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Japan speed-eater triumphs again

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15 August, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Japan speed-eater triumphs again

BNE: Japan's world champion speed-eater has won his second contest in two days at an eating competition in Hong Kong. Takeru Kobayashi, 27, easily beat his rivals by consuming an amazing 83 steamed dumplings in eight minutes on Saturday. Kobayashi showed his munching talents again a day later by downing 100 roasted pork buns in 12 minutes. He said he has a special technique that allows him to eat so much, so quickly. He squashes the food as tightly as he can in his mouth and then "chews like crazy".

Kobayashi holds several world eating records and is a celebrity on the world speed-eating tour. He is the current world record holder and champion for eating hot dogs - 53-and-a-half in 12 minutes. He has also shown a similar ability with hamburgers by setting the world record in 2004 - 69 burgers in eight minutes. Mr. Kobayashi's physique does not suggest he can eat such serious quantities of food. He is a very slim 65kg but says his stomach can stretch more than others. He hopes to make a career out of speed-eating.

WARM-UPS

1. SPEED-EATING: In pairs / groups, talk about which of the following foods you could eat a lot of or could eat very quickly:

- Rice
- Chocolate
- French fries
- Hamburgers
- Cakes
- Pizza slices
- Ice cream
- Other

2. DOING THINGS QUICKLY: Which of these things can you or would you like to do quickly (and why)? How quickly would you like to do these things?

- Eating
- Writing
- Typing
- Walking
- Speaking
- Homework
- Housework
- Reading

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

World champions / Hong Kong / dumplings / rivals / eating a lot / chewing / world records / hamburgers / physiques / being slim / careers

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

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

5. EATING OPINIONS: Talk about these opinions in pairs or groups. Do you agree or disagree with them?

- a. I think speed-eating competitions are stupid.
- b. Speed-eating is a sport. It requires a lot of talent and skill.
- c. Watching speed-eating is much more exciting than watching golf.
- d. With people starving all around the world, I think these contests are terrible.
- e. Speed-eating encourages people to eat too much, and that's bad.
- f. These kinds of competitions are good fun.
- g. I would like to enter a speed-eating contest.
- h. Paying big prize money for people to over-eat shows how unfair the world is.

6. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think speed-eating should become an Olympic sport. Students B think speed-eating is not any kind of sport. Change partners often.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A Japanese runner won two marathons while eating hamburgers. | T / F |
| b. The man consumed a lot of steamed dumplings in eight minutes. | T / F |
| c. The man said he had no special eating technique. | T / F |
| d. He chews his food at a normal rate. | T / F |
| e. The man holds several world eating records. | T / F |
| f. The man's physique suggests he is good at eating lots of food. | T / F |
| g. He says his stomach has more elasticity than others. | T / F |
| h. The man hopes to make a career out of speed-eating. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| a. contest | circuit |
| b. beat | chewing |
| c. consuming | amounts |
| d. munching | defeated |
| e. crazy | indicate |
| f. tour | mad |
| g. ability | lean |
| h. suggest | competition |
| i. quantities | talent |
| j. slim | eating |

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

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| a. won his second | tightly as he can |
| b. easily beat | of food |
| c. he has a special | like crazy |
| d. He squashes the food as | world eating records |
| e. chews | record in 2004 |
| f. Kobayashi holds several | contest in two days |
| g. He is the current | technique |
| h. setting the world | out of speed-eating |
| i. such serious quantities | his rivals |
| j. make a career | world record holder |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

SYNONYM FILL: Place the number of the synonym group in the correct gap (It is not important to guess a correct word - any of the synonyms from each group could be put into the relevant gap).

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Kobayashi holds ___ world eating records and is a ___ on the world speed-eating tour. He is the current world record holder and champion for eating hot dogs - 53-and-a-half in 12 minutes. He has also ___ a similar ability with hamburgers by setting the world record in 2004 - 69 burgers in eight minutes. Mr. Kobayashi's physique does not suggest he can eat such serious ___ of food. He is a very slim 65kg but says his stomach can stretch more than others. He hopes to make a career out of speed-eating.

1

squashes
squeezes
crushes
compresses

2

downing
swallowing
eating
devouring

3

contest
competition
tournament
challenge

4

quantities
amounts
volumes
portions

5

shown
displayed
demonstrated
revealed

6

beat
defeated
whipped
topped

7

several
various
assorted
different

8

celebrity
big cheese
heavyweight
somebody

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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. SYNONYM FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the synonym 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 "EATING" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about food, eating and over-eating.

- 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:

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| • second | • several |
| • easily | • current |
| • showed | • ability |
| • special | • physique |
| • squashes | • slim |
| • crazy | • career |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. What did you think when you first read this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you think about speed-eating?
- d. Do you think speed-eating could become a sport one day?
- e. Have you ever taken part in an eating or drinking contest?
- f. Do you think that when there are millions of starving people in the world, speed-eating contests are bad?
- g. How long would it take you to eat 69 hamburgers?
- h. Is there any kind of food you can eat a lot of?
- i. Describe your eating technique
- j. Would you like to watch a speed-eating contest?

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

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Are you a fast or slow eater?
- d. Do you think eating so much in a short space of time harms your body?
- e. What do you think of the fact that people can make lots of money from eating contests?
- f. How do you think Mr. Kobayashi can eat so much and stay so thin? Are you jealous?
- g. Is there anything you are very fast at doing?
- h. What question would you like to ask Mr. Kobayashi?
- i. How do you think he would answer?
- 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

SPEED-EATER INTERVIEW: You want to be a speed-eater. Look at these interview questions and think about your answers. Take turns in role playing the interviewer (head of a speed-eating team) and interviewee. Interview two or more people.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why do you want to become a speed-eater?
2. Why do you think you could be a good speed-eater?
3. What will you do to make speed-eating an international sport?
4. What kind of training will you do to become a speed-eater?
5. Tell me about a time when you ate a lot.
6. Do you think you are good at speed-eating any particular type of food?
7. Tell me why you think you can handle the pressure of international competition.
8. What do you think are the difficult parts of life as a speed-eater?
9. What do you think are the dangers of being a speed-eater?
10. What would you say to someone who says speed-eating is wrong when people in Africa are starving?
11. What questions would you like to ask me?
12. Other _____

Return to the partners you interviewed and tell them whether or not they got accepted onto the team and why (not).

Find a new partner and talk about who you interviewed and the quality of their answers.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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Kobayashi holds _____ world eating records and is a celebrity on the world speed-eating tour. He is the current world record _____ and champion for eating hot dogs - 53-and-a-half in 12 minutes. He has also shown a _____ ability with hamburgers by _____ the world record in 2004 - 69 burgers in eight minutes. Mr. Kobayashi's _____ does not suggest he can eat such serious quantities of food. He is a very slim 65kg but says his stomach can _____ more than others. He hopes to make a career out of speed-eating.

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 speed-eating and Takeru Kobayashi. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. LETTER: Write a letter to Takeru Kobayashi. Tell him / her what you think of speed-eating competitions. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all have similar thoughts?

4. DIARY / JOURNAL: Imagine you are a speed-eater. Write your diary / journal entry about a speed-eating competition you took part in. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| a. contest | competition |
| b. beat | defeated |
| c. consuming | eating |
| d. munching | chewing |
| e. crazy | mad |
| f. tour | circuit |
| g. ability | talent |
| h. suggest | indicate |
| i. quantities | amounts |
| j. slim | lean |

PHRASE MATCH:

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| g. He is the current | world record holder |
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SYNONYM FILL:

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