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Essay 3, Final Draft

<https://www.youtube.com/c/JoshuaWeissman>

WC: 934

Cooking and I are not natural friends. Since going off my meal plan junior year of undergrad I have been on the struggle bus trying to figure out how to make quality food. However, as a member of Gen Z I don't have the attention span to read someone's life story blog to get to the recipe and I don't have the bank account to pay for the Food Network. So, I turned to YouTube and social media for all my cooking needs, and I found [Joshua Weissman](#).

Joshua Weissman is a 25-year-old professional chef and member of Gen Z who has become quite the star on social media. With over 5.1 million subscribers on YouTube and 5.8 million followers on TikTok ([@flakeysalt](#)) Weissman uses his platform to teach the youngest of adults how to make quality food through his But Better series, But Cheaper series and various other videos. What makes Weissman so appealing is his enthusiasm for teaching people how to cook and his ability to break the rules of cooking to create a product fit for Gen Z.

"Like there are no rules, and you can manipulate everything if you actually understand the science of it," Weissman said in an [interview with Pop Sugar](#). "As cooks, we all stand on the shoulders of the chefs and the cooks before us. We are all where we are now because of . . . all of the thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions of hours of cooks who have tested and failed and tried, and made these incredible dishes that now we're able to riff off of. And the only way we move forward as a cooking community is to break those rules."

Capitalizing off internet trends and the common sense of [competitiveness among his demographic](#) Weissman uses his "But Better" series to show his audience how to recreate fast food favorites at home, but better. For example, at the height of the Popeyes vs. Chick-Fil-A chicken sandwich debate Weissman posted a video called ["Making the Popeyes Chicken Sandwich At Home, But Better."](#) This is his most viewed video to date with over 10.3 million views.

Weissman does not shy away from creating complex masterpieces of food, especially in these videos, however, he presents the content in a way that is digestible and doable. In the Popeyes video he explains how to make Japanese Milk Buns and buttermilk fried chicken in 8 minutes and each sequence is peppered with his unique sense of humor. He explains why to use chicken thighs over breasts because you don't want to overcook those "big boys" and he describes his sandwich against the Popeyes with the meme "you vs. the guy she told you not to worry about."

As a digital native I find myself gravitating toward Weissman's videos when I'm in need of a cooking lesson or if I'm bored and need something to watch. He is present across all platforms and utilizes them in a way that appeals to Gen Z without sacrificing the educational integrity of the topic he is describing. I love going to his videos knowing that I will legitimately learn something while also knowing I'll get a good laugh out of it.

All of Weissman's videos follow a formula that fits the modern YouTube tone of individual creators, homemade fast-paced and casual, like [My Drunk Kitchen](#) and [Nerdy Nummies](#) and hit also fits the professional, fast and aesthetically pleasing videos created by corporate YouTube powerhouses like [Tasty](#) and [Bon Appetit](#). However, his work also harkens back to Food Network classics like [Alton Brown's "Good Eats."](#)

Much like Brown, Weissman will open a cupboard to casually find a camera there to talk to and he is incredibly good at breaking down the science behind why food works the way it does. Then on the flip side you'll find Weissman using what looks like iMovie filters over the screen while he sings a lil song about whatever ingredient he is dealing with or referring to a common cooking technique with his own humor (like when he says "whisky business" when incorporating ingredients). This mix of tones creates a unique environment where it does not feel like I am being berated by someone better than me, I feel like I am genuinely learning something while being thoroughly entertained.

In his video ["Ultra Easy Healthy Meals | But Cheaper"](#) (which has over 3 million views) Weissman explains how to make three seemingly complex meals: Shakshuka, Peanuttty Pork and Glazed Meatballs. All three of the meals check out under \$10 for two to four servings. "Things that are healthy have the stigma of being expensive and being not very tasty," Weissman said in the video. "It's just not true. Something being healthy can also be perfectly affordable and perfectly delicious. You just gotta understand what to do; you gotta use your noggin."

As a person who is scared of cooking and as someone who knows a lot of people who are also intimidated by it it's reassuring to hear Weissman break it down in a simple, yet intelligent manner. In his "But Cheaper" series he appeals to a generation [plagued by financial insecurity](#) who want to find ways to create quality meals without the high cost — like me.

Weissman is breaking the rules left and right when it comes to both content creation and cooking. He has said he wants his channel to [provide value to the viewer](#) and he does this by paving his own path and creating a new type of cooking content for those who are still figuring out how to adult.