

Chocolate bars poisoned in Australia

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Today's contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
After Reading	6
Discussion	7
Speaking	8
Listening Gap Fill	9
Homework	10
Answers	11

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THE ARTICLE

Chocolate bars poisoned in Australia

BNE: Police in Australia are investigating threats that *Mars* and *Snickers* chocolate bars have been poisoned. An anonymous group has warned the manufacturer that seven chocolate bars are currently on supermarket or convenience store shelves. The threat is being taken seriously by food stores, which have acted quickly in removing all of the products from their shelves. Masterfoods, the food company that makes the chocolate bars in Australia, has confirmed that tests done on a *Snickers* bar contained an unknown chemical.

Masterfoods doesn't know why its products are being targeted. It has received three threatening letters since May. None of the letters contains any demands for money. The company said its biggest concern was for public health. It advised anyone who had recently purchased a *Mars* or *Snickers* bar to destroy it. Police think the whole thing might be a hoax. They suspect someone with a grudge is behind the threats. Meanwhile, Australian chocoholics are waiting for the green light to continue eating the chocolate.

WARM-UPS

1. ADVANTAGES: In pairs / groups, make a list of all of the advantages and disadvantages of eating chocolate. Change partners and compare your lists. When you have finished, talk about whether the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Would the disadvantages stop you eating chocolate? Would you cut down on chocolate?

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

Police / Australia / chocolate bars / convenience stores / threatening letters / public health / hoaxes / grudges / chocoholics

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. CHOCOLATE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "chocolate". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

4. PUBLIC HEALTH: How worried would you be if the police announced your favorite chocolate bars had been poisoned? What do you think of the following comments?

- a. I wouldn't buy the chocolates until the police said it was OK.
- b. I'd continue to buy the chocolates. It is very unlikely I would buy one of the poisoned bars.
- c. I love chocolate too much. I'd die for chocolate. I would still buy it.
- d. I'd be a little cautious. I'd buy the chocolate bar but give some to my pet dog first to see if it's safe.
- e. I'd be very worried. It could be terrorist activity from Al-Qaeda.
- f. I'd never buy another bar of chocolate again. It's getting too dangerous.
- g. It's a great excuse to go on a quick diet.
- h. It all sounds like a big practical joke to me. I'd still buy the chocolate bars.

5. YUM: In pairs / groups, talk about which of these chocolaty things would make you lick your lips or make your mouth water.

- Mars or Snickers bar
- Chicken in spicy chocolate sauce (Mexico)
- Chocolate ice cream
- Chocolate cake
- Chocolate and mustard bar (Japan)
- Chocolate milk shake
- Chocolate fondue
- Hot chocolate drink
- Chocolate coated banana
- Other

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. <i>Mars</i> and <i>Snickers</i> chocolate bars in Australia are poisonous. | T / F |
| b. Al-Qaeda has announced it poisoned chocolate bars in Australia. | T / F |
| c. Supermarkets have emptied their shelves of <i>Mars</i> and <i>Snickers</i> . | T / F |
| d. The manufacturer said an unknown substance was found in a bar. | T / F |
| e. The manufacturer has received hundreds of threatening e-mails. | T / F |
| f. The group behind the threats wants \$10,000,000. | T / F |
| g. The police think the whole thing might be a hoax. | T / F |
| h. Australian chocoholics are waiting for a green light. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| a. investigating | presently |
| b. poisoned | trick |
| c. currently | requests |
| d. confirmed | hatred |
| e. chemical | looking into |
| f. demands | go-ahead |
| g. concern | explained |
| h. hoax | worry |
| i. grudge | contaminated |
| j. green light | substance |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. Police in Australia are | seriously |
| b. chocolate bars have been | continue eating the chocolate |
| c. convenience store | chemical |
| d. The threat is being taken | for money |
| e. contained an unknown | poisoned |
| f. its products | a grudge |
| g. demands | might be a hoax |
| h. the whole thing | investigating threats |
| i. someone with | are being targeted |
| j. waiting for the green light to | shelves |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces.

Chocolate bars poisoned in Australia

BNE: Police in Australia are investigating _____ that *Mars* and *Snickers* chocolate bars have been _____. An anonymous group has _____ the manufacturer that seven chocolate bars are currently on supermarket or convenience store _____. The threat is being taken _____ by food stores, which have acted quickly in removing all of the _____ from their shelves. Masterfoods, the food company that makes the chocolate bars in Australia, has _____ that tests done on a *Snickers* bar contained an _____ chemical.

products
shelves
poisoned
seriously
threats
unknown
confirmed
warned

Masterfoods doesn't know why its products are being _____. It has received three _____ letters since May. None of the letters contains any _____ for money. The company said its biggest _____ was for public health. It advised anyone who had recently _____ a *Mars* or *Snickers* bar to destroy it. Police think the whole thing might be a _____. They suspect someone with a _____ is behind the threats. Meanwhile, Australian chocoholics are waiting for the green _____ to continue eating the chocolate.

purchased
light
concern
targeted
hoax
demands
grudge
threatening

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'green'** and **'light'**.

- 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 gap fill. 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. STUDENT CHOCOLATE SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about chocolate.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

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

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| • investigating | • targeted |
| • anonymous | • threatening |
| • convenience | • concern |
| • seriously | • destroy |
| • shelves | • grudge |
| • unknown | • light |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. What did you think when you first saw this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the story?
- c. Did the article make you worry about food safety?
- d. Do you ever think about whether the food you buy is safe to eat?
- e. Have you ever suffered from food poisoning?
- f. Do you think the Australian food stores are doing the right thing?
- g. Are there stories of food contamination in your country?
- h. Do you think terror groups could contaminate food as a new way of frightening people?
- i. Why do you think someone is poisoning food?
- j. Would you buy a *Mars* or *Snickers* bar in Australia right now?

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

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. What do you think about chocolate?
- d. Are you a chocoholic?
- e. What are your favorite foods that contain chocolate?
- f. Do you think this chocolate poisoning story is very serious?
- g. Do you think this could hurt Australia's chocolate industry?
- h. Have you ever been the target of a hoax?
- i. Have you ever had a grudge against a company?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

ROLE PLAY: This role play is to discuss whether or not to give the green light for the sale of *Mars* and *Snickers* bars in Australia. Team up with classmates who have the same role as you. Develop your ideas and “strategies” before the role play begins.

Introduce yourself to the other role players before the role play begins.

Student A

You are head of the food company. Profits are most important. No one has been ill. Your testing laboratories told you the unknown substance found in the chocolate bars came from the wrapping of the chocolate bar. The substance is harmless. You are convinced the chocolate bars are safe to eat.

Student B

You love playing practical jokes – the bigger the better. Pretend that you used to belong to Al-Qaeda but you were thrown out of the organization. You have “secret” information that Al-Qaeda wants to poison people via chocolate bars. The wrapping from the chocolate bar poisons the chocolate.

Student C

You are a doctor who once treated student B for mental problems. He/She often believed he/she had a different personality. One of the effects of his/her condition was that he/she loved practical jokes. The last time you heard from your patient was a postcard you received from Afghanistan.

Student D

You are the head of Australia’s security services. You cannot take any risks with public safety. You understand that Al-Qaeda can operate in many different ways. You have to make 100 per cent sure that the chocolate bars are not a risk to your country. You must prepare a statement for the public. You will decide whether or not to allow the sale of the chocolate bars.

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Chocolate bars poisoned in Australia

BNE: Police in Australia are _____ that *Mars* and *Snickers* chocolate bars have _____. An anonymous group has _____ that seven chocolate bars are currently on supermarket or convenience store shelves. The threat is _____ seriously by food stores, which have acted quickly in removing all of the products _____. Masterfoods, the food company that makes the chocolate bars in Australia, has confirmed that tests done on a *Snickers* bar _____ chemical.

Masterfoods doesn't know why its products are _____. It has received _____ letters since May. None of the letters contains any _____. The company said its biggest concern was for public health. It advised anyone who had _____ a *Mars* or *Snickers* bar to _____. Police think the whole thing might _____. They suspect someone with a grudge is _____. Meanwhile, Australian chocoholics are waiting for the _____ to continue eating the chocolate.

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 more information on the Australian chocolate poisoning. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. CHOCOLATE: Create a fact sheet about the benefits and dangers of chocolate to your health. Show your fact sheets to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to Australia's head of police in New South Wales. Give him/her advice on what he/she should do about the chocolate poisoning. Read your letter to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all give similar advice?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. investigating	looking into
b. poisoned	contaminated
c. currently	presently
d. confirmed	explained
e. chemical	substance
f. demands	requests
g. concern	worry
h. hoax	trick
i. grudge	hatred
j. green light	go-ahead

PHRASE MATCH:

a. Police in Australia are	investigating threats
b. chocolate bars have been	poisoned
c. convenience store	shelves
d. The threat is being taken	seriously
e. contained an unknown	chemical
f. its products	are being targeted
g. demands	for money
h. the whole thing	might be a hoax
i. someone with	a grudge
j. waiting for the green light to	continue eating the chocolate

GAP FILL:

Chocolate bars poisoned in Australia

BNE: Police in Australia are investigating **threats** that *Mars* and *Snickers* chocolate bars have been **poisoned**. An anonymous group has **warned** the manufacturer that seven chocolate bars are currently on supermarket or convenience store **shelves**. The threat is being taken **seriously** by food stores, which have acted quickly in removing all of the **products** from their shelves. Masterfoods, the food company that makes the chocolate bars in Australia, has **confirmed** that tests done on a *Snickers* bar contained an **unknown** chemical.

Masterfoods doesn't know why its products are being **targeted**. It has received three **threatening** letters since May. None of the letters contains any **demands** for money. The company said its biggest **concern** was for public health. It advised anyone who had recently **purchased** a *Mars* or *Snickers* bar to destroy it. Police think the whole thing might be a **hoax**. They suspect someone with a **grudge** is behind the threats. Meanwhile, Australian chocoholics are waiting for the green **light** to continue eating the chocolate.