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Americans waste 40% of their food

23rd August, 2012

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1208/120823-wasted_food.html

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THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120823-wasted_food.html

Americans are wasteful when it comes to food, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). It has released a report called "Wasted: How America Is Losing Up to 40 Percent of Its Food from Farm to Fork to Landfill". The study highlights how much of the food produced in the USA ends up in the trash. It says the 40 per cent of uneaten food equates to around \$165 billion a year. This figure has increased by 50 per cent since the 1970s, suggesting Americans are becoming more wasteful. The NRDC highlighted the effect on the environment, saying US food production "eats up 10% of the total US energy budget...and swallows 80% of all freshwater consumed in the United States".

The NRDC points out how a change in behaviour could help America's health. It says: "Reducing food losses by just 15% would be enough food to feed more than 25 million Americans every year at a time when one in six Americans lack a secure supply of food to their tables." The Council offered three tips. It suggested the U.S. government should "set national goals for waste reduction," that businesses needed to "streamline their own operations, reduce food losses and save money," and that "consumers can waste less food by shopping wisely...knowing when food goes bad...cooking only the amount of food they need, and eating their leftovers." It said the average family could save up to \$2,275 a year.

WARM-UPS

1. WASTED FOOD: Walk around the class and talk to other students about wasted food. Change partners often. Share your findings with your first partner.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

wasteful / natural resources / landfill / trash / the environment / food production / change in behavior / food supply / tips / waste reduction / save money / leftovers

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. WASTE: Complete this table and share what you wrote with your partner(s). Change often and share again.

Wasted...	How does this happen to you?	What can you do to cut this waste?
food		
time		
money		
energy		
electricity		
water		

4. BEHAVIOUR: Students A **strongly** believe we will change our behaviour and waste less food; Students B **strongly** believe not. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. WASTE LESS: How can we waste less food? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best ideas at the top. Change partners often.

- buy less food
- don't buy food that goes bad quickly
- make a weekly food planner
- use all leftovers for the next meal
- cook food that can be frozen later
- go on a diet
- use smaller plates
- other _____

6. WASTEFUL: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'wasteful'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120823-wasted_food.html

1. TRUE / FALSE:

Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. A U.S. TV channel made a report about the food Americans waste. T / F
- b. A report says up to 40% of food America ends up in landfills. T / F
- c. The report says Americans waste around \$165 a year in food. T / F
- d. Food production in the USA uses around 80% of its fresh water. T / F
- e. A 15% reduction in food waste could help 25 Americans to eat. T / F
- f. One in six Americans have problems putting enough food on the table. T / F
- g. The report said consumers should streamline their waistlines. T / F
- h. U.S. families could save as much as \$275 a year by wasting less food. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. according to | a. cutting down on |
| 2. ends up | b. swallows |
| 3. equates to | c. suggestions |
| 4. eats up | d. as claimed by |
| 5. consumed | e. sensibly |
| 6. points out | f. finishes |
| 7. reducing | g. eaten / drunk |
| 8. tips | h. uneaten food |
| 9. wisely | i. corresponds to |
| 10. leftovers | j. indicates |

3. PHRASE MATCH:

(Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Americans are wasteful when it comes | a. help America's health |
| 2. ends | b. in the United States |
| 3. The NRDC highlighted the effect | c. more than 25 million |
| 4. food production eats up 10% of the | d. bad |
| 5. 80% of all freshwater consumed | e. up in the trash |
| 6. a change in behaviour could | f. on the environment |
| 7. enough food to feed | g. to food |
| 8. businesses needed to streamline | h. leftovers |
| 9. knowing when food goes | i. total US energy budget |
| 10. eating their | j. their own operations |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120823-wasted_food.html

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Americans are wasteful when it (1) _____ to food, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). It has (2) _____ a report called "Wasted: How America Is Losing Up to 40 Percent of Its Food from Farm to Fork to Landfill". The study highlights how much of the food produced in the USA (3) _____ up in the trash. It says the 40 per cent of uneaten food equates to (4) _____ \$165 billion a year. This figure has increased by 50 per cent since the 1970s, suggesting Americans are becoming more wasteful. The NRDC highlighted the (5) _____ on the environment, saying US food production "(6) _____ up 10% of the total US energy budget...and (7) _____ 80% of all freshwater (8) _____ in the United States".

eats
released
around
swallows
comes
ends
consumed
effect

The NRDC points (9) _____ how a change in behaviour could help America's health. It says: "Reducing food (10) _____ by just 15% would be enough food to (11) _____ more than 25 million Americans every year at a time when one in six Americans lack a (12) _____ supply of food to their tables." The Council offered three tips. It suggested the U.S. government should "(13) _____ national goals for waste reduction," that businesses needed to "streamline their own operations, reduce food losses and (14) _____ money," and that "consumers can waste less food by shopping (15) _____ ...knowing when food goes bad...cooking only the amount of food they need, and eating their (16) _____." It said the average family could save up to \$2,275 a year.

secure
leftovers
losses
wisely
out
save
feed
set

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120823-wasted_food.html

Americans are wasteful (1) _____ food, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). It has released a report called "Wasted: How America (2) _____ Percent of Its Food from Farm to Fork to Landfill". The study highlights how much of the food produced in the USA (3) _____. It says the 40 per cent of uneaten food (4) _____ \$165 billion a year. This figure has increased by 50 per cent since the 1970s, suggesting Americans are becoming more wasteful. The NRDC highlighted the effect on the environment, saying US food production "(5) _____ total US energy budget... (6) _____ freshwater consumed in the United States".

The NRDC points (7) _____ behaviour could help America's health. It says: "Reducing food losses by just 15% would be enough (8) _____ than 25 million Americans every year at a time when one in six Americans (9) _____ of food to their tables." The Council offered three tips. It suggested the U.S. government should "set national goals (10) _____," that businesses needed to "streamline their own operations, reduce food losses and save money," and that "consumers can waste less food by shopping wisely...knowing (11) _____ ...cooking only the amount of food they need, and (12) _____." It said the average family could save up to \$2,275 a year.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120823-wasted_food.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'food' and 'waste'.

food	waste

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• comes• losing• ends• since• eats• swallows	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• change• feed• supply• three• shopping• average
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WASTED FOOD SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120823-wasted_food.html

Write five GOOD questions about wasted food in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

WASTED FOOD DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'waste'?
- c) What do you think about what you read?
- d) Are you surprised at the figure of 40%?
- e) How much food do you waste?
- f) Do you think about the food you waste as you throw it in the trash or leave it on your plate?
- g) Are your eyes bigger than your stomach?
- h) Why are Americans (and others around the world) so wasteful?
- i) Why don't people act on this wastefulness?
- j) What could the wasted \$165 billion be used for?

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WASTED FOOD DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) How could the change of behavior the NRDC talks about happen?
- c) How difficult would it be to get Americans to waste 15% less food?
- d) What do you think of the NRDC's three tips?
- e) How could the government help its people reduce food waste?
- f) What can you do in your life to reduce wasted food?
- g) Would highlighting how much money could be saved help people waste less food?
- h) What do you do with your leftovers?
- i) Should supermarkets help people waste less food?
- j) What questions would you like to ask the head of the NRDC?

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LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

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The NRDC (7) _____ out how a change in behaviour could help America's health. It says: "Reducing food losses by just 15% would be enough food to (8) _____ more than 25 million Americans every year at a time when one in six Americans (9) _____ a secure supply of food to their tables." The Council offered three (10) _____. It suggested the U.S. government should "set national goals for waste reduction," that businesses needed to "streamline their own operations, reduce food losses and save money," and that "consumers can waste less food by shopping (11) _____ ...knowing when food (12) _____ bad...cooking only the amount of food they need, and eating their leftovers." It said the average family could save up to \$2,275 a year.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. | (a) comes | (b) leaves | (c) goes | (d) arrives |
| 2. | (a) Lost | (b) Lose | (c) Losing | (d) Losers |
| 3. | (a) over | (b) down | (c) around | (d) up |
| 4. | (a) of | (b) to | (c) for | (d) so |
| 5. | (a) numeral | (b) statuette | (c) shape | (d) figure |
| 6. | (a) tolerate | (b) gulps | (c) swallows | (d) ingests |
| 7. | (a) pants | (b) points | (c) paints | (d) pints |
| 8. | (a) feed | (b) fodder | (c) fed up | (d) fad |
| 9. | (a) lack | (b) slack | (c) black | (d) flack |
| 10. | (a) taps | (b) tops | (c) tips | (d) sips |
| 11. | (a) wise | (b) wisdom | (c) wisest | (d) wisely |
| 12. | (a) comes | (b) goes | (c) arrives | (d) leaves |

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HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about wasted food. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. WASTED FOOD: Make a poster about wasted food. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. WASTE: Write a magazine article about food waste. Include imaginary interviews with rich and poor people.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the NRDC. Ask it three questions about wasted food. Give it three of your ideas on how to reduce the waste. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. T e. T f. T g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. according to | a. as claimed by |
| 2. ends up | b. finishes |
| 3. equates to | c. corresponds to |
| 4. eats up | d. swallows |
| 5. consumed | e. eaten / drunk |
| 6. points out | f. indicates |
| 7. reducing | g. cutting down on |
| 8. tips | h. suggestions |
| 9. wisely | i. sensibly |
| 10. leftovers | j. uneaten food |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
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| 2. ends | b. up in the trash |
| 3. The NRDC highlighted the effect | c. on the environment |
| 4. food production eats up 10% of the | d. total US energy budget |
| 5. 80% of all freshwater consumed | e. in the United States |
| 6. a change in behaviour could | f. help America's health |
| 7. enough food to feed | g. more than 25 million |
| 8. businesses needed to streamline | h. their own operations |
| 9. knowing when food goes | i. bad |
| 10. eating their | j. leftovers |

GAP FILL:

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LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - a 2 - c 3 - d 4 - b 5 - d 6 - c 7 - b 8 - a 9 - a 10 - c 11 - d 12 - b