

In this extract, the writer explains how the founders of McDonald's restaurants changed the way that fast food was made and served.

Text 1 Fast Food Nation, Eric Schlosser

Richard and Maurice McDonald had left New Hampshire for southern California at the start of the Depression, hoping to find jobs in Hollywood. They worked as set builders on the Columbia Film Studios back lot, saved their money, and bought a movie theater in Glendale. The theater was not a success. In 1937 they opened a drive-in restaurant in Pasadena, trying to cash in on the new craze, hiring three **carhops** and selling mainly hot dogs. A few years later they moved to a larger building on E Street in San Bernardino and opened the McDonald Brothers Burger Bar Drive-In. The new restaurant was located near a high school, employed twenty carhops, and promptly made the brothers rich. Richard and "Mac" McDonald bought one of the largest houses in San Bernardino, a hillside mansion with a tennis court and a pool.

By the end of the 1940s the McDonald brothers had grown dissatisfied with the drive-in business. They were tired of constantly looking for new carhops and short-order cooks — who were in great demand — as the old ones left for higher-paying jobs elsewhere. They were tired of replacing the dishes, glassware, and silverware their teenage customers constantly broke or ripped off. And they were tired of their teenage customers. The brothers thought about selling the restaurant. Instead, they tried something new.

The McDonalds fired all their carhops in 1948, closed their restaurant, installed larger grills, and reopened three months later with a radically new method of preparing food. It was designed to increase the speed, lower prices, and raise the volume of sales. The brothers eliminated almost two-thirds of the items on their old menu. They got rid of everything that had to be eaten with a knife, spoon, or fork. The only sandwiches now sold were hamburgers or cheeseburgers. The brothers got rid of their dishes and glassware, replacing them with paper cups, paper bags, and paper plates. They divided the food preparation into separate tasks performed by different workers. To fill a typical order, one person grilled the hamburger; another "dressed" and wrapped it; another prepared the milk shake; another made the fries; and another worked the counter. For the first time, the guiding principles of a factory assembly line were applied to a commercial kitchen. The new division of labor meant that a worker only had to be taught how to perform one task. Skilled and expensive short-order cooks were no longer necessary. All of the burgers were sold with the same condiments: ketchup, onions, mustard, and two pickles. No substitutions were allowed. The McDonald brothers' Speedee Service System revolutionized the restaurant business. An ad of theirs seeking **franchisees** later spelled out the benefits of the system: "Imagine — No Carhops — No Waitresses — No Dishwashers — No BusBoys — The McDonald's System is Self-Service!"

The Speedee Service System, however, got off to a rocky start. Customers pulled up to the restaurant and honked their horns, wondering what had happened to the carhops, still expecting to be served. People were not yet accustomed to waiting in line and getting their own food. Within a few weeks, however, the new system gained acceptance, as word spread about the low prices and good hamburgers. The McDonald brothers now aimed for a much broader clientele. They employed only young men, convinced that female workers would attract teenage boys to the restaurant and drive away other customers. Families soon lined up to eat at McDonald's. Company historian John F. Love explained the lasting significance of McDonald's new self-service system: "Working-class families could finally afford to feed their kids restaurant food."

carhops: waiters who serve food to customers in their cars at a drive-in restaurant
 franchisees: the owner of a business who has bought the right to use the name and sell the products of an established business. More than half of McDonald's restaurants in the UK are owned and run by franchisees.

1 How do I identify the key ideas in the text?

When you first read an unseen text, you need to identify the key ideas and information in each section of the text.

1 Read the first paragraph of the extract on page 2.

Look at some ideas and information that the writer has included.

A. The McDonald brothers bought a cinema but it was not successful.

B. The McDonald brothers ran a very successful drive-in restaurant business.

C. The McDonald brothers' first restaurant sold mainly hot dogs.

D. Richard McDonald was a very experienced chef.

E. The McDonald brothers came from New Hampshire.

Label each piece of information above to identify whether you think it is:

- the key idea of the first paragraph, write **KEY**
- additional detail, write **DETAIL**
- not included in the first paragraph, mark with a **X**.

2 Now look at the rest of the extract.

a Write one sentence summarising the main idea in each section.

Paragraph 2:

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Paragraph 3:

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Paragraph 4:

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b Now check your answers to question 2 a to make sure you have:

- focused on the main idea in each paragraph
- not focused on additional details which are less important than the main idea.

Tick any that you are happy with and change any that you are not happy with.