

Fast Food Nation
Chapter 1

1. Do you think Carl N. Karcher would be pleased if he saw America's obsession with fast food today? Why or why not?
2. How did General Motors affect life today in Southern California with its political maneuverings of the 1940's?
3. What is/was the difference between a chain that took off, i.e., McDonalds, and one that didn't?
4. "When I first met my wife, this road here was gravel...now it's blacktop." Explain why this is "progress" and why all progress is considered success.

Fast Food Nation
Chapter 2

1. Why do you think that everything has to have merchandise that goes along with it?
2. What is the symbolism of the golden arches flag flying next to the American Flag?
3. Which man, Walt Disney or Ray Kroc, do you think has had more affect on American culture today? Why?
4. Compare and contrast Dr. Wernher von Braun as depicted in October Sky and Fast Food Nation.
5. How do you fit into the national averages of time spent watching TV or playing video games? Is this time well spent? Are you being exploited by the commercialism directed at you?
6. What does it say about our society that 90% of all children between the ages 3 and 9 visit a McDonalds every month? Do you believe this statistic is accurate? Why or why not?
7. As a young child, did you ever ask to go to McDonalds to buy a meal just so you could get the toy? What was the allure? Was the toy all that you expected?
8. Where do the lines between food value and entertainment start and end? Use examples from the book to support your answer.
9. Define synergy.
10. Do you think there is a hidden cost with schools partnering with fast food, soda, or other mass merchandising firms? What will it cost America's schools financially, socially, environmentally, physically, intellectually?
11. Do you think it was fair that Mike Cameron was suspended from school for wearing a Pepsi t-shirt? Why or why not?
12. "...it's the law of the universe that the strong shall survive and the weak must fall by the way, and I don't give a damn what idealistic plan is cooked up, nothing can ever change that."

-Walt Disney

“...I’ll kill ‘em, and I’m going to kill ‘em before they kill me. You’re talking about the American way of survival of the fittest.”

-Ray Kroc

What do these two quotes say about American business practices and politics, success, failure, and fairness?

Fast Food Nation Chapter 3

1. How has California and the fast food mentality changed Colorado Springs, Colorado? Has this improved the area? Use specific details from your reading.
2. Describe a day in the life of Elisa Zamot.
3. Describe the labor and food preparation practices of the fast food industry.
4. Why do fast food industry executives think that the few instructions that cannot be communicated through pictures should be written at a fifth grade level?
5. Are fast food restaurant workers exploited? Explain your response.
6. Where should a high school student’s priorities be focused?
7. Do you think that fast food restaurants have a vested interest in a student **NOT** pursuing their education?
8. Why do you think the restaurant association would protest suggestions that would allow their employees to be safer while at work?
9. Define what elements for a good job should be, based on what you’ve read so far in this book.

Fast Food Nation Chapter 4

1. Why do you think Ray Kroc is proud that he ran the McDonald’s brothers out of business? What does this say about Ray Kroc? What does this say about the McDonald brothers?
2. Do you think it is a good thing that so much of our retail experiences have been standardized? Should there be room for regional individuality?
3. Can studies and surveys be created so that a “given” result is guaranteed? Why would business want to do this, especially if it doesn’t give honest results?
4. After reading this chapter, would you consider opening a fast food franchise enterprise when you become an adult? Why or why not?
5. What is your definition of success?

Fast Food Nation Chapter 5

1. Do you believe the dream of better living through frozen foods been fulfilled?

2. How has America's demand for fast food changed agriculture and technology?
3. Are fast food restaurants more interested in quality products or profits? Explain your answer by using examples from the book.
4. What are some of the economic implications of growing potatoes?
5. When you eat food, are you eating food or chemicals? Describe the difference between the two as related to the fast food industry.
6. Which of the five senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting) tells you the **most** about whether you will like or dislike a particular food? Defend your answer using details from the book.
7. What is your "comfort food?" Tell the story of how this came about. How often do you eat your "comfort food?"
8. Do you believe "natural flavoring" leads to false advertising? Why or why not? Defend your response by using examples from the book.

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pp. 133-139

1. How important is community planning and zoning? Explain.
2. How has the meat packaging business changed due to the rise of fast food companies?
3. Do you believe that meat processing companies have made ethical decisions? Defend your answer using details from the book.

Fast Food Nation
pp. 139-147

1. Why would anyone want to go into ranching as a career with all of the industry constraints?
2. How do you determine what is healthy and what is not? How do you believe the public is deceived despite "nutrition facts" labeling?
3. Are the agreements between chicken farmers and processors fair? Why or why not?

Fast Food Nation
Chapter 7

1. Do you believe that the changes in meat production over the past 20 years are appropriate, healthy or ethical? Use evidence from the book to defend your answer.
2. Create a metaphor for a Greeley, Colorado feed lot that encompasses the size, sounds, and stench you would expect. Be creative and imaginative.
3. What are some environmental concerns of producing and processing meat?
4. Do you believe that IBP's sentence of \$7,000 and no prison time was appropriate for how they conducted business and the laws they broke compared to how much profit they generated? Why or why not? Who or what could have stopped them?

5. Has life treated Ruben Ramirez fairly? Explain.
6. Why did Ken Monfort change his business outlook so dramatically?
7. Do you believe Ken Monfort acted in his company's best interest when he sold it to ConAgra?
8. Assuming you were in the "agriculture business," would you work for ConAgra? Why or why not?
9. "If they've got a pulse, we'll take an application." What does this imply as to how IBP and ConAgra view their employees?
10. Do meat packing companies create "false economies" by not paying for their employees benefits and needs and depending upon the community to make up the difference through Medicare, welfare, etc., while at the same time lobbying for, and receiving, generous tax breaks?

Fast Food Nation
Chapter 8

1. Do you think that Eric Schlosser presents a balanced point of view with regards to slaughter house working conditions? Defend your response with examples from the book.
2. Of all the jobs in America, why do you think that meatpackers have the highest injury rate? What do you think can make this job safer?
3. Why do you think meat packers have indulged in illegal drug use? Wouldn't this make the workplace even more dangerous and the food they produce unsafe?
4. Are the meat packing firms being ethical with how they deal with injured workers?
5. What are the meat packing firms' moral responsibility toward their employees' lives and livelihood? Are they meeting this obligation? Why or why not?
6. Why would our government reduce the enforcement of health and safety laws? Who benefits from such a reduction of enforcement? Who needs the government's protection more?
7. If companies were regularly falsifying injury records, why did they create mundane, silly jobs for injured workers to avoid "lost work days?" Couldn't they just falsify these records as well?
8. What was Diane Arndt motivation to be so callous towards her patients?
9. "...the employee's duty is to follow orders. Period." To what historical event can this type of statement be compared to? Does following this protocol absolve wrong-doers of their responsibility?
10. Was Kenny wrong to believe that people are good and honest?

Fast Food Nation
Chapter 9

1. Already OSHA only has a handful of staff watching over hundred of meat factories, and politicians want to further cut the OSHA staff by 20%. Why is that so? Can anything be done about this?
2. Who is responsible for making food companies like ConAgra so powerful? Is it the consumer or the CEOs?
3. If you were in Kenny's shoes, would you stay working for the meat company for pride, or quit the job for a safer job? Why?
4. How does e-coli and pathogens form and spread in the meat? If the meat companies *can* prevent it, why don't they?
5. If there weren't any fast food chains in America would our lives be better or would we suffer?
6. If fast food chains actually focused on food and healthy food do you think consumers would pay more money to eat it?
7. Do you think it was fair that the USDA didn't "research" the meat that they sent to the school district?

Fast Food Nation
Chapter 10

1. Why do you think Schlosser compares the golden arches to a swastika and the hammer and sickle? Do you agree that the golden arches represent the same levels of evil and societal controls as the symbols for Nazism and Communism? Explain.
2. Explain the symbolism of McDonalds building the first new building in the newly freed town of Plauen.
3. Why do the majority of McDonald's profits come from outside the U.S.?
4. "Millions of other people at that very moment were standing at the same counter, ordering the same food from the same menu, food that tasted everywhere the same." Should everything be the same everywhere, or should there be differences. Defend your response.
5. Do you think it is appropriate, or right, that the world has become "Americanized?" Explain your response.
6. What factors, in addition to fast food, do you believe has led to the current obesity epidemic in America? What can people do to combat this problem?
7. What does obesity cost our society in terms of economics? Health? Productivity? Other?
8. Who is ultimately responsible for what a person eats? Explain contributing factors in this decision.

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Epilogue: Have it your way

1. "Nature is smart as hell." What does Dale Lasater mean by this statement? Do you agree or disagree?
2. Do you believe it is possible to be successful in business without losing your ethical/moral compass? Explain
3. Can our government make decisions that good for our economy, good for business, yet good for our health and environment? Explain what needs to be done.
4. Why do you think Schlosser thinks that In-N-Out Burgers are a good fast food franchise? What is the difference between this company and McDonalds?

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Afterward

1. Why are times changing? What needs to be changed in our society?
2. What one change do you think needs to be made in the production of beef? Why?
3. Do you believe that Eric Schlosser is a "health fascist?" Explain.
4. What did you learn from reading this book? Was it a worthwhile book for you?
5. Did you enjoy reading this book? Why or why not?
6. Would you recommend this book to anyone? Why or why not?