

Title:	Wasabi or not?	Level: higher
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Text:	<p>Mayumi came up with an interesting topic today; Sushiro, a popular sushi chain in Japan, have stopped adding wasabi, which is a strong mustard, automatically to sushi. Sushi is traditionally made with a thin layer of wasabi between the rice and topping, so we pondered why they have done this.</p> <p>Well, Sushiro branches are usually packed with families particularly at weekends, and often have queues of customers waiting to be seated. Wasabi, being particularly pungent, is not a children's favourite, so I guess it often results in customers specially ordering sushi without wasabi.</p> <p>Perhaps, I thought, it had become apparent that the cost in time and materials of preparing unwanted product for a large part of their customer base was wasteful. In years gone by, a sushi restaurant was more likely to have been frequented by adults and those with more disposable income. Nowadays, however, they are open to all with low prices; value and speed being key selling points.</p> <p>The option now for those wishing to have wasabi is the same as it has always been, to open a small sachet and mix it with soy sauce on a small saucer for dipping. To me, it seems like a 'win-win' situation for everyone!</p> <p>The gradual move from a service to self-service culture has influenced many industries such as fuel stations, air travel, insurance and now food.</p>
Discussion:	Do you prefer to be served or serve yourself? Give your reasons.
Words and usage:	<p>Service</p> <p>This word is the noun form of the word 'serve', a verb meaning to do work for others, paid or unpaid. There are many other uses of 'service'.</p> <p>In Japan, it means something is given free, for example, if work is not charged for. If a product is not of satisfactory standard, you may be offered a free replacement, which is termed 'service'.</p>
Resources:	<p>https://translate.weblio.jp</p> <p>Oxford Dictionaries. http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com</p> <p>The British Council website. https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org</p>
Practice idea:	Write about a time when you were given a free product or service and explain why.
Listening link:	<p>Wasabi or not? - audio</p> 
Quiz Me! Conversation card:	Card number F3 below is from Which?, pack 2, available at englishbooks.jp, Amazon and Rakuten

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Which do you prefer;
to do it yourself
or be served?

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