NEWS BREAK

Article:  At mealtimes, consider a return to the table (sans the phone)

Section:  AT HOME IN THE NW, F11

Sunday's News Break selects an article from Sunday, April 18, 2021 of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

*Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will talk about whether their families sit at a table for meals and whether they find this act important. They’ll discuss what happens during meal times and how sitting together could bring families even closer. Students will talk about whether electronics are allowed during meals, why it’s difficult for people to disconnect from technology and why breaks are important. They will also talk about whether their family sets the table for a meal and when that happens, is it on a daily basis or maybe just holidays. They will discuss how they feel when they sit at a table that’s been set and how these simple additions may make meal times extra special with a bit of extra effort.
Pre-Reading Discussion:

• What do you think the article will be about, using only this picture?
• Are there clues?
• What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using context clues? A context clue is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

But she acknowledges that sitting at the table instead of in front of the TV, or eating without scrolling on your phone can feel like daunting tasks, because “it’s hard to unlink those two behaviors when you’ve done them day after day.”

Daunting Guess:

Daunting Definition:
**Comprehension Questions:**

1. What is “Quarantine permissiveness?”
2. But it may be time to consider a return to what?
3. “Eating should be an experience and something you enjoy,” Albers said. “You don’t have to take a lot of time to eat, but when you do it, give it your full attention.” What does she mean by this?
4. What is considered “zombie eating?”
5. But she acknowledges that sitting at the table instead of in front of the TV, or eating without scrolling on your phone can feel like daunting tasks. Why?
6. The good news is that sitting down and eating meals at the table doesn’t have to be a chore. When you reframe mealtimes as special parts of the day, a time to connect with loved ones or to unwind alone, they become what?
7. Many people have leaned into cooking during the pandemic, and _______ _________ is a great way to honor the work that goes into preparing a meal.
8. What are the 5 steps to make meal times special?

**Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay Questions:**

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first I thought ________________, but now I think ____________?
- What things did you already know from prior experience?
- Does your family sit at a table for meals? All of them? Which ones?
- If you sit together for meals, do you find this important? Will you want your own family to sit together, when you have children?
- What happens when families sit together during meal time? How would this bring families closer together?
- Are electronics allowed during meal time in your home? Why or why not?

If you have found yourself over the past year increasingly eating dinner in front of the TV, or scrolling endlessly through your phone over breakfast, you certainly are not alone.

- If you have a cell phone or tablet, do you find yourself mindlessly scrolling during meals? Why?
- Why is it difficult for people to “disconnect” from technology?
- Why are tech breaks important?

Fallon Carter, an event planner based in New York City, recently bought a new dining table. She has found that sitting down to proper meals during the pandemic has been a great way to connect with herself. “When you set the space and set the zone,” she said, “you can turn any place into something
special.” Nothing about dining at a table has to be fussy, but a little effort can go a long way toward making the experience enjoyable. Carter added a floral arrangement to her dining table, with flowers she bought at Trader Joe’s. “It wasn’t a big lift,” she said, laughing, but it made the space feel more inviting. She also suggests using cloth napkins and proper glassware, and acquiring a set of dishes that you really love.

- **Does your family set the table for meals on a daily basis? What meals? Only during holidays?**
- **How do you feel when you sit at a table that’s been set? Maybe there are nice dishes, glasses, candles or flowers? How do these simple additions make a meal time extra special?**

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