Omnivore’s Dilemma Reading and Study Questions

These questions are written to assist you in understanding the reading and for quiz preparation. I strongly recommend that you print these out and take notes for every single question. You can use these notes when you take the quiz over this material.

INTRODUCTION Our National Eating Disorder

Write out the basic question that this book addresses.

Describe the two “-phobias” that Pollan identifies, included the year that each began.

“So violent a change in a culture’s eating habits is surely the sign of a national eating \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

Pollan lists around 8 symptoms in a paragraph that a “culture in possession of deeply rooted traditions surrounding food and eating” would not have. List the first one (the legislative one) and the last one.

What is the French paradox?

What is the American paradox?

What did the original *omnivore’s dilemma* entail?

What do our taste buds guide us toward?

What do our taste buds guide us away from? Explain.

What is the advantage (or “boon”) to being omnivores (generalists)?

What is meant by the Manichaean view of food?

How does ***culture*** give humans an advantage over rats in terms knowing which things will nourish and which things will poison?

List the five key concepts that human culture uses to codify the rules of wise eating? (hint, the first one is taboos, page 4)

What is it about the modern supermarket that has caused the return of the so called omnivore’s dilemma?

How, in one sentence, does Pollan explain why Americans have never had a “….single, strong, stable culinary tradition”…?

What group uses the omnivore’s dilemma as an opportunity? Explain.

Pollan lists six current dilemmas (in this vs. that form) near the end of page 5. Do you have any of these?

Pollan describes his approach to answering the question what to eat how? (last sentence, page 6).

Related to previous question, what “long lenses” does he use? (two “–ologies”)

How does our omnivorousness shape 1) our body and 2) other aspects of our being?

Pollan writes how we are different from other eaters, in our ability to modify the food chains we depend on. List four technologies, beginning with cooking with fire.

Pollan next outlines the other two parts of the book, including the pastoral food chain and finally a hunter-gatherer diet (though practiced in the current time frame). Then he discusses a few themes. One is a fundamental tension between what two things? Summarize what is meant by this. This tension, he points out, links to problems of health and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Describe the basics of the other theme.

Finally, he write that industrial eating obscures what?

What did Wendell Berry say that eating is?

What two other “acts” does Pollan add?