

The World's Fastest Eaters

Competitive eating is an intriguing sport. Yes, it's a sport, and it's drawing more and more attention each year. Sometimes referred to as speed-eating, it's a battle of who can eat more food in a set time, typically 10 to 15 minutes. The sport is often sanctioned, or officiated, by the International Federation of Competitive Eating. This organization hosts, sets the rules, and judges the most famous competitive eating events in the world.

The Fierce Competition

On July 4, 2018, Joey "Jaws" Chestnut returned to the annual Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest. He had his eye on the prize, the coveted Mustard Belt which he had already claimed ten times in this event, and a world record on top of that.

Chestnut had prepared well for the event. He was confident he would take home the belt. He didn't let any of the other heavyweight eaters, like Matt "Megatoad" Stonie, intimidate him. Joey barreled through his heaping plates of Nathan's hot dogs. He alternated between fistfuls of hot dogs and soaking wet bread. He ignored his body's natural cries for mercy. He never stopped, not when he almost got a hot dog lodged in his throat and not when he noticed a counting error on the electronic scoreboard.

His determination paid off. He won the

Mustard belt for the eleventh time, \$10,000 cash, and broke his own world record of 72 hot dogs. Joey "Jaws" Chestnut ate 74 hot dogs in 10 minutes. At age 34, he currently holds 43 world records.

The History of Speed Eating

Eating contests actually began as friendly pie eating contests at county fairs and picnics. These contests included children and adults. They sat side by side, typically with their hands tied. The contestants would dive down face first and pig out. The first to finish was declared the winner.

Traditional eating contests of other food items, like hot dogs and pizza, have been around since the early 1900s. Nathan's Hot



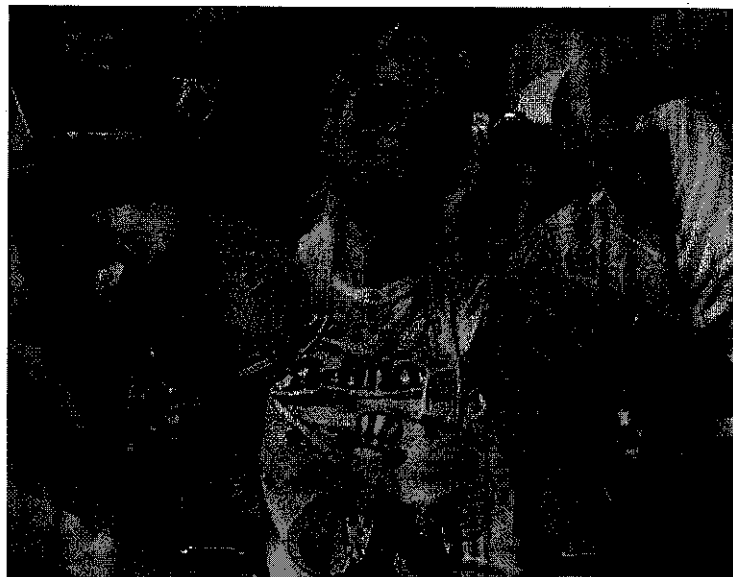
Jaey "Jaws" Chestnut wins Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest by downing 74 hot dogs on July 4, 2018.

Dog Eating Contest began in 1916 when four immigrants held the contest just to prove who was more patriotic. The sport, however, caught the eye of the competitive market in the early 2000s.

A Japanese contestant of the famous hot dog eating competition by the name of Takeru Kobayashi won six consecutive contests from 2001-2006. In 2001, Kobayashi shattered the standing record of 25.5 hot dogs by gobbling 50 hot dogs in 10 minutes. His incredible skill introduced the concept of true advanced speed eating and training techniques used by speed eaters today. Nathan's Hot Dog Eating contest draws crowds of about 40,000 to 50,000 each year. It is broadcast each year on ESPN2.

Behind the Scenes

Many of the top competitive eaters have made this a career. Matt "Megatoad" Stonie, age 25, has a net worth of \$500 million as a competitive eater and YouTuber. "We are professionals, we aren't just average Joes who have big appetites. We've calculated our



Miki Sudo shows off four of her belts in 2017.

techniques and approaches to these contests, we've trained our bodies and worked for what we've accomplished," says Stonie.

Competitors of the sport endure rigorous personal training under extreme medical supervision. The key to success is stomach elasticity. Training involves months of stretching the stomach further and further. Due to the risks involved with this type of training, the International Federation of Competitive Eating discourages anyone from enduring this intense training.

Medical professionals have studied the effects of speed eating, or binge eating. They've determined that the stress put on the stomach during training and events can cause serious side effects. These include ulcers and stomach perforations, water intoxication from gulping abnormally large quantities of water, choking, nausea, vomiting, and even death. All speed eating contests are attended by emergency responders for these reasons.

Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest Winners by Year		
Men/# of Hot Dogs	Year	Women/# of Hot Dogs
Joey Chestnut 74	2018	Miki Sudo 37
Joey Chestnut 72	2017	Miki Sudo 41
Joey Chestnut 70	2016	Miki Sudo 38
Matt Stonie 62	2015	Miki Sudo 38
Joey Chestnut 61	2014	Miki Sudo 34
Joey Chestnut 69	2013	Sonya Thomas 37
Joey Chestnut 68	2012	Sonya Thomas 40
Joey Chestnut 62	2011	Sonya Thomas 40

Comprehension Quiz

Answer each question according to the article.

1. How long does an eating competition last?

2. Who judges the contests?

3. When does the annual Hot Dog Eating Contest take place?

4. What prize does the winner take home?

5. According to the article, which contestant holds 43 world records?

6. What year did Nathan's Hot Dog Eating contest begin?

7. Why do professional eaters need medical professionals when they are training?

8. According to the article, what is one possible consequence of speed eating?

Finding Text Evidence

Find each piece of text evidence in the article and highlight OR underline it with the color specified.

For items 1-4, you'll be citing textual evidence to support what the text says explicitly.

1. Find the sentence that tells how food eating contests began. Highlight it in **blue**.
2. Find the sentence that explains the International Federation of Competitive Eating's official stance on intense speed-eating training. Highlight it in **green**.
3. Find the sentence that tells the new world record for hot dog speed eating. Highlight it in **purple**.
4. Find the sentences that tell what the word *sanctioned* means. Highlight it in **gray**.

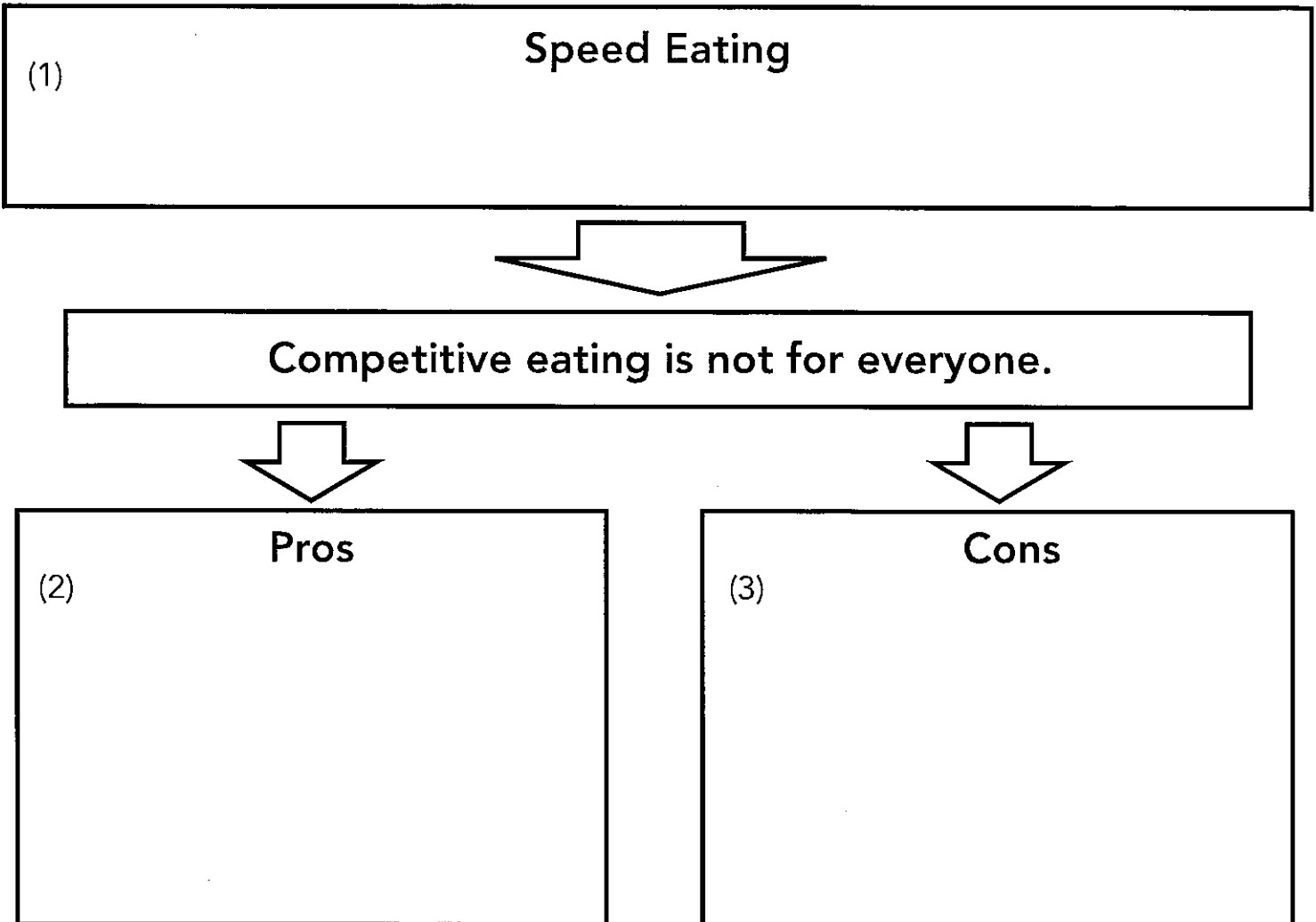
For items 5-8, you'll be citing one piece or multiple pieces of textual evidence to support inferences drawn from the text.

5. Find two pieces of evidence in the article that support the idea that it was very difficult for Joey Chestnut to break the world record for hot dog eating. Highlight them in **orange**.
6. Find two pieces of text evidence that support the idea that speed eating takes a serious amount of work and commitment. Highlight them in **pink**.
7. Find one piece of text evidence that highlights an individual who paved the way for today's competitive eating athletes. Highlight it in **yellow**.
8. Find one piece of text evidence that would make you assume that this sport can be quite damaging to the human body over time. Highlight it in **red**.

A. Analyzing Details

Use the article to answer the questions and complete the graphic organizers.

1. The main topic in the article is competitive eating as a sport. Briefly explain what competitive eating is and why it should be considered a sport.
2. List two advantages to becoming a competitive eater.
3. List two disadvantages to becoming a competitive eater.



4. Based on the effects of speed eating, do you think competitive eating is worth the risk? Explain your answer using the information in this activity.

B. Analyzing Details

In the spaces below, give details to elaborate on each central idea given. Use details provided by the author. Be sure to use examples and anecdotes given by the author when possible. The first one is done for you.

5. Joey Chestnut is the top competitive eater.

central idea

Joey Chestnut holds 43 world records.

He went to Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest to win and set a world record. He was determined during the contest. He won the Mustard belt and he broke the world record. He ate 43 hot dogs

He is ranked #1

Give 2 or more details to elaborate. This one uses an anecdote (a short or interesting story or situation about a real incident or person).

6. Speed Eating became more popular over time.

7. Competitive Eating can be a career.

Integrate Information

View the video clip, "This is How the Body Reacts to Competitive Eating" Then, answer these questions.

1. Think about how the article approaches competitive eating compared to how the video approaches the same topic. What does each focus on? What is different? What is similar?

What does the article focus on?

What does the video clip focus on?

Differences

Similarities

2. The video mentions one effect called gastroparesis. What is this and what causes it?

3. What techniques from the video clip most enhanced your understanding of how the body reacts to competitive eating?
