

NEWS BREAK

Article: **After years in ‘the trough,’ Beyond Meat wants to get its sizzle back**

Section: **BUSINESS, C5**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, June 9, 2024** of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

****Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.***

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will learn about the plant-based burger industry and the rise and fall of the company, Beyond Meat. They'll discuss how marketing impact sales and can spin consumers to think they are purchasing something healthier, when it may not be. Students will talk about health and nutrition when creating new food products and discuss concerns surrounding “fake meat” and processing. They will brainstorm how meat alternatives can be more environmentally friendly, sustainable and affordable. They will also discuss lobbying and its impact on food trends in our nation’s history.

Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about, using this picture?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

“Deals with fast-food chains and soaring sales during the pandemic seemed to only underscore how a once-**fringe idea** had gone mainstream.”

Fringe Idea Guess:

Frings Idea Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. When Beyond Meat went public in _____ in an initial stock offering that saw its shares nearly triple in price, it seemed to confirm that plant-based meats had arrived.
2. The company's stock is down more than _____% since its all-time highs topping \$200 in 2019. based meats had arrived.
3. The food technology, capable of converting _____ into something approaching meat in taste and appearance, caught the imagination of the public, restaurant chefs and media alike.
4. But those heady days are over as industry sales have fallen amid concerns about what three things?

5. Now the company is betting it can turn around its fortunes with a newly formulated burger. What makes this one different?
6. Though the company's growing lineup, including breakfast patties, beef tips and chicken tenders, are sold at _____ retail and food service outlets worldwide, some of its heralded fast-food deals with companies such as Carl's Jr., Dunkin' Donuts and KFC have either petered out or not moved beyond test phases.
7. It's also faced stiff competition from rival Impossible Foods in Redwood City, Calif., which has made fast sales gains in what two main areas?
8. "_____, _____," is one such campaign sponsored by the Center for Consumer Freedom, a business-backed nonprofit. "Our campaign simply informed the public about what's in fake meat.
9. What has Beyond done to formulate its new burgers?
10. Who has given Beyond key endorsements?
11. Despite how much is riding on its newest burger, Beyond has raised the suggested retail price for an 8-ounce pack of two patties by \$1 to \$_____, partially to offset the higher costs of the ingredients, but also to improve margins.
12. While Brown's goal has been to achieve pricing parity with animal meat, he said Beyond's customers — health-conscious and concerned about the environmental issues surrounding the beef industry — have been found to be what?

Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay Questions:

Class Discussion Questions:

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first, I thought _____, but now I think _____?
- What things did you already know from prior experience?
- Have you tried plant-based burgers? What are your thoughts? Do you think they are healthier? Why or why not?

“Consumers have seen past the marketing spin and realized that these products are just ultra-processed goop that costs more and isn’t healthier than real meat,” said James Bowers, executive director of the center, in an emailed statement to the Los Angeles Times.”

- What are your thoughts about the paragraph above?

Diving Deeper-Journal, Essay Prompts & Discussion Questions:

1. What factors do you think contributed to the initial surge in popularity of plant-based meat alternatives, and why might sales be declining?

2. How can companies like Beyond Meat navigate the challenge of creating appealing products while also addressing concerns about health and nutrition?
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of Beyond Meat's marketing strategies. How could they better address consumer concerns about "fake meat" and processing?
4. Beyond Meat recently raised prices. Do you think this is a wise decision, considering the current economic climate and their goal of mainstream adoption?
5. Producing meat alternatives can be more environmentally friendly than traditional meat production. However, these alternatives often come at a higher cost. How can we promote a more sustainable food system while keeping affordability in mind?
6. The article mentions the influence of the meat industry in shaping consumer perception. Research lobbying practices and their impact on food trends. Is it fair for industries to influence public opinion in this way?
7. Should Beyond Meat focus on improving taste and texture, or prioritize health and nutritional value to win back consumers?
8. Beyond Meat's initial success was driven in part by strong marketing. However, some criticism suggests their message was misleading. Discuss the ethical considerations of marketing plant-based meat products.

News Break is posted to the Web on Tuesday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please [register online](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.
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