

GCSE

2431/2/READING BOOKLET

ENGLISH (Specification 1900)

Unit 1 Non-Fiction, Media and Information

READING BOOKLET

WEDNESDAY 10 JANUARY 2007

Morning

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- The material in this READING BOOKLET is for use with the questions in Section A of the question paper.

This document consists of **4** printed pages.

‘Delicious!’

Rachael Oliveck was a committed vegetarian and animal rights activist for 14 years. But on Christmas Day she finally cracked, and tucked into some turkey – and she hasn’t looked back since.

It wasn’t specifically the thought of roast turkey that changed my mind, but this year’s Christmas dinner was notable for marking the moment I gave up vegetarianism after fourteen long, virtuous years. And, to save me answering the same three questions over and over again – yes, it was delicious, no, my body didn’t seize up in shock and, yes, I have eaten meat at least once a day since.

I originally gave up meat for ethical reasons, and have always missed the taste of it. As an animal-rights activist, I was primarily concerned about the conditions of animals reared for meat, and I was also put off by the routine feeding of antibiotics and growth hormones to livestock.

In 1989 these were not widely understood views, and spreading the word on animal cruelty was perceived as scaremongering at best and downright unnatural at worst. Being vegetarian was solely the preserve of the crank, hippy and the misguided but well-intentioned teenage girl. Supermarkets stocked “veggie grills” (yellowish, cutlet-shaped minced vegetables) which were a barbecue staple in the summer, and restaurants routinely offered plates of vegetables as the meat-free option.

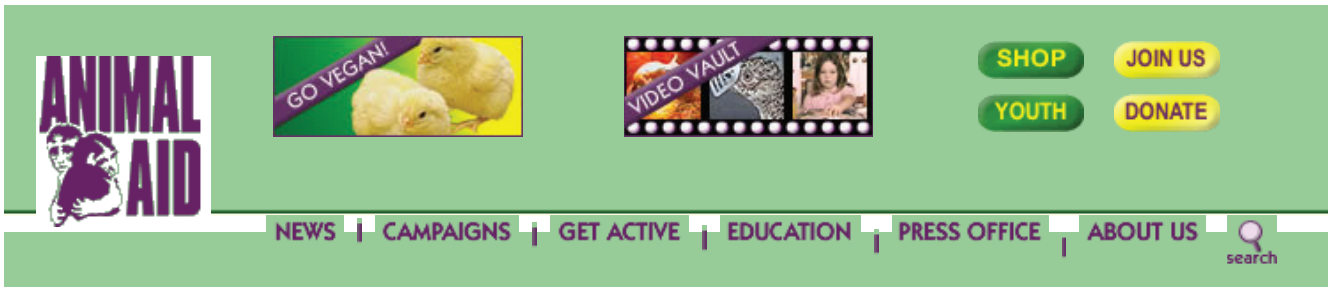
Since then, meat, and indeed food production, has changed enormously, as have eating habits in general. Humanely-reared meat is widely available, eating less meat is the norm, supermarkets offer huge veggie ranges and restaurants have wised up to what non-meat eaters want. Following the public furore surrounding BSE and, to a lesser extent, the foot-and-mouth outbreak, the horrors of modern meat production have become widely known, and vegetarians feel they have been proved right. Meat is now much more traceable and, it is hoped, of higher quality.

I wish I was noble enough to claim that it was simply a question of ethics. If I am honest, it was just as much a question of gluttony. I have always loved food, and I had taken to staring at the meat sections of my favourite cookery book and watching food programmes in a desperate attempt to satisfy a growing desire for the flesh of defenceless animals. Meat didn’t repel me any more. I wanted to eat it. I realised that I was no longer taking a principled stand that I was proud of, I was simply missing out. My stomach may have been meat-free but, in my heart, I was a ravenous carnivore. And that was that.

I cannot imagine that I will ever go back to vegetarianism, but I used to think I would never eat meat again. I am hoping, however, that my diet will balance out, and I will be able to combine meat and meat-free. What is undeniable is that the physical effects of eating meat have been striking; I have more energy, feel much better and, according to friends, I look much healthier. I went back to meat for reasons of taste, but I am pretty sure that, had my choices been restricted to cheap, greyish cuts and mechanically recovered meat, I would have stuck with the vegetables and soya.

Some ethical principles remain – so far I have tried to buy humanely-reared meat wherever possible. I still find the idea of veal or foie gras distasteful, and doubt I will be tempted by them for some while yet. I don’t feel as if I failed at vegetarianism, nor that I have condemned poor little animals to a life of unending misery just to satisfy my stomach.

Extract from Rachael Oliveck, *Delicious*, 29 January 2003 © Guardian Newspapers Limited 2005



Veggie Month

The heart of the matter

Every March, Animal Aid concentrates on its annual promotion of vegetarianism, known as Veggie Month. We do so because a meat-free diet is at the heart of our overall campaign, combining an anti-cruelty message with the more positive promotion of a compassionate way of life.

The reason we push the 'go veggie' message so passionately is because it really is the quickest, easiest and most immediate way that an individual can demonstrate opposition to animal suffering. The idea is simple: stop eating animals and you save their lives. And we are talking about millions and millions of lives.

In the UK alone, more than 900 million animals are slaughtered for food annually. That's 2.5 million a day, 100,000 an hour, 1,700 a minute, 30 per second. Not only are their deaths at the slaughterhouse a terrifying, violent experience, they usually follow lives filled with pain, frustration and discomfort inside crowded and dirty sheds on factory farms.

Additionally, the number of fish killed globally each year is impossible to assess accurately. In the UK, fish farming is second only to intensive poultry farming in terms of numbers – more fish are bred and killed than pigs, sheep and cattle combined. The average meat-eater will consume 2,000 animals in his or her lifetime, and (very approximately) half a tonne of fish.

Vegetarianism – the rational choice

Perhaps in the past there was a certain stigma attached to being vegetarian. It would conjure up preconceived ideas of kaftans and sandals and provoke ridicule at the thought that brown rice, lentils and lettuce leaves were all that "they" ever ate. Nowadays, with thousands of people going veggie each week, it is so mainstream that even fast food chains have a veggie burger on their menus.



● Dan Green's new healthy tasty veggie recipes – including Thai Bean Burgers with Sweet Potato Wedges, above – are now online in [The Veggie Collection](#).



● For more information about the suffering of animals, read [Meat Kills](#).



● Sesame spinach with potato & parsnip balls – healthy, tasty and cruelty-free.

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For the majority of vegetarians, the most compelling reasons for giving up meat are the welfare of animals and/or the health benefits. According to established authorities such as the American Dietetic Association: “Appropriately planned vegetarian diets are healthful, nutritionally adequate, and provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases.

“There are also important environmental reasons for going veggie. A plant-based diet makes much better use of the planet’s precious resources. In a world of dwindling resources, vegetarianism is the only rational diet.”

Every little bit helps

There are a number of stages along the way to a completely animal-free diet, and taking any step in the right direction helps. Although we encourage veganism*, we aren't here to tell people how to live their lives, and it is up to each individual to decide. Our task is to offer advice and support along the way. Most importantly, we can demonstrate that eliminating meat and/or dairy products is not all about self-sacrifice. On the contrary, it offers the possibility of enriching your life with the satisfaction of knowing that you are no longer supporting barbaric industries and that animals are not being killed in your name. And, of course, there is the additional bonus that you may well add years of healthy living to your life.

First steps to an animal-friendly future

If going vegetarian sounds daunting, start by making simple changes. Leave the ham off your pizza and have mushrooms instead; try a salad and houmous sandwich instead of tuna and mayo; swap your chicken tikka masala for a vegetable biriyani. Have one veggie dinner a week and you’ll be saving lives. Step it up to one meat-free day a week, then two and then three – until you’re happy to have had your last meaty meal. If you are partial to a fried breakfast and can’t bear the thought of never eating a BLT again, don’t panic: veggie sausages are so delicious some meat-eaters prefer them.

* Lifestyle using no animal produce at all



● Dairy cows repeatedly have their babies taken away at one or two days old, so that the milk meant for them can be bottled up for human consumption. Yet a varied and balanced plant-based diet provides all the nutrients you need, with none of the nasties like saturated fat and cholesterol.

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Acknowledgements:

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