

## A healthy appetite?

**Level:** Intermediate +

**Time:** 90 minutes

**Summary:** This lesson is about healthy eating and the bad eating habits many workers develop. In this lesson, students:

1. study a text outlining British workers' eating habits;
2. write survey questions based on information provided, using the questions to interview others;
3. discuss their views on work lunches;
4. research the UK's 'five a day' healthy eating targets.

**Materials:** One copy of the worksheet per student

**Group size:** Any

**Note:** This lesson plan is for both pre-experience and in-work business students based on an original article first published in *Business Spotlight* issue 3/2018.

### Warmer

Students discuss their answers to the warmer questions in small groups, then share their answers with the whole group.

### Key words

Students read the key words, write them next to the definitions, then find the words in the article to read them in context.

**Key:**

- |            |                 |
|------------|-----------------|
| 1. calorie | 7. mindless     |
| 2. obesity | 8. desire       |
| 3. strokes | 9. perks        |
| 4. lame    | 10. rapport     |
| 5. pasties | 11. initiatives |
| 6. snack   | 12. cutlery     |

### Understanding the article

Students work together to answer the questions with information from the article.

**Key:**

1. *Employees will spend less time and money searching for takeaway food, they will feel healthier and because they then spend their lunch break eating together with colleagues, there is likely to be better communication between employees and a stronger sense of organizational identity.*
2. *People who snack on the go consume 50% more than they would if they were seated at a table because they don't realize how much they are eating.*
3. *In Britain, this figure is at least a third.*
4. *Commuters add an extra 800 calories to their diets each week. They are less likely to spend time at home preparing healthy meals and they also spend almost €3,000 a year on takeaway drinks and snacks.*
5. *drink more water*

### Questions for a survey

This three-part task builds on the information about British workers and their lunch habits.

- a. In pairs, students read the information and turn each point into a question. They should both write the questions down as they will need them in the next part.
- b. Students use their questions to interview others in the class. They should make notes of the answers they receive.
- c. Students now sit together in their original pairs or in small groups and write a new info box with the answers they received.

In a short feedback session, ask students to say how much the class answers differ from the points in the info box. Ask them also to reflect on how well and clearly they worded their questions.

### Discussion

Students read the second info box and discuss the questions related to lunch at work.

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### Research and further discussion

Information and further reading about the UK's 'five a day' campaign can be found in many articles online, such as:

[www.nhs.uk/Livewell/5ADAY/Pages/5ADAYhome.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/5ADAY/Pages/5ADAYhome.aspx)

[www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/what-counts-five-day](http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/what-counts-five-day)

[www.theguardian.com/society/2017/feb/23/five-day-10-portions-fruit-veg-cut-early-death](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/feb/23/five-day-10-portions-fruit-veg-cut-early-death)

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### 1 Warmer

- What are you having, or what did you have, for lunch today?
- Where do you usually eat your lunch on a workday?

### 2 Key words

Match the key words with the definitions below. Then, find them in the article to read them in context.

perks	cutlery	desire	obesity	snack	lame
mindless	pasties	calorie	initiatives	rapport	strokes

1. a unit for measuring how much energy you get from food \_\_\_\_\_ (para 2)
2. a condition in which someone is too fat in a way that is dangerous for their health \_\_\_\_\_ (para 3)
3. times when blood is suddenly blocked and cannot reach the brain, or in which a blood vessel in the brain breaks, often causing a loss of the ability to speak or to move particular muscles \_\_\_\_\_ (para 3)
4. done without much effort in a way that seems as though you are not trying very hard \_\_\_\_\_ (para 4)
5. traditional English food made by folding pastry around meat, cheese or vegetables, then baking it \_\_\_\_\_ (para 4)
6. eat between meals \_\_\_\_\_ (para 5)
7. people's behaviour or actions when they do not think about what they are doing \_\_\_\_\_ (para 7)
8. a strong feeling of wanting to do something \_\_\_\_\_ (para 9)
9. extra benefits that you get in your job \_\_\_\_\_ (para 10)
10. a relationship in which people like, understand and respect each other \_\_\_\_\_ (para 11)
11. important actions that are intended to solve a problem \_\_\_\_\_ (para 12)
12. the knives, forks and spoons that you use for eating food \_\_\_\_\_ (para 12)

## A healthy appetite?

### A healthy appetite?

by Julian Earwaker



**What do we eat during our hectic workday? What effect does snacking on the go or at the desk have on our health? And how can employers support their employees' healthy eating? JULIAN EARWAKER examines these questions.**

“When we don’t fully concentrate on our meals and the process of taking in food, we fall into a trap of mindless eating, where we don’t track or recognize the food that has just been consumed,” says Professor Jane Ogden from the University of Surrey.

Commuters are especially likely to overeat. *The Huffington Post* reports on research from the Royal Society for Public Health showing that commuters add an extra 800 calories to their diets each week. Commuters are less likely to spend time preparing healthy meals and there’s a financial cost, too: according to the MailOnline, British commuters spend almost €3,000 a year on takeaway coffee and hot drinks, lunch and other snacks. Taking a proper lunch break is essential to help stop snacking and overeating.

In the US, where 15-minute lunches are the new normal, deliveries from Uber Eats and other meal providers have replaced the traditional lunch break. Too few workers eat fresh fruit, vegetables or salads but according to the food-ordering service Seamless, there is a desire for change. Their research shows a massive 81 per cent of employees prefer healthy options such as salads, wraps and fruit to be served at company meetings and events.

Seamless’s yearly food survey says that food perks are now an essential tool in employee recruitment and retention. Across the US and UK, organizations are recognizing the added value of meal discounts, in-house cafeterias and food-ordering services, free drinks and snacks, healthy snacks and in-house sit-down lunches. *The Huffington Post* recently identified business giants Dropbox, Apple and Google as top providers of excellent workplace food.

The benefits of in-house catering are easy to see: less time and money wasted searching for takeaway food, a focus on healthier food and lifestyles, increased rapport through sharing meals with colleagues and the creation of an organizational identity.

Companies are promoting initiatives such as healthy office cookbooks, shared meal events, healthy snack boxes and fruit bowls. They are also taking simple steps like making sure there is sufficient cutlery and dishes with which to eat a healthy lunch. UK employers such as shoe-repair chain Timpson have adapted their cafeterias to healthy eating and no longer sell chocolate and crisps.

*Continued on next page ....*

- 1 You are what you eat, so they say. And since most employed adults spend between 50 and 60 per cent of their waking hours at work, it makes sense to combine that with eating well. But how many people find time for healthy eating in their busy working lives? And how many workplaces help to provide good food?
- 2 According to NHS England, British workers consume at least a third of their daily calorie intake while at work. Eating the wrong food or not drinking enough water can lead to headaches, tiredness and poor concentration. A healthy diet means a better general feeling of wellbeing and greater workplace performance.
- 3 The United Kingdom has some of the highest reported levels of obesity in Europe. Linked to diabetes, heart disease, strokes and some types of cancer, it is estimated to cost the British economy almost €18 billion every year.
- 4 According to Deliveroo, one major problem among British workers is a lack of imagination. With its recent “Lame Lunch Amnesty” campaign, the food delivery firm reported that most British workers stick to the same unhealthy routine every day. Favourite lunches include buttered toast, sausage rolls and pasties. Sandwiches rule the office – with ham being the favourite filling.
- 5 The *Daily Express* wrote of another worrying trend: secret snacking. It reports that half of all office workers secretly snack at their desks, mainly on crisps, sweets and pastries. Most people claim that they need the snacks to increase their energy levels for their jobs.
- 6 The University of Surrey has produced research showing that eating food considered a snack rather than a meal leads to higher food consumption because snacks are not thought to be filling. People eating snacks on the go, rather than seated at a table, consume 50 per cent more than their colleagues.

- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12

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### A healthy appetite?

by Julian Earwaker

**13** Marks & Spencer began its healthy in-store catering programme, "Refresh", in 2007 for 59,000 staff across 444 stores. Its healthy-eating campaign focused on low salt, fat and sugar content, "five a day" targets and better staff training. It included encouraging staff and customers

to drink more water – something that many workplaces continue to overlook. You are what you drink, too.

JULIAN EARWAKER is a freelance journalist, prison writer-in-residence and book author.

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### 3 Understanding the article

Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. What benefits is a company likely to get when it provides in-house catering for its employees?
2. Why should we sit at a table to eat food rather than eat snacks on the go?
3. What proportion of our daily calories do we consume while at work?
4. What additional problems do people who commute to work have when it comes to eating healthily?
5. In addition to eating healthily, what else is UK employer Marks & Spencer encouraging its staff and customers to do?

### 4 Questions for a survey

#### THE BRITISH LUNCHBOX

**13** minutes is the time an average worker spends each day talking about lunch options.

**1/3** of British workers eat the same thing for lunch every day.

**4 in 10** workers are jealous of colleagues with more interesting lunches.

The average worker has a range of just **3** different lunch meals.

**7 in 10** workers admit to being bored by their lunch routine.

**28** minutes is the average length of a lunch break.

Source: Deliveroo ([news.deliveroo.co.uk/news/lame-lunch-amnesty.html](http://news.deliveroo.co.uk/news/lame-lunch-amnesty.html))



a. Read the information and turn each point into a question.

E.g. *How many minutes each day do you spend talking about what you might eat for lunch?*

b. Use your questions to interview other students. Make a note of their answers.

c. Discuss your answers and rewrite the information box with a new title: **OUR LUNCHBOX.**

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### 5 Discussion

#### MOST POPULAR UK WORK LUNCHES



1. ham sandwich
2. cheese sandwich
3. tuna mayonnaise sandwich
4. egg mayonnaise sandwich
5. superfood salad

Source: Deliveroo ([news.deliveroo.co.uk/news/lame-lunch-amnesty.html](https://news.deliveroo.co.uk/news/lame-lunch-amnesty.html))

- Which of these popular UK lunch options would you like to have for lunch today?
- Which would you not like to eat for lunch? Why?
- What do you think the most popular lunch option is in your country?
- What types of lunch options do you think a work canteen should offer?
- What other information should the canteen provide about its lunches?
- How much are you prepared to pay for your lunch at work?
- Do you have a canteen or food service at work?
  - If so, is it subsidized by the company?
  - Are you happy with the food and drinks on offer?
  - What changes would you like to see in the canteen?
  - If not, where do you get your lunch from?

### 6 Research and further discussion

The final paragraph of the article mentions 'five a day' targets.

- What are these?
- What counts as five a day?
- Why do you think the targets were introduced?
- How easy do you think it is for the average working person to keep to the five a day guidelines?