

VEGANISM

IS IT REALLY THAT
GOOD FOR US?

A TALKING POINTS LESSON FOR
ENGLISH READING & SPEAKING

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Introduction

What is a vegetarian diet?

How about a vegan diet?

What is the difference?

Could you eat this way? Why/why not?

A Vegan Diet — The Pros and Cons

In the last few years, veganism has exploded in popularity.

It has developed from the early beginnings in the hippie culture of the sixties to the worldwide phenomenon we see today.

There are countless websites and blogs that discuss the merits, thousands of videos online and supermarket shelves are packed with vegan products.

We see it as healthy and good for the environment.

But is it?

Proponents of the vegan lifestyle say it helps with weight management or weight loss. That a vegan diet reduces heart disease, high blood pressure and cholesterol.

They see it as good for the environment because it reduces animal farming and therefore it is humane because it doesn't harm animals.

The argument against eating animals is very hard to counter. We should have a more caring attitude when it comes to the protection of all life on the planet.

We, as human beings, are not the only living things on earth.

Animals also have a right to live here as much as us.

But now there is evidence that a vegan diet is not as healthy as first claimed. And that, in fact, it is actually bad for the environment.

One of the main issues with a vegan diet is that there is a lack of certain vitamins.

For people eating a regular omnivore diet — *people who eat food extracted from plants and animals* — rarely suffer from any vitamin deficiency.

But vegans often have a great deal less vitamin B12 and vitamin D in their system. Vitamin B12 can be found in meat, fish, dairy products and eggs. The kind of food that a vegan doesn't eat.

A plant-based diet lacks any vitamin D at all.

This can lead to problems such as tiredness, confusion and muscle weakness. It can also cause depression and weakness in the bones.

Vegans also have a deficiency in Omega-3 — *an essential oil necessary in human beings*. This can most easily be found in a fish diet.

Apart from health problems, veganism has created environmental concerns.

Food such as almonds and avocados require a lot of water to grow. This has caused water depletion in some areas of the world that grows these things.

Soybeans are an essential part of the vegan diet, but in fact, this has caused deforestation in some countries.

It is now widely believed that this has caused problems in areas that are worthy of protection, such as the Amazon Forest.

So, while there is much conversation about the vegan lifestyle being wholesome and healthy, there are concerns.

Vegans lack certain vitamins and essential oils plus the production of certain foods in the vegan diet creates some environmental problems.

There seems to be no clear settlement on the discussion.

Two opposing sides, both with very strong arguments to support their claims.

Yes, we should protect other animals living on the planet, but it seems that the human diet has some need for certain vitamins and oils that can only be found in animal products.

What can we do to solve this issue?

Reading Comprehension Questions

What is the main topic of this article?

How has veganism evolved over the years?

When did it start? Was it followed by many people?

What are some reasons people support a vegan diet?

What are the potential health benefits of a vegan diet?

What is the argument against eating animals?

What are the concerns raised about a vegan diet in terms of health?

Which vitamins are often lacking in a vegan diet?

What are the potential consequences of a deficiency in vitamin B12 and vitamin D?

What is the deficiency in Omega-3 and where can it be found?

How has the production of certain vegan foods impacted the environment?

Which foods mentioned in the article require a significant amount of water to grow?

Which crop has caused deforestation in some countries?

Which one place is cited as an example of this?

What are the environmental concerns associated with the production of certain vegan foods?

What are the two main arguments discussed in the article?

Are there any clear resolutions to the discussion about the pros and cons of a vegan lifestyle?

What is the dilemma posed by the article regarding the need for certain vitamins and oils in the human diet?

In your own words, summarize the author's main viewpoint on the issue.

What could be potential solutions to address the concerns raised about a vegan diet?

How does the article emphasize the importance of protecting other animals?

What is the overall tone of the article? Supportive, critical, neutral, or uncertain?

Essential Vocabulary

veganism	exploded	popularity
developed	hippie-culture	phenomenon
countless	merits	proponents
weight-management	weight-loss	heart disease
high blood pressure	cholesterol	humane
counter	attitude	protection
evidence	omnivore	extracted
suffer	deficiency	dairy products
confusion	depression	almonds
avocados	depletion	Soybeans
deforestation	worthy	wholesome
essential oils	settlement	opposing
claims		

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Veganism — *the lifestyle of giving up eating and using all animal products.*

Exploded — *having grown or become known at a very fast and rapid rate.*

Then write a sentence of your own that uses the new word or phrase correctly.

Veganism has grown as a lifestyle over the last twenty years.

AI apps have exploded on the market this year.

Do this with all the vocabulary and, over time, this will help improve all your English skills — reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Discussion Questions

What do you know about veganism?

What does being a vegan mean to you?

Are you a vegan? If so, why did you adopt this kind of diet and lifestyle?

Have you ever tried a vegan diet? What did you think of it?

If you are not a vegan, have you ever considered doing this?

What could make you become a full vegan?

Do you think the health benefits included in the article are valid?

Could we not lose weight or reduce cholesterol by other means?

The article mentions that vegans often have a deficiency in certain vitamins and Omega-3 oil.

How could vegans make up for this without eating animal products?

Do you think it would be hard to maintain a vegan diet?

If you were to become a vegan, what kind of foods would you miss?

How can a vegan get protein in their diet?

Exactly what kinds of food can a vegan eat every day?

What kind of foods can they not eat?

Are there certain kinds of places that a vegan cannot go to eat?

Think of fast-food places. Or ice cream stores. Or drink stores.

Are there any spiritual or religious aspects to being a vegan?

Are there certain people from certain cultures around the world that are vegan by choice?

What is the difference between a vegan and a vegetarian?

Are there any vegan restaurants or stores in your hometown?

Have you tried any food in these places?

Do vegans still wear or use leather products? Such as shoes or belts or bags?

Have we, as people, evolved to a point where we need to eat meat and animal products?

Can vegans eat honey? Why/why not?

Animals are not harmed in the production of dairy products such as eggs, milk and cheese. Is it acceptable to eat these kinds of food on a vegan diet?

There are very strong ethical arguments from vegans in terms of the care and welfare of animals.

Do we have a responsibility to animals?

If so, why do we still eat animal products?

Writing

This is a writing exercise.

You have been asked to write the advertising copy for a vegan restaurant.

The restaurant is called **Fresh and Green** and they have a new menu available.

Your job is to write a social media post of around 100 words to promote the restaurant and the new menu.

Do some research to find out about vegan food ideas online.

Then write your social media post copy.

When you have finished, you can share it with all your classmates.

Or show your teacher for review.

Credits

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