



## **Stuffed**

Eric Walters

Reading level: 3.8

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AR Quiz # 106540

### **Book Summary**

After watching a documentary stressing the health dangers of eating fast food, Ian and his friends decide to boycott one of the largest fast-food burger chains in the nation. To advertise the boycott, Ian begins an Internet campaign, which quickly spreads nationwide. The threat of a large boycott reaches the ears of the burger chain's lawyers, and they do their best to force Ian and his friends to abandon their plans. Refusing to succumb to their pressure, Ian seeks the help of a teacher to formulate an even more promising plan.

### **Prereading Idea**

Show students portions of the documentary *Super Size Me*, written and directed by Morgan Spurlock in 2004. As students watch the film, ask them to make notes on what they consider to be the most compelling facts. Then, as a class discuss the documentary and the implications it has for North American society.

**Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas**

- Ask students to conduct further research on the effects of eating fast food on a regular basis. Ask each student to find and to illustrate two facts on a poster board relating the health dangers of a steady diet of fast food. Then display the posters in the hallways.
- In chapter 2, Ian quoted Socrates to make a point. Ask students to read the speeches Mr. Evans and Ian make at the school assembly in chapters 12 and 13 and choose with whom they agree. Then with a partner, have students find a minimum of five quotes to support their views. With each quote, have students write an explanation of the quote and how it helps support their opinion, taking into consideration the source of the quote. Then divide the students into groups of six to eight students with mixed opinions. Have each group of students present a panel discussion using the quotes and their explanations for points of discussion. Allow audience members to ask questions of the panel to further thinking on the subject.

**Connecting to the Text—Elements of the Novel*****Characterization***

Authors use various avenues to develop a character—through physical description of a character; through the character's speech, thoughts, feelings, or actions; through the speech, thoughts, feelings, or actions of other characters; and through a narrator's direct comments. Ask students to choose a partner and select one of the minor characters—Julia, Oswald, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Evans, Ian's father or Ian's mother—and find an example of at least three methods that the author used to develop their character. Along with the name of the character, have students display on a poster board the three methods and a quote or situation that models each method. Display the posters around the room.

***Theme***

Generally speaking, the theme of a book revolves around the main character: what he learns and/or how he changes as a result of his experiences. Based on the brief glimpse the reader has of Ian's life, what would you say is the theme of *Stuffed*? As a class write a thematic statement for the novel. Have students research and bring at least one news article pertaining to fast-food chains big business, and/or food-related health issues that would share the same theme as the novel. Display all themes around the room.

**Plot**

The sequence of events in a story is called the plot, and it is generally built around the conflict. The story's plot includes four stages: exposition, rising action, climax and falling action. In groups of three, ask students to identify what occurs in each stage. Have students complete a storyboard of twelve sections on an 8.5 x 14 inch piece of paper. Use the storyboard as a tool for students to prewrite their own individual narrative stories focusing on the plot stages.

For each section, have students draw a visual to represent major events and include a caption explaining the action and identifying which stage of the plot is involved.

**Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions**

1. When Ian's teacher asks his opinion about the documentary, he says, "Maybe I've learned that it's sometimes better to keep your mouth shut." How does Ian apply this lesson to his life while standing up for his belief? What other means does he use to "speak" his mind? How is that more effective?
2. Ian is bothered by the relationship between Oswald and Julia. How does their romantic involvement change the dynamic of the threesome? Why is Ian more irritated at Oswald than he is at Julia? What do Ian's concerns reveal to him about his feelings for Julia?
3. After watching the documentary, Julia strongly expresses her opinions without regard for other viewpoints. Ian finally says, "Everything in moderation. Socrates." How does this quote relate to other characters and situations in the book?
4. When Ian swears at Mr. Phillips in the classroom, Ian is suspended, even though he thinks he is right. He tells his dad that he has nobody to appeal to. How could he have handled the situation in a more appropriate manner? What does Ian learn from the incident? How does Mr. Phillips prove to Ian that his judgment is incorrect?
5. Ian feels manipulated by Mr. Evans, the attorney for Frankie's Fast Food Chain. At the assembly he says, "All he [Ian] was trying to do was make a difference—just like the people at Frankie's are trying to make a difference." How can this be the truth and a lie at the same time?
6. Ian's parents apply pressure on him to become an attorney and join their family law firm. Although he strongly resists at first, Ian begins to think that maybe he does want to be a lawyer. What happens to cause him to change his mind?

**Writer's Craft***Vocabulary Enrichment*

Locate the following words and determine their meaning from the context clues. Then write an original sentence using the words. Or have students take a current piece of their writing and look for places where using these vocabulary words would strengthen their writing. Students can share their revised sentences with the class.

Sluggish	(ch. 1)	Revenue	(ch. 8)
Alternative	(ch. 1)	Conglomerate	(ch. 9)
Occupational	(ch. 3)	Sheepishly	(ch. 11)
Chaos	(ch. 4)	Sauntered	(ch. 11)
Hovered	(ch. 6)		

**Author Biography**

**Eric Walters** coaches his children's soccer and basketball teams. In addition, he plays the saxophone and enjoys music. He enjoys presenting to children—blending drama, storytelling, audience participation and interaction. Eric strives to inspire his audience members, not only to respond to his books, but also to develop their own personal writing processes.