Dinner's on me: entertaining and eating out

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
ADVANCED | C1

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each advanced term with its definition.

1 conspicuous hospitality ____	**a** hospitality displayed partly to demonstrate wealth or status
2 commensality ____	**b** the practice or custom of eating together, and its social significance
3 noblesse oblige ____	**c** an obligation felt by the privileged to act generously towards others
4 reciprocity norm ____	**d** the expectation that a favour or invitation will be returned
5 largesse ____	**e** generous giving, especially by someone of high status
6 performative generosity ____	**f** generosity performed visibly, partly for social recognition rather than pure altruism
7 social obligation ____	**g** a duty felt towards others because of social convention
8 gastronomic capital ____	**h** prestige or status derived from culinary knowledge and taste
9 sumptuary ____	**i** relating to regulating or restraining extravagant expenditure
10 gauche ____	**j** socially awkward or lacking refinement

2 Choose the most precise term for each context.

1 Hospitality partly meant to display wealth is conspicuous hospitality / private charity.

2 The social practice of eating together is commensality / solitary dining.

3 An obligation felt by the privileged to be generous is noblesse oblige / entitlement.

4 The expectation that a favour will be returned is the reciprocity norm / one-way giving.

5 Generous giving by someone of high status is largesse / stinginess.

6 Generosity performed partly for recognition is performative generosity / quiet charity.

7 Prestige derived from culinary knowledge is gastronomic capital / financial capital.

8 Socially awkward or unrefined behaviour is gauche / polished.

3 Match the verbs with the noun phrases to form academic collocations.

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1 cultivate ____	**a** social status
2 signal ____	**b** generosity for an audience
3 confer ____	**c** prestige upon a host
4 flaunt ____	**d** wealth ostentatiously
5 reciprocate ____	**e** a gesture of goodwill
6 negotiate ____	**f** the etiquette of hosting
7 perform ____	**g** a sense of obligation
8 uphold ____	**h** gastronomic capital

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4 Complete the analysis with terms from the box.

commensality | conspicuous hospitality | gastronomic capital | gauche | largesse | noblesse oblige | performative generosity | reciprocity norm | social obligation | sumptuary

Anthropologists studying entertaining across cultures point to 1 _____, the shared act of eating together, as a foundational mechanism for building trust and social bonds. In stratified societies, elaborate feasting has historically functioned as 2 _____, signalling wealth to guests as much as offering nourishment. This dynamic echoes older notions of 3 _____, whereby the privileged were expected to display generosity as a mark of their status, though critics note that such acts can shade into 4 _____, generosity performed primarily for an audience rather than out of genuine care. Historically, some societies enacted 5 _____ laws specifically to restrain excessive entertaining, recognising its potential to destabilise social hierarchies through unchecked display. A host's 6 _____, meanwhile, can confer real prestige independent of wealth, rewarding genuine expertise over sheer expenditure. Guests, for their part, typically operate under an implicit 7 _____, understanding that an invitation carries an unspoken 8 _____ to reciprocate eventually, however informally. Declining to return an invitation without explanation, in many cultures, risks being perceived as 9 _____, underscoring how deeply embedded these unwritten rules of 10 _____ remain in everyday social life.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Feasting, status and social bonds

Anthropological research on feasting suggests that shared meals have historically served a dual function: strengthening social bonds through commensality while simultaneously reinforcing status hierarchies through conspicuous display. Elaborate hospitality, in this reading, is never entirely disinterested; even genuinely warm hosts operate within cultural scripts that reward generosity with prestige, a dynamic some scholars term gastronomic capital. This does not necessarily undermine the sincerity of hospitality, researchers caution, since social and altruistic motivations frequently coexist rather than compete. However, understanding the status-signalling function of lavish entertaining helps explain persistent social pressure to reciprocate invitations at a comparable scale, a pressure that can, paradoxically, undermine the very sense of ease that hospitality is meant to create.

1 What dual function have shared meals historically served? _____

2 Is elaborate hospitality ever entirely disinterested, according to the text? _____

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3 What do cultural scripts reward generosity with? _____

4 Does this necessarily undermine the sincerity of hospitality? _____

5 What does understanding the status-signalling function help explain? _____

6 What can this pressure paradoxically undermine? _____

6 Replace the words in bold with a precise term or collocation.

1 The act of eating together built trust among strangers. _____

2 The lavish party was partly meant to display wealth. _____

3 The generosity seemed performed mainly for the audience. _____

4 Declining to return the invitation seemed socially awkward. _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 160-190 word critical commentary on how entertaining and hospitality can simultaneously express genuine care and reinforce social status, distinguishing observation from inference.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Include four academic collocations. [ ] Maintain a precise, balanced register.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Advanced terms

1 a 2 b 3 c 4 d 5 e 6 f 7 g 8 h 9 i 10 j

2 Precise terms

1 conspicuous hospitality 2 commensality 3 noblesse oblige 4 the reciprocity norm 5 largesse 6 performative generosity 7 gastronomic capital 8 gauche

3 Academic collocations

1 h cultivate gastronomic capital 2 a signal social status 3 c confer prestige upon a host 4 d flaunt wealth ostentatiously 5 e reciprocate a gesture of goodwill 6 g negotiate a sense of obligation 7 b perform generosity for an audience 8 f uphold the etiquette of hosting

4 Analysis

1 commensality 2 conspicuous hospitality 3 noblesse oblige 4 performative generosity 5 sumptuary 6 gastronomic capital 7 reciprocity norm 8 social obligation 9 gauche 10 commensality

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Strengthening social bonds through commensality while reinforcing status hierarchies through conspicuous display.
2 No.
3 Prestige.
4 No, social and altruistic motivations frequently coexist rather than compete.
5 Persistent social pressure to reciprocate invitations at a comparable scale.
6 The very sense of ease that hospitality is meant to create.

6 Precise terms and collocations

1 commensality 2 conspicuous hospitality 3 performative generosity 4 gauche

Over to you

Answers will vary. Look for conceptual precision, evidence-aware reasoning and balanced evaluation.