



## Considering the possible benefits and risks, is becoming a vegetarian a smart decision?

### GETTING ORIENTED

The weekly passage introduces issues related to vegetarianism. Here is some information that might be helpful to students less familiar with the topic.

#### Greenhouse Gases

Greenhouse gases include water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and ozone. These gases are emitted or released into the atmosphere as a result of human activity and through natural systems. These gases are usually converted or changed into another chemical compound and absorbed into the atmosphere. Every year since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution (approximately 1820), more of these greenhouse gases have remained or stayed in the atmosphere. This is because we continuously have more machines in the industrial world, more cars on the freeways, and more airplanes in the sky. Scientists believe that the increase of these gases is what has caused our temperature to increase all over the world.



#### History of Vegetarianism

The earliest records of vegetarianism, or eating a diet without meat, come from India and Greece in the 6th century BC. In India the diet was connected with nonviolence toward animals. It was called ahimsa.

Philosophers and some religious groups promoted, or made people aware, of this practice. In Greece, vegetarianism was practiced for medical purposes. People believed it was good for your health. The first Vegetarian Society started in England in 1847. Many countries followed this example. The popularity of vegetarianism has grown steadily since that time.



#### Cattle and Other Livestock

Ruminant animals are animals that have hooves. Common ruminant animals are cattle, goats, buffalo, and sheep. These animals are unique or different because they have digestive systems that convert unusable plant material such as grass into nutritious food. This process, however, also produces methane, one of the greenhouse gases that causes climate change. America breeds more cattle for human consumption than any other country in the world.





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### EVIDENCE AND PERSPECTIVES

	<i>Some may have this view:</i>	<i>But others may think:</i>
<b>Cattle Ranchers</b>	Cattle ranchers earn their living by raising and selling cattle or cows for the world market. The only cattle ranchers who might support vegetarianism are those with health problems who may need to reduce the quantity of red meat that they eat in order to lower their cholesterol.	Cattle ranchers are not interested in encouraging vegetarianism because their livelihoods depend on the sale of beef for consumption. They are aware of the fact that cattle emit methane. Many ranchers do everything they can to improve the process of productivity so they can reduce the quantity of methane emitted by their cattle.
<b>Business People</b>	Business people who have money invested in the production of grains or beans might support the idea of vegetarianism because they might like to see an increase in the production of grain. These people may not give up eating meat themselves.	Many people in the business world have a lot of money invested in the raising and selling of cattle. When the stock market goes up and down based on big world events, investors watch how the events affect their investments. These people would not want to see the production of cattle disappear. They would not support a world full of vegetarians, but they might support more care and attention to the ways cattle are raised in order to reduce methane emissions.

- ✓ In the United States, cattle emit 5.5 million metric tons of methane per year, which makes up 20% of U.S. methane emissions.
- ✓ Globally, livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats, and buffalo produce 80 million metric tons of methane annually. This is 28% of global methane.
- ✓ Improving the productivity and efficiency of livestock production is the best way to reduce emissions.
- ✓ Some vegetarians are ovo vegetarians. This means they eat eggs but not other dairy products.
- ✓ Veganism excludes all animal flesh and animal products, including milk, honey and eggs, and may also exclude any products tested on animals, or any clothing made from animals.
- ✓ For much of the world, vegetarianism is largely a matter of economics. Meat costs more than beans and rice.
- ✓ In 2008, a study showed that 7.3 million Americans were vegetarians and another 22.8 million follow a vegetarian-inclined diet.
- ✓ 59% of vegetarians in America are women whereas 41% are men.

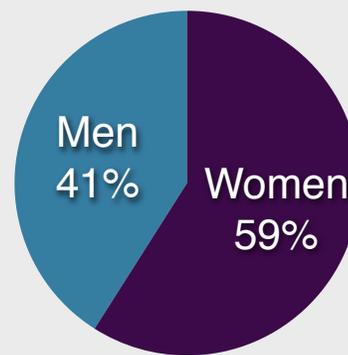
#### Additional Information for Teachers

Learn about cattle ranching in America.  
[www.workingranches.com/](http://www.workingranches.com/)

Learn about vegetarianism.  
[www.vegetariantimes.com/](http://www.vegetariantimes.com/)

Read about greenhouse gases.  
[www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions](http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions)

Read more about the harm livestock causes the environment.  
<http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2006/1000448/index.html>



Vegetarians in the United States



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### ANNOTATIONS FOR TEACHERS

#### Features of Academic Text: *Nominalization*

A nominalization is a noun or noun phrase that is used to describe a complex process or concept. It typically follows a textbook explanation and is used as a compact way of referring to this bigger idea as the writer elaborates on the topic.

For example:

“There is a movement in this country to replace the traditional diet of beef and pork with one that consists of fruits and vegetables.

**Vegetarianism** is growing in popularity, even among middle and high school students and schools.”

**Vegetarianism** is a nominalization for the “movement to replace the traditional diet of beef and pork with one that consists of fruits and vegetables.”

While the writers of Word Generation tried to avoid nominalizations in these passages, it is important for teachers to be aware of them.

After watching the movie, Finding Nemo, ten-year-old Alia made a big decision. She decided she would not eat meat any more. She did not want animals to be killed for food. Her story is not unique. Lately many children are choosing to be vegetarians.

Vegetarians do not eat any beef, pork, chicken, or fish. Some vegetarians choose their meat-free diet for health reasons. Some choose this diet because of their concern for animals, and others because of their concern for the environment.

There are many health benefits from adopting a vegetarian diet. Vegetarians can benefit from lower cholesterol levels, lower blood pressure, and lower rates of diabetes and colon cancer. By replacing meat with beans and nuts, vegetarians eat a diet lower in saturated fat and higher in fiber than meat-eaters.

Nonetheless, a vegetarian diet is not a very **efficient** way for people to get enough protein, iron, and vitamin B12. Meat contains all of these nutrients. So, it is important that vegetarians plan their meals so they do get enough protein and other vitamins and don't end up undernourished.

Some people note that eating meat is not only nutritious, but that it is part of the traditional American diet. Thus,

they think that eating meat is part of the American way of life. A huge roasted turkey is **symbolic** of the first American Thanksgiving. Hamburgers and hot dogs are traditional foods for Fourth of July barbecues. For some Americans, eliminating meat would be like giving up their culture and traditions.

Could the American tradition of eating meat be hurting the earth? Thirty percent of usable land on earth is devoted to producing meat. Feeding cattle and transporting meat creates almost one-fifth of the earth's greenhouse gases. This amount is more than the amount of greenhouse gases produced by cars, trucks, trains, and airplanes combined.

Most of the beef produced domestically is eaten by Americans. However, **exports** are also increasing as more countries are **integrating** meat into their daily diets. As a result, the beef and cattle industry is thriving. Reducing meat consumption could damage an important **domestic** industry.

With all of the environmental and health benefits of **vegetarianism**, should people continue to eat meat? Are tradition and industry more important than the environment and good health?



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### GENERATING WORDS

#### Cognates

Many words in Spanish, French, English, Italian, and Chinese sound the same. Ask friends from different countries how they pronounce the word “Google” or “Internet” in their home language. You may be surprised that they sound very similar. Languages that use the same alphabet, like English and Spanish, will have words that are spelled similarly as well. These words are called **cognates**. All five of this week’s focus words are cognates in English, Spanish, and French. See if someone in your class can help find the missing word.

English	Spanish	French
export	exportar	exporter
symbolic	simbólico	symbolique
domestic	domestico	domestique
integrate	integrar	intégrer
efficient	_____	efficace

**Directions:** Many of the Word Generation focus words that you have learned have cognates in Spanish and French. Below are a few of the Spanish or French translations of these words. Even if you do not know Spanish or French, see if you can figure out the English word.

English	Spanish	French
_____	consecuencia	conséquence
_____	voluntario	volontaire
_____	régimen	régime
_____	suspicaaz	soupçonneux
_____	compatible	compatible

#### BEWARE OF FALSE COGNATES!

There are some words that sound and/or are spelled the same in more than one language but have different meanings. For example:

The word **exit** in English means a **way out of a place**, but **éxito** in Spanish means **success**.

Would it make sense to say,

“Could you direct me to **success** to get out of this building?”

Probably not!

#### FALSE COGNATES





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### DEVELOPING DISCUSSIONS

**Becoming a vegetarian is a smart decision.**

<i>harm to the environment</i>	<i>good for your health</i>	<i>you get to discover new foods</i>

**Becoming a vegetarian is not a smart decision.**

<i>not the American way of life</i>	<i>dangerous to your health</i>	<i>cattle ranchers would go out of business</i>



1

**Step One:** Look at the reasons for both sides of the issue. Think about which reasons are strong and which reasons are weak. Color in the meter above each reason. Think about why you labeled the strongest and weakest reasons as you did. Be ready to explain to your partner. Think about how you can use focus words: *export, symbolic, domestic, integrate, and efficient.*



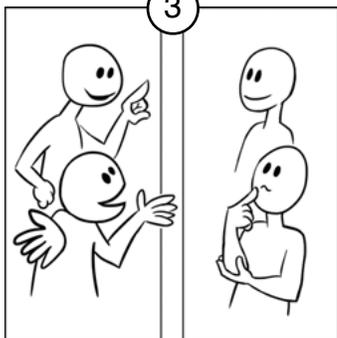
2

**Step Two:** Explain your meter to your partner. Why did you choose a strong or weak rating? Ask your partner questions if you need more explanation. Challenge your partner if your ratings are different. As a pair, be prepared to argue that one of the issues has stronger reasons.



3

**Step Three:** Explain to another pair of students in the class which side you think has better reasons.



#### Word and phrases:

- The strongest reason for becoming a vegetarian is \_\_\_\_.
- This is the strongest reason because \_\_\_\_.
- The article provides evidence for this where it says \_\_\_\_.
- This is the weakest reason due to \_\_\_\_.
- That sounds like a good reason, but what is the evidence for \_\_\_\_?
- Is there data to support \_\_\_\_?
- I agree that it's the strongest reason. Can you think of any more evidence?
- That's important, but do you think it outweighs \_\_\_\_?
- I didn't think of that. Can you say more about \_\_\_\_?
- We decided that \_\_\_\_ has stronger reasons. For example, \_\_\_\_.
- What side do you think has the best reasons?
- Do you really believe that?
- Can you think of any reasons that are not included here?