

ESPA Sample Test

Task 1: Oral Summary of the article

You will have 20 minutes to read the article, take notes (words and phrases only), and prepare to give an oral summary. This task is about your speaking, *not reading ability*. Do not read directly from the article or your summary notes. Instead, imagine that you are teaching a group of undergrads who did not get a chance to read this article, so you are summarizing it for them before discussing it in class. It is okay if you do not finish reading or summarizing the article. At the end of the 20-minute preparation time, you will have 4 minutes to deliver your summary.

Set your timer for 20 minutes and begin reading the article and taking notes.

Article for Task 1

A Fresh Perspective: Sustainable Food Systems

Adapted from <https://2012books.lardbucket.org/pdfs/an-introduction-to-nutrition.pdf>

The science of nutrition includes the study of how organisms obtain food from their environment. An **ecosystem** is defined as the biological and physical environments and their interactions with the community of organisms that inhabit those environments as well as the interactions among the organisms.

Human nutrition and the health of the world's ecosystem are interdependent, meaning that what we eat and where we get it from affects the world. In turn, the health of the earth influences our health. The term **sustainability** is used to indicate the variety of approaches aimed at improving our way of life.

Sustainability promotes the development of conditions under which people and nature can interact harmoniously. It is based upon the principle that everything needed for human survival depends upon the natural environment. A major theme of sustainability is to ensure that the resources needed for human and environmental health will continue to exist. A healthy ecosystem, one that is maintained over time, is harmonious and allows for social and economic fulfillment for present and future generations. Nutritious foods come from our ecosystem and to ensure its availability for generations to come, it must be produced and distributed in a sustainable way. The American Public Health Association (APHA) defines a **sustainable food system** as “one that provides healthy food to meet current food needs while maintaining healthy ecosystems that can also provide food for generations to come with minimal negative impact to the environment.”¹ It also states that the attributes of a sustainable food system are:

- availability
- accessibility
- affordability to all

¹ (American Public Health Association. “Towards a Healthy, Sustainable Food System.” Policy Statement Database. Policy no. 200712 (November 6, 2007). <http://www.apha.org/advocacy/policy/policysearch/default.htm?id=1361>)

- humane
- just

A sustainable food system does not just include the food and those who consume the food, but also those that produce the food, like farmers and fishermen, and those who process, package, distribute, and regulate food. Unfortunately, we have a long way to go to build a sustainable food system.

The Challenges

The most prominent challenge to building a sustainable food system is to make food available and accessible to all. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) states the right to food is a fundamental human right and its mission is to assist in building a food-secure world. Food security in America is defined as the “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.”² As of 2009, 14.9 percent of households, or 17.4 million people in the United States, had very low or low food security and these numbers have risen in recent years.³

Food security is defined by the FAO as existing “when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”⁴ The FAO estimates that 925 million worldwide were undernourished in 2010. Although there was a recent decline in overall food insecurity (attributable mostly to a decline in undernourished people in Asia), the number of undernourished people worldwide is still higher than it was in 1970, despite many national and international goals to reduce it.

Another challenge to building a sustainable food system is to supply high-quality nutritious food. The typical American diet does not adhere to dietary guidelines and recommendations, is unhealthy, and thus

² “US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. “Food Security in the United States: Key Statistics and Graphics.” Last updated June 4, 2012. http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/stats_graphs.htm#food_secure

³ Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. “Food Security: Concepts and Measurement.” In Corporate Document Repository, ID: 144369. 2003. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y4671e/y4671e06.htm>

⁴ “Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. “How Does International Price Volatility Affect Domestic Economies and Food Security? In the State of Food Insecurity in the World. 2011. <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/en/>

costs this country billions of dollars in healthcare. The average American diet contains too many processed foods with added sugars and saturated fats and not enough fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Moreover, the average American takes in more kilocalories each day than ever before. This shift of the population toward unhealthy, high-calorie diets has fueled the obesity and diet-related disease crisis in this nation. Overall, the cost of food for the average American household has declined since the 1970s; however, there has been a growth of “food deserts.” A food desert is a location that does not provide access to affordable, high-quality, nutritious food. One of the best examples of a “food desert” is in Detroit, Michigan. The lower socioeconomic status of the people who live in this city does not foster the building of grocery stores in the community. Therefore, the most accessible foods are the cheap, high-caloric ones sold in convenience stores. As a result, people who live in Detroit have some of the highest incidences of obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease in the country.

A fourth challenge to building a sustainable food system is to change how we produce, process, and distribute food. Large agribusiness, complex industrial processing, and massive retail conglomerations distort the connection we have between the food on our plate and where it came from. More food is being produced in this nation than ever before, which might sound good at first. However, some factors that have contributed to higher food production include using genetically engineered plants, excessive use of herbicides and pesticides, and the selective promotion of only a few crops by the policy of crop-specific subsidies (money given to farmers by the federal government). The subsidies are given toward the support of only about eight crops, most notably corn and soybeans. This policy diminishes the variety of crops, decreases biodiversity among crops, and supports large agribusiness while disadvantaging small- and medium-sized farms. Additionally, the whole system of food production, processing, and distribution is lengthy, requiring a great deal of energy and fossil fuels, and promotes excessive use of chemicals to preserve foods during transportation and distribution. In fact, the current US food system uses

approximately 22 percent of the energy in this country and is responsible for at least 20 percent of greenhouse gas emissions.⁵

Solutions to the Challenges

While these challenges are intimidating, there are many potential solutions that are gaining momentum in the United States. The APHA advocates expanding the infrastructure for locally grown food, improving access to healthy and local food for low-income Americans, providing education on food origin and production, building up the livelihoods of local farmers, and using sustainable farming methods. Detroit is currently a “food desert,” but there is a fantastic example of how to positively affect the growth of a sustainable food system within the city. It is called the Eastern Market and it is a six-block inner city market with over 250 vendors marketing local produce, meat, seafood, plants, fresh-cut flowers and much, much more. Unlike many urban farmers’ markets, it sells foods that are of better quality and lower prices than grocery stores. Its forty-thousand visitors every Saturday demonstrate its success as a community-based way to foster good nutrition, good health, and social interaction.

Task 1: Summary

Speaking time: 4 minutes

Directions: Present your summary. not necessary to complete the summary in that amount of time.

You will now have 4 minutes to give your summary. Set your timer and begin.

⁵ Canning, P. et al. “Energy Use in the US Food System.” US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Report, no. ERR-94 (March 2010). http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR94/ERR94_ReportSummary.pdf

Task 2: Vocabulary List

Preparation Time: 30 seconds

Speaking Time: 45 seconds

Directions: Read each word one-by-one.

1.	Simulation	11.	Obvious
2.	Priority	12.	Method
3.	Exceed	13.	Attributed
4.	Newly formed	14.	Reluctant
5.	Nuclear	15.	Unified
6.	Visual	16.	Sphere
7.	Initiative	17.	Concurrent
8.	Precise	18.	Liberal
9.	Thereby	19.	Widespread
10.	Guarantee	20.	Deviation

You will now have 45 seconds to read each word one-by-one. Set your timer and begin.

Task 3: Vocabulary in Sentences

Preparation Time: 1 minute

Speaking Time: 1 minute

Directions: Study the five sentences below for one minute. After one minute, read each sentence aloud, one by one.

1.	We do not account for the deviation from this law in our numerical model, so our results are not conclusive.
2.	Our goal is to digitize some images into the computer to see if any kind of unified theory emerges.
3.	All new users need the ability to make multiple concurrent connections through the same account.
4.	This two-day online seminar will teach you the precise methods needed to perform a successful experiment.
5.	This article shows two challenges to a widespread understanding of the science of evolution.

You will now have 1 minute to read each sentence one-by-one. Set your timer and begin.

Task 4: Vocabulary Definitions

Preparation Time: 90 seconds

Speaking Time: 2 minutes

Directions: During the preparation time, look at the five words below and prepare definitions. During the two-minute speaking time, explain the meaning of as many of these words as you want.

1.	Nuclear
2.	Guarantee
3.	Initiative
4.	Simulation
5.	Liberal

You will now have 2 minutes to give your definitions. Remember to speak for the full 2 minutes. Set your timer and begin.

Task 5: Graph Interpretation

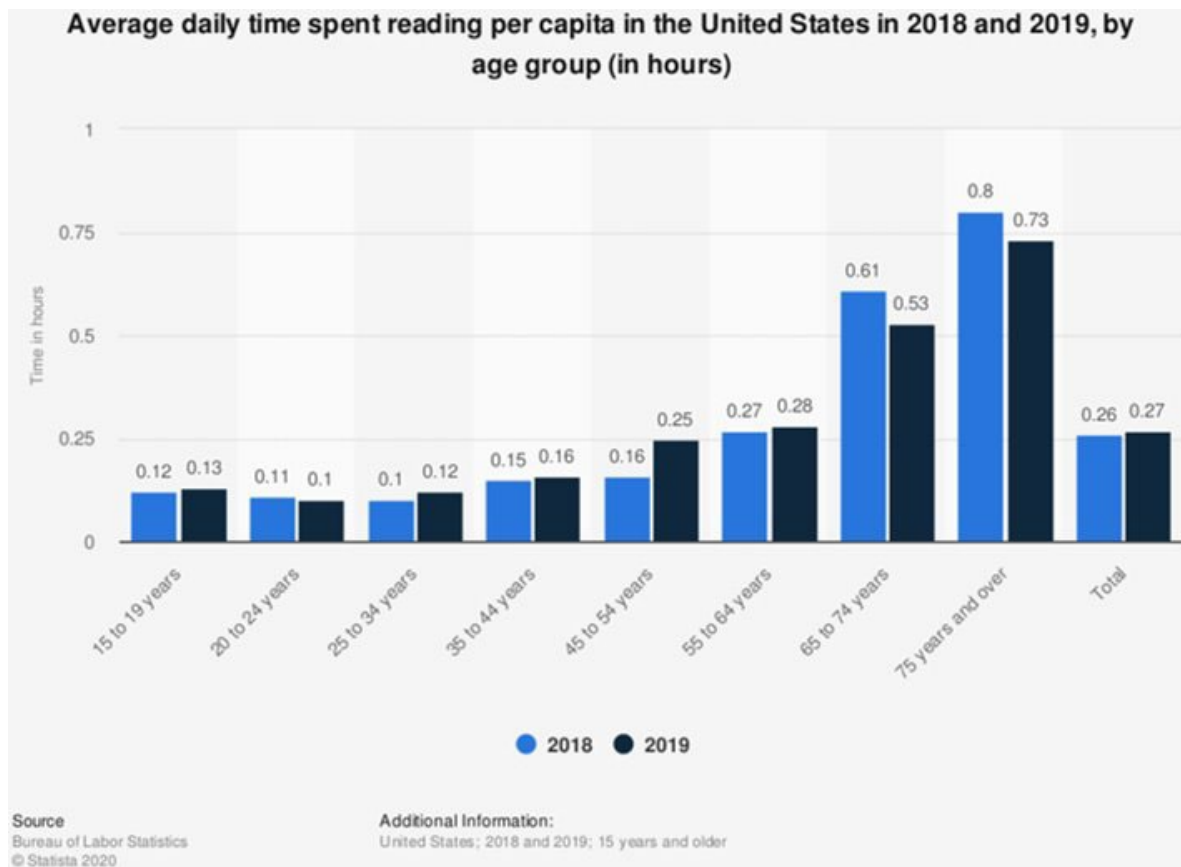
Preparation Time: 90 seconds

Speaking Time: 3 minutes

Directions: Imagine that you are a TA of an undergraduate level class, and you will present a graph to your class. Study the graph below for 90 seconds. After the preparation time, you will have 3 minutes to describe what you see in the graph and interpret it (e.g. make a generalization or a prediction of what would happen if the trend continued). You can use the three questions with the graph to help you organize and develop your presentation.

Questions to help you:

1. Talk about the information in the graph.
2. What do you think are the reasons for these data?
3. What are some implications of this graph?



You will now have 3 minutes to describe & interpret the graph. Set your timer and begin.

Task 6: Announcement

Preparation Time: 2 minutes

Speaking Time: 2 minutes

Directions: Imagine that you are a TA of an undergraduate level class. Study the announcement below for 2 minutes. After the preparation time, you will have 2 minutes to present the information to your students.

Virtual Study Abroad Fair

When: April 14-17

Where: Your living room!

What: Plan your study abroad experience! (Zoom webinar)

Learn:

- different study abroad programs & internships
- how study abroad fits with your major
- available scholarships and grants
- virtual ways to connect with the world in Iowa

Plus, attendees will be entered into a drawing to win a \$250 scholarship!

Registration: <https://international.uiowa.edu/virtual-study-abroad-fair>

More information: Kristine Smith at kristine-smith@uiowa.edu.

You will now have 2 minutes to make your announcement. Set your timer and begin.