

IELTS READING – The Flavor of Pleasure
S6AT1



IELTS reading The Flavor of Pleasure reading practice test has 10 questions belongs to the Leisure & Entertainment subject.

When it comes to celebrating the flavor of food, our mouth gets all the credit. But in truth, it is the nose that knows.

Questions 1-5

Complete the notes below. Type **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage.

1. According to scientists, the term

Type correct answers here

characterises the most critical factor in appreciating flavour.

2.'Savoury' is a better-known word for

Type correct answers here

3. The tongue was originally developed to recognise the unpleasant taste of

Type correct answers here

4. Human nasal cavities recognize

Type correct answers here

much better than external ones.

5. Gordon Shepherd uses the word 'neurogastronomy' to draw together a number of

Type correct answers here

related to the enjoyment of eating.

No matter how much we talk about tasting our favorite flavors, relishing them really depends on a combined input from our senses that we experience through mouth, tongue, and nose. The taste, texture, and feel of food are what we tend to focus on, but most important are the slight puffs of air as we chew our food – what scientists call ‘retronasal **q1 smell**’.

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Certainly, our mouths and tongues have taste buds, which are receptors for the five basic flavors: sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and **q2 umami**, or what is more commonly referred to as savory. But our tongues are inaccurate instruments as far as flavor is concerned. They evolved to recognize only a few basic tastes in order to quickly identify **q3 toxins**, which in nature are often quite bitter or acidly sour.

All the complexity, nuance, and pleasure of flavor come from the sense of **q4 smell** operating in the back of the nose. It is there that a kind of alchemy occurs when we breathe up and out the passing whiffs of our chewed food. Unlike a hound's skull with its extra-long nose, which evolved specifically to detect external smells, our noses have evolved to detect internal scents. Primates specialise in savoring the many millions of flavor combinations that they can create for their mouths.

Taste without retronasal smell is not much help in recognizing flavor. Smell has been the most poorly understood of our senses, and only recently has neuroscience, led by Yale University's Gordon Shepherd, begun to shed light on its workings. Shepherd has come up with the term ‘neurogastronomy’ to link the **q5 disciplines** of food science, neurology, psychology, and anthropology with the savory elements of eating, one of the most enjoyed of human experiences.

Questions 6-9

Complete the notes below. Type **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage.

Face recognition	patterns of dark and light are used to put together 6 . Type correct answers here	the brain identifies faces	facial recognition is key to our enjoyment of 7 . Type correct answers here
Smell	receptors recognise the 8 . Type correct answers here in food	the brain identifies certain 9 . Type correct answers here	smell is key to our enjoyment of food

Questions 10-13

Answer the questions below. Type **NO MORE THAN ONE WORD** from the text for each answer.

10. In what form does the brain store 'odor objects'?

Type correct answers here

11. When seeing was difficult, what did we use our sense of smell to find?

Type correct answers here

12. Which food item illustrates how flavour and positive emotion are linked?

Type correct answers here

13. What could be controlled in the future through flavour manipulation?

Type correct answers here

Next

In many ways, he is discovering that smell is rather like face recognition. The visual system detects patterns of light and dark and, building on experience, the brain creates a **q6 spatial map**. It uses this to interpret the interrelationship of the patterns and draw conclusions that allow us to identify people and places. In the same way, we use patterns and ratios to detect both new and familiar flavors. As we eat, specialized receptors in the back of the nose detect the **q8 air molecules** in our meals. From signals sent by the receptors, the brain understands smells as complex spatial patterns. Using these, as well as input from the other senses, it constructs the idea of specific **q9 flavors**.

This ability to appreciate specific aromas turns out to be central to the pleasure we get from food, much as our ability to recognize individuals is central to the pleasures of **q7 social life**. The process is so embedded in our brains that our sense of smell is critical to our enjoyment of life at large. Recent studies show that people who lose the ability to smell become socially insecure, and their overall level of happiness plummets.

Working out the role of smell in flavor interests food scientists, psychologists, and cooks alike. The relatively new discipline of molecular gastronomy, especially, relies on understanding the mechanics of aroma to manipulate flavor for maximum impact. In this discipline, chefs use their knowledge of the chemical changes that take place during cooking to produce eating pleasures that go beyond the ‘ordinary’.

However, whereas molecular gastronomy is concerned primarily with the food or ‘smell’ molecules, neurogastronomy is more focused on the receptor molecules and the brain's spatial images for smell. Smell stimuli form what Shepherd terms ‘odor objects’, stored as **q10 memories**, and these have a direct link with our emotions. The brain creates images of unfamiliar smells by relating them to other more familiar smells. Go back in history and this was part of our survival repertoire, like most animals, we drew on our sense of smell, when visual information was scarce, to single out **q11 prey**.

Thus the brain's flavor-recognition system is a highly complex perceptual mechanism that puts all five senses to work in various combinations. Visual and sound cues contribute, such as crunching, as does touch, including the texture and feel of food on our lips and in our mouths. Then there are the taste receptors, and finally, the smell, activated when we inhale. The engagement of our emotions can be readily illustrated when we picture some of the wide-ranging facial expressions that are elicited by various foods- many of them hard-wired into our brains at birth. Consider the response to the sharpness of lemon and compare that with the face that is welcoming the smooth wonder of **q12 chocolate**.

The flavor-sensing system, ever receptive to new combinations, helps to keep our brains active and flexible. It also has the power to shape our desires and ultimately our bodies. On the horizon we have the positive application of neurogastronomy: manipulating flavor to curb our **q13 appetites**.

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