In Defense of Food
Michael Pollan

What are the first three sentences of the book?
What do you think he means by the above?

What is Pollan’s advice about eating meat (1)?

What places has Pollan visited? Does this fact give him some authority as a source (2)?

What is his advice about eating processed food products (1)?
What do you think he means by “whole fresh foods” (1)?
Why does Pollan suggest you “avoid products that make health claims” (2)?

It used to be that culture—or family—determined what people ate. Who tells us what to eat now (3)?

A 2006 study showed what about a low-fat diet (5)?
• In 2005, we learned that dietary fiber may not protect us from what (5)?

• Pollan cites a study by the Institute of Medicine at the National Academy of Science and a Harvard study. These two studies showed conflicting results on the question of the health benefits of eating fish. Why does Pollan cite these two studies? What is he trying to demonstrate (5)?

THE AGE OF NUTRITIONISM
Next, Pollan gives you a preview of what is in each of the three sections of his book. The first section is “The Age of Nutritionism.”

What is his basic premise in this section (6-9)?

THE AGE OF NUTRITIONISM
What are the three “pernicious myths” that scientists and food marketers have been “eager to exploit” (8)?

THE WESTERN DIET
The second section is “The Western Diet.” What is his basic premise in this section (9-12)?

THE WESTERN DIET
What are four of the top ten causes of death that are linked to diet (10)?

THE WESTERN DIET
These chronic diseases can be “traced directly to the industrialization of our food,” according to Pollan (10). What four items does he then list as the sources of this industrialized food?

THE WESTERN DIET
What happens when people in other places “gave up their traditional way of eating and adopted the Western diet” (11)?

THE WESTERN DIET
Pollan points out that “there have been traditional diets based on just about any kind of whole food you can imagine” and that these diets have resulted in a healthier population than the Western diet (11). What does this suggest? In other words, what is he trying to argue with this fact?
THE WESTERN DIET
Rather than returning to traditional diets, "nutritionism prefers to tinker with the Western diet" by doing what (11)?

GETTING OVER NUTRITIONISM
The third section, entitled "Getting Over Nutritionism" is about "personal rules of eating" (12).
In what way are Pollan’s rules of eating different from the nutrition guidelines we’re used to (12)?

GETTING OVER NUTRITIONISM
How does Pollan answer the question regarding his authority on the subject of eating? Do you think he is a credible source (13)?

GETTING OVER NUTRITIONISM
Pollan states that "by the 1960s… if you wanted to eat produce grown without synthetic chemicals or meat raised on pasture without pharmaceuticals, you were out of luck. The supermarket [was] the only place to buy food, and real food was rapidly disappearing from its shelves, to be replaced by the modern cornucopia of highly processed foodlike products" (13-14). What does this mean?

How are things beginning to change now?

GETTING OVER NUTRITIONISM
What does Pollan predict for the future if more consumers continue to "join the movement that is renovating our food system" (14)?

Does the introduction of this book seem to have a positive or negative tone? Do you think there is good news about the future of food in America?