pay attention to food, it is most frequently not to appreciate it but to consider its health implications.**b** Jamie Oliver:

- showed how the food in a city school could be improved
- highlighted the low standard of meals in schools
- presented a petition to the government demanding more money for school dinners.

c The government gave more money for school dinners after receiving the petition from parents and because it had been revealed that France spent three times more per child than Britain.**4.****1** halted**2** supreme**3** fizzy**4** on**5** has fallen**6** for**7** cheaply

5. Students' own answers reflecting the following points:

- a** In the eighteenth century the breweries were concerned about competition from tea and influenced the government to raise taxes on all tea imports.
- b** Because of the competition from soft drinks, bottled water, green and herbal teas, and coffee.
- c** Tea is a staple part of the British diet and the public expect it to be very cheap, which makes it difficult to make a profit unlike coffee, which can be more expensive.

6.

- 1** C
- 2** A
- 3** B
- 4** D
- 5** B
- 6** B
- 7** B
- 8** A

GRAMMAR EXERCISES**1.**

- 1** The professor asked her students not to eat or drink during lectures. (OR The professor asked her students if they would not eat or drink during lectures.)
- 2** The guard ordered the prisoner to stand up when the judge came in.
- 3** The worker asked to leave early on Friday. (OR The worker asked (his boss) if he could leave early on Friday.)
- 4** Scott's mother recommended applying to several universities. (OR Scott's mother recommended (that) he (should) apply to several universities.)

2.

1 to place her napkin in her lap (OR that she should / must place her napkin in her lap OR that she place her napkin in her lap)

2 not to rest her elbows on the table (OR that she should / must not rest her elbows on the table OR that she not rest her elbows on the table)

3 to chew her food with her mouth closed (OR (that) she should / must chew her food with her mouth closed)

4 not to talk with her mouth full (OR (that) she shouldn't / mustn't talk with her mouth full)

5 not to put a lot of food on her plate all at once (OR that she shouldn't / mustn't put a lot of food on her plate all at once OR that she not put a lot of food on her plate all at once)

6 not to take more food until it is offered (OR that she shouldn't / mustn't take more food until it is offered OR that she not take more food until it is offered)

7 should / must ask somebody

8 if they would (please) pass the salt (OR to (please) pass the salt)

SPEAKING EXERCISES

Students' own answers.

WRITING EXERCISES

Students' own answers.