



# Student Perspective E-Newsletter

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## 'Organic vs Non-Organic Food' by Lilia Baker

Let's talk food. You know? That thing we consume every now and then. It plays a big part in our lives, but how much of it is actually beneficial? Have you ever stopped to think what actually happens to your vegetables before they get to your plate? How about that lamb chop you ate the other night, what did that have to go through? Not many people know, but most fruit, veg, and even meat have a lot of unwanted chemicals added to it.

I recently had a science internal in which I had to learn and present information about organic food and if it was better for us than non-organic. What I found was shocking. Did you know that most pesticides used on non-organic plant produce is carcinogenic, and over half a million people get sick from non-organic food every year? Non-organic is an extremely unhealthy way to eat, and unfortunately, not that many people are aware how bad it truly is. Despite being a little more expensive, organic food is far more effective and better for you in the long run.

So, how is non-organic food bad for you, and why is organic food better? Non-organic food is grown and processed with the use of many, many chemicals and added flavours. Pesticides play a big part in the growth of non-organic foods, and when sprayed onto plants, they can strip the natural nutrients and replace them with harmful toxins instead. Non-organic food contains many dangerous ingredients from the pesticides, and there is often a highly toxic residue found in non-organic food. This means a harder time for our tummies to break down nutrients, and unwanted chemicals messing with our body's functionality. It's also known that some non-organic pesticides contain traces of heavy metals.

During processing, non-organic foods have even more chemicals put into them! When being washed, non-organic fruit will have various chemicals sprayed onto the outside to increase shelf life and change the flavour. According to studies published in the Pesticides Literature Review journal, chemical pesticides have been strongly tied to many diseases and chronic illnesses found in farmers and people that have a more conventional diet. Cancer, reproductive problems and nervous system ailments have all been connected to the use of chemical pesticides. The problems of non-organic food arise from the lack of nutrients and overload of synthetic ingredients. Quercetin, which helps prevent heart disease, cancer, and improve your immune system, is highly important for our bodies, and highly excessive in organic produce. There is hardly any quercetin in non-organic food.

Organic food is far superior and healthier to its counterpart. Because of the minimal chemicals and toxicity in pesticides, and rigorous cleaning in the processing of produce, organic food is extremely beneficial. The low amount of chemicals in pesticides means that organic food provides excessive amounts of natural nutrients and antioxidants. Antioxidants help boost our immune system, increase our metabolism, and protect us against oxidants. Professor Carlo Leifert, from Newcastle University, believes that there are substantial differences between the antioxidants in organic food. From studies, he believes the difference in the number of antioxidants in organic food can vary between 19% and 69% more than non-organic food. It is also known that organic animals that have more time grass grazing (e.g. cows or sheep) than non-organic animals, often provide more conjugated linoleic acid, or CLA for short. CLA is a heart-healthy fatty acid that improves cardiovascular protection. It can be found in breast milk, and in meat from animals that have been raised in organic conditions.

I think that organic food is way better option for our health, especially nowadays with fast food and the large amount of non-organic, synthetic food we consume. Organic food is known for being more expensive, but if a few extra dollars allow me to stay healthy and out of the hospital, why not?

## ‘2017 North Korea Military Parade’ by Mair Gibbs

On April the 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 North Korea held what is now a biennial military parade. The parade commemorated the 105<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the founder of communist North Korea, Kim Il Sung. The parade consisted of citizens of North Korea and the military alike showering their communist dictator Kim Jong-un, the founding father of North Korea’s Grandson, with praise and thanks. In addition to this the parades main intention was to showcase the nuclear weaponry North Korea possesses, the parade’s crowning jewel allegedly being a bi-continental missile named ‘Pukkuksong’, which translates to North Star.

The missile is supposedly the largest nuclear warhead to date and reports from the country’s propaganda filled newspaper claim that it is able to hit Central America. The missile is said to be fully functional but no evidence has emerged too support these claims leaving many to wonder if any of the weapons displayed are really what they are said to be.

In 2015 North Korea was claiming to be on the brink of war with the United States of America as they paraded similar weaponry forces, though it has been revealed that the majority of these were simply empty shells and decorated wood. North Korea’s obvious threats led to the American government spending an estimated 3 billion dollars in upgrading their missile defence system around Washington D.C.

Despite this, the newly inaugurated president Donald Trump was hasty to act and responded to North Korea’s recent war cries by sending out a fleet of navy ships into the waters separating the two nations. This added to the mounting tension

between the powers and many believed it was unsentimental as several days earlier on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2017 the US military had dropped the largest ever non-nuclear bomb in Afghanistan. The president was not deterred by the country’s protest and enlightened us all to the reasoning behind his actions by tweeting ‘North Korea is behaving very badly.’

In addition to this China has come under increasing pressure to cut trade with North Korea due to the fact China is North Korea’s main trading partner and the lack of crucial supplies being brought into North Korea would make it more susceptible to signing a peace treaty. But Chinese officials are hesitant as cutting ties would incur significant economic losses for the country, so they are currently remaining neutral but as time progresses they may be in a position where there is no option but to choose a side.



## 'Finding Solace In Your Own Orbit' by Lilian Jones

You're sitting on your bed, by yourself, scrolling through your feeds. Looking at all the people you know hanging out together, smiling, apparently having a much more exciting time than you are. Don't you start to feel a bit...lonely?

Well, I'm here to tell you that you can put your phone away and stop feeling sorry for yourself. You can have as much fun by yourself as you can with other people. Don't feel like you're doing your teenage-hood wrong by not going out to any 'lit' parties in the weekend and you're perfectly happy alone jamming to ABBA or watching Netflix with your cat. While it's important to spend time



socialising, building and strengthening your friendships, it's also important that you can learn to be solitary and get the same amount of fun out of the things you do solo.

It's okay to spend some time completely on your own planet. By occasionally doing activities alone, you'll make your planet more hospitable to exist within and discover that you can create your own happiness. So, go out into town and make the decision to buy that dress (or

not) by yourself. Go to the gym, go for a run or a fitness class alone and see how far you can push yourself, instead of comparing your progress with your exercise buddy. See that movie you've been waiting for months to be released that none of your friends were. Grab a coffee, read your book in the park and do some people watching - but don't check your phone. That's cheating.

## 'Switzerland's Neutrality is Immoral' by Alana Barns

After the atrocity that was WWII, the nations that were involved were all left with a feeling of remorse due to desperate acts of inhumanity, with one supposed exception. Switzerland's neutral status was, on the surface, exactly what Switzerland appeared to be, neutral, impassive, and pacifistic. However, beneath the disguise, Switzerland's "beneath-the-table" dealings are revealed to be immoral. Their actions go against the common principles humans share to distinguish the difference between right and wrong or good and bad behaviour.

During the Second World War, a major operation of Switzerland's was to act as a deposit box for goods plundered by the Nazis, which they turned into a successful and highly rewarding business. Other neutral nations refused to buy gold from Nazi Germany, so Switzerland accepted gold from the Nazis and sold it to the neutral nations themselves, but for a huge profit. They have been accused of this, with the documentation of gold and treasure shipments code-named "Operation Safe Haven", seized by the World Jewish Congress, to prove it. But at what point does the operation stop being a genuine service to other countries and start becoming a purely selfish money making ploy? The fact that Switzerland used their nation's status to conduct business by selling property that was stolen from all over Europe is immoral. Switzerland took advantage of the suffering of

victimized and persecuted Jews. Had Switzerland not been a neutral state, they would have never been entrusted with over \$100 million worth of valuables by Germany.

The Swiss were very welcoming to the assets deposited by the Jews before the war, even strengthening their laws concerning secrecy and anonymity around using safe deposit boxes, however the same openness was not shown towards the actual people. As Holocaust victims gathered in numbers, requesting their late relatives' riches, Switzerland put up firewall after firewall before the Allies became involved after the war. These came in the form of hiding the fact that they had dormant accounts containing Jewish riches and, despite their involvement in an agreement (the Washington Agreement of 1946), only 12% of the stolen assets were recovered, Jewish people had to wait until 1996 for the Washington Agreement to be re-negotiated and for a transparent audit to occur. Only then were they allowed to be reunited with their accounts.

Switzerland's neutrality is immoral because their idleness in the face of the Nazis. For the sake of not being associated with one side of the war, Switzerland refused to allow Jewish refugees into their country, sentries patrolled borders, sending thousands back to potential death. Accepting and caring for refugees is not necessarily "siding" or aligning with either the Allies or the Axis, it is the humanitarian and right thing to do, outlined by article 14 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was immoral for Switzerland to turn those, persecuted and seeking refuge, away. There were no evident threats made by the Nazis about invading Switzerland if she sheltered Jews, and why would the Nazis have attacked their own safe haven? Switzerland's idleness caused by their paranoia about maintaining their neutrality meant that refugees were not given the asylum they deserved.

If being neutral requires humanitarianism to be disregarded to conduct business, maintain neutrality, hide treasures from their rightful owners, and protect a country from a non-existent threat, then neutrality itself should be disregarded and compassion be the turning point of a decision or action. Switzerland's immorality broke numerous Human Rights including allowing persecuted to seek refuge, possess their own belongings, live in safety/ without fear of death, freedom of movement and adequate living standards. Switzerland's failure to commit moral principles to help the persecuted Jewish race during the Second World War, and for selfish reasons, proves the immorality of Switzerland's neutrality.

## 'The Benefits of Reading' by Juliet Tipler Clemett

I thought I would do some research on the Benefits of Reading, and here is what I found: reading expands your vocabulary and deepens your knowledge of words and their contexts. Children's books expose children to 50% more words than TV or a conversation, it develops analytical skills, writing skills and positively influences your writing. Surprisingly it improves your memory and can even reduce your chances of developing dementia or Alzheimer's disease. Frequent brain exercise (reading) can lower mental decline by 32% (research by the Huffington Post).

★It is proven that reading reduces stress and anxiety, and helps you relax. Reading can reduce stress by as much as 63% (Sussex University 2009). "Reading has been shown to put our brains into a pleasurable trance-like state, similar to meditation, and it brings the same health benefits of deep relaxation and inner calm. Regular readers sleep better, have lower stress levels, higher self-esteem,

and lower rates of depression than non-readers.” - The New Yorker. So if school work is getting too much for you, maybe take a break with a good book to help settle your frantic mind.

★Reading can make you more empathetic. Especially literary fiction as it helps you understand what others are thinking and their mental states: "Understanding others' mental states is a crucial skill that enables the complex social relationships that characterise human societies," David Comer Kidd and Emanuele Castano” (research from Science). Many studies have shown that Imagining stories can help you see the world from a new perspective and understand it better.

★Flipping the pages of a book can help you understand what you are reading, because the feel of the book provides the brain with some context which makes the brain have a better comprehension of what you are reading. (from Wired Reports). Stories open your mind and widen your perception.

★ Reading before bed can help you sleep, and is better than looking at a screen (even a kindle) because it sends you relaxing signals. Screens such as Kindles and other e-readers, phones and computers can actually keep you awake longer and hurt your sleep. “54% percent of children sleep near a small screen, and clock 20 fewer minutes of shut-eye on average because of it” (from the research of Pediatrics). So maybe reading a Kindle or a phone before bed is not a good idea!

★Some book subjects can bring about a huge sense of calm and tranquility. For example: Reading Spiritual texts has shown to bring about a sense of calm, and reading self-help books can actually help people suffering from mood disorders or mild mental illnesses.

★76% of 1500 readers in the United Kingdom said that ‘reading improves their life and makes them feel good’. Also in the survey was that on average those who read often are happier and more satisfied with life. So maybe if you are feeling down a book is the perfect medicine. Which all in all is very interesting research. I hope it encourages you all to pick up a book and explore a new exciting world.

