

Replying to the letter on page 38

A worried mother and her two children have an argument over the consumption of meat. Her children want to become vegetarians, but she doesn't want them to become vegetarians.

1.1 Understanding the letter

Look for the English equivalents in the text and write them down.

Neuigkeiten bekanntgeben – *to break the news*

..., die gerade 12 Jahre alt wurde, ... - _____

zahllose gesundheitliche Gründe - _____

sich entwickeln / sich entfalten - _____

ein großes gesundheitliches Risiko - _____

Massentierhaltung – _____

anekeln / abstoßen - _____

Bio Fleisch - _____

... wir könnten es uns nicht leisten. - _____

seine größte Sorge - _____

Zerstörung des Regenwaldes - _____

es würde mir nichts ausmachen ein bisschen weniger Fleisch zu essen -

ein großer Fehler - _____

1.2 Talking about statements from the letter

Find a partner / partners and discuss the following statements, which are taken from the letter to Mara. Use some of the words and expressions from the list above as well as from the list below.

to live close to nature / to live in harmony with nature – naturnah leben / im Einklang mit der Natur leben; alternative – Alternative; delicious – köstlich; behaviour – Verhalten; habit - Gewohnheit

Statement 1: "We humans evolved because we ate meat. It's against nature to go without it completely." Discuss if you agree or disagree.

Statement 2: "The kind of factory farming we have in this country today disgusts her. [...] it's just one of those things we have to accept." Discuss if you agree or disagree that we have to accept factory farming.

Statement 3: "I wouldn't mind cutting down a bit on meat." What about you? Would it be hard for you to cut down on meat?

1.3 Information on meat consumption and vegetarianism

Read the following texts.

a) **Health:** If a vegetarian diet (eine vegetarische Ernährung) is balanced and includes cheese, nuts, lentils (Linsen), soy (Soja), eggs and other sources of protein (Proteinlieferanten), then it is just as healthy as a diet that includes meat. Some scientists say that vegetarians are less likely to suffer from high blood pressure (unter Bluthochdruck leiden) and heart attacks.

While our bodies certainly need enough protein, it shouldn't be the biggest worry (die größte Sorge) when it comes to a healthy diet. One of the biggest health risks today is the high amount of sugar (große Menge an Zucker) that we consume. Consequently, people who worry about health risks should cut down on sugar (sollten ihren Zuckerkonsum reduzieren) and make sure they eat plenty of vegetables and fruits.



b) **Treatment of animals:** Most of the meat that is offered in supermarkets and restaurants comes from factory farms. Animals at factory farms are often under stress because they have very little room. As a consequence they sometimes attack each other or try to eat each other. These attacks can cause injuries (Angriffe können Verletzungen hervorrufen) and infections. That's why many factory farmers cut off the beaks (Schnäbel) of chicken and remove the teeth of piglets (entfernen die Zähne von Ferkeln). But you can also get meat from animals that are allowed to move freely within and outside their barns (außerhalb ihrer Ställe). These animals are called free-range animals (freilaufende Tiere). Meat from free-range animals is usually more expensive than meat from factory-farmed animals (Tiere aus Massentierhaltung).



c) **Destruction of the rainforest:** The average European (der durchschnittliche Europäer) consumes 61 kg of soy each year. Not directly, but indirectly, because we eat meat. Animals at factory farms eat a lot of soy and most of the soy that they eat is grown on fields in South America (wird auf Feldern in Südamerika angebaut), on areas that used to be rainforest (auf Gebieten, die früher Regenwald waren). This means that when we eat factory-farmed meat, especially chicken and pork, we indirectly destroy the rainforest in South America.

1.4 Collecting words and phrases from the texts

Fill in the table below. You can find the English equivalents in the texts.

English	German
<i>sources of protein</i>	Proteinlieferanten
	unter Bluthochdruck leiden

	die größte Sorge
	eine vegetarische Ernährung
	große Menge an Zucker
	die Zähne von Ferkeln entfernen
	freilaufende Tiere
	den Zuckerkonsum reduzieren
	Angriffe können Verletzungen hervorrufen
	Tiere aus Massentierhaltung
	wird auf Feldern in Südamerika angebaut
	Soja
	der durchschnittliche Europäer
	Gebiete, die früher Regenwald waren

1.5 Questions on the texts

Underline those sentences which are correct according to the texts.

- a) Vegetarians usually have a high blood pressure.
- b) Cheese, nuts, lentils and eggs contain a lot of protein.
- c) Animals in factory farms don't have enough room so they sometimes attack each other.
- d) In these attacks, the animals use their heads and teeth.
- e) Most of the meat that you can buy in supermarkets is from free-range animals.
- f) Free-range animals eat a lot of soy.
- g) Most of the meat from factory-farmed animals comes from South America.

1.6 Planning an answer

Read the letter on page 38 again and write down arguments that the children and the mother give. Then use your knowledge and react from the perspective of the agony aunt.

arguments for / against vegetarianism	agony aunt's reaction / answer
<i>the children say a vegetarian diet is healthier</i>	<i>We need enough protein. Meat contains protein, but so do eggs, lentils, etc.. You should worry about sugar, not about meat.</i>

1.7 Completing phrases that you could use in your letter

When you complete the phrases, you can use your notes from exercise 1.6. Keep in mind that an agony aunt typically shows understanding for every opinion or position, but that she also clearly states what she thinks is right and wrong.

- *Thanks for writing to me* _____
- *Your letter reminded me (erinnerte mich) of my own kids, they also* _____

- *When I read your letter, I thought of* _____
- *I can understand that you're worried, but* _____

- *Your daughter is right when she says that* _____

- *It's also quite right that* _____

- *If you want to make sure that your children's diet is healthy, then* _____

- *In your letter you said that your son wanted to* _____

- *You can be proud of your children, they are* _____

- *If we all ate less meat, this would be good for* _____
---simple past in the if-clause--- ---would/could/might in the main clause---

- *You're quite right when you say that organic meat is expensive. What you could do is* _____

- _____

1.8 Connectives

Find the connectives in the texts on meat consumption and vegetarianism and write them down.

Collect more connectives.

consequently, _____

