

# Eating Alone?

What's for dinner? Are you **eating in** or grabbing a bite **on the go**? In a busy household, it's difficult to find time to sit down together for a daily meal. In this lesson, you will read and discuss six reasons why dining together is better than eating alone.

*"All great change in America begins at the dinner table."*

—Ronald Reagan



## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Do you tend to eat meals alone or in the company of others?
2. What was mealtime like for you as a child?
3. Why is mealtime with family important for all members of a family?

### B. On the Go

Place a ✓ in the box beside any statement that is true. Compare your answers to a partner's answers.

- ☐ I tend to eat out more often than I eat at home.
- ☐ I tend to eat most meals in front of the TV.
- ☐ I have at least one meal per day with family or friends.
- ☐ I tend to use my mobile device when I'm eating a meal.
- ☐ I like home-cooked food better than fast food.

### Eating alone?

In advertisements, -ing verbs are often used at the beginning of a question without a subject or a Be verb. This shortened form is common in informal spoken or written English.

- Buying a car?  
(Are you buying a car?)
- Thinking about moving?  
(Are you thinking about moving?)
- Flying solo?  
(Are you going alone?)

Can you think of some other catchy questions like this?

## Reading

### 6 REASONS WHY DINING TOGETHER IS BETTER THAN EATING ALONE

#### 1. You tend to eat more nutritious food.

Dining together often **coincides** with dining at home. At home, parents can offer kids nutritious meals. **Picky** eaters tend to try food that their brothers or sisters are eating. Dining alone, on the other hand, tends to involve fast-food restaurants. Fast food tends to be high in fat, salt, and sugar.

#### 2. You tend to think about portion sizes.

Dining alone causes people to overeat. In contrast, homecooked meals allow for **portion** control. The host or parent who serves the food shares it out evenly and mindfully. This **cuts down on** food waste and obesity.

#### 3. You tend to eat more slowly.

Eating too quickly can cause **indigestion**. People who eat alone tend to eat more quickly because they have no **distractions**. When you're in a conversation, you naturally eat more slowly. When you eat more slowly, your food has a chance to digest. Likewise, you don't tend to eat as much when you eat slowly.

#### 4. You can reconnect with others.

Sitting down to a meal with friends or family members, gives you time to reconnect. Family mealtime may be the only time of the day when the whole family is together. The dinner table is a good place to share highs and lows from the day. People tend to feel better about themselves after social **interaction**.

#### 5. You can learn or teach something new.

A dinner table tends to be a bit like a classroom. Friends or family members can teach each other interesting things at mealtime. Parents tend to use this time to teach **morals** and manners. Children get a chance to **voice their opinions**, too.

#### 6. You can save money.

Eating at home with a group of people is more **economical** than eating out or eating alone. You tend to save money at the grocery store if you buy enough for a group of people rather than buying single portions. When you save money, you tend to feel happier about your life.



## Grammar Tip

The verb *tend* is used to describe something that often happens, such as a habit.

#### tend + to + base verb

- *She tends to bite her nails when she's nervous.*
- *He tends to call at dinnertime.*

#### Note:

In English, *tend* / *tend to* + *noun* means to look after or give something one's attention.

- *I need to tend (tend to) my garden.*
- *He is tending (tending to) his sick father.*

# Speaking Practice

## A. Portions

Do you have a *big appetite*, or do you *eat like a bird*?

Practice these dialogues so that you can express your portion needs properly when you're a guest at a dinner table.

### 1. TOO MUCH / TOO MANY

The intensifier *too* has a negative meaning. It means "in excess."

A: Is this good?

B: No, that's too much.

A: Is this too many grapes?

B: Yes. She won't eat that many.

A: Is this too much pasta?

B: Yes, I can't eat all that.

A: Did I give you too much?

B: Yes. I'm afraid I'm full.

### 2. ENOUGH

The word *enough* has a positive meaning. It means "a sufficient amount."

A: Did you get enough?

B: No, I'm still a bit hungry.

A: Are you full?

B: I've probably had enough, but I'd like a bit more. Is there any left?

A: How are you doing for bread?

B: I'll take another slice if there is enough for everyone.

A: You aren't full, are you?

B: Yes, I've had enough.

### 3. THE PERFECT AMOUNT

Sometimes you are served just the right amount of food. Here are a few informal ways to express your satisfaction.

A: Do you want some more?

B: No, this is plenty, thank you.

A: Can I get you some more coffee?

B: No, I'm good, thanks.

A: Are you still hungry?

B: No, I'm stuffed, thanks.

A: Should I add more sugar?

B: No, this is perfect.

## B. Practice

Work with a partner. Correct the following dialogues.

Then practice them out loud. Do your new dialogues make sense?

1. A: Did you get enough?

B: No, I'm full.

2. A: There's more. Would you like some?

B: Yes, please. This is plenty.

3. A: Is this too much pasta?

B: Yes, that's enough.

4. A: Can I get you some more turkey?

B: Yes, that's perfect.

5. A: Would you like some more pizza?

B: Actually, I've had enough. Is there any more?

6. A: Is this too much?

B: Thanks. I'll help myself to seconds.

# Vocabulary Review

## A. Vocabulary in Context

Look at the following words in the reading on page 2. Can you understand what each word means from the context? In other words, by looking at the words and examples around the word, can you figure out the definition? Write an example to demonstrate your understanding of each word. Include some **context** to make sure your reader understands the word. Check your dictionary if necessary.

Vocabulary	Example
1. coincide	<u>My birthday always coincides with spring break. I never have to go to school on my birthday!</u>
2. picky	_____
3. portion	_____
4. cut down on	_____
5. indigestion	_____
6. distraction	_____
7. interaction	_____
8. moral	_____
9. voice an opinion	_____
10. economical	_____

## B. Role-Play

### AT THE TABLE

Work together in small groups. Create a dialogue between parents and children at the dinner table. The children share events from their day, and the parents teach some valuable morals. Use your notebook if you need more room to write your dialogue.

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# Writing

## A. Brainstorm

Can you think of any other reasons why dining alone all of the time is NOT a healthy habit?

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. <u>People tend to work while they eat.</u> | 6. _____  |
| 2. _____                                      | 7. _____  |
| 3. _____                                      | 8. _____  |
| 4. _____                                      | 9. _____  |
| 5. _____                                      | 10. _____ |

## B. 5 Reasons NOT to Eat Alone

Now, write your own list of tips from your ideas in Part A. Write at least one sentence after each tip. Use the verb *tend* at least three times.

- |                                     |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. _____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ | 4. _____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |
| 2. _____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ | 5. _____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |
| 3. _____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |                                     |