

Jordyn Sullivan

3/4/19

Professor Jesse Miller

In 1963, Julia Child first appeared on her American television show, “The French Chef”. With this she helped take the fear out of cooking for many women who watched her. Her show took the viewer through the recipes step by step and it was even expected that the audience would follow along with her. This is polarized to the landscape of cooking shows today. Rachel Ray and The Pioneer Woman follow Child with their step by step recipes but they will miraculously pull a dish out of the oven that was supposed to bake for an hour in a matter of seconds. This certainly does not allow the viewer to follow along with the cooking, and not to mention, the pristine level of cooking on these shows is nothing like Julia Child’s flubs. Even though these shows are nothing like the one Child pioneered, they are much more similar than the ones that dominate the programming on the Food Network. Shows like Chopped, Cupcake Wars, and Iron Chef are cooking competition shows which manipulate food into entertainment rather than recipes to follow by the viewer. This shift reflects the shift in American culture from focusing on cooking meals for the family to spending more time in the office. Processed foods, fast food, and inventions like Soylent have accentuated this shift even further. In Michael Pollan’s essay, “Out of the Kitchen, Onto the Couch”, he points out a major change in the nature of cooking programs over the last several decades. This is evidence of a major cultural shift in the United States in recent years away from spending time together to living in “work mode”. Even though this is contrasted by the experiences of students at the University of New England, Nick Triggs, Molly Cadogan, and Kayla Lowe, these are rarities rather than everyday habits.

**Commented [MC1]:** I am not sure if this should be in your introduction? I like how it does provide background to the situation, but I think could work better as a body paragraph before your next one. This is a good lead in to where tv today are and how they are different from where they use to be.

**Commented [MC2]:** This is where your intro should start. It gives the broad overview of the topic(shift in culture) and then in the following paragraphs you can discuss where it started and where it is today

**Commented [MC3]:** Is this your thesis? I understand where you are going with your essay, but I am unsure about what your thesis is. You could combine the sentence before( this evidence...work mode) with how it is rare in today’s society.

If you have ever watched the food network, you will notice that during the day, instructional cooking shows modified from Julia Child's "The French Chef" are on screen, but primetime programming is full of competition themed shows, food versions of American Idol or America's Got Talent. The Food Network is not to blame for this since they are simply catering to the wants of their viewers. They are still just a company trying to maximize their profits.

According to Pollan, "Americans today spend more time working than people in any other industrialized nation -- an extra two weeks or more a year. Not surprisingly, in those countries where people still take cooking seriously, they also have more time to devote to it" (14).

American culture had become more and more focused on efficiency and productivity that we value cooking meals at home less than in other countries. We are just as content stopping at a fast food restaurant for dinner if that means getting to relax after a difficult day at the office. The last thing these hardworking people want to do when they come home from work is to cook. They would rather get some take out and sit down on the couch to turn on their favorite show. This might be America's Got Talent or Chopped. Even though one of these shows is featured on the Food Network, they are one in the same. The Food Network is catering to their audience in the sense that they want to be entertained after a long day at work. The major shift in television programming in order to cater to the wants of the audience demonstrates a major change in the

values of individuals in America. In our fast paced technological world, our loyalties lie with our progress at work and making money in a society that prides itself in being a capitalist nation. Since the progress that women have made on the social ladder, they had incorporated themselves into the workforce. As Pollan says, this removes women from the kitchen. For better or for worse, it cannot be denied that women are no longer focusing on the homes and cooking meals for their families after they come home from a long day at work.

**Commented [MC4]:** How does this quote work with the idea of competitive cooking shows? I think there is a better quote that you could put in instead

**Commented [MC5]:** This section should be its own paragraph. This paragraph begins with food shows, but after the quote you discuss working people, and then go back into the cooking shows. The quote til "...come home from work it[is?] cook." Is a good point to discuss the shift in culture

**Commented [MC6]:** Values do not really tie in with this whole paragraph. You should definitely include it with the work/productivity section of this paragraph to make it its own. To make sure you are sticking with one idea through out a paragraph try seeing if your topic sentence and closing sentence of that paragraph match

**Commented [MC7]:** Take out "for"

Even though our values in America have shifted largely away from stay at home moms making home cooked meals everyday, this is still an experience that many of the students at this university have had. The epitome of Pollan's article is an emphasis of Americans moving "onto the couch". Despite this, Molly Cadogan gets off the couch when her mom starts cooking her favorite meal, she says, "While doing my homework on the couch, out of the corner of my eye I spot my mom entering the kitchen and I can only hope she is going to be preparing dinner soon. I quickly shove my homework into my backpack and move to work in the kitchen, so I can get a front row seat to the show". Her actions of getting off the couch to watch her mom directly contrasts Pollan's opinion that Americans are no longer cooking meals. Cadogan's favorite meal of Chicken Parmesan is created from scratch and it far from processed foods that Pollan claims we have fallen to as a society. Even though Cadogan has moments from her life that challenge Pollan, Nick Triggs experience with his family lobster bake demonstrates the rarity of these meals shared with family members, Triggs tells his reader, "The best part about doing a lobster bake is "being with the family one last time for the summer and looking back at all the good times we had together as a family that summer". My family likes to spend as much time together as we can, but it can be difficult with different people being in different places". Triggs experience seems to be a once in a summer type occurrence, meaning he doesn't get to enjoy his favorite meal very often. All other days of the year his may align directly with Pollan's argument of decline in cooking. Even though many of us have experiences with home cooked meals, it seems that these are less common than they were when Julia Child was on the air.

**Commented [MC8]:** How does the paragraph before and this one relate? I think you should include a transition sentence to give your essay better flow instead of jumping from one idea to the next.

**Commented [MC9]:** Cadogan lol

**Commented [MC10]:** Have you thought of splitting these into multiple paragraphs? Together they seem a bit crammed, like you can not fully talk about one because you need to move onto the other. You could also put both examples early on and then discuss the common theme in both and how it relates to your overall idea

**Commented [MC11]:** Change the comma to a period so it is not a run on sentence

**Commented [MC12]:** Kinda confused with all of the quotation marks, if it is a quote with in a quote you do a single ( ' )

**Commented [13]:** I am not finished with the essay but this is 1,000 words so far

**Commented [MC14]:** Closing letter  
Hi Jordyn your essay looks really go so far, there are some things I think you need to work on though. Try to get a clear thesis statement, this will help the reader to prepare for what you are going to say later and it makes it easier to organize your ideas. Also, work on breaking up your ideas. You have multiple ideas in all of your paragraphs, by breaking them up so each idea had its own paragraph you can go into more depth on each. Lastly, I think you can improve your transitions whether it is changing idea in a paragraph or between paragraphs. Having transition sentences will make your essay more cohesive and give it better flow. Since our drafts had to be short I know you have more to talk about, but what you have now is good. Just make sure you are clear about why your paragraph/point is important to your thesis/your overall idea.