A sign with a person's face on it

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These tasks will help you prepare a piece of writing to enter the

Orwell Youth Prize 2024, on the theme of ‘HOME’

LESSON 1: IN DEFENCE OF ENGLISH COOKING

A bowl of soup next to a loaf of bread

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*“It is commonly said, even by the English themselves, that English cooking is the worst in the world.”*‘In Defence of English Cooking’ by George Orwell, published in the *Evening Standard*, 15th December 1945

Orwell wrote about the things that mattered to him – and these weren’t always obviously political or serious topics. For example, his essay ‘In Defence of English Cooking’ is all about food – and while he makes a serious point, he gives the reader a laugh.

**Read the full text** [**here**](https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/in-defence-of-english-cooking/)**.**

A table with plates of food

Description automatically generated**Food and home** are often very closely linked. Here are some prompts, inspired by ‘In Defence of English Cooking’, to help you get started coming up with ideas and writing a piece about **what food and home mean to you**:

1) Orwell picks out a selection of English foods he particularly loves. What would be on your list of most treasured home-foods, which you’d **miss** if you lived somewhere else? Are there foods/combinations of foods which are **special** to your family/community? How would you **describe** them to someone who had never tried them?

2) When **writing persuasively**, it’s important to show you’ve considered the other side of the argument. Orwell includes the **counterargument** in his ‘Defence’ of English cooking: *“It is commonly said, even by the English themselves, that English cooking is the worst in the world.”*

Imagine someone is arguing that the foods you love are ‘the worst in the world’. How would you **convince** them that they’re actually delicious?

3) What **foods** do you associate with **your home**?

- **Your** **household/family** – e.g. grandad’s curry, mum’s Sunday roast, sister’s cookies…

- **Comfort food** – a food which helps you relax at home

- **Your town/city/county/neighbourhood** – local delicacies you might not get elsewhere (e.g. Cornish pasties, Welsh cakes, haggis, Dorset knobs – look them up!)

- **Your country** – this could include both where you live now, and anywhere else you have lived (e.g. if you were born in/spent some years in a different country), or where your parents/grandparents lived.

4) **Plan** **to** **describe** your favourite, homely meal to make your reader’s mouth water.

**(15 minutes total)**

This could be any one of the four foods from above – your household/family food, your comfort food, your town/city/county food, your country’s food.

**3 steps:**

1) **MINDMAP** your feelings about this food in five areas, one for each sense. **(5 minutes)**

2) Next, move to the **PLAN**. Decide the best **order** in which to write your description – which of the senses will you start with? Number them – this will be your sequence. **(5 minutes)**

3) Now think of a good sentence to **LINK** each paragraph to the next and write each one down. It can come at the end of the old paragraph or the start of the new one.

**(5 minutes)**