

Suggested level

Advanced

Aims

- to introduce and practise some cooking terms (e.g. *to dilute*) that can be used metaphorically
- to expose students to some idioms connected with food (e.g. *to have your cake and eat it*)

Word list

to boil over, to cook someone's goose, to dilute (a principle/quality), to end up in the soup, to give somebody a roasting, to grill somebody, to have a bone to pick with somebody, to have your cake and eat it, to let somebody stew, not to give a sausage for anyone, to simmer down, to simmer with anger/hatred, to turn sour, to use your loaf, fishy, half-baked (ideas/plans), a good/bad egg, as easy as pie, food for thought, ham actor, on a plate, the cream of society


Preparation

- Photocopy one set of the Student Pages for each student in the class.
- Bring in dictionaries for 4b and 4c.

In class

1


- Explain to students that this activity revises literal meanings of vocabulary connected with food and cooking.
- Do the first two examples with students to check they understand the activity.
- Encourage students to work in pairs before you do feedback with the whole class.

 The examples that are not logical and do not make sense are:

- a *As grilling is putting food close to very strong, direct heat it would be impossible to grill chops for an hour without them getting badly burned.*
- c *Cakes are baked, not roasted, although both methods of cooking involve cooking by dry heat in the oven.*
- f *To simmer something means to cook something slowly in liquid that is just below boiling point, so if you cooked vegetables like this for one hour they would not remain raw.*
- g *A stew is made by slowly cooking meat and vegetables together in a liquid, so simply frying the meat would not make a stew.*

2

- Explain to students that in English many words connected with preparing or cooking food can be used metaphorically. For example, many of the words that describe using heat to cook food can also be used to describe strong feelings.
- Instruct students to work on the activity in pairs.
- Encourage discussion as to how far the literal meaning of the word helps in understanding its figurative meaning, e.g. the metaphorical meaning of *to dilute* may be fairly clear from its literal meaning, whereas the metaphorical meaning of *to grill* may be a lot less obvious.

 a 2 b 1 and 3 (NB 2 may happen in some situations, but not in all)
c 2 and 3 d 3 e 3 f 2 and 3 g 1 and 3 h 1

3


- Organise students in pairs for this activity.
- During the activity, monitor unobtrusively, noting down any points for later discussion.
- During feedback, note clear or interesting examples used by students as well as pointing out any inappropriate uses of the vocabulary.

4a

- Explain the term *ham acting* (an informal term meaning 'bad acting which is done with too much false emotion').
- Ask the students to predict what the text is about. The title suggests that the text will be both humorous and full of informal language.

4b

- Ask students to work individually.
- When doing feedback, point out to students that most of the idioms are informal, and some are even slang, e.g. *to use your loaf*.

 *the cream of society, A good egg, have his cake and eat it, on a plate, as easy as pie, used his loaf, turned sour, didn't give a sausage for, ended up in the soup, his goose was cooked, had a bone to pick with him, acting fishy, grilled, half-baked, gave him a real roasting, food for thought*

4c

- Students do a) in pairs.
- Explain to students that in the text, the writer is having a bit of fun with food vocabulary and that not all the idioms are in common use today. Discuss b) with the students before they write the sentences.
- When doing c) students should be encouraged to be ham actors and to perform the extract with as much melodramatic, false emotion as possible.

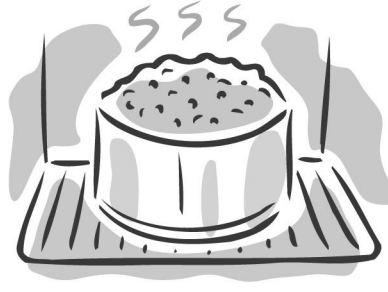
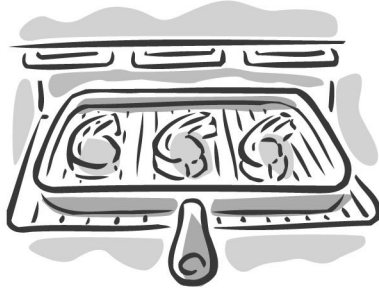
4d

- Ask students to brainstorm 'crimes of cooks' individually before reporting their ideas to the whole class (e.g. using salt instead of sugar, stealing food, poisoning the soup).
- Students write up their texts individually, and once you have checked them they can be circulated and read by other students.

Notes

- These idioms are now considered rather dated: *a good/bad egg, not to give a sausage for anyone, to end up in the soup*.
- The slang expression *to use your loaf* originates from Cockney rhyming slang where *use your loaf (of bread)* means *use your head*.
- See Unit 7 A recipe for success (page 26) for more figurative language connected with food.

Revision activity
Brainstorming page 127



1 Read these instructions. Which ones do not make sense? Give your reasons why.

- a Grill the lamb chops for at least an hour on each side.
- b This orange squash can be diluted by adding 5 parts of water to every 1 part of squash.
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- c Roast the cake in a 180 °C oven (350 °F) for 30 minutes or until golden brown.....
.....
- d Heat the milk gently until it boils.
- e Add the sifted dry ingredients to the mixture, and then bake in a greased and floured 9-inch square tin for 40 minutes.
- f Cover the casserole with a lid and simmer gently for 1 hour so that the vegetables remain raw.
.....
- g To make this meat stew, fry the steak in a heavy-bottomed pan until brown, and then serve immediately with a green salad.

2 Many words for preparing or cooking food can be used metaphorically. In these questions, guess the metaphorical meanings of the words and expressions and circle the correct answer(s).

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|---|--|
| <p>a To dilute a belief, principle or quality means</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 to increase it. 2 to make it weaker. 3 to strengthen it or make it more effective. | <p>e If somebody grills you, they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 give you lots of complicated instructions. 2 ask you lots of questions in a kind, friendly way. 3 ask you lots of detailed questions in a pressurising way. |
| <p>b If a situation boils over,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 people become extremely angry and excited. 2 large crowds start to gather. 3 it starts to get out of control. | <p>f If somebody gives you a roasting, they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 praise you warmly. 2 criticise you strongly. 3 are annoyed or angry with you. |
| <p>c If you let somebody stew, you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 do something that reduces their anxiety. 2 deliberately leave them to worry about something for a while. 3 deliberately don't show any sympathy or offer to help them. | <p>g If somebody's ideas, plans or opinions are half-baked, they are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 not properly planned. 2 fresh and original. 3 usually impractical and stupid. |
| <p>d If somebody simmers down, he or she</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 becomes very exhausted. 2 has used up all their energy. 3 stops being so angry about something. | <p>h If you are simmering with anger, hatred or resentment, it means that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 you feel anger, hatred or resentment very strongly and you just manage not to express them openly. 2 you no longer feel anger, hatred or resentment 3 you express these feelings openly and clearly. |

3 Discuss these questions with another student.

- a Suggest two ways in which the police could dilute people's fears about crime.
- b Suggest one way in which teachers could prevent an argument between two students from boiling over into a fight.
- c Have you ever let somebody stew? When, and why?
- d Suggest two situations in which one person might grill another.
- e Name two situations in which somebody might give you a roasting. Has this ever happened to you?
- f Describe a half-baked idea or plan that somebody you know has had. What was it? Why was it half-baked?
- g Suggest a way to stop your colleague simmering with resentment about how much work they have.

4a You are going to read a text called *The Cook's Tragedy: A Short Play for Ham Actors*. What do you think it's going to be about?

4b Read the text and underline all the words or phrases connected with food.

The Cook's Tragedy

A Short Play for Ham Actors

by Brian Patten

A: I once knew a cook who moved among the cream of society.

B: A good egg?

A: Unfortunately he thought he could have his cake and eat it.

B: You mean he wanted everything on a plate?

A: Exactly. He thought life was going to be as easy as pie.

B: Obviously he never used his loaf.

A: One day, when the chips were down, he turned sour.

B: I suppose he became a fast liver?

A: He didn't give a sausage for anyone.

B: No doubt he ended up in the soup?

A: Of course. He realised his goose was cooked when he heard the police had a bone to pick with him.

B: You mean he was acting fishy and they grilled him?

A: He told them a half-baked story and they gave him a real roasting.

B: Such lives are food for thought.

Food for thought

Cooking and food

4c Read *The Cook's Tragedy* again, and do the following:

- a Guess the meaning of any words or phrases connected with food, and discuss them with another student. Or look up the meaning of any words or phrases you don't know in a dictionary, and then explain some of them to another student.
- b Discuss with your teacher which phrases are a bit outdated and which ones are not. Choose three phrases that you think are most useful to you and write sentences using them.
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.....
.....
- c Read the text aloud with another student. Remember it is a tragedy for ham actors! Use lots of expression in your voice and gestures!

4d What do you think was the cook's crime in *The Cook's Tragedy*? We don't know, but write your own ideas.

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Use your ideas to complete this newspaper article.

Famous cook

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