

WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

DOES GASTEIZ REALLY NEED OR WANT A STARBUCKS?

Coach John wonders whether the Basque capital needs or wants Starbucks.



It has been reported that the US multinational coffeehouse chain, Starbucks, will be opening a **branch** in Vitoria-Gasteiz. The company, which is headquartered in Seattle is **taking over** the premises of the much loved city-centre Café, El Mentirón.

As of November 2022, the company had 35,711 stores in 80 countries, 15,873 of which were located in the United States. Of Starbucks' U.S.-based stores, over 8,900 are company-operated, while the remainder are licensed. There are only around 150 Starbucks in the Spanish state and the planned opening in Virgin Blanca will be the first in the Basque capital.

Personally, I have always been proud that VG has resisted the **relentless** march of coffee globalisation represented by Starbucks. Up until now there has been no place for Starbuck's **bland** brand in a city with customers who demand a high standard of the **beverage**.

VG even has an annual, 'Semanas del Café' when the best coffee establishments are chosen. In 2023 the 'Orange Coffee' of O Nest cafe in

Salburua was chosen in a public vote as the best drink in the city.

I can't imagine a Starbuck's 'Flat white' or 'Americano' will win the popular vote in 2024.

There are other reasons why Vitorianos may be questioning the arrival of Starbucks. The US workforce have been conducting a union drive to improve their conditions. Howard Schultz, former CEO of Starbucks makes \$9,637 an hour while Starbucks workers get an average of less than \$9 an hour! Schultz and management oppose a real \$15/hr minimum wage for workers have conducted **union busting** activities for decades.

Starbucks and the union organising its workers are now **suing** each other in federal court over a social media post that was sent out by the workers' union supporting Palestinians in light of the Israel-Hamas war.

The company sued Starbucks Workers United in federal court in October alleging trademark **infringement** after the union sent out a social media post saying "Solidarity with Palestine!"

Starbucks is now facing a boycott and there have been protests outside branches in New York with people accusing the company of supporting genocide in Gaza.

Personally, I don't think we need Starbuck's coffee or 'values' in Gasteiz. What do you think?

by **ECP coach**



John Hird

Word list

branch: (n) a local division of a business, library, or other organization

take over: (v) to get into one's possession

relentless: (adj) not giving in; unrelenting:

bland: (adj) lacking in special interest or liveliness; dull, boring, nothing special

beverage: (n) any liquid that can be drunk, esp. a liquid other than water

union busting: (v) the actions of a group of persons hired by a company to disperse picketers, end a strike or job action, etc., esp. by violence or intimidation

sue: (v) to bring legal action against; bring a lawsuit in court

infringement: (n) an act of interfering with someone's rights

Let's chat about that!

1. Give a summary of the text to your coach and/or classmates.
2. Which famous premises is Starbucks taking over in VG?
3. Why do you think VG has resisted the invasion of Starbucks so far?
4. What does John think of Starbucks' coffee? What is your opinion?
5. What is the 'Semanas del Café'? Which are your favourite establishments in VG?
6. How do you like your coffee?
7. What problems do Starbucks have at the moment?
8. Will you be boycotting Starbucks?.

7 AMAZING FACTS ABOUT COFFEE

Read the text. Ask your coach about any difficult words or phrases

#1 Coffee As An Alternative Car Fuel

Scientists are researching new uses of coffee beans. Their studies show the food source not only energises us, but can possibly replace fossil fuel to power motor engines in the future. Wow amazing!

#2 How Was Coffee Discovered?

This legend has persisted over time: Ethiopian shepherds were curious to the effects of caffeine when they saw their goats become "frisky and dance" after eating coffee berries. Amazing right? Sometimes coffee makes THAT happen to us too!

#3 George Washington Invented Instant Coffee

Actually, it was another George Washington who was an American emancipated slave who became a scientist, botanist and educator with the same name.. he was the

inventor in 1906. Instant dry coffee was just one amongst many other discoveries to his credit.

#4 Coffee Beans Are Actually Fruit Seeds

It's called a "bean" because it looks like one after being dried and roasted, but really the coffee bean is the seed inside a red fruit berry. Do you think the berry resembles the new health trend, the acai fruit? Evidently both share beneficial properties like: anti-oxidants, increasing energy, weight control and more!

#5 Americano Coffee Please.

Have you ever wondered where the term, "Americano" came from? It's the name of a type of coffee which WWII American GIs stationed in Europe would drink. They'd order strong espresso and dilute it with water. Additionally, these American GIs were known as

big coffee drinkers and the term, "cup of Joe" stems from them, the "GI Joes".

#6 A World Money-Making Phenomenon

In fact, coffee is the second most traded commodity on the earth!! The first is the other dark black liquid, being oil. In the U.S., New Yorkers consume times more coffee than in any other state.. could this be why their sidewalks are like super highways?!

#7 A Creature's Role In Coffee-Making

There's a species of Asian civets that loves to eat coffee beans! Now, are you sitting? It's the civet's droppings of coffee beans called Kopi Luwak, which are a delicacy. Its brew is one of the world's most expensive boutique variety of coffees!

CLICK [HERE](#) FOR FREE SOCIAL EVENTS IN ENGLISH!