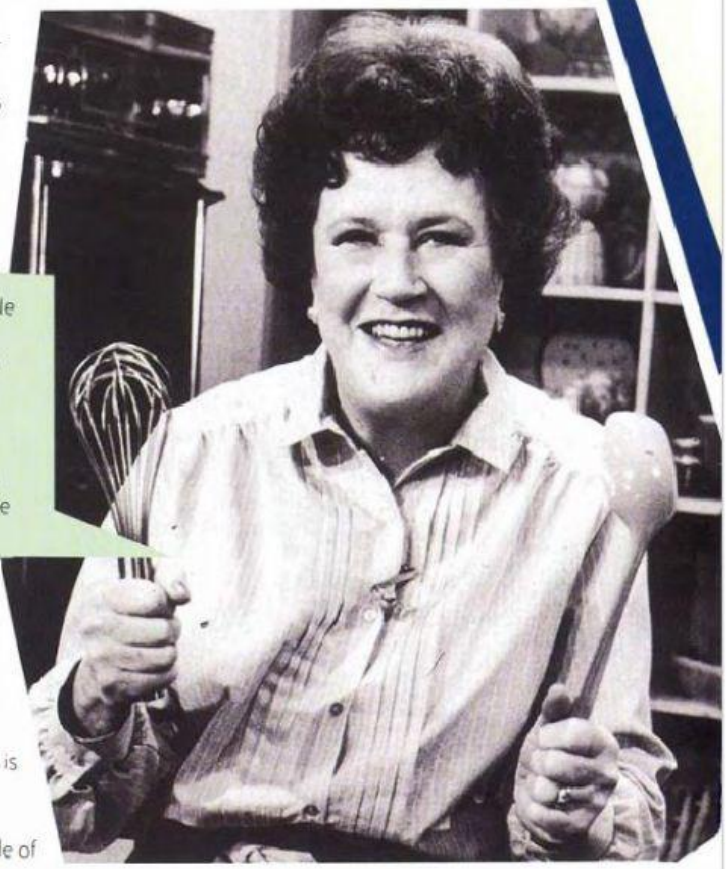
READING

EXAM SKILLS

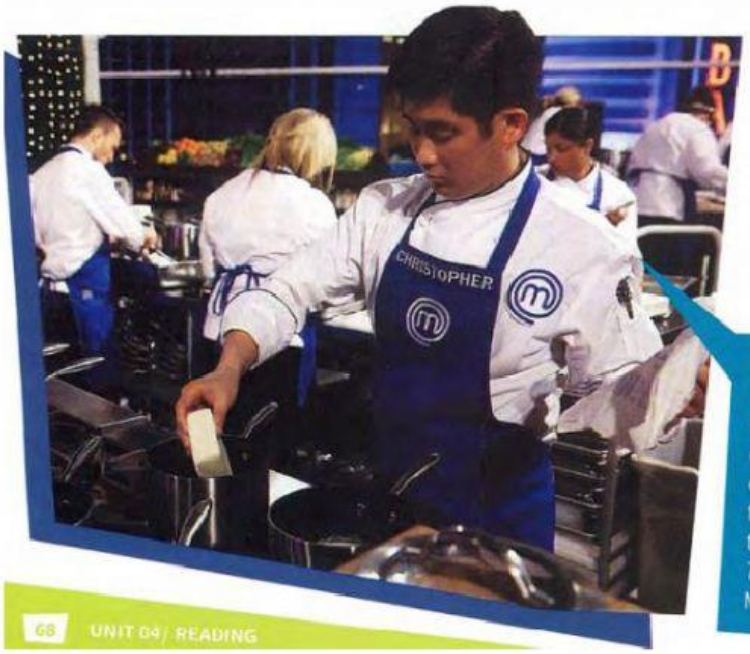
FOOD TV: education or entertainment?

A Shows about cookery have become more and more popular all over the world. But what are the reasons for this, and does it make us cook more? In the UK, BBC viewers complained to the programme *Points of View* that there were too many cookery shows on TV. In one week, the BBC showed 21 hours of cookery. When shows on other channels were included, this came to an amazing 434.5 hours of food TV.



B In the past, TV cookery shows were there to teach people how to cook. One of the first famous TV cooks, Julia Child, was American. She began her career as a cook when, in 1948, she moved to Paris and learnt to cook sophisticated French cuisine because her husband loved good food. On her return home, she published a collection of French recipes made simple, for ordinary American housewives to use, which was an instant success. She was invited to do a TV show, where her humour and strong personality soon won her great fame.

C Nowadays TV chefs are famous for all sorts of different reasons. Gordon Ramsay, for example, is an interesting TV chef. He is famous for having a bad temper and using foul language. In his TV show, *Hell's Kitchen*, he shouts at his staff when they make mistakes because he wants all the food at his restaurants to be perfect. He has many restaurants in different countries. Jamie Oliver is a good-looking, working-class boy who made healthy eating fashionable. He believes children should eat healthy food and he worked with the government to make school meals healthier. His style of cooking is quick, easy and fun.



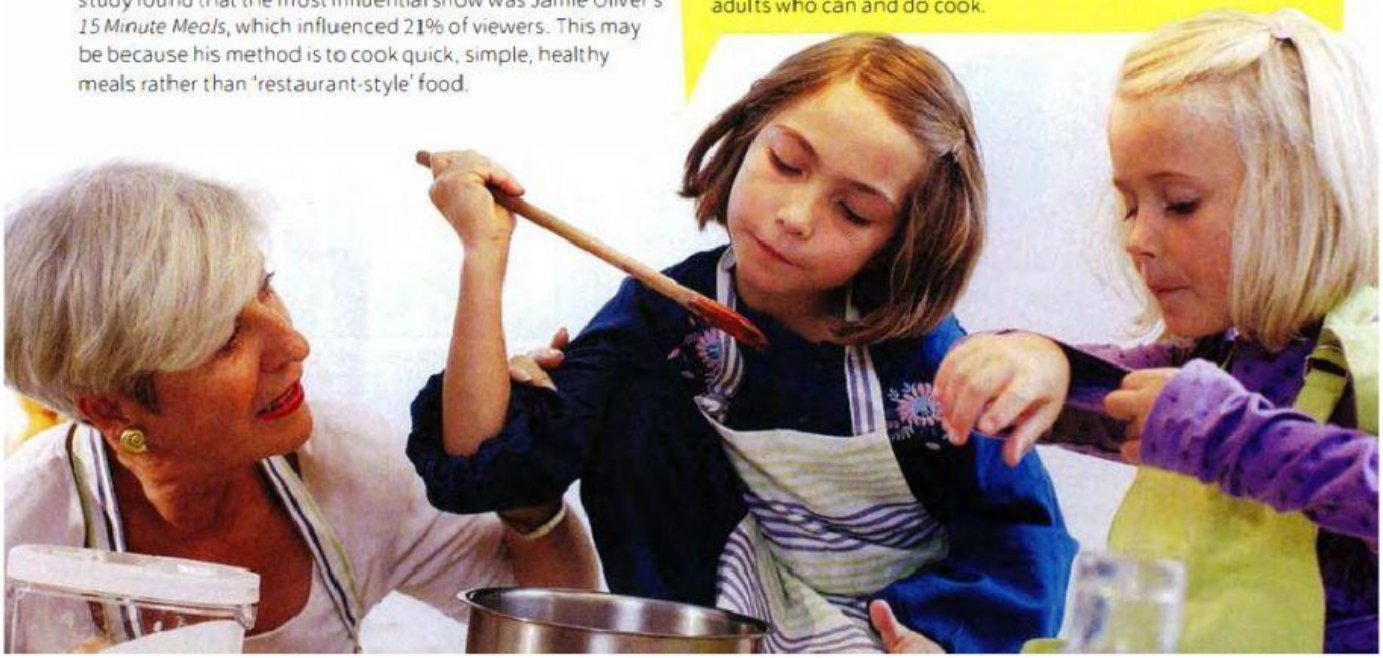
D There are some famous pairs of TV cooks as well. The Hairy Bikers are a pair of chefs who have beards and ride motorbikes. They travel around to different places and cook there. They were both fat but then did a series of shows on how to cook diet food and both lost weight. Another famous pair was the Two Fat Ladies. They cooked unhealthy food using lots of fat and they didn't care about healthy eating. They also rode a motorbike.

E The introduction of a competitive element to many cookery shows reminds us that food TV is more entertainment than education these days. Many of us love shows like *Masterchef*, where a contestant is eliminated on every show. The personalities of both the contestants and the judges are far more important than the cookery. In a popular competitive show called *The Great British Bake-Off*, there was a 'nice judge', Mary Berry, and a 'nasty judge', Paul Hollywood.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

F We know that cooking at home is better for us than eating ready-made or takeaway meals. However, the fact that there is more cookery on TV doesn't necessarily mean people cook more. Different studies have produced different results, but most agree that people generally spend less time cooking than they did in the past. Certain cookery shows influence viewers more than others. One study found that the most influential show was Jamie Oliver's *15 Minute Meals*, which influenced 21% of viewers. This may be because his method is to cook quick, simple, healthy meals rather than 'restaurant-style' food.

G It seems, though, that teaching children to cook at home and at school has much more influence on healthy eating than watching TV programmes on cooking. Grandparents have an important role to play because they may have more time – and experience – than parents. Cooking with family members on a regular basis and making food preparation part of the school curriculum is likely to ensure that children become adults who can and do cook.



09 Read the article about Food TV. Which paragraphs contain the following information? Write the correct letter, A–F.

[NB You may use any letter more than once.]

1 The cooking show that affects people most
2 A TV chef who was first famous as an author
3 The number of food shows on TV
4 The role of cookery shows for enjoyment rather than learning
5 Why children should be taught to cook at school
6 Research about the amount of time people cook
7 Examples of famous cookery partners

10 Look at the following descriptions (1–7) and the list of famous chefs. Match each description with the correct chef, A–F.

[NB You may use any letter more than once.]

1 Changed the style of cooking on some of their programmes
2 One of the first TV chefs
3 Helped to get children eating healthy food
4 The kinder of two judges
5 Cooked food that was not very good for you
6 Is very rude to the kitchen workers
7 Showed people that cooking foreign dishes need not be difficult

A Mary Berry
B Jamie Oliver
C The Hairy Bikers
D Gordon Ramsay
E Julia Child
F Two Fat Ladies

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