

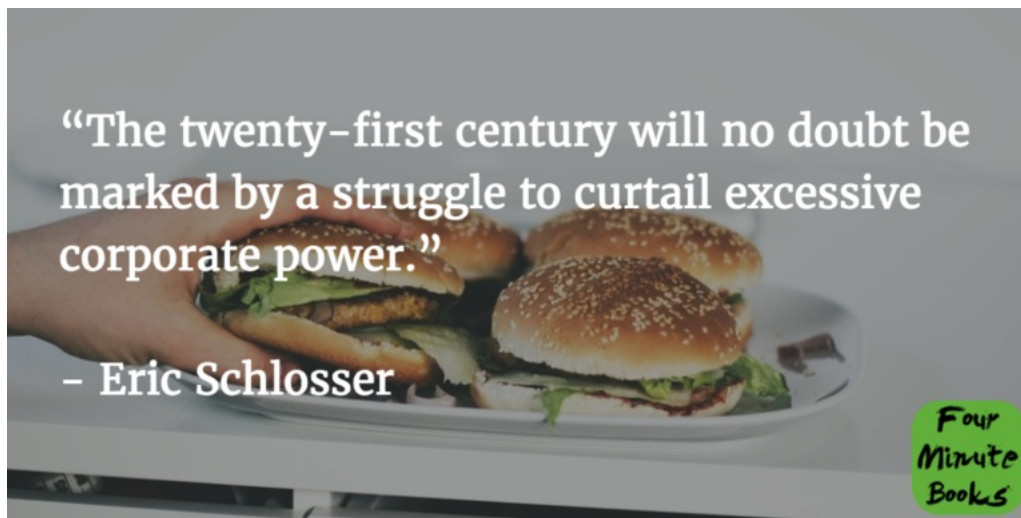
Fast Food Nation Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/fast-food-nation-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Fast Food Nation* describes how the fast food industry has reduced the overall food quality worldwide, created poor working conditions for millions of people and ruined public health.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



The most serious thing about *Fast Food Nation* is that it was written 15 years ago and not much has changed. Many books have taken on the topic of fast food, and while they all emphasize different aspects, they share one unanimous message: fast food is bad for everybody, regardless of whether you eat it or not.

Even if you don't eat fast food, you'll still be negatively affected by some of the consequences, like rising crime rates where you live, because a big supplier moved there recently and now employs illegal migrant workers, who are poor and desperate.

And if you think that's bad, wait till you read the other 3 lessons from Eric Schlosser's book. Chances are, you'll take a break from eating at McDonald's for a while. Here they are:

1. Fast food franchises deliberately target children, because they're more effective to market to.
2. The meat packaging industry has made American cities poor and ridden with crime.
3. Obesity isn't the worst health issue that fast food creates. There's something bigger.

Ready to kiss your favorite burger joint goodbye? You'll want to find a new one soon!

Lesson 1: Fast food companies target children in their marketing, because they're impressionable.

When you think about who to market a product to, one of the first questions that comes up is usually: "Who has the money to buy this?" But the fast food industry found a group of customers that helped them go around this question: children.

Children are responsive, easy to impress and can be convinced with very simple incentives. You show them a bunch of toys and funny characters plus a savory burger and they're sold. Speaking of sold, how do they come up with the money to pay for the food?

They don't. **They simply annoy their parents until they buy it for them.** There's hardly anything more convincing for a parent than a child's plea and since the tendency of parents to compensate a lack of attention with spending more money on their kids has gone up since the 80s, this kind of advertising made for the perfect combination of desire and guilt.

Just think of all the colors at a McDonald's. The playground outside. The naming of "Happy Meals." The toys. They're a children's paradise. Adding the toys alone can double or triple sales in any given week.

A shocking result of their deliberate marketing to children is that **90% of all children in the US between the ages of three and nine go to McDonald's at least once a month.**

Oh and the food has long snuck into schools too. Fast food chains like Subway are often the main suppliers of cafeteria food.

Lesson 2: Wherever big meat packaging companies go, crime and poverty are on the rise.

How is it even possible for one cheeseburger to cost \$1? I mean, think about how much of the work that goes into one burger you could do if I gave you \$1. And that's not even thinking about profit!

Of course mass production is the main driver behind these prices, but even with that in mind the race for cheaper could hardly be any closer to the bottom, could it?

The meat processing industry has long adopted the same assembly line, highly standardized process the fast food industry uses to make the food. This has made skilled workers unnecessary. Instead, they hire cheap, replaceable employees, often illegal migrants, homeless people or refugees and pay them next to nothing.

For example, since an employer must only offer paid holidays and health insurance after at least six months of work time, many meat companies fire their workers shortly before passing this mark. Another thing meat packagers love about hiring illegal immigrants (like the 25% of workers in this industry in Iowa and Nebraska are) is that they can't form unions.

The natural result of these practices is not just a cheap burger, but also a downfall of the cities these companies move to. Because poor and desperate people make up the workforce of meat packaging firms, the cities they move to see a drastic spike in crime and the need for medical care. Lexington, Nebraska, for example, doubled both its crime rate and state-subsidized medical care incidents within ten years of a big slaughterhouse moving there in 1990. Gangs controlled the streets and turned the city into a drug hub.

Everything comes at a price. Even if it's just \$1. *Especially* if it's just \$1.

Lesson 3: There's a worse health issue than obesity that the fast food industry creates, and it affects 130,000 people a DAY.

You're probably aware of the big obesity problem in the US, and you're right to suspect that fast food is largely at fault here. However, there's an even bigger health issue, one that affects still more people, that you probably have no idea about.

A type of bacteria called E. coli sometimes pops up in the news for bringing someone into the hospital or even causing their death. It's a pathogen that mostly grows within feces (that's poop). But sometimes, somehow, it ends up in the food people eat, which then gets them infected.

Now you might say "Wait a minute. If the bacteria grow in feces, and end up in food, then..." – and you're right. **It means some of your fast food is shit.** *Literally.*

Because in both the meat packaging and fast food industry the work is done fast, by unskilled people and in unsanitary conditions, it's not uncommon for crap to somehow come in contact with the meat. But that doesn't even have to be the case. By illegally feeding the cattle (which naturally eats grass) wrong (like corn) and sometimes downright atrocious food (like dead horses, pigs or chicken poop), they're increasing the chances of E. coli even further.

Since so few companies (there are just four big meat packagers) supply all of the US with meat, **just one contaminated batch can affect millions of people.**

As a result, 130,000 Americans get sick from food poisoning – EVERY DAY.

Fast Food Nation Review

I've eaten at McDonald's once in the past four years. And once at Burger King. I haven't regretted it so far and I think neither will you. Read *Fast Food Nation*. Get educated. Choose better food.

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- What the secret behind fast food's meteoric rise is
- How fast food restaurants strategically abuse teens as a workforce
- Why a franchise model is always better for the corporation than the franchisee
- The reason it doesn't matter whether it says "artificial" or "natural" flavor on the box
- How much a farmer earns from a \$1.50 pack of fries sold (it's almost nothing)
- Why meat packaging is the most dangerous industry in the US to work in
- How fast food chains have managed to go global so fast

Who would I recommend the Fast Food Nation summary to?

The 14 year old, who considers getting a job at McDonald's during school holidays, the 29 year old entrepreneur, who thinks he'll try a franchise next, and anyone who eats fast food more than twice a month.