

# Speaking Through Pictures

*Zbirka slikovnih in besedilnih iztočnic za ustni izpit iz angleščine na splošni maturi*



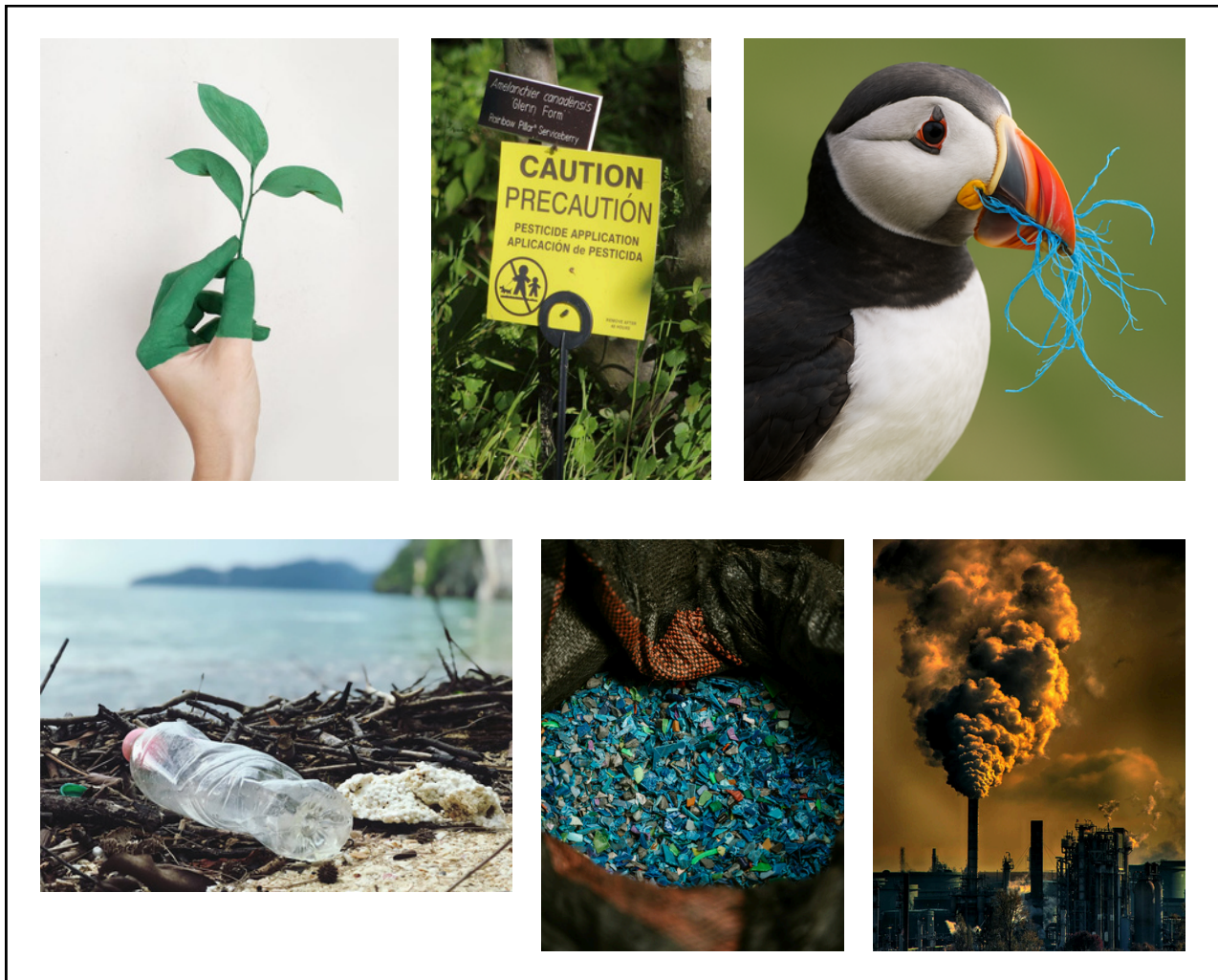


This e-book provides sample picture and text prompts designed to help you prepare for the English oral component of the General Matura exam. Each prompt is accompanied by suggested talking points to guide your practice. It is important to note that these suggested points are provided solely for preparatory purposes and will not be available during the actual examination.





## PROMPT #1



### **Types of pollution and major causes**

- Different types – air pollution (car emissions, factories), water pollution (oil spills, microplastics), soil pollution (pesticides, heavy metals), and noise pollution.
- The most common types of pollution in Slovenia.

### **Microplastics: the invisible threat**

- Microplastics – tiny plastic fragments found in water, food, and even air.
- Impact on marine life – fish and seabirds ingest them, which can lead to health problems or death.

### **How pollution affects human health**

- Air pollution can cause respiratory diseases like asthma and bronchitis.
- Long-term exposure may increase the risk of cancer, heart disease, and affect brain development in children.

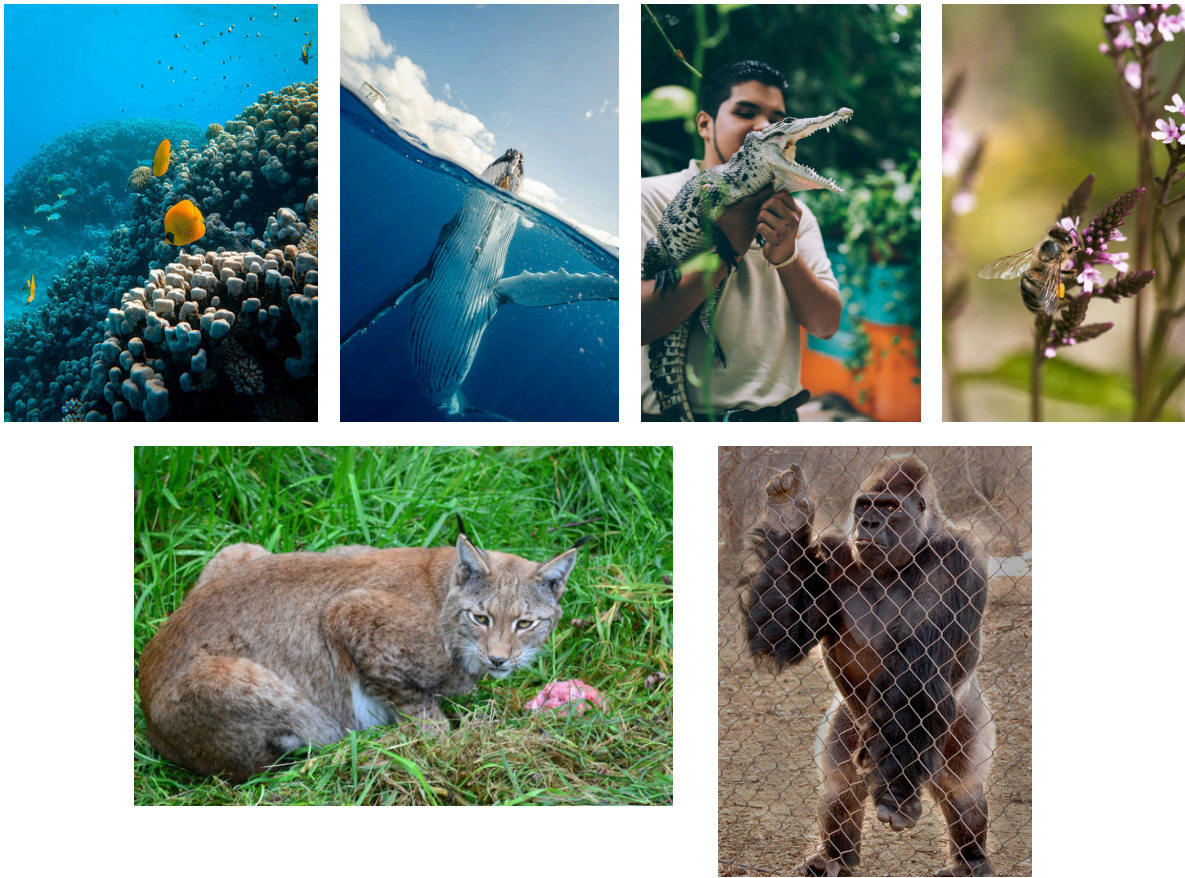
### **Impact on wildlife and ecosystems**

- Pollution destroys natural habitats and threatens biodiversity.
- Animals can become trapped, poisoned, or starve due to litter and chemicals.

### **Hope for the future: innovation and awareness**

- New technology – biodegradable plastics, electric vehicles, green energy.
- Growing youth activism, e.g. Greta Thunberg, climate strikes.

## PROMPT #2



### **The wildlife**

- The wildlife – wild animals and plants living in natural environments – forests, savannahs, mountains, wetlands.
- Biodiversity importance – healthy ecosystems rely on a balance of species (e.g. pollinators, predators).
- Threats to wildlife – habitat loss, poaching, pollution, and climate change.
- Wildlife in Slovenia – bears, lynxes, wolves in the Dinaric Alps; protected bird species like the Ural owl and white stork.

### **Zoos**

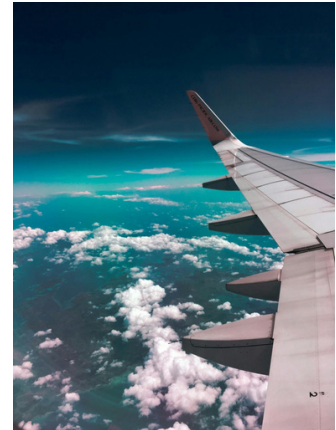
- Zoos – facilities where animals are kept for public viewing and often for education or research.
- Pros:
  - Help endangered species through breeding programs (e.g. pandas, rhinos).
  - Educate the public and promote wildlife awareness.
- Cons:
  - Animals may suffer in captivity due to stress or lack of space.
  - Some zoos focus more on entertainment than animal welfare.
- Modern trends – many zoos are evolving into wildlife conservation centres with better living conditions.

### **Sealife:**

- Marine animals and plants – fish, whales, corals, seaweed – living in oceans and seas.
- Ecological importance – oceans regulate climate and produce over 50% of the Earth's oxygen.
- Threats to marine life:
  - Overfishing, plastic pollution, coral bleaching, noise pollution from ships.
- Sealife in the Adriatic Sea – dolphins, sea turtles, seahorses, and diverse fish species.
- Marine protection – marine parks, protected zones, and international efforts like banning microbeads or reducing plastic use.



## PROMPT #3



### **Common means of transport**

- Road transport – cars, buses, and motorcycles; most popular for daily travel but cause traffic and pollution.
- Rail transport – trains and trams; fast, efficient, and often eco-friendly.
- Air transport – planes; best for long distances but pollute heavily.
- Water transport – ships and ferries; important for cargo but can damage marine ecosystems.
- Non-motorized transport – bicycles, scooters, and walking; healthy and green, but need better infrastructure.

### **Problems caused by transport**

#### *Environmental problems*

- Air pollution from car exhaust and airplane emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>, nitrogen oxides).
- Noise pollution from traffic and airports.
- Water pollution from oil spills and fuel leakage from ships.
- Climate change – transport contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions.

#### *Traffic and infrastructure issues*

- Traffic jams, especially during rush hour.
- Overcrowded public transport in big cities.
- Accidents and road safety – speeding, distracted driving, poor infrastructure.

#### *Urban Problems*

- Too many cars in cities take up space and slow down travel.
- Parking issues – not enough space leads to illegal or unsafe parking.
- Road maintenance – damaged roads from heavy vehicles cause safety hazards.

#### *Health Effects*

- Breathing problems from air pollution (especially in children and the elderly).
- Stress caused by long commutes or noise.
- Lack of physical activity when relying only on cars or buses.

## PROMPT #4



***Taking a short break from using your smartphone can change how your brain works, helping you control impulses better and respond less to phone-related distractions.***



The text is based on: <https://www.psypost.org/taking-a-break-from-your-smartphone-changes-your-brain-study-finds/>

### **Mobile phone addiction**

- Smartphones are useful for communication, information, and entertainment, but overuse can lead to dependency and mental strain.
- Threats of device addiction – reduced attention span, disrupted sleep, physical health problems (eye strain, poor posture), and social isolation.
- Signs – frequent checking of notifications, anxiety without the phone, using devices during meals or conversations, and neglecting responsibilities.
- Efforts to manage usage – screen time monitoring, app blockers, digital detox periods, and promoting device-free zones or activities.

### **Internet addiction**

- The Internet connects people globally, provides instant access to knowledge, and supports education and work, but needs to be used mindfully. Compulsive use of the internet for browsing, social media, or entertainment can negatively affect daily functioning.
- Threats to well-being – Internet overuse can lead to mental health issues (anxiety, depression), reduced academic or job performance, and physical inactivity.
- Signs – excessive scrolling on social media, binge-watching videos, constant online chatting, or inability to unplug from digital life.

### **Gaming addiction**

- Games can improve reflexes, creativity, and teamwork, and offer enjoyment, but moderation is key.
- Threats from gaming addiction – sleep deprivation, lack of physical activity, irritability, neglect of real-life responsibilities, and isolation.
- Signs – spending hours on multiplayer games, skipping meals or sleep to keep playing, and prioritizing virtual achievements over real ones.
- Modern trends in gaming – parental controls, healthy gaming habits education, and recognition of gaming disorder as a mental health issue by health organizations.



## PROMPT #5



**“There is no compelling scientific evidence to support the claim that children raised in families with same-sex parents are worse off. Therefore, I conclude that the advocacy for so-called traditional families is rooted more in personal beliefs and prejudices – held by those who mistake their opinions for facts, who patronizingly assume that only their worldview is correct, and who condescendingly presume to know what is best for others. The mere fact that their way of life is more common does not entitle them to impose their beliefs on others. The law cannot and should not accommodate feelings of threat, indignation, or offense simply because other types of marriages and families exist alongside their own. They will simply have to come to terms with these feelings themselves.”**

Katja Šugman Stubbs, Constitutional Judge

Translated from:

<https://www.us-rs.si/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/U-I-91-21-Up-675-19-U-I-486-20-Up-572-18-Pritrdilno-LM-dr.-Sugman.pdf>

### **LGBTQ+ community**

- The LGBTQ+ acronym stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning. It represents a diverse group of people whose sexual orientation or gender identity differs from the majority.
- In many countries, the LGBTQ+ community has gained legal protections against discrimination, the right to marry, adopt children, and live freely. However, challenges remain in many parts of the world where being LGBTQ+ is still criminalised or socially stigmatised.
- While social attitudes have improved in recent decades, prejudice and discrimination still exist. Public figures, education, and media play a role in promoting tolerance and understanding.
- LGBTQ+ youth often face bullying or mental health challenges due to lack of acceptance. Supportive families and inclusive schools can make a big difference in their well-being.
- The quote by Katja Šugman Stubbs highlights how opposition to LGBTQ+ rights often stems from personal beliefs and bias, not facts. It emphasises that diverse family structures deserve legal and social recognition, and feelings of discomfort should not justify discrimination.

### **Marriage equality**

- Marriage equality means that all couples, regardless of gender, have the legal right to marry and enjoy the same rights and responsibilities.
- Marriage equality is recognised in many countries, including Slovenia (since 2023). However, in many others it remains illegal or restricted.
- Research shows that children raised by same-sex parents do just as well as those raised by heterosexual parents – as the quote underlines.
- Opponents often cite tradition or religion, but these arguments are increasingly challenged by modern legal and ethical standards. As the quote suggests, commonness does not equal correctness, and discomfort is not a valid reason to deny others their rights.
- Marriage equality is a symbol of broader social acceptance. It sends a message that love and commitment are valued, regardless of gender.

## PROMPT #6

“Hope” is the thing with feathers –  
That perches in the soul –  
And sings the tune without the words –  
And never stops – at all –

EMILY DICKINSON,  
an American poet (1830–1886)



### **Types of literature**

- Prose – stories and novels, often used for entertainment or exploring ideas.
- Poetry – short, emotional, uses rhyme and rhythm (e.g. Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost).
- Drama – written for stage (e.g. Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*); combines storytelling and performance.

### **Reading and libraries**

- People read for fun, learning, or relaxation.
- Common formats: printed books, e-books, audiobooks.
- Libraries offer free books, quiet spaces, and events.
- Popular genres: mystery, fantasy, romance, sci-fi.

### **Concerts and performances**

- Music – live concerts (e.g. pop, classical, folk) are social and fun experiences.
- Classical music (and other genres) can reduce stress, improve focus, and inspire creativity.
- Theatre – plays and musicals express emotions and stories; common in schools.
- Students join clubs or perform at school events to build confidence.

### **Why it matters**

- Literature and performances teach culture, empathy, and creativity.
- They connect people and share important ideas through art and expression.



## PROMPT #7



### **Importance of education in society.**

- Education provides knowledge, skills, and values that help individuals succeed in life.
- It reduces inequality by giving everyone opportunities for personal and professional growth.
- A well-educated population contributes to innovation, democracy, and economic development.

### **Different types of education**

- Formal education – schools, universities, structured curriculum.
- Informal education – learning from family, friends, media, everyday experiences.
- Non-formal education – courses, workshops, online learning, adult education.

### **Challenges in modern education**

- Inequality: access to education still depends on wealth, location, and social status.
- Technology: digital divide (not all students have equal access to computers/internet).
- Pressure: standardized testing, competition, and mental health issues among students.

### **Role of technology in education**

- Online classes and digital tools make learning more flexible and accessible.
- AI and personalized learning platforms can adapt lessons to students' needs.
- Risk – overreliance on technology may reduce critical thinking and face-to-face interaction.

### **Education and personal development**

- Beyond academics – education develops creativity, teamwork, problem-solving.
- Helps build confidence, responsibility, and cultural awareness.
- Encourages lifelong learning – not just for exams, but for adapting to future changes.

## PROMPT #8



### **What the European Union is**

- The EU is a political and economic union of 27 European countries.
- Its main goals are peace, stability, economic cooperation, and free movement of people, goods, services, and capital.
- Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

### **History and formation**

- After World War II, European nations wanted to prevent future conflicts.
- 1951 – European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).
- 1957 – Treaty of Rome → European Economic Community.
- 1993 – Maastricht Treaty → European Union officially created.

### **Institutions of the EU**

- European Commission – proposes and enforces laws.
- European Parliament – elected by citizens, shares law-making power.
- European Council – heads of state set the overall direction.
- Court of Justice of the EU – ensures laws are applied equally.
- European Central Bank – manages the euro and monetary policy.

### **Benefits of EU membership**

- Common market – free trade and free movement.
- Common currency – the euro (used by 20 countries).
- Stronger global influence through unity.
- Funding for regional development, education (Erasmus+), and science projects.

### **The future of the EU**

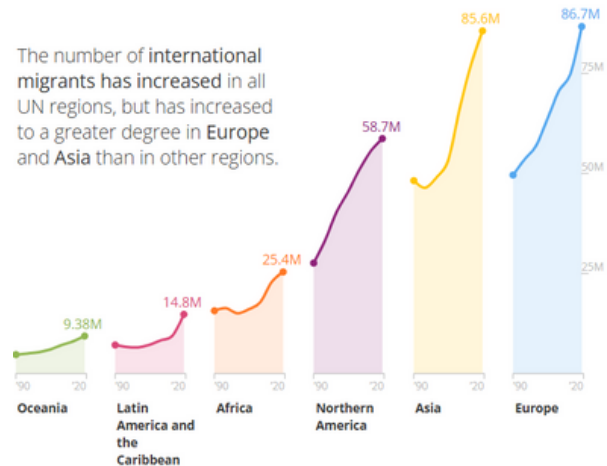
- Expansion – potential new members (e.g. Western Balkans, Ukraine).
- Climate action – European Green Deal.
- Digital transformation: innovation, AI, and cybersecurity.



## PROMPT #9



The number of international migrants has increased in all UN regions, but has increased to a greater degree in Europe and Asia than in other regions.



UN DESA 2021.

Source: <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/msite/wmr-2024-interactive/>

### **Migration: causes and types**

- Causes – economic opportunities, war and conflict, climate change, family reunification.
- Types – internal (within a country), international (between countries), voluntary (seeking better life), forced (refugees, asylum seekers).

### **Effects of migration**

- Positive – new skills, cultural diversity, economic contributions.
- Negative – brain drain (loss of skilled workers), integration challenges, pressure on public services.
- For host countries – need to balance openness with social cohesion.

### **Mobility in today's world**

- Easier and faster travel due to modern transport and open borders (e.g. Schengen Area).
- Student exchange programs (like Erasmus+) increase cultural understanding.
- Digital mobility: remote work allows people to live in one country while working for another.

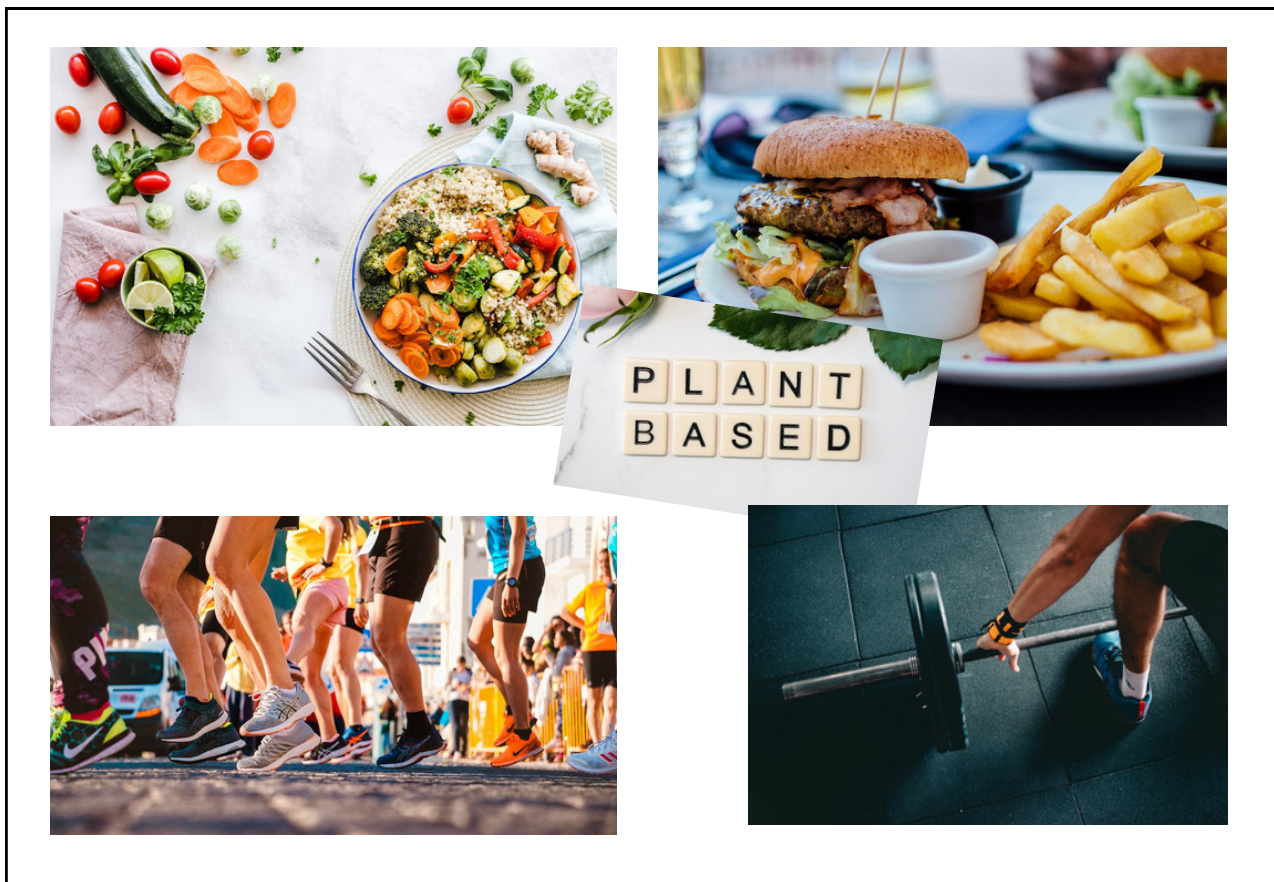
### **Globalization and its impact**

- Globalization – interconnectedness of economies, cultures, and societies.
- Economic impact – global trade, outsourcing, multinational companies.
- Cultural impact – spread of languages, music, food, fashion – but also risk of cultural homogenization.
- Social impact – more communication across borders, but also rising inequality.

### **Challenges of globalization**

- Job losses in some industries due to cheaper production abroad.
- Environmental costs of global transport and mass production.
- Spread of misinformation and cyber risks across borders.
- Tension between global cooperation and national interests.

## PROMPT #10



### **Importance of food in our lives**

- Food is not just fuel – it affects health, mood, and energy levels.
- A balanced diet is essential for physical and mental well-being.
- Eating habits are influenced by culture, family traditions, and modern lifestyles.

### **Components of a healthy diet**

- Carbohydrates – provide energy (whole grains, fruits, vegetables).
- Proteins – build and repair body tissues (meat, fish, legumes, dairy).
- Fats – necessary in moderation (nuts, olive oil, avocados vs. unhealthy trans fats).
- Vitamins & minerals – support immune system and body functions.
- Water – hydration is key (1.5–2 litres a day recommended).

### **Healthy lifestyle beyond food**

- Regular exercise (at least 30 minutes daily) keeps the body strong.
- Sleep – 7–9 hours helps recovery and concentration.
- Avoiding harmful habits: smoking, excessive alcohol, and too much sugar.
- Managing stress through mindfulness, hobbies, or relaxation techniques.

### **Modern challenges to healthy living**

- Fast food and processed meals are convenient but often unhealthy.
- Busy lifestyles → less time for cooking and exercising.
- Social media can create unrealistic body image standards.
- Rising obesity and lifestyle-related diseases (diabetes, heart disease).

### **Trends in food and health**

- Growth of plant-based diets and vegetarian/vegan options.
- Organic and locally sourced foods becoming more popular.
- Technology in nutrition: personalized diet plans, fitness apps, smart watches.
- Greater awareness of sustainability and reducing food waste.



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