

Unit 6 JAMIE OLIVER

Teach Every Child About Food

Part 1

. . . OK, school. What is school? Who invented it? What's the purpose of school? School was always invented to **arm us with**¹ the tools to make us creative, do wonderful things, make us earn a living, etc., etc., etc. You know, it's been kind of in this sort of **tight box**² for a long, long time. **OK?**³ But we haven't really evolved it to deal with the **health catastrophes**⁴ of America, OK? School food is something that most kids—31 million a day, actually—have twice a day, more than often, breakfast and lunch, 180 days of the year. **So you could say that school food is quite important, really, judging the circumstances**⁵. . .

Now, the reality is, the food that your kids get every day is fast food, it's highly processed, there's not enough fresh food in there at all. You know, the amount of additives, **E numbers**⁶, ingredients you wouldn't believe—there's not enough veggies at all. French fries are considered a vegetable. Pizza for breakfast. They don't even get given **crockery**⁷. Knives and forks? No, they're too dangerous. They have scissors in the classroom, but knives and forks? No. And the way I look at it is: If you don't have knives and forks in your school, you're

purely endorsing, from **a state level**⁸, fast food, because it's handheld. And yes, by the way, it is fast food: It's **sloppy joes**⁹, it's burgers, it's wieners, it's pizzas, it's all of that stuff. Ten percent of what we spend on healthcare, as I said earlier, is on obesity, and it's going to double. We're not teaching our kids. There's no **statutory**¹⁰ right to teach kids about food, elementary or secondary school. OK? We don't teach kids about food. Right? And this is a little clip from an elementary school, which is very common **in England**¹¹.

[Video] Jamie Oliver: Who knows what this is?

Child: Potatoes.

Jamie Oliver: Potato? So, you think these are potatoes? Do you know what that is? Do you know what that is?

Child: Broccoli?

JO: What about this? Our good old friend. Do you know what this is, honey?

Child: Celery.

JO: No. What do you think this is?

1. When a person is “armed with something,” its purpose is to help them be prepared for something. In this case, school arms us for the future.
2. When Oliver calls school a “tight box,” he is using this metaphor to explain things related to schooling have been set and unchanging.
3. Note that Oliver uses the question “OK?” as a tag at the end of his statements throughout his talk. He also uses “Right?”
4. By “health catastrophes,” Oliver is referring to medical problems prevalent in the US, such as diabetes, due to obesity.
5. If we are only reading this statement, it sounds quite straightforward. However, Oliver's delivery is given with a slight tone of sarcasm during his talk, which is why the audience laughs as he says this. Either way, Oliver is saying that of course school lunches are very important.
6. “E numbers” refers to a system of labeling that is common in Europe. The letter E followed by a number indicates when a food contains additives.
7. “Crockery” is a synonym for dishes, plates, and cups.
8. The term “at state level” refers to state governments, which, in the U.S., make many of the decisions regarding schools, such those about school nutrition.
9. A “sloppy joe” is a sandwich similar to a hamburger, except the meat is kept loose instead of shaped into a paddy, and a sweet, ketchup-based sauce is mixed in.
10. Something that is “statutory” is required, usually by law.
11. Note that Oliver says “in England” here even though the video clip is from a school in America. He is making the point that the same scene is also very typical in England.

Child: Onion.

JO: Onion? No.

JO: Immediately you get a really clear sense of: Do the kids know anything about where food comes from?

JO: Who knows what that is?

Child: Uh, pear?

JO: What do you think this is?

Child: I don't know.

JO: If the kids don't know what stuff is, then they will never eat it.

Normal. England and America, England and America.

Guess what fixed that. Guess what fixed that: Two one-hour sessions. We've got to start teaching our kids about food in schools, period.

Part 2

I want to tell you about something that kind of **epitomizes**¹² the trouble that we're in, guys. OK? I want to talk about

something so basic as milk. Every kid **has the right to**¹³ milk at school. Your kids will be having milk at school, breakfast and lunch. Right? They'll be having two bottles. OK? And most kids do. But milk **ain't**¹⁴ good enough anymore. Because someone at **the milk board**¹⁵, right—and don't get me wrong, I support milk—but someone at the milk board probably paid a lot of money for some **geezer**¹⁶ to work out that if you put loads of flavorings and colorings and sugar in milk, right, more kids will drink it. Yeah. . . .

For me, there ain't no need to flavor the milk. Okay? There's sugar in everything. I know **the ins and outs**¹⁷ of those ingredients. It's in everything. Even the milk hasn't escaped the kind of modern-day problems. There's our milk. There's our carton. In that is nearly as much sugar as one of your favorite cans of **fizzy pop**¹⁸, and they are having two a day. So, let me just show you. We've got one kid, here, having, you know, eight tablespoons of sugar a day. You know, there's your week. There's your month. And I've taken the liberty of putting in just the five years of elementary school sugar, just from milk. . . .

¹². To “epitomize something” is to offer an exact or perfect example of it.

¹³. When we “have the right to something,” it means it's a basic need that we morally or legally should have.

¹⁴. The word “ain't” is a colloquial way to say “is not”, “are not”, and “am not”. It is generally not considered correct English, however it is used widely by native speakers in various locations around the world.

¹⁵. The “milk board” is a government agency that makes decisions about milk production and distribution in the U.S.

¹⁶. “Geezer” is a slang term, with a negative tone, for older man.

¹⁷. When you know “the ins and outs” of something, you know it in great detail.

¹⁸. “Fizzy pop” is a synonym for soda.

Part 3

Obviously in schools we owe it to them to make sure those 180 days of the year, from that little precious age of four, til 18, 20, 24, whatever, they need to be cooked proper, fresh food from local growers on site. OK? There needs to be a new standard of fresh, proper food for your children. Yeah?

Under the circumstances, it's profoundly important that every single American child leaves school knowing how to cook 10 recipes that will save their life. Life skills.

That means that they can be students, young parents, and be able to sort of duck and dive around the basics of cooking, no matter what recession hits them next time. If you can cook, recession money doesn't matter. If you can cook, time doesn't matter. . . .

I know it's weird having an English person standing here before you talking about all this. All I can say is: I care. I'm a

father, and I love this country, and I believe truly, actually, that if change can be made in this country, beautiful things will happen around the world. If America does it, I believe other people will follow. It's incredibly important.

When I was in Huntington, trying to get a few things to work when they weren't, I thought "If I had a magic wand, what would I do?" And I thought, "You know what? I'd just love to be put in front of some of the most amazing **movers and shakers**¹⁹ in America." And a month later, TED phoned me up and gave me this award. I'm here. So, my wish. **Dyslexic, so I'm a bit slow**²⁰. My wish is for you to help a strong, sustainable movement to educate every child about food, to inspire families to cook again, and to empower people everywhere to fight obesity.

Thank you.

This is an edited version of Oliver's 2010 TED Talk. To watch the full talk, visit TED.com.

¹⁹. The term "moves and shakers" refers to powerful people in their fields, who are usually the decision-makers.

²⁰. Dyslexia is reading disorder that causes problems with organizing and arranging words and thoughts. In his talk, Oliver explains that he is "dyslexic" here to explain why he is taking time to find his notes for his final statement. Note that he is also using this moment to compose his emotions.