

## **Pollan, *In Defense of Food***

### **The Western Diet and the Diseases of Civilization**

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 Chapter 1. Focusing on Kerin O’Dea’s experiment with ten Aborigines, examine the relationship between a traditional diet, where food rules are based on cultural information, with the western diet, where food rules are determined by modern industrial agriculture. How would you answer the question Pollan poses at the end of the chapter: To what extent are we all Aborigines?

**Group Two:** Analyze and discuss Chapter 2. Explore Weston Price’s ecological approach to diet and health. Consider such factors as tooth decay and soil quality. What effect did the modern disruption of the circular flow of nutrients through the food chain help create the “American paradox” of higher quantities of food and lower nutrient levels?

**Group Three:** Analyze and discuss Chapter 3. Track the modern innovation of whole grains into refined flour that could be easily stored and transported, and the widespread increase in the trade of cheap sugar (106-114). What effects do these changes in diet have on the human body’s ability to produce insulin?

**Group Four:** Analyze and discuss Chapter 3. Examine the manner in which corn, soy, wheat, and rice came to dominate the US food market (114-124). How does this situation contribute to the causes of “nutritional inflation” revealed in Brian Halweil’s research.

**Group Five:** Analyze and discuss Chapter 3. Examine the function of Omega-3 and Omega-6 fats in the western diet. In what way does Pollan’s discussion of the relationship of tradition to modern food science (124-136) lead him to this section’s culmination? How does it prepare the reader for the final section of the book?