Fast Food Nation
Topic Questions

Alternatives
- What diet options are available for someone that wants to avoid processed foods, meat, sugars, etc.? What are the challenges of “restrictive” diets?
- Discuss the pros and cons of organic and non organic foods.
- What is urban farming?
- What is vertical farming?
- What is a locavore or localvore?

Business
- Who is Carl Katcher, Richard and Maurice McDonald, Ray Kroc, or Harland Sanders and how are they important to the fast food industry?
- The automobile is cited as one of the reasons for the rise of fast food. Is this true? What other aspects of American life has the automobile influenced?
- What is an entrepreneur? What is a franchisee? Discuss how these are similar and/or different.
- How have fast food restaurants, cars, and American’s increasing demand for convenience affected or contributed to urban sprawl?
- What is a union? Discuss pros and cons of the union and their effect on businesses.
- Who is ConAgra, IBP or Monsanto? Discuss the history or scandals of the business.

Children
- Discuss how fast food is marketed to children. Is this ethical?
- Fast food industries have allied with toymakers, theme parks, sports leagues, TV/film, and schools. What does each party in the partnership have to gain? Discuss pros and cons.
- How does advertising (TV, radio, Internet, magazines/newspapers, in-store) affect children?
- Discuss the impact fast food has on children’s diets.

Food Consumption
- How has the way people eat changed over the past 10, 25, 50, or 100 years?
- How does advertising influence what we eat?
- What is a portion size and how has it changed over the years?
- Should the government regulate portion sizes?
Politics
- There are many examples of politicians or government getting involved with private industries such as fast food. Discuss and explain why this happens and is it ethical or necessary?
- Pick a government entity that oversees something to do with business (Food and Drug Administration-FDA, Small Business Association-SBA, US Department of Agriculture-USDA). Discuss the history and mission. Do they ultimately help or hurt business and people?

Processing
- Choose someone from food processing history or a known company from today. Discuss their history and contributions, both good and bad. (JR Simplot, Clarence Birdseye)
- What are “natural flavors”? What are “artificial flavors”? How are they used in food?
- How does science help create taste, texture, and preservation of food?
- Discuss things that are added to food (sugars, salt, chemicals) and how they affect the product as well as the health of the consumer.

Production
- What is Genetically Modified Food (GMO)? Discuss the history, implications, pros and cons of GMOs.
- Why GMO’s, certain food dyes, and additives banned or restricted in most European countries but allowed in the United States?
- Describe the impact that Factory Farming has had on animal rights, the environment or family farms.

Workers
- Discuss the history/evolution of minimum wage, workers rights, or workers benefits.
- Discuss the meatpacking industry. What affect does it have on towns, families, individuals?
- Large corporations are often said to be the reason farmers and ranchers make less money. Is this true? Why or why not?
- Compare worker’s conditions in Upton Sinclair’s The Jungle to worker’s conditions in Fast Food Nation. What are the differences? What are the similarities?