

Happy April Fools Day

Read the news release which appeared on news.bbc.co.uk on 1st April 2003 and answer the comprehension questions below.

Chips banned from school canteens

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School dinner bosses in the UK have revealed shock plans to ban pupils from eating chips at school. They reckon the fave food is unhealthy, so have decided kids won't be able to eat it any more - you'll all have to eat lumpy mash instead!

Government food expert Professor Steve P.U. Denton said that although they knew the decision would be unpopular, they were making it so kids would be healthier. He added: "We're very sorry that



we have to do this, but kids spend so much time playing computer games now we have to help them keep fit another way."



Will pizza be next to be taken off the menu?

The head of the UK Chip Authority, Fry Smith has slammed the move, saying he couldn't understand why chips have come in for special treatment. He asked: "Why have they banned chips but decided things like crisps, sweets and chocolate are okay? It's madness!" And he had this worrying advice for kids not happy about the move: "Who knows what they'll be banning after chips? Maybe pizza is next!"

1. Why are chips going to be banned from UK school canteens?
2. Why is this move criticised?
3. Why is Mr Fry Smith's advice for kids worrying?



Teacher's Notes and Answer Key

This article contains some informal English, but it should not hinder text comprehension. It is suggested that the informal vocabulary items are explained separately as a text feature (of many articles published on the Internet) after the reading comprehension exercise. Though, depending on the level of your students, you may need to pre-teach some words, e.g.: to reveal or to reckon.

Give your students 5 minutes to read the article and answer the three comprehension questions. Then, check answers with whole class.

To make this exercise more challenging you may do this exercise as a listening comprehension using the audio recording available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/media/audio/39035000/rm/_39035239_cn_cy_chips.ram. Please, note that you will need basic Real Player to listen to the audio recording, but you may download this software for free from <http://europe.real.com/realplayer>.

Possible answers:

1. Because they are unhealthy / to keep kids fit
2. Because other unhealthy foods like crisps, sweets or chocolate are not banned
3. Because Pizza, which is popular among kids, may be banned next.

Ask your students to read the article again and underline examples of informal English. Ask them if they know more formal equivalents of these words?

fave – favourite

lumpy – covered with or containing small pieces

mash – potatoes which have been boiled, crushed and mixed with milk

to slam sth – criticise (used usually in newspapers)

to come in for sth (e.g. criticism or blame) - to be criticised or blamed for sth

Follow-up discussion:

Ask your students about their school canteen? Do they like it? What foods are available? Do they think some foods should be banned? Why?