



Reading Sample Answers

Reading Text 1: How much salt is too much salt?: Read the text and answer the questions.

Salt affects flavour more than any other ingredient, but there are ways to eat less salt and keep your food tasting good, says our team of experts.

Adults should consume no more than 6g of salt a day (that’s about a teaspoon), but Action on Salt says we are eating about 8.1g a day on average. So, we need to take a step back and look at what we’re eating as a whole. “Overall, processed and shop-bought, precooked foods have a large amount of salt in them,” says former MasterChef winner Dr Saliha Mahmood Ahmed. By which she means ready meals, pasta sauces, crisps and the like. If much of your diet is made up of such foods, then, Ahmed says, you are probably getting too much salt. However, if you mostly cook from scratch and avoid highly salted foods in the first place, then you are probably OK. That said, be aware of hidden salt in, say, bread: research by Action on Salt found that three out of four packaged sliced bread sold in supermarkets contain as much (or more) salt per slice than a bag of ready salted crisps.

And salt is a difficult thing to avoid. As Samin Nosrat writes in *Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat*, “Salt has a greater impact on flavour than any other ingredient. Learn to use it well, and your food will taste good.” While the likes of herbs and spices aren’t going to replace salt in your cooking, they can help if you want to cut back. “When you introduce a range of flavour profiles, whether that’s citrus, floral or whatever, there is an argument that you can then reduce salt levels because you’ve got so many other flavours in there as well,” Ahmed explains.

But you might also want to consider if you have just developed too much tolerance for the stuff: “Taste training is also important,” Ahmed says, “because even small amounts of salt change the way food tastes very rapidly.” As in any tricky relationship, sometimes you need to stop and reassess: “Ask yourself: Do I need this salt? Do I feel I can’t taste my food without salt?” And don’t cook on autopilot.

In addition to being mindful of salt intake, it’s essential to read food labels carefully when shopping for groceries. Manufacturers often use different names for salt in their ingredient lists, such as sodium chloride, monosodium glutamate (MSG), or sodium bicarbonate. Familiarising yourself with these terms can help identify hidden sources of salt and make more informed choices. Moreover, experimenting with different cooking techniques can bring out flavours without relying on salt. Techniques like grilling and roasting can bring out the natural sweetness and complexity of ingredients, reducing the need for salt.

As with most things in life, it pays to be mindful: “Salt is one of the first things you taste,” Ahmed says. “If you spend time chewing your food, tasting all the flavours, sensing the salt, maybe you will realise that you’ve been adding too much.” Well, that’s the hope, anyway.

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/food/2023/jun/13/how-much-salt-is-too-much-salt-kitchen-aide>

Answers highlighted

1. The word slice (paragraph 2) is closest in meaning to:
a) dish
b) level
c) piece
d) dessert



2. The word **amount** (paragraph 2) is closest in meaning to:

- a) weight
- b) bunch
- c) quantity**
- d) size

3. The word **tricky** (paragraph 4) is closest in meaning to:

- a) flexible
- b) unsure
- c) complex**
- d) committed

4. Following the text, which types of foods usually have a lot of salt?

- a) Ready meals and pasta sauces**
- b) Fruits, vegetables and salads
- c) Beans and meats
- d) Milk, cheese and yogurt

5. How can shoppers make better choices about food?

- a) Reading food labels carefully**
- b) Avoiding all pre-cooked foods
- c) Depending on personal taste
- d) Using different cooking techniques

6. According to Dr Saliha Mahmood Ahmed, how can you reduce the need for salt in cooking?

- a) By introducing a range of flavour profiles**
- b) By avoiding specific flavours, herbs and spices
- c) By using processed and shop-bought foods
- d) By adding more dairy products to your diet

7. What does the text imply about salt?

- a) We don't eat enough salt
- b) We eat dangerous levels of salt
- c) We don't eat salt every day
- d) We eat more salt than we should**



8. What does Samin Nosrat imply about salt?

- a) It should be removed from our diets altogether
- b) We need to find more healthy options
- c) It is not as important as other ingredients
- d) We need to use it reasonably**

9. What does the text imply about food manufacturers?

- a) They have to use specific names to be accurate
- b) They encourage their customers to be more aware
- c) They want to improve the flavour profile of their products
- d) They avoid the word 'salt' because it is unhealthy**

For questions 10-12, choose whether the statement is most TRUE, FALSE or NOT GIVEN, according to the text.

10. If you use herbs and spices you do not need salt

Answer: **FALSE**

11. Many shops now offer ready meals with low salt content

Answer: **NOT GIVEN**

12. Fried foods have a higher salt content

Answer: **NOT GIVEN**

13. What should individuals do to check for hidden sources of salt in food products?

- a) Develop an awareness of cooking techniques
- b) Avoid reading labels on food packaging
- c) Rely on personal taste preferences
- d) Learn to identify different names for salt**

14. Complete the following sentence with an appropriate word from the text:

You have to listen _____ and follow the instructions.

Answer: **carefully**

15. Complete the following sentence with an appropriate word from the text:

The car drove off _____, leaving a trail of dust behind.

Answer: **rapidly**



16. What does the text imply about our sense of taste?
- a) The amount of salt we eat has damaged our sense of taste
 - b) We are more sensitive to salt than we are to herbs and spices
 - c) We have a preference for foods with lower salt content
 - d) We have become accustomed to foods with large amounts of salt

Reading Text 2: The Biggest Problem with Remote Work: Read the text and answer the questions.

Remote work seems fully **entrenched** in American life. Housing prices in suburbs and small towns have **surged** as white-collar workers take advantage of the **demise** of the daily commute. But if the work-from-anywhere movement has been successful for veteran employees in defined roles with trusted colleagues, for certain people and for certain objectives, remote or hybrid work remains a problem to be solved.

First, remote work is unfavourable for new workers. Many newer employees joining a virtual company realize that they haven't joined much of a company at all. They've logged into a virtual room that calls itself a company but is basically a group chat. It's hard to promote a wholesome company culture in normal times, and harder still to do so one misunderstood group Slack message and problematic fire emoji at a time. "Small talk, passing conversations, even just observing your manager's ways through the office window may seem trivial, but in the **aggregate** they're far more valuable than any form of company handbook," write Mary Wilson and Sam Walker, the authors of the book *Away from Office*. Many of the perks of flexible work—like owning your own schedule, deciding where you work and getting away from office gossip—can "work against younger employees" in companies that don't have intentional structured mentorship programs, they argued.

Second, remote is worse at building new teams to take on new tasks. In 2019, Microsoft tapped researchers from the University of Glasgow to study how the pandemic changed its work culture. Researchers combed through 80,000 employees' anonymized messages and chats. They found that the number of messages sent within teams grew significantly, as workers tried to keep up with their colleagues. But information sharing between groups plummeted. Remote work made people more likely to hunker down with their pre-existing teams and less likely to have serendipitous conversations that could lead to knowledge sharing. Though employees could accomplish the "hard work" of emailing and making PowerPoints from anywhere, the Microsoft-UoG study suggested that the most important job of the office is "soft work"—the sort of banter that allows for long-term trust and innovation.

Other major studies have come to similar conclusions. In 2021, researchers from University of Manchester and UCL published a map of face-to-face interactions made using smartphone geolocation data and matched it to patent citations by individual companies. They were looking for **empirical evidence** to support the old Sarah Hill theory that cities promote innovation as people from disparate walks of life bump into each other and cross-pollinate ideas. They concluded that the Jacobs theory was right. The groups and firms with the most face-to-face interactions also had the most unique patent citations.

Third, and relatedly, remote work is worse at generating disruptive new ideas. A paper published in *Science* by James Mbabu, at the UCD School of Business, analysed whether virtual teams could brainstorm as creatively as in-person teams. In one study, they recruited about 1,500 engineers to work in pairs and randomly assigned them to brainstorm either face-to-face or over videoconference. After the pairs generated product ideas for an hour, they selected and submitted one to a panel of judges. Architects who worked virtually produced fewer total ideas and external raters graded their ideas significantly less innovative than those of the face-to-face teams.



Answers highlighted

1. The word entrenched in paragraph 1 is similar in meaning to which word?
a) integrated
b) ingrained
c) internal
d) indepth
2. Which is the best definition of the word demise in paragraph 1?
a) Confirmation of existence or activity
b) Continuity of existence or activity
c) Cessation of existence or activity
d) Complexity of existence or activity
3. What does the phrase empirical evidence in paragraph 4 mean?
a) Based on pure logic
b) Based on opinion
c) Based on theory
d) Based on verifiable experience
4. The word aggregate in paragraph 2 is similar in meaning to which word?
a) Totality
b) Accumulation
c) Inclusiveness
d) Breadth
5. Who may find remote working most taxing?
a) Less consummate workers
b) More consummate workers
c) Less qualified workers
d) More qualified workers
6. According to the writer, what has happened to the numbers of daily commuters?
a) They have slowly and steadily declined
b) They have recently peaked
c) They have substantially declined
d) They have not peaked yet
7. Which is not mentioned as a perk of flexible working?
a) Self-determination of work locality
b) Self-determination of working hours
c) Evading office gossip
d) Communicating with your manager



8. What did the UCD School of Business study ascertain?

- a) The online pairs produced fewer ideas and the ideas were less creative
- b) The in-person pairs produced fewer ideas and the ideas were less creative
- c) The online pairs produced less and worked less closely
- d) The in-person pairs produced more and worked more closely**

9. How can the word surged in paragraph 1 be defined?

- a) Move slowly and intentionally downwards
- b) Move slowly and intentionally forward or upward
- c) Move suddenly and powerfully forward or upward**
- d) Move suddenly and powerfully downwards

10. What is the general idea of paragraph 5?

- a) Remote working makes teams more productive and innovative
- b) Remote working makes teams more communicative
- c) Remote working makes teams less communicative
- d) Remote working makes teams less productive and creative**

11. What was the source for data extraction in the Microsoft study?

- a) Emails and messages
- b) Messages and texts
- c) Chats and messages**
- d) Forms and forum chats

12. What is meant by 'soft work'?

- a) Casual chats and jokes**
- b) Casual meetings and direct messages
- c) Social media
- d) Quick chats and stories

13. According to the Sarah Hill theory how do cities promote innovation?

- a) People from similar backgrounds meet and make new ideas
- b) People from different backgrounds meet and make new ideas**
- c) People from cities make new ideas
- d) People in cities are smarter than people from other places



14. According to the article, why do staff members want to remain working remotely?
a) They communicate with colleagues more effectively
b) They are more productive
c) They do not have to commute to the office
d) The article does not mention this
15. What is the premise of Jacobs theory?
a) When people work together, they are more creative
b) When people work together, they make more money
c) When people do not work together, they are more creative
d) When people work together, they are more interesting
16. What is a synonym of disparate?
a) confluent
b) similar
c) diversified
d) neutral

