

## In Focus 2 - Speed Reading Unit 12

### Meat Eating and Human Evolution

Long ago, before modern humans walked the Earth, early people lived very different lives. What they ate, and how they got their food, was very different from today. One of the biggest changes in the way people lived was when they started eating meat. This change played a significant role in human evolution. Evolution explains how living things change with their environment over time.

In the beginning, we were similar to chimpanzees. We lived in trees and ate plants. As time passed, the climate changed, and most of the trees were gone. We had to change our behavior to survive. We came down from the trees and started walking on two legs. This was the beginning of a big change.

Around two million years ago, something new happened. Early humans, began to eat meat. This wasn't common before. Early humans were not strong or fast like other animals that eat meat. They had to find new ways to get meat. At first, they learned to cut meat from animals that were already dead. Later, they learned to work together to kill animals for food.

Eating meat brought many benefits. Meat is full of energy. This helped early humans grow much bigger brains. A bigger brain meant they could think better and learn new skills. They started to catch and kill animals in groups. This improved their communication. Later, they made better tools and learned to control fire. Cooking meat made it easier to eat and process the food. It also made it safer by preventing diseases.

As the food they ate every day changed, so did their bodies. Their bodies became better suited for eating meat. This didn't mean they stopped eating plants. They ate both plants and meat. This is called being omnivorous. This change had a big effect on human evolution. Bigger brains led to more complex thoughts. Early humans started to create art and develop languages. They built communities and spread across the world. Meat played a key role in this development. But eating meat also had challenges. Early humans had to learn to avoid bigger, stronger animals. They had to work together to be successful. This need to work together was important. It helped early humans develop strong social connections.

Today, the debate on meat eating is complex. Some people choose not to eat meat for moral or health reasons. Others argue that meat is a natural food for humans. What is clear is that in our long-ago past, eating meat was a turning point. It helped shape who we are today.

The shift to eating meat was a key moment in human evolution. It led to bigger brains, better ways of working together, and the development of language and art. Humans changed from living in trees to walking the Earth. They went from simple plant eaters to skilled killers of food animals. The way they followed was full of challenges and changes. It played a very big role in making humans who we are today.

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When you have finished, write your time in the box.

Now, go to the next page and answer the questions. **Do NOT look back at the text.**

**Now, let's test your understanding of the text with some questions.**

1. What did early human ancestors mostly eat before they started eating meat?
  - A) Fish
  - B) Insects
  - C) Plants
  - D) Eggs
  
2. How did early humans obtain meat in the beginning?
  - A) They raised animals.
  - B) They found dead animals.
  - C) They fished in rivers.
  - D) They bought it.
  
3. How did early humans hunt animals?
  - A) Alone
  - B) In pairs
  - C) In groups
  - D) They did not hunt.
  
4. What was one benefit of eating meat for early humans?
  - A) Their brains grew bigger.
  - B) They became faster runners.
  - C) They could swim better.
  - D) Their skin became tougher.
  
5. What did bigger brains allow early humans to do?
  - A) Think better
  - B) Run fast
  - C) Eat more
  - D) Sleep less
  
6. What does omnivorous mean?
  - A) Eating a meat-based diet
  - B) Eating a plant-based diet
  - C) Eating cooked food
  - D) Eating plants and meat
  
7. Why did cooking meat become important?
  - A) It made meat taste better.
  - B) It killed disease.
  - C) It was a fun activity.
  - D) It helped them stay warm.
  
8. What kind of diet is called omnivorous?
  - A) Eating only plants
  - B) Eating only meat
  - C) Eating both plants and meat
  - D) Eating neither plants nor meat
  
9. What happened as a result of early humans eating meat?
  - A) They started living underwater.
  - B) They developed complex thoughts.
  - C) They stopped using tools.
  - D) They lost the ability to speak.
  
10. What is one reason some people today choose not to eat meat?
  - A) They prefer the taste of water.
  - B) It is the only food available.
  - C) They can't find any meat.
  - D) They have moral or health reasons.