



FAST FOOD NATION

– Extra

Level 3

This level is suitable for students who have been learning English for at least three years and up to four years. It corresponds with the Common European Framework level B1. Suitable for users of TEAM magazine.

SYNOPSIS

Fast Food Nation contains three interwoven stories connected with Mickey's, a fast food chain. It follows the lives of people from different sectors of society who work for the company and shows the impact the company has on their lives.

In the first story, Don is sent by Mickey's to Cody to investigate suspected meat contamination at a meat packing plant, UMP. Don's tour of the plant doesn't reveal any problems, but later he meets an old rancher who explains what is happening. They are speeding up the production line to increase profit and the meat is being contaminated as a result. Harry, Mickey's meat buyer, warns Don not to interfere or risk losing his job. Don decides to let the matter rest.

The second story follows Amber, a part time waitress at Mickey's in Cody. She meets an environmentalist group and decides to take action with them to protest about killing cows to provide burger meat. Their plan fails and Amber resigns from Mickey's. She is the only character who manages to escape the company's influence.

The third story is about three illegal Mexican workers. Raúl and Coco see the real side of life at UMP. Coco forms a relationship with supervisor Mike and develops a drugs problem. Sylvia works in a hotel but when Raúl is injured badly in an accident at work and UMP refuses to accept responsibility, she is finally forced to work in the slaughter room to earn money.

THE BACK STORY

The film *Fast Food Nation* is based on the non-fiction book by Eric Schlosser. It aims to shock and it does this through some very dramatic scenes. This is why it has a 15 certificate. The horrific closing scenes were actually shot in a slaughter house. The idea of showing what goes on in a slaughter house is not new. A book called *The Jungle* was written in 1906 by Upton Sinclair and this revealed the terrible conditions for workers and animals in these places. The book led to the development of regulations for the industry, including the formation of the FDA – the Food and Drug Administration. As *Fast Food Nation* makes clear, much more still needs to be done.

Fast Food Nation has many themes. It is about big business and the control it has over all our lives. It also makes us think carefully about environmental and ethical issues. It raises questions about illegal workers. It certainly doesn't have a happy ending. We are left at the end with a scary feeling of inevitability – that we are all like cogs in the wheels of a big machine.

MEDIA LINKS

DVD: The film *Fast Food Nation* is available on DVD.

CD: A recording of *Fast Food Nation* is available to accompany the Scholastic Reader.

Internet: You can find more information at the official website: www.foxsearchlight.com/fastfoodnation.

Book: *Fast Food Nation* is published by Penguin (2002).

HOW TO USE YOUR SCHOLASTIC READER

Choosing and motivating

Is this the right story for your class? Have your students seen the film *Fast Food Nation*? Motivate them with some background information (see The Back Story above) and by reading aloud the first page of the story with dramatic atmosphere.

Organising

Plan a class reading schedule. Decide how many pages to set for reading each week. Select exercises from the Self-Study section at the back of the reader and extra activities from this resource sheet to go with each chunk of reading. (All answers on page 4 of this resource sheet.)

Using the CD

Students can listen and follow in their books. They can listen and then read. They can read and then listen. All these activities will improve their reading speeds and skills.

Using the DVD

Select the English language option on the DVD. The film is 108 minutes. You could show it in chunks of, say, 15 minutes, in parallel with the class reading schedule. Alternatively, show it when the class have finished the book, as a reward.

Glossary

Go to 'New Words' at the back of the reader. Translate the words with the class or get students to find meanings at home. The Vocabulary Builder on page 3 of this resource sheet practises the new words in a different context.

Casual language

Introduce the informal expressions used in *Fast Food Nation* (see Vocabulary Builder on page 3 of this resource sheet). Put them into context. Ask students to look out for them as they read.

Fact Files

Set these as self-study or use for whole class work. These provide background information about how the book became a film, the problem of illegal immigration and a short history of fast food.

What did they think?

Get everyone to do a written or spoken review of *Fast Food Nation*. Compare opinions. Will they read the original book some time? Will they go and see the film? Did you like it? Let us know at readers@scholasticeltreaders.com.



FAST FOOD NATION

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People and places

1 Answer the questions.

- a) Which two people work for Mickey's? *Don and Amber*
- b) Who is a relative of Coco's?
- c) Who is Amber's uncle?
- d) What happens at Universal Meat Packing (UMP)?
- e) Where is UMP?
- f) Who doesn't like UMP?
- g) What does Mickey's sell?

2 Talk to a partner. Which person would you like to learn more about in the story? Why?

Chapters 1-3

1 Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)? Correct the false ones.

- a) The Mexicans pay Esteban to drive them across the border. *F. They pay him to walk across the border.*
- b) The people in the meeting are happy because Mickey's burgers are selling well.
- c) The scientist gives Don new burger flavours to taste.
- d) Jack is worried because there is not enough real meat in the burgers.
- e) It's an easy journey for the Mexicans to cross the border.
- f) Benny drives the Mexicans to more than one town in the USA.
- g) Don goes to Cody to check the restaurants there.

2 Cross out the answer which is not correct.

- a) What do they talk about in the meeting?
i) sales ii) advertising ~~iii) new employees~~
- b) Who works for Mickey's?
i) Benny ii) Reilly iii) Phil
- c) How does Coco feel?
i) tired ii) ill iii) hot

- d) What does Benny have in the van?
i) bottles of water ii) a gun iii) vegetables
- e) What do Raúl and Jorge see in Cody?
i) restaurants ii) banks iii) supermarkets
- f) What special clothes do Raúl and Jorge have to wear?
i) hats ii) gloves iii) trousers

3 What is different about these things?

- a) Don's journey to Cody and the Mexicans' journey to Cody.
- b) Don's hotel room and the Mexicans' hotel room.

4 Talk to a partner. What do you think about these things?

- a) What jobs will Coco, Sylvia and Raúl do in Cody?
- b) What will be different about their new life?
- c) What will Don learn?

5 Talk to a partner. Describe a long or difficult journey you have been on.

Chapters 4-6

1 Where do these people work and what do they do?

- a) Mike *UMP - he tells the workers what to do.*
- b) Raúl
- c) Coco
- d) Sylvia
- e) Tony
- f) Rita

2 Who says these things about UMP? Who do they say them to?

Harry	Raúl	Rita	Buddy	Sylvia	Tony	Vicky
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- a) 'Then they showed you nothing.' *Rudy to Don*
- b) 'The big problem is the conveyor belt ...'
- c) 'UMP is a bad place. I worked there for a few weeks.'
- d) 'That place is horrible. I don't want to go in there ever again.'
- e) 'Yeah, I've heard some bad things too.'
- f) 'We had to clean the killing floor.'
- g) 'I'm going to go over there and get angry with a few people.'

3 Circle the correct words in *italics*.

- a) The girls have to cut *off* / (up) the meat.
- b) Coco and Sylvia's mouths fell *wide* / *open*.
- c) Their dream was *getting* / *coming* true.
- d) There was no *show* / *sign* of manure anywhere.
- e) They had no *idea* / *thought* what the film was about.
- f) Don's eyes opened *wide* / *big*.

RESOURCE SHEET STUDENT ACTIVITIES

4 Talk to a partner. How are Rudy and Harry different? Think about these things.

- a) appearance b) personality c) opinions

Chapters 7–8

1 Answer the questions.

- a) How do Sylvia and Raúl feel after their dinner out?
Sylvia is worried about the future. Raúl is happy.
- b) Why do Sylvia and Coco have a fight?

- c) Why doesn't Pete like Mickey's?

- d) Why is Coco ill at work?

- e) What are Amber's new friends interested in?

2 Why did these people say these things?

- a) 'I'm not going out with a banana!' (Pete)
He doesn't like the Mickey's overalls.
- b) 'My life is better than yours,' (Coco)

- c) 'And don't copy your uncle, young lady.' (Cindy)

- d) 'You want to fight – then fight in your own time.' (Mike)

- e) 'It's because this isn't real – Mickey's isn't real.' (Amber)

3 Talk to a partner. Pete tells Amber 'The happiest people are the people who follow their dreams. Even if they don't succeed – they feel good because they've tried.' What do you think?

Chapters 9–Epilogue

1 Circle the correct word in *italics*.

- a) The machine cut off Francisco's *arm* / (leg).
- b) Raúl hurt his back on the *floor* / *wall*.
- c) The man told Sylvia that *alcohol* / *drugs* caused the accident.
- d) Coco now works *on the killing floor* / *in an office*.
- e) Amber and her friends wanted to *give the cows more food* / *free the cows*.
- f) It's very *quiet* / *noisy* on the killing floor.
- g) *Phil* / *Don* is the new boss at Mickey's.

2 How and why did these people change in the book?

- a) Don b) Raúl c) Amber d) Coco

3 Talk to a partner. Imagine you are Amber and her friends. Discuss what your next step is going to be.

FINAL TASKS

- 1 Choose a character in the book and tell the group what your plans are for the future.**
- 2 Work in pairs. One of you is a reporter for the Cody Times. The other is Sylvia. Have the interview about the accident. Then write a short article about the interview for the newspaper.**
- 3 Imagine that Don decided to leave Mickey's because of what he found out. Write his letter to his boss.**
- 4 Rudy says, 'We're all just part of the machine.' Discuss what he means by this.**

VOCABULARY BUILDER

1 Find 'New Words' at the back of the book to complete the sentences.

1. You go across a *border* when you go into another country.
2. People sometimes cook meat outside on a
3. Some animals and birds are kept in
4. The truck had an accident and its was all over the road.
5. In the there aren't many trees or plants.
6. We use a to water the garden.
7. protect our clothes and stop them getting dirty.
8.s persuade us to buy things.
9. Workers put the cut meat on a at UMP.
10. Cows live in fields surrounded bys.

2 Write the noun form of these words.

1. pollute *pollution*
2. advertise
3. environmental
4. protest

Casual language

- 'Like what?' (p. 25). We say this when we want someone to give us an example.
- 'What's your point?' (p. 40). We use this question when we know someone is trying to tell us something but doesn't say it directly.
- 'How crazy is that?' (p. 44). We say this when we think an action or comment is stupid.

Choose the right expression to complete the sentences.

1. A: They've opened a new supermarket right next to the old one!
 B: !
2. A: We did some very interesting things on holiday.
 B: Really?
3. A: You've got a test tomorrow, haven't you?
 B: ? Do you think I should be studying?

FROM BOOK TO FILM (pages 56–7)

Research

Put students into small groups. Ask each group to choose a book that has been made into a famous film. Ask students to research – using the Internet or the library – information about the original author of the book and how and why the book became a film. They then write a fact file for the class.

Make a presentation

Ask students to choose a film they know that has a strong ‘message.’ They should make notes about the film and prepare a short presentation. They should consider these things:

- what the ‘message’ of the film is
- how effective the film is in communicating this message
- whether they recommend the film or not and why

Design a poster

Put students into groups to discuss and design an alternative poster for the film *Fast Food Nation*.

THE ILLEGALS (pages 58–9)

Write an information sheet

Put students into groups. Ask them to discuss what advice they would give people coming to their country to live and work. Then they should write an information sheet for these people. They should think about these things:

- jobs
- language
- accommodation
- culture, etc.

Interview

Ask students to imagine they have come from another country to work here. They must find out about life in that country. Put them into pairs to interview each other about the differences they have found in living and working in this country.

A SHORT HISTORY OF FAST FOOD (pages 60–1)

Write an advertisement

Ask students to work in groups to plan a healthy eating menu for a new restaurant. Then they should write an advertisement for the restaurant to go in the local newspaper.

Do a survey

In small groups students write a questionnaire to ask other students about their eating habits. They then interview the other students, collate the results and decide how healthy the class is.

FILM/CD FOLLOW-UP

Observation

Watch a short section of the film and prepare questions to test students’ observation and memory. Show the section to the class. Put the students into two teams and ask the first people in each team your first question. The fastest correct answer wins a point. Questions can be about people/ signs/clothes, etc.

Prediction

Stop the film at a certain point before a character says something. Ask students what he/she is going to say and give them a choice. Play and check.

Sound effects

Ask students to say what sound effects they think a scene will have. Play to check.

Differences

Students identify which scenes are not in the book. They can then choose one of these scenes and write a new chapter for the book.

ANSWER KEY

Self-Study Activities (pages 62–4)

- 1 a) fence b) cargo c) overalls d) lime e) ranch f) manure
 2 a) iii b) iv c) i d) v e) ii
 4 a) Jack b) Harry c) Esteban d) Benny e) Roberto f) Mike
 6 a) iii b) iv c) i d) ii
 7 a) a little b) difficult c) pleased d) likes e) bad
 f) doesn’t want g) worse
 9 a) F. Because he smells. b) F. Because she needs the money.
 c) T d) T e) T f) F. Because the belt moves too fast.
 10 a) ‘There’s always been dirt in our food.’
 b) ‘They’re afraid of a bit of dirt!’
 c) ‘[They] come here to get a better life.’
 d) ‘He’s been stealing from the company.’
 e) ‘Think about your future.’
 11 a) Should he tell Jack about UMP? b) He won’t tell him.
 c) Open answers.
 12 a) environment b) pollution c) control d) protest
 15 a) Coco because Sylvia is worried about her.
 b) Cindy because Pete talks about his beliefs.
 c) Pete because if you hope and do nothing about it you get nowhere.
 d) Andrew because big companies don’t tell the truth about pollution.
 e) the man from UMP because he doesn’t want to give Raúl any money.
 f) Amber because the cows refuse to escape.
 g) Benny because he wants the boys to like life in the USA.

Resource Sheet Activities

People and places

- 1 b) Sylvia c) Pete d) They kill cows and cut meat. e) in Cody
 f) Rudy g) burgers

Chapters 1–3

- 1 b) T c) F. Don smells the flavours.
 d) F. he’s worried that there’s manure in the burgers.
 e) F. the journey is hard. f) T g) F. He’s there to check UMP.
 2 b) i c) ii d) iii e) ii f) iii
 3 a) Don travels in an air conditioned car – the Mexicans on foot and in a dirty van.
 b) Don’s is luxurious/comfortable/clean/has many facilities – the Mexicans’ is small/cramped/dirty/uncomfortable.

Chapters 4–6

- 1 b) at UMP – he cleans the floors c) UMP – she cuts meat
 d) at a hotel – she cleans rooms
 e) at Mickey’s – he’s the manager
 f) at Rudy’s ranch – she looks after his house
 2 b) Rita to Don c) Vicky to Sylvia d) Sylvia to Coco
 e) Tony to Don f) Raúl to Sylvia and Coco g) Harry to Don
 3 b) open c) coming d) sign e) idea f) wide

Chapters 7–8

- 1 b) Because Sylvia learns Coco is taking drugs.
 c) Because there are too many of them.
 d) Because she’s tired and needs drugs.
 e) Saving the environment.
 2 b) Coco has an easier life because of Mike.
 c) Pete had to leave college.
 d) Coco wants to attack Maria at work.
 e) People don’t know the truth about Mickey’s.

Chapters 9–Epilogue

- 1 b) floor c) drugs d) in an office e) free the cows f) noisy
 g) Phil

Vocabulary builder

- 1 2. barbecue 3. cages 4. cargo 5. desert 6. hose 7. overalls
 8. advertisements 9. conveyor belts 10. fences
 2 2. advertisement 3. environment 4. protest

Casual language

1. How crazy is that? 2. Like what? 3. What’s your point?