

## ADVANCED LEVEL *READING COMPREHENSION SAMPLE*

### Task 3

#### **The Decline in Home Cooking**

Once they were upheld as the paragons of feminine genius in the kitchen, but all that remains now of Les Mères de Lyon—the famous 20th-century French mother cooks—are their names. Mère Brazier may be written above the door of the restaurant at No. 12, Rue Royale in France's second major city, but there's a male chef in Eugénie Brazier's former kitchen. Mère Léa's stove at La Voûte (Chez Léa) is today **tended** by chef Philippe Rabatel and the restaurants of those equally renowned priestesses, Mère Paulette Castaing and Marie Bourgeois, were long ago taken over by male chefs, who work very differently to their female forebears.

These bistros, or porte-pots as they were known, originated as places where the Lyon **white-collar work force** could stop and eat perfectly cooked, comforting, motherly food made from seasonal, often inexpensive ingredients. Les Mères often worked with only one assistant, and their short menus and practical techniques are in marked contrast to the technique heavy "haute cuisine" prepared by brigades of male chefs today.

The decline in French home cooking—specifically the nurturing, bourgeois home cooking for which French women have always been admired—joins a trend that has affected all major European nations as their societies and economic structures changed post World War II.

Home cooking is in decline in Southern Europe as it is in the northern and Nordic countries, yet in each there are variables in the style of change. It is happening faster in certain countries—such as the U.K., where total industrialization was complete in the 19th century—than others.

Analyzing the decline across these nations is mainly a matter of reading the figures for sales of convenience and fast food, and collecting statistics that mark change in attitude and trend. Market-research firm Euromonitor carried out a **comprehensive** study of changing habits across Europe from 2000–2007. It found that among large, less affluent populations in European countries, the take up of fast food and convenience food is increasing. The researcher's latest figures this year for sales of packaged food in the U.K., France, Italy, Denmark and Germany, for example, show an average increase of 15% in consumption. But there is a parallel story of a much smaller number of wealthier women and men in the same countries becoming increasingly concerned about their health, trying organic and cooking fresh foods from scratch. When this group buys convenience food, they tend to buy the healthier, often natural or organic, option.

You cannot **pin** the demise of home cooking in European countries **on** a single issue. The loss of structured mealtimes can be put down to a number of causes including urbanization and smaller households, but the changing role of women in European society in the past 40 or 50 years is very significant. Exercising

their right to equality in the workplace raises the family income and the hard-pressed career woman relies more on prepared food or eating out when it comes to feeding her family. Mr. Marquis, an acclaimed chef, believes that aspirational tastes have put good traditional home cooking lower on the agenda in **upwardly mobile** European families. "In my youth, we had one car and ate very well on a budget supported only by my father's salary," he says. "Now everyone wants three cars, Apple technology and long-haul holidays, so both parents must work. Food becomes less significant," he adds.

There is the added dynamic that women are sometime sole **breadwinners**. Their male partners can enthusiastically take up the home-cooking role. Male keenness for cookery remains in the margin of wealthier families, but there is a role reversal that fits with the eminence of chefs in the media and heading up kitchens in the world's "best restaurants."

**Controversially**, there is the accusation that liberated women (who gave up cooking) inadvertently generated a modern irresponsible food industry. The women that chose not to follow their mother and grandmother's career, left the door open. Had the food companies created a healthy **surrogate** for all and not just wealthy society—we might not have the fast-food industry and ensuing health problems, such as rising obesity. It is important to note that no feminist would have intended such an outcome, and that other environmental and economical factors have contributed to the problem.

It is not that women in Europe need leave their jobs and go back to housework, but families risk rearing a generation of "kitchen orphans," men and women who have never **witnessed** their parents cooking. There is no substitute for this; no popular TV chef can replace the effectiveness of the conversation about the right way to prepare a dish between mother and daughter, or indeed father and son. The talented Les Mères gave up their kitchens to male chefs and their brigades of helpers, **worn down** by an unequal society that gave them too much work and little assistance, as did millions of stay-at-home mothers throughout Europe. In a culture where gender roles are more evenly balanced, there is a chance to revive the heroic, nurturing motherly food of each nation. It isn't just a sociological need, but an economic one. Mr. Marquis, whose life's work has been to emulate this, says a return to these basics is politically necessary. "In the past there were economic reasons for women getting out of the kitchen; now there is an economic reason for their simple, perfectionist cooking to be restored. This is the culture that is the envy of the world."

*From The Wall Street Journal*

**Choose the best option a), b) or c) according to the text**

1. Male chefs
  - a) are better cooks than women.
  - b) make more complicated dishes.
  - c) are more practical.

2. The loss of home cooking has resulted mainly from
  - a) the loss of structured mealtimes.
  - b) women not wanting to cook.
  - c) spending money on more consumer products.
  
3. Prepared food was originally intended for
  - a) workers.
  - b) wealthier families.
  - c) less wealthy families.
  
4. Modern women
  - a) asked the food industry to produce fast food.
  - b) asked the food industry to produce healthy food.
  - c) didn't realise that fast food would be created.
  
5. Home cooking needs to come back
  - a) to maintain equal gender roles.
  - b) because of the economic climate.
  - c) for health reasons.

Now choose the **LEAST APPROPRIATE** meaning, according to the context, for these words from the text (in bold)

- |                             |                              |                       |                    |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 6. tended                   | a) modernised                | b) managed            | c) watched over    |
| 7. white-collar work force. | a) clerics                   | b) non-manual workers | c) office workers  |
| 8. comprehensive            | a) extensive                 | b) selective          | c) thorough        |
| 9. pin...on                 | a) blame...on                | b) attribute...to     | c) change...by     |
| 10. upwardly-mobile         | a) technologically improving | b) socially-advancing | c) class-ascending |
| 11. breadwinners            | a) earners                   | b) workers            | c) home cooks      |
| 12. controversially         | a) arguably                  | b) accordingly        | c) disputedly      |
| 13. surrogate               | a) stand-in                  | b) replacement        | c) selection       |
| 14. witnessed               | a) tried                     | b) seen               | c) observed        |
| 15. worn down               | a) beaten                    | b) survived           | c) weakened        |

KEY 1.-b, 2.-a, 3.-b, 4.-c, 5.,b, 6.-a, 7.-a, 8.-b, 9.-c,  
10.-a, 11.-c, 12.-b, 13.-c, 14.-a, 15.-b

## **ADVANCED LEVEL *READING COMPREHENSION SAMPLE TEST***

### **SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS AT RISK**

#### **New multi-agency schemes are under threat despite their success in helping women and children who have been abused**

Tens of thousands of women most at risk of being seriously harmed or even killed by violent partners are not getting access to the help that could save them, domestic violence experts claim.

More than 28,000 adult and 40,000 child victims of domestic abuse were supported by a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (Marac) last year – where agencies join together to help high-risk victims. Many have been raped, strangled and beaten. But they are a fraction of the 120,000 adults and 117,000 children at high risk of severe abuse, according to a new report out tomorrow.

More than 200 multi-agency schemes currently operate nationally – fewer than the 300 that experts estimate are needed. The resulting provision lottery forces some women to wait weeks before they get help.

Diana Barran, the chief executive of Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (Caada), which produced the report, said: "In some areas there are local committed individuals, but other areas don't have those individuals and there is very little in the way of commitment." She said the death of a child as a consequence of domestic abuse was often the catalyst for more resources being given to Marac teams.

The report warns that the new approach, first piloted in 2007, is being hampered because there is no legislation making Maracs statutory. They are vulnerable to being cut and even closed down, it warns. The future of the service is under threat, with funding due to run out in 2011, according to the charity, whose report calls on the Government to give legal protection to Maracs and to commit £120m in funding.

A national roll-out of the multi-agency approach, with support for the independent domestic violence advisers who play a key role, could save the taxpayer £740m a year, the report argues, by reducing the amount of time and money spent on dealing with repeat victims. Up to 60 per cent of those helped by Marac report no further violence. And for every £1 spent on the multi-agency approach, at least £6 could be saved in direct costs to the police, health, criminal justice system and children's services.

The report comes amid fears that the economic climate could cause a surge in domestic violence. Although cases have declined recently, partially because of greater efforts by the police and the growth of specialist services, they remain prevalent, said Professor Gene Feder from Bristol University. Professor Feder, who advises health ministers on domestic abuse, added, "It's still incredibly common, and we still have a major problem. When it comes to health consequences it ranks up there with major causes of ill health such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. We are entering into years of economic pressure on households, which I think is going to manifest itself in increased violence."

Backing calls for more support for victims, Sandra Horley, the chief executive of Refuge, said: "Only one in four high-risk victims receives support from a Marac at present. That is simply not enough. All women and children experiencing domestic violence must have access to this level of support. It not only makes financial sense; it makes moral sense."

Wiltshire's chief constable, Brian Moore, the lead officer on violence and public protection at the Association of Chief Police Officers, warned: "Engagement in the multi-agency process is on a voluntary basis and, as a result, there is inconsistency in attendance and they are not operating to their full potential."

The Government has pledged to ensure Maracs cover all of England and Wales. A Home Office spokesman said: "To ensure every area has a Marac in place and that every relevant statutory agency attends them, the Government can see a case for this change, but it is important that we consult fully on the best way of achieving this. It is our intention to launch a public consultation by the summer 2010."

The stakes could not be higher, said Ms Barran. "I have people ringing me who say, 'I just want you to know this woman would be dead if it hadn't been for the Marac'. This is the single most important advance in dealing with domestic violence since the start of the refuge movement and it would be a travesty to lose it."

## ADVANCED LEVEL *READING COMPREHENSION SAMPLE TEST*

### SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS AT RISK.

#### A. COMPREHENSION TEST

1. Aid programmes for victims of domestic violence...
  - A. are threatened on account of their lack of success.
  - B. have proved really successful, so there's no reason for concern.
  - C. have reached the majority of abused women and children across the UK.
  - D. do not reach all the people that need them.
  
2. *Caada* report states that...
  - A. the number of people reported for domestic abuse varies a lot according to the area.
  - B. people are not concerned about domestic abuse anywhere in the country.
  - C. *Marac* organization lacks proper legal backing (support).
  - D. *Marac* organization is really at risk, even though its funding problem is expected to be solved by 2011.
  
3. According to *Caada* report...
  - A. independent advisers should consider backing up (supporting) the multi-agency approach.
  - B. the multi-agency approach has now resulted in a sizeable (large) saving of money for the taxpayer.
  - C. the money spent on violence prevention would be less than the money needed to cope with actual manifestations of violence.
  - D. police, health, courts and children services all contribute effectively to saving the taxpayer a lot of money.
  
4. According to the different experts quoted in the article...
  - A. the present economic situation has brought about (caused) a rise in domestic violence.
  - B. health problems are likely to trigger (set in motion) domestic violence.
  - C. more women and children should get support, though it is obviously inefficient from a financial point of view.
  - D. relying (depending) on voluntary work actually hinders (obstructs) multi-agency action.
  
5. According to the contents of the article...
  - A. *Marac* is encountering obstacles to carry out its programmes.
  - B. the problem of domestic violence is now worse than ever.
  - C. organizations such as *Marac* are well-meaning but utterly (completely) unable to cope with domestic violence.
  - D. *Marac* action has proved really effective, though its economic efficiency is in question.

#### B. VOCABULARY EXERCISE

1. Devoted to the cause.
2. Thing or situation that causes a change.
3. When something new is ....., it is tested.
4. Obstructed, delayed, prevented from progressing adequately.
5. An occasion when a new product is made available for people to buy or use.
6. Sudden increase.
7. Gets a high position.
8. Has promised

**ADVANCED LEVEL *READING COMPREHENSION SAMPLE TEST***

**SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... - KEY**

**Multiple choice exercise:**

1. D            2. C            3. C            4. D            5.A

**Vocabulary:**

1. committed
2. catalyst
3. piloted
4. hampered
5. roll-out
6. surge
7. ranks up
8. has pledged

Advanced level Reading sample

Put the words in the box in the right gaps of the text. Keep in mind that there are three extra words that are not to be placed anywhere.

a) assist    b) crafts    c) drop    d) endures    e) huts    f) range    g) raise    h) runs  
i) sought-after    j) tan    k) witness

### TRAVELLER'S GUIDE: DUBAI

Blissfully balmy by day, cool and breezy in the evenings – the weather is what brings most visitors to Dubai at the start of the year. Temperatures in the emirate **1** \_\_\_\_\_ considerably from a peak of about 45C in July, and the humidity dissipates. Now the days are warm enough to work on your **2** \_\_\_\_\_ or take a dip in the Arabian Sea, while the nights are decidedly cooler, averaging about 15C.

For locals, life moves back out of air-conditioned rooms and into the outdoors. This is also the time when myths are discredited. People do walk in Dubai and it does have a cultural agenda: a highlight this spring is the contemporary Art Dubai event from 21-24 March. Right now, the hot ticket is the Dubai Shopping Festival, which **3** \_\_\_\_\_ until 5 February and offers retail discounts, competitions and entertainment.

Dubai is one of seven emirates that form the United Arab Emirates. Last month, the UAE celebrated 40 years of independence from Britain. The celebrations' theme is "Spirit of the Union"—and one of the events still running is a market of local **4** \_\_\_\_\_ at the Global Village (until 12 March).

Another winter highlight is the racing season, which culminates in the Dubai World Cup Carnival on 31 March. **5** \_\_\_\_\_ tickets can be bought online from 350 dirhams (£60). Be sure to book in advance.

Winter is also when Emiratis participate in traditional events, including weekend evening gatherings at the heritage villages to recite poetry or dance the popular folk dances from the Arabian peninsula. There's also the chance to see rifle-throwing competitions and to **6** \_\_\_\_\_ elaborate re-enactments of traditional Bedouin weddings.

A good place to start is at Dubai's Heritage and Diving Village on the waterfront at Al Shindagha, which is the oldest part of Dubai and lies at the mouth of Dubai Creek. Here a simple fishing and pearling village of palm-frond **7** \_\_\_\_\_ has sprawled along the waterfront for hundreds of years.

For visitors, golf is another big lure, and there are several courses where you can take a swing. Alternatively, you can watch some of the biggest names in world golf tee off in professional tournaments such as the Dubai Desert Classic at the Emirates Golf Club from 6-12 February.

Dubai airport has an astonishing 13 non-stop flights a day from Heathrow, with British Airways, Royal Brunei, Virgin Atlantic and Emirates. Emirates also flies daily from Gatwick, Birmingham, Manchester, Newcastle and Glasgow. Etihad Airways flies from Heathrow and Manchester to Abu Dhabi, with free coach connections to Dubai, a 60- to 75-minute drive. Many other airlines, including Air France, Turkish Airlines and Qatar Airways, fly from a **8** \_\_\_\_\_ of UK cities via their hubs to Dubai.

**Key**

- 1 drop
- 2 tan
- 3 runs
- 4 crafts
- 5 sought-after
- 6 witness
- 7 huts
- 8 range