

# 3c | Competitive eating

## WHAT THE LESSON IS ABOUT

Theme	An eating competition and doing things to excess
Speaking	Pairwork: roleplaying an interview with Sonya Thomas, a world eating champion
Reading	<i>Me and my big mouth</i> : a magazine article about Sonya Thomas
Vocabulary	Excess

## IF YOU WANT A LEAD-IN ...

### Discussion starters

- **Methodology guidelines:** Discussion starters, page xiv
- What's the most food you've ever eaten in one go? What was the occasion?
- What's your favourite food? Do you have a 'comfort' food? What is it and why is it comforting?
- Is there any type of food that you just can't stop eating once you stop?

### Test before you teach

- **Methodology guidelines:** Test before you teach, page xiv
- Write *over* and *under* on the board. Ask students to work in pairs to think of as many words as they can which begin with these prefixes. Give the students four minutes. In feedback, find out which pair thought of the most correct examples.

### Introducing the theme: competitive eating

- Write the following questions on the board:  
*What do you think competitive eating is?*  
*Where do you think it might be popular?*  
*What sort of people might be good at it?*  
*How would you prepare for a competitive eating contest?*
- Ask students to discuss the questions in small groups or as a class, depending on the size of your class.
- You could use these questions to create a prediction task for the reading.

## SPEAKING

- 1 Students look at the photos and read the information. Ask them what they think about the contest.
- 2
  - **Communication activities, Student's Book pages 141 & 152**
  - Pairwork. Divide the class into two groups, A and B, and then into pairs of A/B students. Ask the pairs in each group to turn to their respective pages at the back of the book and to read the instructions.
  - Pairs A prepare the interview questions about the competitive eating contest, and pairs B prepare answers to questions they think they might be interviewed about. Set a time limit of five minutes for them to complete their questions or answers.
  - Go round monitoring and give help where needed.

- 3
  - Students now work with a different partner, so that an interviewer from a pair A is talking to an interviewee from a pair B, and roleplay the interview.

### Alternative procedure

- Write the following words on the board before doing the roleplay:  
*sympathetic humorous appalled disapproving critical*
- Tell the 'magazine journalists' to choose one of the adjectives to describe the tone of the interview they are about to conduct. That way, when doing the interview, the interviewers are not merely asking questions, but responding to what Sonya says depending on the emotion they are role playing.
- Ask a few of the magazine journalists to report what they found out about Sonya to the class.

## READING

The reading text is about Sonya Thomas who is America's record-breaking eating champion, and her incredible ability to consume large quantities of food in record times, despite being thin. The text gives a commentary on an event in which Sonya eats 46 crabcakes in ten minutes.

- 1
  - Students read the article and find out which questions from their roleplay were answered in the text.
- 2
  - Students read the text and decide if the statements are true or false.
  - They could then compare their answers with a partner before you check with the class.

- 1 True – *Yet as unlikely as it seems, What is even more remarkable and Sonya ate an astonishing 40 crabcakes in twelve minutes.*
- 2 False – *It is that record she is here this morning to defend.*
- 3 True – *The first time I did it, it was just for fun. It just came out good so I thought, 'OK, let's do it'.*
- 4 False – No such claim is made: we only learn of one theory which attempts to explain why the very thin Sonya can eat so much in such a short time.
- 5 False – *The so-called sport of eating contests – while dating back decades to events held at county fairs ...*
- 6 False – *She eats with one hand, using the other to take sips from a bottle and Food and water and a combination of the two drip down faces ...*
- 7 True – *at every eating contest, there are medics on hand*
- 8 False – *She is thrilled. She says she slowed down and that she could eat more but there is no suggestion of discontentment with her performance.*

- 3
  - Students look back at the highlighted verbs in the text and match them to the definitions.
  - They could then compare their sentences with a partner before you check with the class.

1 confides	5 dunk
2 grabs	6 licks
3 wolfing down	7 pondered
4 masticating	8 choked

## 4

- Pairwork. Students discuss the questions with a partner and give reasons for their answers.
- Ask students if they found out anything interesting from their partner in their discussion.

Possible criticisms are that competitive eating is bad for your health. It may cause long-term problems; It glamorises and condones eating too much which may lead to other people over-eating, particularly children; People have died during competitive eating contests in Japan; It is being exploited by a New York marketing company.

**Extra discussion task**

- Ask students if they can think of any other 'so-called sports' which are in bad taste or may be bad for your health?
- Discuss them as a class.

**VOCABULARY: excess**

## 1

- Pairwork. Students discuss the questions with a partner. Tell them that they can use a dictionary if they need to.

## 2

- Students complete the sentences with the prepositions in the box.

1 to	4 with
2 in; of	5 over
3 to	6 in

## 3

- Pairwork. Students discuss each of the statements in exercise 2 with a partner.
- They can then choose two of the statements which they agree with the most.

**Language notes: excess**

- The *Macmillan English Dictionary* lists about fifty uses of *over* (as an affix meaning too much/in excess) plus a verb or adjective. Note that *over* is used as an affix with other meanings too, such as *above* (overhang), *from one side to another* (overarching), *on top of* (overlap), and *to recover* (overcome).
- Here are some other common examples of *over* (as an affix meaning too much/in excess) plus a verb or adjective:  
over + verb: *overact, overcharge, overcook, overdo, overheat, overload, overflow, overstate*  
over + adjective: *overactive, overblown, overcrowded, overdone, overpowering, overqualified, overweight, overwrought*
- Note that the main stress here is on the main syllable of the verb or adjective, and there is secondary stress on the first syllable of *over*: *overpriced* /əʊvə'praɪst/
- **Overexposed** means seen in the media so often that you lose interest in it.

- **Binge drinking** is drinking a lot of alcohol in a short period of time (a common social problem in British towns where young people go to pubs, get very drunk and cause problems in the street).
- **Junk mail** is mail (such as promotional or advertising material) that is sent to you when you don't want it.

**Extra task**

- Write the examples of *over* + verb and *over* + adjective, listed in the Language notes above, on the board, in two lists. Ask half the class, in pairs, to guess the meaning of the *over* + verb words, and the other half to guess the *over* + adjective words. Then ask the pairs to check their answers in dictionaries.
- Divide the class, so that students are in new pairs with partners who have researched different sets of words. Students must explain their sets of words to each other.

**Extra task**

- At the end of the lesson, ask students to close their books and see how many of the *over* words they can remember from exercise 1.

**IF YOU WANT SOMETHING EXTRA ...**

- 🔗 *Photocopiable activity, page 221*
- 🔗 *Teaching notes, page 195*