

Dabbawalas in Mumbai

B In India, 100-Year-Old Lunch Delivery Service Goes Modern

Every day in Mumbai, some 5,000 deliverymen called *dabbawallahs* hand deliver 200,000 hot meals to office doorsteps¹ across the city. [...]

For decades, Indian workers have had their lunches delivered, but usually from home kitchens. The prices were cheap, and the food was traditional Indian fare. But that's changing.

"[...] It's a traditional *dabbawallah* but at a premium kind of a thing, where the customer is conscious about what he's eating, he's not bothered about what price he's paying," Nityanand Shetty² says. "So, the delivery chain remains the same, but the food, where it is coming from, has changed."

Cooking these meals is quite a complicated process, and Shetty says the kitchen has to start

cooking at 11 p.m. With hundreds of different meals, all with specific calorie counts [...].

And after a night of cooking and a morning of packing, each meal is put into a small metal canister, or *tiffin*, in time for the *dabbawallah's* pickup. "When he comes at 9, everything has to be ready for him... because they are on a very tight schedule," Shetty says. "The *dabbawallahs* have a huge network... that's the whole reason why we still use *dabbawallahs*. And they are very effective³."

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1. Doorstep: hall d'entrée, accueil.

2. Nityanand Shetty: head chef of a delivery company.

3. Effective: compétent.

GO!

1. Identify the people and places in the text.
2. What is the *dabbawallah's* job exactly?

Read the text as many times as necessary to answer the following questions.

1. Identify the people and places in the text.

- a. Read the text carefully. Underline in blue all the people and in green the places mentioned.
- b. Where does the scene take place?
- c. Find in the text the definition of a *dabbawallah*.
- d. Complete the sentence using expressions from the text:

A deliveryman delivers to across the city.

- e. Explain in your own words what *dabbawallahs* do:

.....

- f. What is Shetty's job? She is... ☐ a *dabbawallah*. ☐ a cook. ☐ a supervisor.

2. What is the *dabbawallah's* job exactly?

- a. Circle the correct answers:

- what you use to put the food inside is called the: container / content.
- what you put inside is called the: container / content.

b. Find in the text all the words or expressions used to describe the food container below:

Names given to the container		What Is Inside / the content
.....		
.....		
.....		
.....		

c. Here are other pictures of *dabbawallahs*. How do they transport canisters?

		
.....		
.....		
.....		

d. What do *dabbawallahs* do? They...

- ☐ take the food around the city. ☐ deliver the food. ☐ empty canisters in dumpsters.
☐ bring the food to workers. ☐ feed animals. ☐ work out.

3. What changed recently in the lunch delivery service?

a. What sentence in the text justifies the change in the lunch delivery service? Tick the correct answer:

- ☐ "the customer is conscious about what he's eating, he's not bothered about what price he's paying" (l. 9-11)
☐ "the delivery chain remains the same, but the food, where it is coming from, has changed" (l. 11-12)
☐ "And after a night of cooking and a morning of packing, each meal is put into a small metal canister" (l. 17-18)

b. Can you explain what it means? Link the correct sentences:

- The *dabbawallahs* work the same way. • • The dishes are still home-made.
 The *dabbawallahs* are very modern. • • The dishes are made by a company.

c. The picture below shows the meal you could find in a metal canister. What can you see?

