

01

HAS THE EASE OF COOKING IMPROVED LIFE?

Nowadays, food has become easier to prepare. Has this change improved the way people live? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

1. Key words

food habits	les habitudes alimentaires
food science	la diététique
to be health conscious	faire attention à sa santé
to prepare a meal	préparer un repas
to prepare lunch / dinner	préparer le déjeuner / le dîner
to whip up / to rustle up a meal	préparer un repas en vitesse
canned food / preserves / to can a meal / lunch tray	les conserves / mettre en conserves un plateau-repas
to cook a meal	faire cuire un repas
to bake / to roast	faire cuire (au four) / rôtir
the cooking time	le temps de cuisson
food preservation	la conservation de la nourriture
foodstuffs / ingredients	les denrées alimentaires / les ingrédients
(pre)processed food	la nourriture industrielle
organic food / junk food	la nourriture bio / la malbouffe
to deep-freeze / deep frozen food	surgeler / les aliments surgelés
fresh produce / vacuum packaging	des produits frais / l'emballage sous vide
to process food	traiter / transformer la nourriture
preservatives	des agents de conservation
to introduce additives	injecter des colorants
artificial flavorings	des parfums / assaisonnements artificiels
a food processor	un robot ménager
time-saving	qui fait gagner du temps
a micro-wave oven	un four à micro-ondes
a pressure cooker	une cocotte minute
to freeze-dry / to decay, to rot	lyophiliser / se gâter, pourrir
a deep freeze / a cold room	un congélateur / une chambre froide
ready made food	les plats tout préparés
a meal ready to go	un repas tout préparé
a ready / ready to serve meal	un plat cuisiné
to be the worse off (for sth)	perdre au change

2. Talking points

1. The ease of cooking has improved life.

- The development of food devices, kitchen appliances and the progress of technology have led to many useful inventions, among which the refrigerator, the microwave oven, and the deep-freeze.
- Food has become easier to preserve and store thanks to the deep freeze, the refrigerator or processes such as freeze-drying, vacuum packaging or canning.
- Food conditioning (pre-packaged or pre-processed) has made it possible to instant-cook.
- For the housewife, modern kitchen appliances mean less time spent in the kitchen preparing meals. As a consequence, more time has been freed for other activities, including sports, entertainment, work, etc. Women are no longer tied to the sink.
- Access to some foodstuff, such as strawberries in winter or grapes in the spring, fresh vegetables all year round—once the preserve of the elite—has been made easier and cheaper.

2. The ease of cooking has worsened life.

- The development of homogenized and pre-processed food means a loss of culinary habits and therefore of tradition. Cooking is an art that is dying out / on the way out.
- Food quality has gone down: prepackaging and pre-processing means a loss of freshness, of natural vitamin content and antioxidants and an increase in preservatives and artificial flavorings.
- The development of standardized, homogenized, bland dishes sold has become common practice by caterers or food processing companies.
- Children now resort to snacking and gorging on unhealthy or junk food such as pizzas and French fries. Less quality food means more health problems, especially obesity for children.
- Less time at the family table means less conviviality and less quality time between parents and children.
- Man caught in the rat race can no longer afford to waste time eating. Man has lost his taste for good food in the race against the clock. Food is no longer considered as enjoyable. It is no longer seen as an art as well.

3. Possible answers

1. The ease of cooking has improved life.

Progress, and in particular the progress of technology, has spread to every aspect of our life. One area is the kitchen. Actually, food has become much easier to prepare than it used to be. Our lives have therefore been changed for the better.

Gone are the days when the mother would spend hours in the kitchen preparing elaborate dishes following old-fashioned recipes. The ingredients then were fresh cabbages, zucchini and other veggies from the kitchen garden, apples gathered in the orchard, potatoes harvested in the field nearby, strawberries or blackcurrants handpicked to eat for dessert or to can for the winter. The meat would be carved out from slaughtered animals, the game came from a recent hunt. The food was then locally produced and locally consumed.

The progress of technology has allowed food to be prepared more quickly. As well, it has prevented part of it from being wasted. On the one hand, the electric or gas cooker means we do not have to wait for hours before reaching the right baking temperature. On the other hand, thanks to the refrigerator and the deep freeze, we can actually preserve the food in perfect condition and for long periods of time. We now eat in winter what has been harvested in the summer.

Preservation methods have changed too. Today, prepackaged food is being sold in supermarkets and other specialized shops. The food is kept deep-frozen in cold rooms for months on end before distribution to the consumers.

Such changes in food preparation have brought considerable benefits. Preparing food is cost- and time efficient. People now spend far less time in the kitchen to prepare the evening meal or lunch. Foodstuffs are also cheaper owing to the development of transportation modes. Above all, the way food is prepared has enabled people to spend less time eating and more time for other pursuits, be it leisure activities, playing sports or pursuing hobbies. In the same way, such food preparation has made it easy for the housewife to rustle up a meal when her kids invite their friends around. She just has to defrost the pizza and heat it up in the oven. Dinner is ready in a matter of minutes, thus satiating the appetite of hungry teenagers.

What is more, food is now available the year round and no longer dependent on local seasons. Food has gone global. We now consume strawberries in winter, grapefruit in the spring, and fresh vegetables all year round. Some exotic produces that were out of the reach of the average man are now available in the shop next door. In a word, such luxuries are no longer the realm of the well-off but can be enjoyed by a large part of the population. So, all in all, because cooking has become much easier, our diet has improved as well but also the way we live and consume.

2. The ease of cooking has worsened life.

From the hunter-gatherer's days to the high tech entrepreneur's, man's lifestyle has changed altogether and so have his eating and cooking habits. If, on the one hand, food preparation has changed woman's life, on the other, in the frantic world which man lives and works in, cooking has taken a backseat to other concerns, such as getting an education, making money, starting a company, finding a job or edging competitors out of the market. The changes in food habits have meshed with some of the concepts that define today's world: faster, simpler, and more efficient.

Global standardization and food pre-processing have led to a loss of care and tradition in the art of cooking. We no longer take time to prepare food according to yesteryear recipes. Caught in the rat race man can no longer afford to waste time eating. In the race against the clock, man has lost his taste for genuine food. The hurried parents that come home in the evening cannot afford to spend another two hours poring over cookbooks and coming up with the original and varied meal that is so necessary to a balanced health. Culinary art is dying.

The quality of the food that is prepared in haste or sold has gone down as well. What matters is to fill our stomachs, whatever the ingredients. Prepackaging and pre-processing means a loss of freshness, a decline in natural vitamin content and antioxidants and an increase in preservatives and artificial flavorings so that the food can remain on the shelves as long as possible. To that end, food-processing companies have dumbed down quality. Food has lost its freshness, its originality and become homogenized, artificial and bland through the introduction of additives to preserve flavor or enhance taste and appearance.

The loss of quality and freshness has made life worse for kids. First, unable to make a difference between good and bad food, children resort to junk food with the attendant consequences on health. No wonder obesity has been a growing problem in the rich countries. Second, kids have lost track of what fresh and healthy fruits or vegetables taste like. We buy our food in bulk from the supermarket and not from the local market because it is cheaper and we are obsessed with conserving it as long as possible.

Eating all-ready meals means that families no longer spend lunch or dinner together. Children for example retire to their rooms and snack in front of the video game console or other electronic devices, chatting on FB and paying no attention to what they eat. Food is no longer considered as an opportunity to get together and enjoy life. The culinary traditions have gradually frittered away as cuisine is no longer considered as an art but as a basic necessity. We eat to live, we no longer live to eat. Gone are the days when we looked forward to a hearty meal at Grandma's house with the whole family gathered together. Food is no longer considered as enjoyable. It is no longer considered as an art either.

Movies are popular all over the world. Explain why movies are so popular. Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.

1. Key words

a form / a source of entertainment	une forme / une source de distraction
the cinema / the audience	le cinéma (genre) / le public
American / Italian cinema	le cinéma américain / italien
to watch a movie	regarder un film
the motion / film industry	l'industrie cinématographique
a movie theater / a movie house	un cinéma
a motion picture / a blockbuster	un film / un film à grand spectacle
a box office hit / a feature film	un film à succès / un long métrage
a hit / a flop / a remake	un succès / un navet / un remake
a thriller / a romance / a horror film	un film à suspense / d'amour / d'horreur
a musical / an animated cartoon	une comédie musicale / un dessin animé
an action-packed film	un film d'action
a actor / an actress / to portray	un acteur / une actrice / jouer le rôle (de)
stardom / the star system	le vedettariat, la célébrité
a moviegoer / a film buff / a film fan	un cinéphile
to release a movie / a release	sortir un film / une sortie
to be on / to show / a screenplay	être à l'affiche / un scénario
a moviemaker / a film director	un réalisateur / un metteur en scène
to shoot / shooting / a shoot	tourner / le tournage / un tournage
a shot / a take	une prise de vue, un plan
to perform (in) / to star (in)	jouer / briller (dans)
to bring excitement (into)	apporter de l'excitation (à)
to express one's emotions	exprimer ses émotions
to suspend disbelief	accepter l'in vraisemblable
to escape (into) / to get away (from)	s'évader (à / dans) / de
escapism	l'évasion
glamour / glamorous	le prestige, le charme / chic, de star
a role model	un modèle à imiter
to inspire / inspirational	inspirer / qui inspire
a break from the humdrum life	une rupture avec le train-train
to take people's minds off	distraindre les gens

2. Talking points

1. Essay 1

- The cinema is a cheap form of entertainment. It is a pastime affordable to all. The cinema is also a convenient form of entertainment: indeed, movies are easily accessible to all and there are theaters in every district. The ubiquitous presence of movie theaters all over town makes it easy to attend a movie. So do the special rates that some categories of people enjoy.
- The cinema is an easy way of reducing stress (when compared to other forms of entertainment). The exciting appeal of the image over text makes it easy to relax after a long day at the office or when you are traveling, by airplane, for example.
- The cinema is a communal experience: it is a form of socialization. You watch movies with friends and family. A movie fosters conversation and encourages dialogue. Films tell us that we're not alone: by the collective reaction in the audience we realize that we are not the only ones wrestling with life's secrets and meaning.
- Movies cater to everyone's needs and desires. The universal appeal of movies lies in the fact that we will always find a movie that corresponds to our tastes, passion or interests.
- Driven by clever advertising campaigns and teasers, such as trailers, movies are also the talk of the town and give the impression that people should not miss out on watching them.

2. Essay 2

- The cinema is a form of escapism. Hollywood is nicknamed the Dream Factory: it conjures up glamorous actresses, handsome actors, and gives us a glimpse of a world out of our reach.
- The cinema helps to relieve the pressure of everyday life. Thanks to movies, we can escape into different worlds and dimensions: we experience romance by watching romantic comedies, we express our inner fears by watching scary movies, we release our energy by attending action movies.
- The cinema is a source of knowledge of our country but also of foreign countries (history, civilization, culture, language). War movies re-enact a nation's moments of glory (*Gettysburg*) or shame (*All the President's Men*) whereas biopics shed light on the complexity of man's character or explain a period of history. Films are educational tools for the student as well as pedagogical aid for the teacher.
- A movie is part of man's journey through life, a way of identifying oneself, of being or becoming who we are.

3. Possible answers

1. Essay 1

Like many people, I have watched a good number of movies across a wide range of genres: horror movies, dramas, westerns, action films, war movies, comedies, and blockbusters. I have seen films from the early days of Hollywood when film was black and white to the modern day era cinema high tech 3D images and high paid performers. Why some movies are more popular than others is a matter of personal taste, yet there are many reasons why the cinema is so popular today.

First and foremost, films are a cheap form of entertainment. Whereas going to the opera or the theater may cost a pretty penny, not to mention the fact that we need to book a long time in advance, going to a movie is easy and inexpensive. In addition, there are movie theaters all over town and even in shopping malls, accessible to all. Going to the movies is therefore one of the most common pastimes. It is an affordable and enjoyable way of spending a couple of hours. Special rates for students or senior citizens, or cheaper matinee prices are an added incentive for people to go, all the more so as there are new releases every week.

Watching a movie reduces stress and does not demand much effort, especially if we compare it with other forms of entertainment, like reading or playing a musical instrument. Watching a movie is relaxing: it only requires that you sit and let yourself be carried away by the images, lulled by the music and entertained by the plot. Watching a movie is a passive way of entertainment; as such it appeals to many people because they can kick back after a long day at the office or during a long journey. Airline companies offer a wide range of recent movies precisely to that effect: keep the passengers happy and quiet during long flights.

The cinema is also a unique form of socialization. When you go to a movie, you usually go with friends or family: you share the same emotions, debate with one another and sometimes even argue. Not only is it a way of getting together, it also means sharing a communal experience that is likely to strengthen the bonds of friendship. Watching a movie is an invitation to dialogue and a venue for congeniality.

The success of the film industry owes much to the diversity of the movies it produces. Films cater to everyone's needs and desires, be it the thriller, the romance, the western or the science fiction movie: they satisfy our tastes. The war movie lover will be attracted to the genre because he is a patriot, he is fond of historical facts, or he is interested in the planning of military campaigns. Besides, thanks to well-orchestrated advertising campaigns, it is almost impossible to miss a movie for the simple reason that it is the talk of the town, of the classroom or the dinner party. Like it or not, some movies have the uncanny ability to arouse passions and stir debates.

2. Essay 2

From Hollywood to Bollywood, no country has escaped the grip of the movie industry. Whatever country we visit, the cinema occupies a major part of the local entertainment and contributes to the local industry. Actually, it looks like man's thirst for pictures can never be sated, begging the question: why are movies so popular?

First, films represent a form of escapism. Isn't Hollywood nicknamed the Dream Factory? One of the basic reasons why people go to the movies is to touch with their eyes the glamorous actresses, the handsome action heroes, set foot in a world that is out of their reach yet that the cinema exposes for a fleeting moment, holding the captive audience in thrall. Movies are seen as alternative worlds that we can only dream of.

Through films, people can escape their humdrum lives, relieve the pressure of work, flee to or take shelter in a dream world. They can take their minds off their problems. If they don't have romance in their own lives, a romantic movie will help them escape into a happy-ever-after world that they have always imagined. Scary movies are popular because they give people a surge of adrenaline or energy. The implication of the theory of course, is that fear is an emotion that needs an outlet. Excitement and thrill are the main reasons why moviegoers adore action films. Beyond, they introduce us to iconic heroes that we can glorify, such as Stallone and Jackie Chan. People root for Rambo when he clobbers the enemy communists and they applaud Jackie Chan's martial art skills for showing justice upon a group of mobsters. Both actors embody the victory of good over evil and thus make people feel good about themselves.

People go to movies because they find in them a source of inspiration and knowledge. Many movies indeed re-create periods of history, re-enact episodes of the war, expose scandals. *Gettysburg* recounts the horrors of a key battle of the American Civil War. Spielberg's *Amistad* brings to light the tragic plight of slaves whose fate was as much dependent on the will of nations as the rigors of American law. *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* highlights discrimination and segregation. Biopics—*Malcolm X*, *Nixon*, *W.*, *Patton*, *Lincoln*—shed light on the lives of great men. Some moviemakers also use the genre as a way of explaining history. Oliver Stone's *JFK* is a case in point. In that respect, films are educative tools, whether they conform to history or not.

Movies are also part of a man's journey through life, not just screen versions of his existence. Like music, they depict the true emotions of actors and actresses whom a person can look up to and identify with; movies help us connect the dots in our life, filling the gaps of inexperience, plumbing the holes of knowledge, be it intellectual or emotional and making us part of a whole. The cinema is like a modern, secular cathedral. As humans, we enter that darkened theatre seeking to expand our emotional bandwidth, seeking sensations we hardly ever experience in our everyday lives. Films are also a way of reminding us of what man is capable of in terms of both good and evil.