COMMON CORE-ALIGNED TASK
WITH INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS

Literacy

GRADE 7 LITERACY: THE OMNIVORE'S DILEMMA

STUDENT WORK SAMPLES

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Grade 7 Literacy: The Omnivore's Dilemma
Student Work

Student A

What exactly is the Omnivore's Dilemma? The dilemma is a human one because humans are omnivores, meaning we eat both meat and plants to survive. Omnivores eat everything and sometimes everything isn't really good for you. Carnivores who only eat meant and herbivores who only eat plants have to focus on finding just those kinds of foods and don't have the dilemma humans have of eating food which keeps us alive but doesn't always keep us healthy.

In Chapter 8, "Is that food?" the author explains to us that omnivores have a variety of foods to eat. A normal omnivore has a wide range of food. Now, this really contributes to the "Ominvores Dilemma". We eat so much and so many different kinds of food, that we don't even know what we're stuffing into our mouths! Unlike Koalas and Monarch Butterflies, who only eat one type of food, we eat just about everything. We also have to remember that humans eat so many different kinds of foods to stay alive, but what we don't know is that not all the food that is being prepared for us and goes into our body to keep us alive will keep us healthy.

According to the author, we, meaning humans over hundreds of years, went from knowing what to eat, to not knowing what we eat! It was simple back then. We ate depending on the seasons and what we could find in the woods or what we could hunt. We used to know how to solve the "Ominvores Dilemma". What happened to us? Now we eat just about everything there is because junk food is easier to buy than healthier choices which we can't find as easily or that don't look as good to us. It's not completely our fault. It's also the food industries fault.

On pg. 87, the author says "standing in our giant supermarkets, we feel more lost than someone standing in the forest 10,000 years ago." Now that's serious. The "Ominvores Dilemma" isn't an unsolveable problem. We as people need to cut down on eating, and focus on what we are eating. We need to resist poor food choices in supermarkets and pay attention to what we put in our mouths.

The author states, again on page 87, "Sometimes it even seems like we've forgotten why we eat." As humans, we have a big brain, so we eat a lot, to have enough brain power. We rely on our senses when we eat, but the koalas rely on instincts. Pollan, the author, explains to readers why our senses cause us to eat so much. Back in the early life, we were hunters and gatherers. It was really hard finding food, so when we did find some, we ate as much as we possibly could because, we didn't know if we were ever going to eat again. Today, finding sweet

things to eat is not as hard as it was when we were cavemen. But we continue to eat as if we will starve tomorrow. It is easier for humans to get trapped into eating too much because it

tastes good even when we are no longer hungry.

Student B

In the chapter, “The Omnivores Dilemma” we focused on three sections. Those sections were “Is That Food?”, “The Modern Omnivore”, and “The Omnivore”s Brain”. The omnivore’s dilemma can be broken down into two things. Omnivore which means devour everything and dilemma which is a problem, issue, or setback. Each section of the chapter talks about a different aspect of what it means to eat meat and plants as omnivores and why this is a problem or issue.

In the section “Is That Food?” the author basically talks about how the food we eat compares to the food animals eat. Also, the difference between a humans diet compared to an animals diet. Likewise, the author says that we need certain things that we just can’t get because the “industrial food chain” (p. 86) gives us too many choices. Pollan states, “Ultimately our omnivore’s dilemma is rooted in our nature as human beings—but we’ve made our choices much harder than they used to be” (p. 86). This is basically saying human problems start with simple ways of doing things and then people who make food make it harder to eat the right way.

In “The Modern Omnivore” it’s saying that over thousands of years our eating habits have really changed. They used to follow rules and habits that made eating healthy much easier. It was based on culture. Likewise, it says that today the modern omnivore has no food culture to fall back on. We no longer know what foods are good and not good for us. Pollan says that “we need to recover the skills and knowledge people used to have” (p.87). In the section it says “we no longer know for sure what foods are good for us and which aren’t”. Meaning, we don’t even know what our foods are really made of or if we should eat them or not. If we had a food culture we would probably know today.

In the section “The Omnivores Brain”, the author is talking about how we need to eat a certain amount of food. Also eating the right foods to keep our bodies functioning properly. We need to eat wisely. In the chapter, “for us, choosing food is a problem that has to be solved with our brains and our senses”. This means that choosing foods for humans has to be done using our brains and senses and nothing else. We have problems with choosing foods.

Our “omnivores dilemma” is something that we must choose to fix on our own. Nobody can do it. We must pick and choose carefully how we treat our “omnivores dilemma”. Our “omnivores dilemma” can go away if we choose the right kinds of food. It’s our choice.

Student C

“Modern Americans have lost the solution to the omnivores dilemma and today the problem is getting bigger than it has ever been.” What Pollan is trying to say is that humans now cannot control themselves as much as they use to before. Now, we eat more than we are supposed to. We have no rule or even culture to follow; we just eat anything that comes in our way. We have a choice of anything to eat but it could be hard to choose.

We being humans get our vitamins from plants and animals. The food industry gave us a variety of food to choose form. We do not have an easy choice. With us not being able to choose, we actually now use our taste. Relying on our taste could be unhealthy for us.

People have a habit of eating what they see their parents eat for instance, if you were from Mexico you would most likely eat rice, beans, and corn tortillas. Now a day, with all the food that we have, we will eat anything even if we don’t know what is in what we are eating.

“Thanks to the food industry, we don’t even know what it is we’re eating”.

People evolved to have better teeth, brain size, and our taste buds changed to. With this evolution we are used to eating a lot because we need it and we know we need it. Our sweet tooth controls our taste buds. The sweet tooth is something that tells us to eat more because there might not be some later. We eat more than needed. Have a hard time choosing what to eat. Additionally, we eat anything. I agree that Michael Pollon is correct that the omnivores dilema is bad. We need to find at least a little bit of a solution.

Student D

In the article “The Omnivore’s Dilemma”, it explains what the omnivore dilemma is and how it effects omnivores. The omnivore dilemma is that people don’t know what is bad or good to eat anymore. When I say “bad” or “good”, I mean if it’ not healthy or healthy. On page 3 of the article, it said “we know longer know for sure which foods are good for us and which aren’t…” this quote supports my answer because it is explaining that our community doesn’t know what to eat anymore to keep them healthy. Also on page 3 it said, “thanks to the food industry, we don’t even know what it is we’re eating. Sometimes it even seems like we’ve forgotten why we eat.” This quote best supports my answer because it is explaining that the food industry is the ones who is causing the omnivore’s dilemma because they put unhealthy ingredients into the food that we think is healthy. In my opinion I think that it is hard for us to choose food in the supermarket because if we want to be healthy, most of the food in the supermarket has HFCS (high fructose corn syrup) which is not healthy. The omnivore’s dilemma is a very serious problem in the United States. But if we keep being healthy, there’s going to be no problem.

Student E

The French follow rules and customs about how and how much they eat. Some of the customs are that the French eat small portions at their meals, not the kind of large portions Americans usually eat. Also, the French don't go back for seconds or snack when they are driving. Instead, they eat basic foods like cheese and bread. The French also rarely eat alone. Instead they usually have long meals with family and friends. That basically means that the French food culture means that they are eating the right amount of healthy food and having a good time with loved ones at the same time. The French culture helps the French solve the omnivore's dilemma of what and how much to eat.

The American food culture on the other hand is very different. We barely have one food culture to fall back on. Pollan says on page 92 that Americans "have never had a national food culture." This means that we are not like other places where you can say "French food" or "Spanish food" and that means what to eat and how to eat. Those places have a food culture but not us. Because Americans came from many countries, we don't have one strong food culture, so when it comes to food and eating, almost anything is acceptable. Americans do not have rules about eating so we have many choices and eat stuff like protein bars and "nonfoods" and eat in places like our cars instead of at tables like many of the French. That is also why Pollan says on pages 92 and 93, people in American even a hundred years ago went on fad diets did crazy things like chewing pieces of food a hundred times. They listened and believed people who were not experts like Dr. John Haney Kellogg and Horace Fletcher.

The French may eat differently from American culture, but this has made them healthier.

As you read in my essay, there are many reasons why. Culture can affect diets in ways you couldn't imagine before reading Pollan's chapter.

Student F

Michael Pollan uses a lot of comparisons that explains the omnivore's dilemma. One of the comparisons is between the French and the Americans. The French are a comparison of explaining the omnivore's dilemma because the French have a food culture and they solved the Omnivore's dilemma. According to page 94 in the chapter, the "French eat healthier because they eat traditional foods." The French don't eat snacks and they don't get seconds because they have French culture rules about how to eat. The French eats with their families and friends and their "culture of food allows the French to enjoy their meals and be healthy at the same time" (p. 95). The food culture rules can cause the rate of obesity and diseases to decrease. The comparison that Pollan uses is important because this shows that other countries know how to solve the omnivore's dilemma. But the United States won't follow the other countries or even try to solve this dilemma. The omnivore's dilemma is that Americans don't know what to eat anymore because they don't know whether they should eat healthy or not. They also don't know when to eat or if the food they are eating is healthy because the food industry puts unhealthy ingredients into food that we think is healthy. So, as you can see, the Americans are having a lot of trouble eating healthy and they don't even see it. Therefore, Americans are gaining a lot of weight, but other omnivores like the French don't have the same problem.

Student G

The comparison I chose compares French culture and American culture. One textual evidence on page 94 is, “Yet their rates of heart disease and obesity are lower than the healthcrazy American.” That quote compares the rate of heart disease and obesity in France to America. It explains how the French have a lower rate than Americans.

He also compares how the French and Americans eat and rules. On page 94 it quote, “French cultures includes a set of customs and rules about how to eat. For example, the French eat small portions and don’t go back for seconds.” On page 95 it also quotes, “Because we have no food culture in America, almost every question about eating is up for grab.” The first quote explains a rule the French have about eating. The second quote explains how Americans have no rules and take whatever is left.

Therefore, this comparison explains the different cultures in food between France and America. Pollan uses a lot of comparisons that explains the omnivore’s dilemma.