Sardinia restaurants test screen-free family meals

LEVEL B1


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I. WARM-UP

1. How often do you check your phone during meals?
2. What do you like to talk about at the table?
3. Would a no-phones rule make dinner better or worse for you?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

- **ban** — to say that something is not allowed
- **device** — a piece of electronic equipment like a phone or tablet
- **ombudsman** — an official who protects people's rights and deals with their complaints
- **pilot** — a short test of a plan to see if it works
- **volunteer** — to offer to do something without being forced
- **survey** — questions asked to many people to find out what they think or do
- **guidance** — official advice about what people should do
- **conversation** — talk between two or more people

III. READING

A group of restaurants on the Italian island of Sardinia is running a screen-free dining trial to help families talk more. The scheme, created by the island's ombudsman for children, is a one-month pilot at 15 restaurants that volunteered to join. Parents and children are asked to put devices away when they sit down.

If they hand them in, staff give a kit with games and activities for kids, plus advice on social media use, to spark conversation at the table. In the UK, guidance from four chief medical officers in 2019 said families should ban phones from the dinner table because talking helps development.

Last year, a survey reported that 77% of families eat with phones at the table, and about one in four said they do not chat at dinner any more. Supporters in Sardinia, including Emanuele Frongia, say restaurants can help families reconnect.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News:** *"Should phones be allowed at the table in...". Original article linked at* theenglishwire.com.

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where is the screen-free dining trial taking place?
2. How many restaurants are taking part in the pilot?
3. Who created the scheme on the island?
4. What do families receive if they hand in their devices?
5. What percentage of families eat with phones at the table, according to the survey?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Should restaurants in your area try a no-phones rule? Why or why not?
2. What is a fair phone rule for family meals at home?
3. Would games or prompts help your family talk more at dinner?
4. When is phone use at the table acceptable, if ever?



VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

So/such/too/enough

So goes before an adjective/adverb (so + adj). Such goes before a noun phrase (such + adj + noun: such a quiet dinner). Too means more than is good/possible. Enough means sufficient: adj + enough; enough + noun.

*"The restaurant was **so noisy** that we couldn't talk."*

*"It was **such a quiet dinner** that everyone talked."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

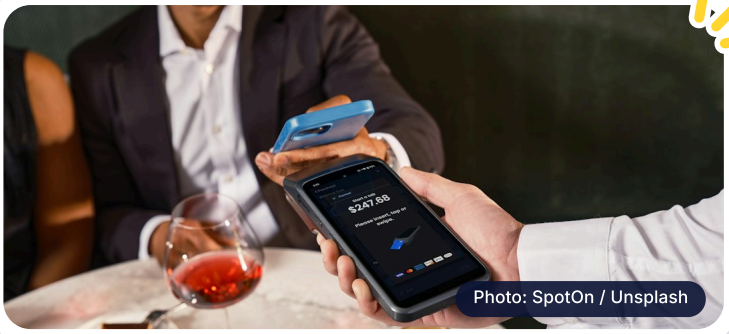
Choose the correct option in each sentence.

1. Phones can be (so / such) distracting at the table. _____
2. They sent (so / such) long messages during dinner. _____
3. The table wasn't (enough big / big enough) for six. _____
4. There was (so much / such much) noise in the room. _____
5. It wasn't (enough quiet / quiet enough) to study. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 6–8 minutes warm-up, 8–10 minutes vocabulary, 10–12 minutes reading, 8–10 minutes comprehension, 8–10 minutes discussion; fold grammar into reading or discussion time as needed.
- Pre-teach or check: ban, device, ombudsman, pilot, survey; elicit examples of guidance and conversation from students' lives.
- Run reading: skim for place, numbers and people (Sardinia, 15, ombudsman). Then scan again for what families do and receive. Discussion involves family habits; start in pairs so students can share views without judging their own families in front of the whole class.
- Differentiation: Stronger students design two extra table prompts for conversation; others match prompts to topics (school, sport, music) and role-play a short dinner chat.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Take a quick show of hands, then pair students with different views to swap reasons.
2. Elicit common rules first (no phones, face-down only, time limits), then personalise.
3. Give each pair three prompt cards (school, friends, hobbies) to model short chats.
4. Set a line down the room: "never OK" to "often OK". Students stand, explain, then move.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Debate: In groups, plan and hold a 5-minute mini-debate: "Our school café should be screen-free."

Writing: In pairs, write a 70-word notice a restaurant could post to explain the pilot politely.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: So/such/too/enough

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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These answers are for teachers only. Please do not share this page with students.

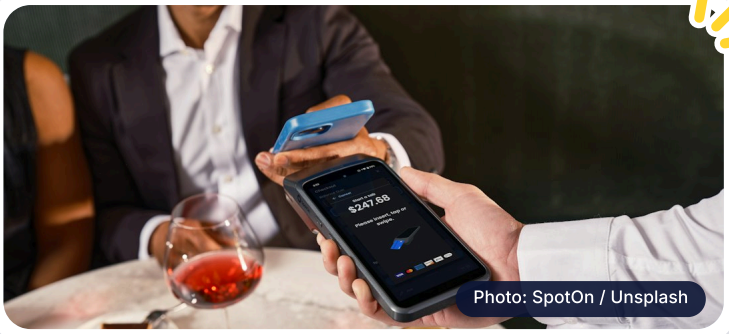


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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where is the screen-free dining trial taking place?
   On the Italian island of Sardinia.
2. How many restaurants are taking part in the pilot?
   Fifteen restaurants.
3. Who created the scheme on the island?
   The island's ombudsman for children.
4. What do families receive if they hand in their devices?
   A kit with games and activities, plus advice on social media use.
5. What percentage of families eat with phones at the table, according to the survey?
   Seventy-seven percent.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Choose the correct option in each sentence.

1. Phones can be (so / such) distracting at the table. **so**
2. They sent (so / such) long messages during dinner. **such**
3. The table wasn't (enough big / big enough) for six. **big enough**
4. There was (so much / such much) noise in the room. **so much**
5. It wasn't (enough quiet / quiet enough) to study. **quiet enough**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: So goes before an adjective/adverb (so + adj). Such goes before a noun phrase (such + adj + noun: such a quiet dinner). Too means more than is good/possible. Enough means sufficient: adj + enough; enough + noun. (Examples constructed.)

"The restaurant was **so noisy** *that we couldn't talk."*

"It was **such a quiet dinner** *that everyone talked."*