TASTING HISTORY

You are going to read an article about four people who tried an unusual diet for a week. For questions 1-15, choose from the people (A-D). The people may be chosen more than once.

Which person:

ate with other people? 1 ___

was ordered to end their diet early? 2___

has changed this eating habits a s a result of the experiment? 3___

is usually very active? 4___

did not enjoy a food they had previously liked? 5___

spent a lot of time eating? 6___

ate in an unusual position? 7___

enjoyed doing other activities while eating? 8___

was looking forward to trying the diet? 9___

respects the philosophy behind the diet? 10___

had to stop doing an activity they enjoyed? 11___

felt guilty about something? 12___

mentions learning something that they found upsetting? 13___

thought that the diet had a positive effect on their health? 14___

was reassured by the example set by someone else? 15___



LIVEWORKSHEETS

Four people volunteered to follow a historical diet for a week ...

A. Elisa Riedo tried a medieval European diet (fifteenth century)

Life expectancy in the middle ages was much lower than today, and now I understand why. At one dinner I ate a baked goose stuffed with a chicken, a partridge and a blackbird! I ate so much meat that I started dreaming about vegetables. Actually, since the experiment I've turned vegetarian, so that tells you how bad it was! Cooks used to heavily season meat to preserve it, so it was very spicy. This made me thirsty, so I drank a lot. That was a mistake! I was horrified to discover that medieval people always drank beer or wine, even for breakfast — apparently because the water was very polluted. Eventually I felt so unwell that I had to see a doctor, who wouldn't let me continue. Although it's never nice to let people down, I admit that this was something of a relief!

B. Wang Fei tried the 'fruitarian' diet (popularised in the nineteenth century)

Nineteenth-century fruitarians believed you should never cause harm to any living thing, which is a principle I admire in theory. But it's an extreme diet. In order to show respect to plants and trees, fruitarians can only eat fruit or nuts which have fallen to the ground, they aren't allowed to pick them! You also aren't allowed to cook — you have to eat everything raw. I spent several hours a day just looking for food, because of course you can't just pop into a supermarket. I thought I'd feel really healthy, but instead the diet made me tired and weak. I'm normally quite sporty, and I go running daily, but I just couldn't manage to keep it up. I got so desperate for something warm, sweet and sugary that I eventually gave in and bought a fried doughnut. Of course, I felt awful about breaking the rules. Afterwards I read that the famous spiritual leader Gandhi had once experimented with fruitarianism, but he also struggled to stick to it. That made me feel slightly better!

C. Alicja Kolub tried an ancient Roman diet (c. 200 AD)

In search of an authentic experience, some friends and I hired an old Mediterranean villa, which had a huge dining room. We replaced the chairs there with couches from the lounge. Apparently, Romans preferred to dine lying down, in the belief this aided digestion! I don't know if that's true, but it definitely wasn't good for my table manners. I think I spilled as much as I ate! Romans believed mealtimes should delight all the senses, so during dinner we listened to music and admired the tasteful artwork on the villa walls. In films, Roman dining seems pretty unhealthy — too many rich foods, too much drinking. But this turned out to be something of a myth. The diet included lots of fresh salads and fruit, and I was allowed to dilute my wine with water, so I never felt drunk. Several dishes were very tasty, although I didn't take to those flavoured with garum, a sauce with a salty taste and overpowering smell. I wasn't surprised to discover it was made from old, rotting fish!

D. Jake Brown tried an early American weight-loss diet invented by Horace Fletcher (1903)

I was keen to volunteer for this, as I'd put on rather a lot of weight over Christmas! Horace Fletcher was one of the first people to recommend a low-fat diet, and I must admit, I did seem to be in better shape afterwards, which was great. Unfortunately, he also advised people to chew each mouthful thirty two times before swallowing. As you can imagine, this makes meals stretch on forever, and by the end of the process most food seems completely bland, even tasteless. I used to think roast chicken was delicious, but when you've reduced it to mush, you might as well be eating cardboard. Even worse, no one would dine with me. My girlfriend said watching me turn food into liquid was too disgusting!

LIVEWORKSHEETS