



## Gelda's House of Gelbelgarg (10 marks)

*Learners of a foreign languages (and computers for that matter) often come across words that they don't know. Sometimes you can't do much more than guess what they mean, but more often there are various clues in the surrounding text that can tell you a lot about the "unknown" words, as this problem illustrates. On the next page we reproduce a website where customers have rated their most recent experience at Gelda's House of Gelbelgarg, a new ethnic restaurant in the city centre. Even if you've never heard of any of the dishes mentioned, you should still be able to work out some things about them...*

### 2.1 (8 marks).

The restaurant review mentions the following words that you have probably never come across before:

bolger, färsel-försel, flebba, gelbelgarg, göngerplose, gorse-weebel, meembel, rolse

Use the reviews to guess what kind of thing each word refers to:

- A for individual, discrete food items.
- B for liquids, or masses of uncountably small things.
- C for containers or measurements.

### 2.2 (2 marks)

Name something you would find in an English restaurant menu which would fit into type A, and another one for type B. (They could be your guess at what kind of thing two of the above are, but they don't have to be.)



## Gelda's House of Gelbelgarg

★ ★ ★ based on 18 reviews

138 Euclid Ave.  
 Neighbourhood: City centre  
 Category: Ethnic, Specialty  
 Price Range: ££  
 Hours: Mon-Fri. 10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
 Sat. 10:30 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.



<b>mosfel2</b> Reviews: 2 <a href="#">Report this</a>	A hidden gem in the City Centre! Get the färsel-försel with gorse-weebel and you'll have a happy stomach for a week. And top it off with a flebba of sweet bolger while you're at it!	Food Service Atmosphere Value	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
<b>SanDeE*</b> Reviews: 2 <a href="#">Report this</a>	The portions at this place are just too big! I'd rather have half the portions at a lower price – they just bring out too many göngerplose and too much meembel for me.	Food Service Atmosphere Value	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
<b>wndIHghs40</b> Reviews: 5 <a href="#">Report this</a>	i took my nan here and she said it was just like she remembered from the old country. but the service was a bit lacking – nan ordered four gelbelgarg and the waitress only brought two!	Food Service Atmosphere Value	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
<b>xMandie7x</b> Reviews: 4 <a href="#">Report this</a>	I found the food confusing and disorienting. Where is this from? I randomly ordered the färsel-försel and had to send them back! Three words: weird, weird, and weird.	Food Service Atmosphere Value	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
<b>wrldTrvl1977</b> Reviews: 11 <a href="#">Report this</a>	I went to Wolserl last year for a holiday, and this is the real thing. If you order the gelbelgarg, though, make sure you also get at least one rolse of sweet-bolger – it's how the locals like it!	Food Service Atmosphere Value	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
<b>money@home</b> Reviews: 103 User is on probation	the prices are steep, but i can afford them – i make up to £45/hr working at home! find out how i do it at <a href="http://bit.ly/grhCm">http://bit.ly/grhCm</a>	Food Service Atmosphere Value	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
<b>bu_zhidao</b> Reviews: 8 <a href="#">Report this</a>	not a great date spot! i got a gelbelgarg and a rolse of meembel, but my date was so disoriented that she just ended up with some gorse-weebel. :/	Food Service Atmosphere Value	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
<b>wembley2000</b> Reviews: 2 <a href="#">Report this</a>	The food was pretty good... But I would have liked more gorse-weebel and fewer göngerplose. You really feel like the chef is skimping on the good stuff..	Food Service Atmosphere Value	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



## Answer sheet

2.1	bolger	färsel- försel	flebba	gelbelgarg	göngerplose	gorse- weebel	meembel	rolse
2.2								



Answers

2.1	bolger	färsel-försel	flebba	gelbelgarg	göngerplose	gorse-weebel	meembel	rolse
	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
2.2	Type A: [Accept any food name which combines with a(n), e.g. sausage, cake; in fact, virtually any food!]				Type B: [Accept any food name which combines in the singular with <i>some</i> – e.g. soup, cake; in fact, virtually any food!]			

**Comment by Patrick Littell**

English systematically differentiates classes of nouns between whether they're Count – that is, are treated grammatically as if they can be counted, like *five cows* – or whether they're considered Mass, which can't themselves be counted. (This is a grammatical property of the *words*, not the items in question – even though rice comes in individual pieces you can't refer to five of them as “five rices” – you have to specify some measure word like “five *grains* of rice”.)

Mass nouns tend to be liquids, undifferentiated masses, or masses of many, many tiny things (like rice), but as above it's a grammatical property: that's why even once you know a word is Count or Mass you can't be *sure* of the type of object it refers to. But you can still take a pretty good guess.

The properties of Count nouns are: they can co-occur with numerals, they can take “a”/”an” as an article, they co-occur with “fewer” but not “less” and “many” but not “much”, and you can't leave a singular count noun “bare” – that is, *without* an article (“the”, “a”/”an”), quantifier (like “some”, “every”), or numeral.

Meanwhile, Mass nouns can occur “bare”, can't occur with numerals or “a”/”n” without a “measure” or “container” word like “grain”, “tablespoon”, “plate”, and co-occur with “less” but not “fewer” and “much” but not “many”.

In addition, some words act as “measures” or “containers” – they can take an “of <something>” phrase and, whether or not it's Mass or Count, turn it into Count.

Words like these are necessary to use Mass nouns with numerals, “a”/”an”, etc.

How could you determine these properties in this problem if you didn't already know all this? Easy – put in words you do know in place of the unknown ones. For example, if a word like “water”, “rice”, “porridge”, etc. fits in the same places that “meembel” does and makes good English sentences, but not in the places “gelbelgarg” does, then it's very likely that “meembel” is something like water, rice, or porridge. Meanwhile, “burger(s)” fits in the same places “gelbelgarg” does, but not “meembel”, making it very likely that a “gelbelgarg” is some kind of discrete item.