UNIT 3 FOOD 3

A. READING

You are going to read an article about colour-taste relationships. For questions 47–56, choose from the sections of the article (A–D). The sections may be chosen more than once.

How we taste different colours

A

We've all heard that the first bite is taken with the eye but the link between our visual sense and our flavour perception may be stronger than you think. When I think of flavour perception, noses and taste buds primarily spring to mind. Sure, other factors such as texture, temperature and touch sensations play a part but taste and smell are the dominant senses here, right? Well, perhaps not. You only have to consider the insatiable public appetite for food pictures masquerading as cookbooks to see there is meat to the old adage we eat with our eyes. Charles Spence, the Oxford experimental psychologist who helped Heston Blumenthal develop some of his playful multisensory signature dishes, places vision right up there with smell, in flavour's 'premier league', if you will. 'Half the brain is visual in some sense,' says Spence. This is, in part, why the colour of our food and drink can not only determine whether it is appetising but its flavour, too.

B

It is often said that we have an inherent aversion to blue food because it appears so rarely in nature. Another popular theory is that we're attracted to red food because it signals ripeness, sweetness and calories. But is this an innate preference? Probably not, thinks Chris Lukehurst, head of research at the Marketing Clinic. How colour affects appetite is inconsistent and contextual. Think about green food and you might picture fresh, nutritious rocket, watercress or cucumber. Or perhaps under-ripe, sour fruits. 'However, If I talk to you about green meat,' he says, 'your stomach probably turns.' It is interesting, though, that a dyed-blue steak will have the same effect, even if you know it's perfectly safe. 'If you get people to eat it in the dark,' says Spence, 'so they think it's normal, then you turn the lights up and show them the

In which section are the following mentioned?

47 the influence of external factors other than the colour of food or drink _____

48 the idea that reaction to colours is not uniform _____

49 the type of people who are most susceptible to colour influence _____

50 a collaboration between people from different backgrounds _____

51 the effect of impaired vision on eating habits _____

52 something that interests people but not for its original purpose _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS

colour, some will get up and be sick straightaway.' Such is the powerfully aversive effect of food colour out of context.

C

As well as tasting the colour of what we consume, we can also taste the shade of its wrapping. Spence has tricked people into confusing salt and vinegar crisps with cheese and onion flavour merely by switching packets. 'Many of our subjects will taste the colour of the crisp packet, not the crisp itself,' he says. Our brains excel in picking up associations and using them as shortcuts. When the colour makes us expect something to taste a certain way, we'll taste what we expect unless it's shockingly different. Using multiple colours in sweets such as Smarties and M&Ms is a strategy to get you to eat lots of them. People will down more from a mixed bowl than they will from a bowl full of their favourite colour. And a recent study from Cornell University showed that you'll eat more, too, if your food colour matches the plate, while a contrast will have the opposite effect.

D

If you can't see colours, you might expect your other senses to sharpen and compensate but blind people don't taste or smell any more than anyone else. They are, however, generally better at naming smells, which most sighted people struggle with. So they may not be tasting more intensely but they can identify flavours better without visual cues. Not surprisingly, losing your sight can make eating stressful and it is thought to contribute to a diminished appetite in old age. But even losing the capacity to see colours can have adverse effects. In his book *An Anthropologist on Mars*, Oliver Sacks told the fascinating story of a man who experienced this after an accident. He found eating less pleasurable and started to choose black or white foods, or eat with his eyes closed. Following a discussion with Blumenthal, Spence and his team at Oxford did some research to discover who is the most easily influenced by the effects of colouring and found that those at the super-taster end of the spectrum rely less on their eyes. 'Whereas those with fewer taste buds,' says Spence, 'will be more easily led astray or say, "Yep, I see red therefore it's sweet".'

53 a hypothetical situation which may disgust us _____

54 some people's ability to be more precise than others in describing subtle taste changes _____

55 the way companies can use psychology to make us eat more _____

56 a belief that some people are naturally reluctant to taste something _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS

B. WRITING

1. You and your friends recently went to a new café in town, and now you have decided to write a review of the café for a tourist website. Here are two comments from your friends:

''The music was so loud, it was hard to talk to each other.''

''The location is really good.''

Write a review for the tourist website, giving your views. The comments above may give you some ideas, and you can also use some ideas of your own.

Your review should be between 150 and 200 words long.

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2. In your English class, you have had a discussion about fast food.

Here are two comments from your friends:

''I don't think fast food is good for you – it's not 'real' food.''

''Fast food is great – I don't have to cook!''

Write an article for your teacher, giving your views. The comments above may give you some ideas, and you should try to use some ideas of your own.

Your article should be between 150 and 200 words long. You will receive up to 10 marks for the content of your article, and up to 9 marks for the style and accuracy of your language.

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