

Diet for a New World

The following questions concern Chapter 4 of the book *Diet for a New World* by John Robbins. Below each question you'll find the names of the students who have responsibility for it. Don't forget to note down--and bookmark--the URLs of the home pages you find relevant to your topic. You will be asked to deliver a summary of your findings to the class.

1) How did the author believe he was misled by the information he learned about nutrition when he was a school boy? Do you remember studying materials like these? What do you remember about the nutrition information -- both explicit and implicit -- that you learned in school? If you studied both in Japan and in a foreign country, how did the information about nutrition differ in the different educational systems? Use the Web to find out what the Japanese Ministry of Education wants teachers to tell their students about nutrition. Also, use the Web to find out how nutrition is taught in at least one other country.

(pp. 68-69) [Doug, Saya]

2) What economic incentives lead dairymen to promote their higher fat products? How does this system affect the study materials provided by the dairy industry to schools? Using the Web, find out whether the situation is the same in Japan or different. (p. 70) [Karen, Hiroo]

3) Give an example of how the Dairy Council in the U.S. misleads teenagers who want to lose weight. Using the Web, try to find out what 'nutrition' advice is promoted by the Japanese dairy industry. Compare it to that given by U.S. dairy interests. (p. 71) [Yuna, Kaho]

4) What does McDonald's teach young people about 'healthy' eating? How is it misleading? Using the Web, find out if McDonald's Japan provides 'educational' materials for schools. If you can find samples of such materials on the Internet, inspect some of them and tell your opinions about them. (pp. 72-73) [Yukari, Meiko]

5) What sort of award did the Beef Council receive? What did they do to deserve such an 'honor.' Use the Web to find out Japanese organizations that promote beef consumption. What information do they give about the nutritional contribution of beef to our diet? Do you think this information is trustworthy? Why or why not? (pp. 73-74) [Megumi, Hitomi, Minami]

6) How have American government agencies spread information that has been discredited by science? What were the "basic four food groups" and what has replaced them? Use the Web to find the answer to the second part of the last question [you can also find the answer on the top of page 78]. What model does the Japanese government promote to teach people about proper nutrition? (pp. 74-76) [Doug, Saya]

7) How does the American government directly influence what school children eat? Do they insure that school children eat a healthy, nutritious diet? Find out, using the Web, how the Japanese government decides what school children are served in school lunches. What are their policies? Do you think healthy meals are served? Why or why not? (pp. 76-77) [Karen, Hiroo]

8) What message about diet and nutrition have heart doctors (cardiologists) and nutritionists been telling people for the last 40 years? What organizations and journals have supported this message? Using the Web, see if you can find information about what the American Heart Association says about diet. What kind of advice do they give? Also, find the web site of a Japanese 'health protection' agency and see what they have to say about diet. (p. 79) [Yuna, Kaho]

9) What do the charts on pages 80-83 tell us about the connection between diet and health? Although Japan appears on the chart showing the connection between fat consumption and the risk of prostate cancer deaths, it does not appear on the charts on pages 80 or 83. Using the Web, try to find information on 1) the connection between bowel cancer or heart disease and meat consumption in Japan, or 2) the connection between fat consumption and the risk of colon cancer in Japan. (pp. 79-83) [Yukari, Meiko]

10) In the last ten years, what are some of the ailments that a high-fiber, low-fat plant-based diet has been found to either prevent or improve? Using the Web, can you find any other advantages for people who maintain such a diet? What are they? (p. 84) [Megumi, Hitomi, Minami]

11) What is the Framingham Heart Study? What has it revealed so far about the connection of diet, health and longevity? Using the Web, find out how the study got its name and whether or not it is still going on. Also, try to find out if there has been a similar long-term study exploring the connection between diet and health in Japan. (pp. 85-86) [Doug, Saya]

12) What is the "China Health Project" and what's special about it? How did the results of the study affect the personal life of the study's director, T. Colin Campbell? Use the Web to find famous people who practice (or who have practiced) a vegetarian diet. Also, using the WWW to find the most up-to-date information about the "China Health Project." (pp. 86-87) [Karen, Hiroo]

13) What was "revolutionary" about the results of a study conducted by Dr. Dean Ornish in 1990? How did the meat and dairy industries respond to the study? What sorts of positive changes did one of the study's participants experience after switching to a vegetarian diet? Use the WWW to find out about other work done by Dr. Dean Ornish. What projects is he involved in now? Can you find the titles of some books that were written by him?(pp. 87-89) [Yuna, Kaho]

14) The Surgeon General and some leading health organizations recommend cutting down the fat in our diets by 30 percent. Do all scientists agree that this level of fat consumption is appropriate for maintaining good health? Why or why not? Use the Web to search for the web sites of some established health organizations (such as the American Cancer Society and American Heart Association) and see what they recommend about dietary habits. (pp. 89-91) [Yukari, Meiko]

15) Why does the author feel that there is some reason to feel optimistic that Americans will start to eat healthier diets in the near future? What sort of work does Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) do? Describe the four food groups that they promote. Search for PCRM's web site and find some activities they're involved in which are not mentioned by John Robbins. (pp. 91-93) [Doug, Saya]

16) Does Dr. Michael Klaper believe that Americans have been eating a balanced, healthy diet? Why or why not? What does he believe would have happened if the nutritional planners who created the old four food groups could look into a crystal ball and see what the health effects have been of choosing menus according to those food groups? Use the Web, to find out what the four old food groups were and what changes were made to the system before the current food pyramid was adopted? Use Amazon.com to find some books written by Michael Klaper. Be prepared to describe some of them to your classmates. (pp. 93-94) [Karen, Hiroo]

17) What aspect of American culture does the author believe to be sad? In what way does he think people can feel better about themselves and their bodies? Find some sites on the Web that claim to support healthy lifestyle change. Evaluate them and be prepared to tell your opinions about them. (pp. 94-95) [Megumi, Hitomi, Minami]
