

A. Many food enthusiasts appreciate international cuisine and the traditional methods of preparation, often rooted in developing countries. However, in these regions, cooking can pose serious health risks. Nearly 40% of the world's population—around three billion people—rely on open fires or basic stoves, burning wood, charcoal, or dung for fuel. In contrast to modern appliances, these traditional cookstoves use inefficient combustion, filling kitchens with smoke and harming lungs. According to the World Health Organization, indoor air pollution from these stoves causes pneumonia, lung cancer, and heart disease, killing four million people annually—a toll comparable to malaria and tuberculosis combined. Unlike other household hazards, women and children, who spend the most time near these stoves, are disproportionately affected.

B. To combat this problem, initiatives like the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves have promoted cleaner alternatives. Unlike traditional stoves, these newer models are often fitted with chimneys to vent smoke outside, aiming to reduce indoor air pollution. While traditional methods persist, clean cookstoves have been distributed in many communities as a safer option, supported by funding from the U.S. and advocacy from public figures.

C. On the positive side, studies on clean cookstoves highlight potential benefits. Compared to traditional stoves, they emit less carbon, which could help mitigate climate change effects like reduced rainfall and melting glaciers. Additionally, they may burn fuel more efficiently, whereas traditional stoves waste energy. This efficiency reduces the amount of wood needed, freeing up time for women who would otherwise gather fuel—time that could be spent on education, work, or family care, thereby improving household well-being.

D. Despite these advantages, research has also raised concerns. A Harvard-MIT study titled "Up in Smoke" examined 2,600 households in India and found that contrary to expectations, some clean stoves released more pollutants than traditional ones. Moreover, the study noted that while clean stoves are promoted as solutions, their high cost led families to underuse or discard them rather than repair them.

In summary, clean cookstoves offer promising health and environmental benefits, but their effectiveness depends on proper use, affordability, and maintenance. Traditional stoves, though deeply rooted in many cultures, come with severe health risks. Ultimately, the challenge lies in making clean cookstoves accessible, durable, and culturally acceptable to ensure they deliver on their potential rather than becoming abandoned innovations.

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Worksheet A – SEN Students

Task 1: Tick the correct answer.

Traditional cookstoves cause:

- A. Clean air
- B. Smoke
- C. Electricity

Task 2: Match the correct answer.

Traditional cookstoves	less smoke / safer
Clean cookstoves	smoke / health risk

Task 3: Complete the sentence using the word bank

(more dangerous – safer).

Traditional cookstoves are _____ than clean cookstoves.

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Level 1

Task 1: Complete the comparison table using information from the reading text.

Write short phrases.

Aspect	Traditional Cookstoves	Clean Cookstoves
Health Impact	cause _____	reduce _____
Environmental Impact	produce _____	produce _____
Cost & Use	cheap but _____	expensive and _____

Task 2: Use the table to write THREE sentences.

- Unlike traditional cookstoves, clean cookstoves _____.
- Compared to clean cookstoves, traditional cookstoves _____.
- While traditional cookstoves _____, clean cookstoves _____.

Task 3: Tick the best answer based on the text.

Clean cookstoves are sometimes not used because they are:

- A. Safer
- B. Expensive
- c. Traditional

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Level 2

Task 1: Complete the Venn Diagram using information from the reading text.

Traditional Cookstoves	Similarities	Clean Cookstoves
		

Task 2: Evidence Hunt

Find ONE sentence from the text that shows a difference between the two stoves and write it below.

Quote: " _____ "

Task 3: Write ONE structured paragraph (7–8 lines).

Requirements:

- Use at least 3 compare/contrast expressions
- Include one quoted or paraphrased evidence from the text
- Focus on health and environmental impact

Checklist (✓):

- ☐ compared both types
- ☐ used linking words
- ☐ used evidence from the text

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Level 3

Task: Analytical Comparison and Justification

Compare traditional and clean cookstoves and decide which is more suitable for developing communities.

Part 1: Analytical Comparison Table (use short notes)

Criteria	Traditional	Clean
Health		
Environment		
Cost & Maintenance		
Cultural Acceptance		

Part 2: Justified Paragraph (10–12 lines)

Requirements:

- Use at least 4 compare/contrast expressions
- Use 2 specific evidences from different paragraphs
- Clearly justify your final opinion

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Extension (Optional – Higher Challenge):

Suggest ONE realistic improvement that could increase the use of clean cookstoves in developing countries. Explain how it addresses cost, culture, or durability.

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