

Real English Conversations: Junk food (part 2 of 3)

Welcome to another episode of Real English Conversations from Better at English.com. In today's episode, Michael and I continue our discussion about the English government's decision to ban junk food ads on television before 9 pm, when children are likely to be watching. This is part two of a three-part series, so if you missed the first part you might want to listen to that first. In this episode we inadvertently end up discussing some differences in British and American English vocabulary. As always, you'll find the full transcript and vocabulary notes on the website, www.betteratenglish.com.

Here we go!

Conversation Transcript

- Lori: ...do you know what their rationale was, why children, and not just ban them across the board?
- Michael: I don't know the exact reason, but I assumed it was because of this, umm...this...the difficulty that that parents have in, you know, the kids **going**, "Mum, Mum! I..." You know? I don't know the exact reason.
- Lori: OK, because I...I would think that, I mean, that that's one reason, but another reason could be that when you're a child, that your basic eating habits and your relationship to food, that a lot of that is formed by the habits you form as a child.
- Michael: OK
- Lori: And so that's all the more reason to not be **making it any harder on** kids than it already is...
- Michael: That's inter- yeah...
- Lori: ...to develop good, healthy eating habits and...
- Michael: Right.
- Lori: Umm...
- Michael: Well, do you remember when, I mean, back when you were at school,
- Lori: Uh huh?
- Michael: Uhh...did, I mean you...I assume that you ate your lunches at school? Did you have **school dinners**?
- Lori: Yeah we had school "lunches" we would call them.
- Michael: Oh, OK, OK.
- Lori: Yeah, **school lunches**, yeah.
- Michael: Umm, but I mean, what was the food like then? I mean was it **healthful, healthy** food or?
- Lori: It's...it's hard to say I think it could have probably been healthier. I know in high school they always had salads and things, but there was so much junk food, just fried food.
- Michael: And what did the kids eat? Which did they choose? Do I need to ask?
- Lori: It would depend. You know, the **health conscious** ones would try to be healthy but there was a lot of, there's a lot of umm...denial and sort of strange rationalization going on when it comes to food. For example, I know that I had girlfriends who would buy for their snack, they would buy this big bag of **trail mix**, thinking that "oh yeah, it's healthy because it's natural." But the thing is, is that you know, eating this huge bag of nuts and dried fruit, you know all that concentrated energy -- and there were little bits of chocolate and things as well -- that that really,

unless you're out climbing mountains all day long, which is when you need something like trail mix...

Michael: That's why they call it trail mix!

Lori: That if you just, yeah, you know you don't need this huge gigantic pouch of trail mix just to get you through your biology lesson.

Michael: Sure, that's right, right.

Lori: But you know, still...

Michael: No, totally.

Lori: ...**rationalizing** it saying that, "Oh, oh I got this because it's healthy."

Michael: Yeah.

Lori: Umm..."because it's natural."

Michael: Well I thought, yeah, the...the school meals thing, let's call them school meals -- you call them err...school lunches and I call them school dinners, umm, but with the school meals, err...it's something that when you're...you're a kid...err...at school, I can remember back at school and there would be chips or what, err you, err "French fries."

Lori: Yeah, "fries."

Michael: Yeah, err for you, they're always on the menu, always and no matter what myself or my friends would eat, we would always have chips, and loads! As many as possible, they were the yummiest thing going! Umm but there was something...are you familiar, you know who Jamie Oliver is?

Lori: Oh yeah, sure, the Naked Chef!

Michael: TV naked chef!

Lori: Yeah.

Michael: Umm...but he was being very **outspoken** just recently about how really, really bad the choice of food...is in school, umm and he was trying to bring this to people's attention, using his celebrity status, and I don't...I don't think...this wasn't a money-making thing or anything like that, he was just using his...his position to make people aware of it and pointing out all these...all these things. So in the light of that, because this is a...this was a very recent thing too, in the light of that, this is very interesting that the government has taken this step.

Lori: Yeah, I think...I think it's a move in the right direction. I would...I would support ...a total ban on advertisement, because that's just one reason, you know, one more reason that you might watch TV -- to get at the good things that TV has to offer -- is that you know you won't be subjected to all of these, these advertisements that you don't want to see.

Michael: Right, well I mean, there are, I mean.

Lori: You know, advertising things that are bad for you, that hurt you but that are...

Michael: Of course.

Lori: ...still so compelling that maybe in your life you're doing everything you can to cut out the junk food and then you're sitting there, maybe even on a diet, if you're someone who's trying to lose weight...

Michael: Oh yeah.

Lori: ...so you're watching TV at night and the Haagen Dazs ad comes on.

Michael: [laughs]

Lori: With this...beautiful images of these gorgeous ice cream creations in front of you and...

Michael: Oh.
Lori: I mean it...it is really hard; that just puts the idea of food into your head and...
Michael: That's **torture**, that's torture.
Lori: Yeah, horrible torture...

Vocabulary list

going	In informal conversation, native speakers often introduce reported speech with the verb <i>go</i> . Many careful users of English disapprove of using <i>go</i> in this way, so you should not copy it.
making it (any) harder on	To make it harder on someone means to make it more difficult or unpleasant for them.
school dinners/lunches	In British English, the meal you eat at midday is often called “dinner.” In American English, this meal is most often called “Lunch,” and the evening meal is often called “dinner” or “supper.” Note that there is much regional/dialectal variation in the area of meal names.
healthy/healthful	In everyday English, “healthy” means (1) contributing to good health, and (2) possessing good health. So it’s OK to say “a healthy diet” (a diet that contributes to good health) and “a healthy child” (a child who possesses good health). But some careful users of English say that meaning (1) is wrong, and that to talk about things that contribute to good health you should use the word <i>healthful</i> . If you are writing a paper for someone like this, you should use <i>healthful</i> to talk about things that contribute to good health. Otherwise, you can use <i>healthy</i> for both meanings, as most native speakers do.
health conscious	If you are health conscious, you are very interested in good health and try to live a healthy/healthful lifestyle.
trail mix	Trail mix is a type of food for backpacking, hiking or other endurance activities. It is designed to be very calorie-dense for its weight. It typically contains nuts and dried fruit, and may also contain bits of chocolate (such as M&Ms) or other candy.
rationalizing	If you rationalize, you try to find valid reasons to explain your decisions or behavior, usually to make yourself feel better about it. The noun form is <i>rationalization</i> .
outspoken	If you are <i>outspoken</i> , you express your opinions and views very directly without worrying about what other people will think about them.
torture	<i>Torture</i> is the act of inflicting extreme mental or physical pain on someone to get them to do what you want them to, such as confess a crime or reveal a secret. Sometimes people torture others just to be cruel and horrible. But the word <i>torture</i> is often used informally to denote any unpleasant experience.