

SECTION 3

c: I've still got loads to do for our report on nutritional food labels.

E: Me too. What did you learn from doing the project about your own shopping habits?

c: Well, I've always had to check labels for ¹⁾ of peanuts in everything I eat because of my ²⁾ beyond that I've never really been concerned enough to check how healthy a product is.

E: This project has actually taught me to read the labels much more carefully. I tended to believe claims on ³⁾ like 'low in fat'. But I now realise that the 'healthy' yoghurt I've bought for years is full of sugar and that it's actually quite ⁴⁾ calories.

c: Ready meals are the worst ... comparing the labels on supermarket pizzas was a real eye-opener. Did you have any idea how many calories they contain? I was amazed.

E: Yes, because unless you read the label really carefully, you wouldn't know that the ⁵⁾ values given are for half a pizza.

c: When most people eat the whole pizza. Not exactly ⁶⁾ is it?

E: Not at all. But I expect it won't stop you from buying pizza?

c: Probably not, no! I thought comparing the different labelling systems used by food manufacturers was interesting. I think the kind of labelling system used makes a big difference.

E: Which one did you prefer?

c: I liked the traditional daily value system best – the one which tells you what proportion of your required ⁷⁾ of each ingredient the product contains. I'm not sure it's the easiest for people to use but at least you get the full story. I like to know all the ingredients in a product – not just how much fat, salt and sugar they contain.

E: But it's good supermarkets have been ⁸⁾ to provide reliable information for customers.

c: Yes. There just needs to be more ⁹⁾ between labelling systems used by different supermarkets, in terms of portion sizes, etc.

E: Mmm. The labels on the different brands of chicken flavour crisps were quite ¹⁰⁾ too, weren't they?

c: Yeah. I don't understand how they can get away with calling them chicken flavour when they only contain artificial additives.

:E: I know. I'd at least have expected them to contain a small percentage of real chicken.
K: Absolutely.
:E: I think having nutritional food labeling has been a good idea, don't you? I think it will change people's ¹⁾ and stop mothers, in particular, buying the wrong things.
K: But didn't that study kind of ²⁾ the opposite? People didn't necessarily stop buying unhealthy products.
:E: They only said that might be the case. Those findings weren't that ³⁾ and it was quite a small-scale study. I think more research has to be done.
K: Yes, I think you're probably right.

K: What do you think of the traffic-light system?
:E: I think supermarkets like the idea of having a ⁴⁾ system – red, orange or green – for levels of fat, sugar and salt in a product.
K: But it's not been ⁵⁾. And not on all products. Why do you suppose that is?
:E: Pressure from the food manufacturers. Hardly surprising that some of them are ⁶⁾ flagging up how unhealthy their products are.
K: I'd have thought it would have been compulsory. It seems ⁷⁾; it isn't.
:E: I know. And what I couldn't get over is the fact that it was brought in without enough consultation – a lot of experts had deep ⁸⁾ about it.
K: That is a bit weird. I suppose there's an argument for doing the research now when consumers are familiar with this system.
:E: Yeah, maybe.
K: The participants in the survey were quite positive about the traffic-light system.
:E: Mmm. But I don't think they ⁹⁾ the right people. They should have focused on people with low literacy levels because these labels are designed to be accessible to them.
K: Yeah. But it's good to get ¹⁰⁾ from all socio-economic groups. And there wasn't much variation in their responses.
:E: No. But if they hadn't interviewed participants face-to-face, they could have used a much bigger sample size. I wonder why they chose that method?
K: Dunno. How were they selected? Did they volunteer or were they approached?
:E: I think they volunteered. The thing that wasn't stated was how often they bought packaged food – all we know is how frequently they used the supermarket.