

Comparing *The Jungle* with *Fast Food Nation*

In this lesson plan, students read an excerpt from Upton Sinclair's 1906 *The Jungle* and an excerpt from Eric Schlosser's 2002 *Fast Food Nation*. Students write an essay comparing the intentions, content, and effects of these two publications.

A lesson plan for grades 8–10 English Language Arts

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Learning outcomes

CONTENT

Students will compare excerpts from *The Jungle* (1906) and *Fast Food Nation* (2002).

SKILL

Students will write a short essay.

Teacher planning

MATERIALS NEEDED

Student computers with internet access to access the websites used in the activity.

TIME REQUIRED

One class period

Activities

- Have students read the following two excerpts:
 - Excerpt from *The Jungle* (1906) by Upton Sinclair, from the North Carolina digital history textbook
 - “The Most Dangerous Job,” excerpt from *Fast Food Nation* (2002) by Eric Schlosser, from thirdworldtraveler.com
- Assign the students a one-page essay comparing the two excerpts. The paper should answer the following questions:
 - What is the goal of both excerpts?
 - What kinds of details do both authors include in their excerpts to make their points?
 - What were the effects of *The Jungle*'s publication and what have been some possible effects of the publication of *Fast Food Nation*?

Learn more

- [The Jungle Excerpt from *The Jungle*](#), 1906 novel by Upton Sinclair exposing working conditions and food safety problems in the meatpacking industry. Includes historical commentary.

RELATED PAGES

- [The Jungle: Excerpt from *The Jungle*](#), 1906 novel by Upton Sinclair exposing working conditions and food safety problems in the meatpacking industry. Includes historical commentary.
- [Death in a Pot](#): This article, republished by the North Carolina State Board of Health in 1900, informed the public about health hazards associated with new, and devious, ways of processing and packaging food. Includes historical commentary about the growth of concern about food safety and of public health as a field.
- [Krispy Kreme](#): On July 13, 1937, the first Krispy Kreme store opened for business in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The company's success and quick rise to popularity were due both to

TEACHER GUIDE TO ESSAY RESPONSES

Students' responses to the questions above will vary, but may include:

What is the goal of both excerpts?

To produce outrage and a desire to reform the food industry.

What kinds of details do both authors include in their excerpts to make their points?

Any of the graphic details about animal slaughter or horrible working conditions.

What were the effects of *The Jungle's* publication and what have been some possible effects of the publication of *Fast Food Nation*?

The Jungle — Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906; Meat Inspection Act of 1906. *Fast Food Nation* — more health-conscious Americans; maybe more vegetarians and vegans; fast-food restaurants adding healthy options to their menus.

Assessment

- √+ The essay addresses the three questions.
- √ The essay addresses two of the questions.
- √- The essay addresses none of the questions.

• Common Core State Standards

◦ ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (2010)

▪ History/Social Studies

- Grades 6-8
 - 6-8.LH.6 Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).
- Grades 9-10
 - 9-10.LH.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

North Carolina curriculum alignment

SOCIAL STUDIES (2003)

Grade 11–12 — United States History

- **Goal 7:** The Progressive Movement in the United States (1890-1914) -The learner will analyze the economic, political, and social reforms of the Progressive Period.
 - **Objective 7.01:** Explain the conditions that led to the rise of Progressivism.

the personal history of Vernon Rudolph, its owner, and the larger cultural history of doughnuts in America (and more specifically, the American South).

RELATED TOPICS

- Learn more about [Upton Sinclair](#), [food](#), [food safety](#), [history](#), [industry](#), and [public health](#).

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Grade 8

- **Goal 5:** The learner will evaluate the impact of political, economic, social, and technological changes on life in North Carolina from 1870 to 1930.
 - **Objective 5.05:** Assess the influence of the political, legal, and social movements on the political system and life in North Carolina.