Text in Community Study Guide

This reading/study guide is prepared for the students, faculty, staff, and interested members of the Aggie Family in support of the 2013-2014 Text in Community read, *Salt, Sugar, Fat*. By Michael Moss. This guide has been developed in order to highlight “main” points, ideas, and issues within the text. The four separate authors each have their own approach to reading the text and highlight different information. Exposure to the four different styles should create greater opportunity for the reader to engage the text. This guide is meant more as a way to help the reader locate important topics, but this in no way means that there aren’t more issues worthy of exploration. The reader should think of this as a beginning to interacting with the text rather than simply a reference guide.

Readers can use this guide as a basis for conversation, study, or as a preparation for reading. Readers, especially students, should look for ways that create overlap from their classes to the text and more importantly to their lives on campus. Student readers are encouraged to discuss the text outside of class.

Good luck as you read through and engage the text. This particular topic is of great importance given recent issues with health and wellness in our country overall.
Notes on Salt Sugar Fat

Prologue—The Corporate Meeting

Abstract:

This prologue sets the stage for many of the issues Moss will discuss and research in the book. From the way that food has been created to drive us to buy it, to the way that it’s marketed, to the role that advertising and the stock market all feed into making this sort of food omni-present in American lives. The author reflects on the “prescience” of the food corporations and is impressed with their suggestion to alter manufacturing processes. While reading this make certain to identify themes or ideas that the author thinks is important. These themes will surely come up again later in the text. Below are some questions that if you can answer, will help you understand better the approach and interests of the text.

- Why is it that the meeting is being held?
  - http://greatist.com/

- Who are the major players and why are they involved?

- Remember the term “stomach share” and what it means.

- Why does Behnke feel responsible for the obesity problem and what does he tell himself about his/ the food corporations’ role in obesity?
  - See the following blog for more info
    http://wholehealthsource.blogspot.com/2012/02/is-sugar-fattening.html

- Obesity is on the rise, costs from disease and health issues are in the billions of dollars. Why is a food company worried about this?
• Why does the author analogize the food companies to the tobacco companies and the public health lawsuits that occurred relative to that?

• Who is Michael Mudd and what is he doing?

• Who is Stephen Sanger and what does his response do relative to Mudd’s calls on the food industry?

• What is the bliss point?
  o  http://courses.bio.indiana.edu/L104-Bonner/F12/imagesF12/L8/BlissPoint.html

• Why was the author surprised by the fact that meeting was held in 1999? Why was he impressed with the suggestions of Mr. Mudd?

• Beyond the ingredients and achieving the bliss point, what else has the food industry done to get people to buy food?

• What role does Wall Street play in companies maintaining and increasing the sale of foods with high levels of salt, sugar, and or fat?
Chapter 1—Exploiting the Biology of the Child

Abstract:

In this chapter the author goes about introducing us to the research done by scientists, with the support of industry and the government, on sugar, sugar consumption, sugar digestion, and mechanisms of taste and satiety. The author presents research findings, opinions based on those findings, as well as his own ideas on the why sugar has found its way into our food and why it is so ubiquitous. As you’re reading attempt to isolate the study supported findings from the opinions of the researchers and the author. The dividing line isn’t always clear. Finally, ask yourself what the importance of this research is to your health and eating habits. Would you eat differently based on this chapter?

- Why, if the tongue map is wrong, do we keep teaching it to kids?
  - [http://jcb.rupress.org/content/190/3/285.full](http://jcb.rupress.org/content/190/3/285.full)
- Besides taste, what else does sugar do for foods?
- What other examples of sugar driving history might be out there? Is there any way sugar has influenced your major?
- Is there a relation between sugar subsidies and consumption? Why?
  - [http://www.aei-ideas.org/2012/02/u-s-sugar-policy-cost-american-consumers-almost-4-billion-last-year/](http://www.aei-ideas.org/2012/02/u-s-sugar-policy-cost-american-consumers-almost-4-billion-last-year/)
- What do the rodent studies tell us about the power of the attraction of sugar?
- Out of the following groups, rank their preference for sweets.
  - White Adults
  - African American Children
  - African American Adults
  - White Children
- What did the 1975 Greene study show about ingesting sweet foods relative to our preference/desire for more?
• Why is the bliss point so important to food and beverage companies?
  ○ http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/sugary-drinks-fact-sheet/
• Why are starchy foods preferred? What is their relation to sugar?
• Julie Mennella claims that with all the sugar in processed foods, that the food companies are teaching children “...what food should taste like.” (bottom of page 15). What do you suppose this means? Why is it an important idea in Moss’ overall worry about food?
• What are some of the ways sugar was linked to weight gain? Why was this important for soda production? How was the government involved in setting off this research?
• The author notes that the overconsumption of sugar has led to increasing levels of obesity in a variety of countries. Is the increased amount of soda intake in the countries and the obesity levels related? Is one the cause of the other? Why or why not?
• Should sugar be on the government’s list of food additives to be monitored?
  ○ Is it the role of government to set up and safeguard our health?
Chapter 2—How Do You Get People To Crave?

Abstract:

Craving is such a well-known experience for us. We all crave something like chips, chocolate, or Cheetos. But craving is different than hunger. If we were hungry, anything would satisfy us, but when we crave, it’s something in particular that we want. Only one thing will satisfy our craving. The story of Dr. Pepper failing and then succeeding in creating new lines is an example of how the food companies work to create a food item that we crave. One thing to think about is that if companies know how to make us crave things that are unhealthy, should they make them at all? Think also about what you crave and when and what you will do to satisfy those cravings.

- What precipitates Dr. Pepper’s foray into new products? How does industry influence them to move on into new areas?
- What is the technical term for broadening a brand item like Dr. Pepper (Dr. Pepper Cherry, Mountain Dew Code Red)?
- Why do companies create product line extensions?
- Who is Howard Moskowitz and what does he do?
Is Moskowitz’s defense that his research that helped create more appealing and perhaps less healthful foods was not wrong and he has no regrets convincing to you? Why or why not?

What is “sensory-specific satiety”?

What is the result about sugar level increase that Moskowitz found that was so interesting? What is the relation between sugar amount and amount eaten?

Why is “Wall Street” so important to the author? What effects does Wall Street have on the food companies?

What did the Folger’s Coffee study prompt Moskowitz to do?

What does the menu selection at the lunch with Moskowitz, Reisner, and Moss indicate? Does Moskowitz’s dislike of Dr. Pepper seem ironic to you?

What is the ingredient in Dr. Pepper, Prego pasta sauce that is one of the top 2 or 3 in it?

Is the bliss point for food stable or malleable?
Chapter 3—Convenience with a Capital ‘C’

Abstract:

Convenience is important for what we choose to eat. When you get back from a long day of school, activities, and the rest, do you have the time and energy to cook a full meal? One of the many post WWII revolutions was the increase in “convenience” foods. They really became what they are during this time. This chapter focuses on some main characters who influenced the growth of processed convenience foods. The chapter focuses on working through the rise of convenience foods, how they created new products, changed the industry, changed national and global eating habits, and how it changed society.

- What is a “convenience food?”
  - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convenience_food
- Who is Al Clausi and why is he so important?
- Who is Betty Dickson and what did she do?
- Is there a relation between the time and events of the post WWII and the rise of “convenience” foods? If there is, why?
- What was the effect of General Foods commitment to “pure ingredients?” What is a “pure ingredient?”
- Is the use of an enzyme or chemical to simulate a cooking process bad? Are pyrophosphates or orthophosphates bad for our health?
  - http://www.wisegeek.org/what-is-pyrophosphate.htm
- What are some of the more toxic food additives on the Center for Science and the Public Interest’s list? Have you eaten foods with additives high on the list?
- What was so important about cutting the time to make pudding?
- What was the single biggest change to cereal that created more success for companies like Post and General Mills?
- What was Charles Mortimer and what was his plan to get Post back into competitive status? What did he do to really push convenience in foods?
- Beyond being a sweetener, what does sugar do for processed foods? How does it affect bacteria growth?
- How did marketing influence the creation of Tang?
• Why is/was Tang so popular?
• Why did convenience become as important to food consumption and preparation? Are the “slow food” movements, or organic foods related to this in any way?
• Do you prefer organic food? Why? Does this chapter make you want more or less organic food in your diet?
• Who is Betty Crocker and how did she influence Betty Dickson?
• What influence does the increased role of women in the workforce have on the consumption of processed foods?
Chapter 4—Is it Cereal or Candy?

Abstract:

This chapter discusses the rise of cereal as part of the American diet, the increase of sugar found in cereal, and the way cereal has become a flashpoint on health issues, especially as it relates to our children. Pay attention to how government becomes involved and the arguments both for and against regulation. Important too is the relation that advertising has to the consumption of cereal.

- Have you ever eaten a cereal that was too sweet? What was it? Did your parents ever not let you eat a particular sort of cereal? What was it?

- Who are the “Big Three” and how did they come to dominate the cereal aisle?
- How did the amount of sugar in the cereal get to be a national issue?
- Why might cereal in some cases be better thought of as a candy?
- Is the marketing of high-sugar cereals to young children a bad thing, especially given what you learned in chapter one about kids preferring sweeter food more?
• What is the “desweetening the title” strategy that the Big Three did? Why is this considered a marketing move rather than an actual product change?
  o Do a Google image search on the old names of cereals in comparison with the new ones. Do the images change in important ways?
• What is the FTC and what role did they play in the sugar issues?
• Why do you think the Washington Post labeled the FTC as the National Nanny?
• When Kellogg’s sales dipped, to what division (research, sales, marketing, human resources) did they turn to help bolster the sales? Does their choice strike you as odd?
• What cereal did Kellogg come up with that had Rice Krispies as part of its background?
  o http://caloriecount.about.com/calories-rice-krispies-treats-squares-i19438
• Why did the researchers settle on that particular cereal?
• What was the Frosted Mini-Wheats controversy? How did it end?
  o http://www.cerealsettlement.com/
• Did your parents ever buy you Frosted Mini-Wheats?
At the beginning of this chapter, we meet Jeffrey Dunn, who worked as a Coke executive for many years before becoming the CEO of Bolthouse farms in 2008. Bolthouse farms, which mainly deals in vegetables, juices, and salad dressings, markets a very different product than the sugary beverages that Dunn was responsible for at Coke. Find out more about how he decided to make the shift here.

When Robert Woodruff stepped in, he brought with him several big marketing ideas, including that “every soldier in uniform would get a Coke for five cents a bottle, no matter where they were stationed or what it cost the company to put those bottles into their hands.”
Our author notes, “His method didn’t require slogans or celebrity endorsements or the kind of money the company would spend every year on advertising, though all these things helped. It went deeper than that. It focused on getting coke into the hands of people, especially kids, when they were most vulnerable to persuasion – those moments when they were happy. This is how Coke came to be partners with America’s favorite pastime” (97-98).

What do these images say about Coke’s relationship with baseball?
Dunn says that "the idea was to be in all those places where these special moments of your life took place." Inside Coke, this is called the "ubiquity strategy." Knowing this, how do you think these advertisements help sell Coke?
One problem that the author identifies is “supersizing.” Check out this graphic that illustrates how American soft drinks have changed over the year

(Slate.com, “When Did Sodas Get So Big?” Sept 12, 2013)

Dunn also makes the point that “you can look at the obesity rates, and you can look at per capita consumption of sugary soft drinks and overlay those on a map, and I promise you: They correalate .99999 percent” (100).

Looking at this CDC map of self-reported obesity rates from 2011 and this USDA map of soft drink consumption, do you think that there is a correlation?
Dunn initially had trouble getting a job with Coke because his father was in upper level management, and “the company had a strict rule against nepotism” (101). “Nepotism” means “favoritism based on kinship” (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nepotism).

In 1984, PepsiCo “pulled off a stunning coup by signing the world’s biggest star, Michael Jackson, to film a commercial for them.” Check out the commercial here:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Md5IPyuvsk

Coke, meanwhile, had Bill Cosby running advertisements. Check out one here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7o5CHAFH_A
When Dunn resigned from Coke, he went to work for Bolthouse farms. Check out some of their advertising strategies:
Chapter Five Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean for the fountain representatives when they are being “positioned?” What does the choice and use of this term say about the industry?
2. What is the “ubiquity strategy” and how did it work?
3. How did Dunn’s trip to Brazil affect his view of the soft drink industry and of his place in it?
4. How does Dunn say his former colleagues deal with the work that they are doing?
5. What does the chapter’s title refer to? Does it have any other meaning?
6. What is “sensory-specific satiety” and why does it give Coke the edge?
In the beginning of this chapter, the author talks about the Marlboro man, which helped turn the cigarette into the world’s top selling brand of cigarettes.

In addition to owning Marlboro, Phillip Morris also owns Kraft, which owns Kool-Aid. In determining how to market Kool-Aid, the company decided to approach it by using the “intimation of fruit” to “create an even more powerful image for their drinks: a chimera of health.”

Kool-Ade was invented in 1927, and was a mediocre seller, until the 1930s, when the inventor slashed the price from ten cents to give. “People no longer saw Kool-Aid as a frivolous luxury,” Moss tells us. “At a nickel each, they saw the packets as an affordable way to enjoy soft drinks during the tough economic times.”

How do these advertisements get that message across?
When Squeezits threatened to dethrone Kool-Aid, Kool-Aid struck back with several advertising gimmicks, including a comic book, “The Adventures of Kool-Aid Man” (127).
Kool-Aid also developed a their own squeez-able bottle, the Kool-Aid Burst, which, because it used half a teaspoon of fruit juice, Kool-Aid was able to market as being “Nutrition in Disguise” (127).

Moss also discusses the way in which scientists learned how to develop crystalline fructose. Table sugar (sucrose) is made by combining the very sweet fructose with the less sweet glucose. In isolation, fructose is much sweeter than sucrose, however, it resists forming crytals. When scientest learned how to keep fructose longer on the shelf, they began to use it to sweeten drinks. Here is what the glucose, fructose, and sucrose molecules look like.
Another major issue that this chapter brings up is the use of juice concentrate, which the chapter calls “stripped juice” because it “takes out all of the fiber, flavor, aromas... and other attributes we might associate with real fruit” (134). Capri Sun changed its packaging after being sued over their “all natural change.” Check out the packaging pre law suit and post law suit.

Pre- Law Suit:

![Pre-Law Suit Packaging]

Post Law Suit:

![Post-Law Suit Packaging]
Discussion Questions – Chapter 6

1. While introducing Genreal Mills financial manager Geoffrey Bible, Michael Moss points out that both Bible and Dunn are similar and that they avoid “too much of the kind of foods and drinks their company sold.” Does this surprise you? Why or why not?

2. Moss makes the point that marketing food is “even more demanding and also very different from tobacco.” After reading this chapter, why do you think that is?

3. What does the “nutrition in disguise” slogan on the Tang boxes refer to? How is this deceptive?

4. How did the use of fructose allow General Foods to make the claim that Kool-Aid was better for you?

5. What are the possible concerns that the author lists about fructose?

6. How did Kraft begin to market to diabetics? What might the author find so frustrating about this?
Ch. 7—That Gooey, Sticky Mouthfeel

In this chapter on fat, Moss talks about the “handy online calculator” that the Department of Agriculture runs, which shows the levels of calcium, niacin, iron, and other elements in ground beef that go up or down depending on the percentage of fat that is entered. Check out this calculator here.

Moss also mentions an experiment about potato chip sounds. Check that out here.
Moss also talks about an experiment in which it was determined that “ice cream makes you happy.” For more on this experiment, check out this article.

Moss talks about the differences between fat levels in types of milk, and he mentions that people are more likely to pick “reduced fat milk” over “skim milk” based on the “reduced fat” label. Check out the comparisons here.
This chapter also discusses a series of experiments conducted by Alina Szczesniak, which determined how people’s brains register fat. The nerve responsible for how we feel fat is called the trigeminal. Here is what it looks like:

Discussion Questions – Chapter 7

1. Why does Moss begin this chapter by talking about Aristotle?
2. What is “that gooey sticky mouthful” that the chapter refers to?
3. Why does Moss compare fat to an opiate?
4. Edmund Rolls discovered that fat lights up the brain in the same way that sugar does, but what did Drewnowski discover about the brain’s ability to detect fat in foods?
5. Why has fat’s reputation always been “horrid,” while sugar and salt have not had the same terrible history?
6. What are some of the economic decisions that lead people to choose processed foods?
1. Dean Southworth was part of the food science team at Kraft Foods that designed Cheez Whiz, but by 2001, he was alarmed by what the product had become. Why do you think this was so? (Could there be more than one reason?) How do you account for his reaction? What was Kraft’s response? For a look at how other people have reacted to the changes in Cheez Whiz, check out this link: http://forums.speedguide.net/showthread.php?281887-The-day-they-took-the-Cheese-out-of-Cheez-Whiz.

2. This chapter focuses on the fatty quality of cheese and the big implications this has for pushing American consumers toward overeating. What is it about full-fat cheese that makes it so enticing for most people, even when they are avoiding whole milk? Do you have a favorite cheese? If so, what is it? To see what were the most consumed cheeses in the US in 2011 (the last year with complete data), go to website for the Independent Dairy Farmers of America at http://www.idfa.org/news-views/media-kits/cheese/cheese-sales-and-trends/.

3. According to Michael Moss, the federal government has a role in propping up sales of foods that are adding to our waistlines! What are some of the ways that the government uses to support the sale of cheese? Doesn’t this contradict the idea that an agency of the Department of Agriculture is trying to get us to eat more healthily? If the Obama Administration is so committed to the national welfare that it insisted on passage of “Obamacare,” how should it handle this apparent inconsistency? You may want to read more about what some political analysts have to say about this at http://www.theatlanticwire.com/politics/2010/11/the-federal-government-wants-to-fatten-you-up-with-cheese/22378/.

4. Most of us can identify the cheese in our Kraft Macaroni-and-Cheese or when it’s baked into our pizza. Moss claims the food giants hook us with invisible or hidden-fat foods. Can you identify other foods in which the cheese or other fat is hidden or at least not as readily recognizable? See what one reporter came up with: http://healthyeating.sfgate.com/hidden-fat-vs-obvious-fat-foods-1291.html.

5. Want some suggestions on how to avoid hidden fat? Watch this video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghRAWnVdEe0
Ch. 9 — *Lunchtime is All Yours*

1. Follow this link to the Oscar Mayer wiener jingle, one of the most successful ads of all time. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNddW2xmZp8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNddW2xmZp8). Could this commercial have been a factor in getting more consumers to eat more fat? Why or why not? What are some of your favorite lunchtime foods from childhood?

![Lunchtime food images](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

2. Fried bologna sandwiches are a lunch staple in the African American community. What makes them taste so good? What makes them so bad for you?

3. Lunchables became a huge profit center for Oscar Mayer and its parent company, Phillip Morris. As you read chapter 9, identify the reasons why Lunchables came to dominate “lunchtime.” Some of the advertising might have contained subliminal messages suggesting that this fast food was more healthy than it actually is or that Lunchable may have had an endorsement from a higher power. Can you spot any of this in the images below?

![Lunchables images](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

4. On the plus side, Michael Moss gives Oscar Mayer credit for trying to offset the negative publicity it has gained from producing so much processed meat filled with salt, sugar and fat. What steps did the company take, and what were the expected results? Do you think reading this chapter will change your eating habits?
Ch. 10—The Message the Government Conveys

1. Michael Moss tells us that, “...the Department of Agriculture has joined industry as a full partner in the most urgent mission of all: cajoling the people to eat more.” (p.213) If Moss is right, what are the ethical or moral complications for the Department of Agriculture? What is its culpability in the rising level of obesity in America?

2. What is “pink slime?” Have you knowingly eaten it? If so, when and where? Want to know more? Check this out: http://recipes.howstuffworks.com/pinkslime-ammonia-ground-beef.htm.

Ch. 11—No Sugar, No Fat, No Sales

1. At one time, major prepared food companies were owed by a conglomerate that also marketed tobacco products like cigarettes. In the case of cigarettes and prepared foods, the goal was to sell as much product as possible, while minimizing any harmful consequences. Here is an ironic ad campaign from Lucky Strike cigarettes in the 1920s. What point is it trying to make?

2. By the 1990s, the Phillip Morris Company knew it had to be sensitive and responsive to a wide range of public health concerns, both for its tobacco products and its processed foods. What steps did the company take in each case? How successful were they?

3. Kraft Foods actually started an anti-obesity campaign within the company. What steps have they taken to improve their products? What stumbling blocks have they met?

4. If you were a processed foods manufacturer, how would you resolve the dilemma of keeping your profits high while making your food healthy (less fat, etc.) and taste good so it will sell well?
1. Do you know of any family members that have a history of high blood pressure?

2. A 1991 study showed that more than 75% of salt consumed came from processed foods?
   *How frequently do you think about your salt intake?
   *Do you differentiate between salt that comes from pre-packaged foods and vs. that which comes from salt shakers on the table?

3. One teaspoon of salt = approximately 1,500 milligrams. In 2010, the government recommended that as the maximum amount to be consumed by African Americans.
   *How do you think your daily intake compares to that?
4. Like mice, fruit flies are used in laboratories (Paul Breslin, Rutgers University) to help understand human traits.

5. With their strategic use of words, many food manufactures choose “crave-able”, “snack-able”, and “lik-able” on much of their packaging. Prior to reading this, had you ever associated any of those terms with “addiction?”

6. At what age do babies crave sugar? Salt?

7. What does the acronym WOF mean? How might it relate to your high school cafeteria and the campus dining hall?

8. Sodium compounds, like salt, do provide some benefits. Name two?

9. Rehabilitation/treatment facilities can help alcoholics and drug addicts with their addictions. Is it possible for those addicted to salt to be helped? If so, how?

Chapter 13—The Same Great Salty Taste Your Customers Crave

1. Several A&T honors students and graduates have interned and worked full-time at Cargill’s offices in Minnesota. The company’s salts have been referred to as “finely tuned bliss machines.” What does this mean as it relates to different foods?
2. In thinking of the foods you eat, can you think of any that the sugar is made sweeter by the salt and that the crunch is magnified because of the salt?

3. How does the term “salary” relate to salt (think the Romans)?

4. What major step did the British government take in 2003 as it relates to food manufacturers?

5. In one of the strongest statements in the entire book, Moss sates “Without salt, processed food companies cease to exist.” What does he mean?

6. We often see a variety of sugar substitutes (Sweet n low, Equal, Splenda,) in many grocery stores and restaurants. Salt substitutes, however, do not seem to be as prevalent. In recent years, Cargill has produced a brand, Premier, that has shown some promise. How might selling Premier be a huge benefit to the company?

7. Removing salt from many foods proves difficult. Why is it even more difficult when removing salt from cheese?

8. A popular brand for generations, the Campbell Soup Company showed much resistance to taking many of the compliance measures others did. Describe the main issue(s) at hand in the 1980s.
9. Describe the role of fresh herbs and spices in Campbell’s soup.

Chapter 14—*I Feel So Sorry for the Public*

1. With its “back against the wall” on the effects of salt, how did Frito-Lay bolster its sales on snacks?
2. After more than thirty years, mostly as an executive, with Frito-Lay, Robert Lin still had many regrets about his work.
   *Has/will a job/company changed you?
   *Can you work at a place if you have to compromise some of your values?
3. Do you agree with Lin’s assertion: The foods we eat provide a long life or an early death?

4. In 1978, Lin fought to get Frito-Lay to lower its salt content even further in some of its products. From a health standpoint, that would have been a strong and important step. However, there was an alternative motivation for making such a move—increased sales. Can you think of examples in today’s society in which an improved or enhanced product that appears to be “customer friendly” has the additional goal of making money?

5. Has the FDA’s efforts in weaning the country off salt through education been effective? What more can/should be done?

6. Throughout the book, Moss notes that many of the people he interviewed (like Lin) have made diet changes. As a result of reading Salt, Sugar, Fat, what change, if any, will you make in your diet?

7. Have you noticed any changes with your Bliss points since childhood? Are there foods that you now eat that you did not years ago? Are there foods you no longer eat that you once enjoyed?

8. Ernest Dichter came up with “7 Fears and Resistances to Lay’s Chips.” Check the ones that apply to you:
   a) You can’t stop eating them
   b) They’re fattening
   c) They’re not good for you
   d) They’re greasy and messy to eat
   e) They’re too expensive
f) It’s hard to store the leftovers

g) They’re bad for children

9. Lays potato chips became synonymous with the slogan “Betcha Can’t Eat Just One.” Can you think of any other foods or snacks that have slogans or jingles that are etched in your memory?