

Pollan, *In Defense of Food* The Age of Nutritionism

Take approximately 15 minutes in your small group to discuss the following prompts. In your Journal, take notes on your conclusions. Identify key passages that support your claims. Nominate a spokesperson to present your findings and a reader to read aloud relevant passages in your presentation to the class.

Group One: Analyze and discuss chapters 1 & 2, paying special attention to the terms “scientific reductionism” and “nutritionism.” How do these key terms in his argument set the tone for what is to come?

Group Two: Analyze and discuss chapters 3 & 4, considering how the example of margarine and the development of government-sponsored dietary guidelines helped create the contemporary state of confusion and anxiety over how we eat.

Group Three: Analyze and discuss chapter 5. How did the lipid hypothesis come to dominate the early ideology of nutritionism? Examine his subtle shifts in tone as Pollan presents the tension between the ideology and the actual evidence.

Group Four: Analyze and discuss chapters 7 & 8. In the brief history of food science, explain how the carbohydrate hypothesis follows the lipid hypothesis. How does Pollan undermine our confidence in these supposedly “solid” scientific paradigms?

Group Five: Analyze and discuss chapter 9. What are the inherent problems of “testing” in food science? Explore the limitations in each of the three kinds of studies. What does Pollan want us to conclude based on his critique?