

Book Module

“The French Fry King”

By Rogé

Summary

Roger is a sausage dog with big ideas and unusual questions. He is most definitely not a dog who chases mail carriers, or chews bicycle tires, or barks at cars like other dogs. He longs for the day where he will achieve meaning and happiness in his life. One day, however, from a trail of fallen potatoes, Roger comes up with a grand idea! He opens a French fry stand, and soon longs to be crowned French Fry King. Only then, he believes, will he be happy. But will this bring Roger true happiness?



Guidelines for Philosophical Discussion of “The French Fry King”

By Angela Xie

One of the biggest questions people ask is, “What is the meaning of life?” or “Where can I find true happiness?”. These continuous questions reveal the genuine desire of human beings to create purpose, however also showing the lack of one solution that should fit every person. “The French Fry King” looks into concepts such as fame, self-identity, and love, to see if Roger can find ultimate happiness through these various desires he has in life. Through cycles of momentary happiness and then eventual disappointment, the character Roger, helps us question what exactly we seek in life and how satisfied we may be with the results.

The first set of questions, titled “Meaning of Life”, brings about the conversation topic of what exactly is the meaning in our life. This book brings about the idea of Hedonism, whether happiness is the meaning of life. Roger seeks happiness through fame and worth in the eyes of other people. Roger also seeks love towards the end of the story and concludes that love and fame is what ultimately brings him true happiness. The questions in this set allude to questions of whether happiness and satisfaction are the same, or whether happiness will bring ultimate contentment in life. Also, questions of whether fame or love result in happiness bring about the conversation of desires and whether fulfilling one’s own desires bring about true meaning. Last, the cyclical nature of dissatisfaction contributes to the discussion of whether this question is a hopeless question or potentially not the right question to be asking.

The second set of questions, titled “Value in Self-Identity”, brings about the conversation topic of where in our identity we find our value or self-worth. It is interesting in this story that Roger often values himself based on the opinions of other people and based on the success of his french fries. As he pursues fame, he bases his value on what he is famous for. Later in the story, Roger pursues love, where he eventually finds his value based on how exciting Charlotte finds him and his stories. The idea of finding self-worth in love for another person is a very interesting concept and a conversation that the questions can hopefully allude to. This book does not touch too much upon finding worth ultimately in oneself, but the themes in this story lend themselves to the necessary connection between finding worth in one’s own

life and finding value and meaning in life. It is an important question to ask whether one can be satisfied in life if they are not satisfied in themselves.

The topic of meaning and value in life is a difficult topic for children to start considering at a young age. Nonetheless, it is a very important question whose answer will ultimately shape the way that we approach our future work and relationships. The concepts of self-identity and value are important to instill in children early in their lives, but as they are confronted by many ideas in society that tell them they are not worthwhile, this story is an important one to give them to tell them they have inherent worth.

Questions for Philosophical Discussion of “The French Fry King”

The Meaning of Life

“If I were a human, he thought, I could be an astronaut, a tap dancer, a country and western singer or - why not - maybe even a barber! But, since he was just a dog, Roger sighed, ‘Ah! Life is so unfair!’”

“But one rainy day, out of the blue, Roger realized he had grown dissatisfied all over again. It had been wonderful to see the world and to have been crowned king, but his boredom had, sadly, returned”



1. Why was Roger dissatisfied with his life in the beginning?
2. Why do you think Roger wanted to be something that he was not (human)?
3. What was Roger trying to achieve in his life?
4. What do you think is the ultimate goal in life?
5. What is the ultimate goal in your life?
6. Why do you think Roger was dissatisfied again after being crowned French Fry King?
7. Why did Charlotte help Roger feel happy again?
8. Is finding happiness the most important thing in life?
9. What makes someone happy? Can that same thing make someone sad?
10. Does love always bring happiness in life? Why?
11. Is being satisfied the same thing as being happy? Why?
12. Can you be satisfied with something and still want something else? Why?

13. Do you think Roger will be dissatisfied again after Roger and Charlotte open their Royal Shepherd's Pie stand? Why?

The Value in Self-Identity

“The delicious smell drew crowds of French fry fans. ‘I’ve never eaten fries as good as these!’ said the police officer. ... With all this enthusiasm, Roger began thinking even bigger thoughts. He decided to share his cooking skills with the world.”

“Roger was triumphant. His paws didn’t touch the ground for days. He was, without doubt, the most successful sausage dog on the planet!”

1. What was most important to Roger in his life?
2. What makes something important?
3. What does it mean for something to have an identity?
4. What would you define as Roger’s identity in his life?
5. What would Roger define as his identity in life?
6. Why did Roger say, “People only love me for my fries”?
7. How do you think Roger would have responded if his french fries were not famous?
8. Are human beings important because of what they do? Why?
9. Should human beings be valued based on what they do? Why?
10. If Roger did not make french fries, would people still like him? Why?
11. Should you value yourself based on how people value you? Why?
12. What does it mean for something to have worth?
13. Is it important for people to find worth intrinsically in themselves? Why?
14. Do famous people have more value than non-famous people? Why?
15. Do we only have value in our life if we discover the meaning of life? Why?
16. How are the meaning of life and self-identity connected?

Concept Map of Big Ideas

?

Meaning of Life → Value in Self-Identity

Story Matrix

Points in the Story	What does Roger want?	Is Roger happy?	Does Roger's happiness last?
When Roger wanders around town			
When Roger has his potato idea			
When Roger opens up his French Fry Stand			
When Roger becomes the French Fry King			
When Roger abandons his French Fry Stand			
When Roger meets Charlotte			
When Roger Tells Charlotte Stories			
When Roger and Charlotte open up a stand			

Discussion Framework Form

Discussion Framework for Philosophy Discussion of The French Fry King

Author: Rogé

Concept Map of Big Ideas:

?

Meaning of Life → Value in Self-Identity

Vocabulary Words:

Enthralled: fascinated by, amazed by

Satisfied: pleased, contented

Dissatisfied: disappointed, not pleased

Questions You'll Ask Students Before Reading:

1. What do you want to be when you grow up?
2. What is most important to you in your life?
3. What does being satisfied mean to you?

Question You'll Ask Students During Reading:

1. Why do you think Roger is bored?
2. What do the people think of Roger?
3. What does Roger want to be?

Questions You Might Ask Before Facilitating a Discussion

1. What do you think Roger might be saying about our lives?
2. Do you like to ask big questions like Roger?
3. Did you think this was a happy or sad story?

Questions for Discussion

Topic 1: The Meaning of Life

1. Why was Roger dissatisfied with his life in the beginning?
2. Why do you think Roger wanted to be something that he was not (human)?
3. What was Roger trying to achieve in his life?
4. What do you think is the ultimate goal in life?
5. What is the ultimate goal in your life?
6. Why do you think Roger was dissatisfied again after being crowned French Fry King?

7. Why did Charlotte help Roger feel happy again?
8. Is finding happiness the most important thing in life?
9. What makes someone happy? Can that same thing make someone sad?
10. Does love always bring happiness in life? Why?
11. Is being satisfied the same thing as being happy? Why?
12. Can you be satisfied with something and still want something else? Why?
13. Do you think Roger will be dissatisfied again after Roger and Charlotte open their Royal Shepherd's Pie stand? Why?

Topic 2: The Value in Self-Identity

1. What was most important to Roger in his life?
2. What makes something important?
3. What does it mean for something to have an identity?
4. What would you define as Roger's identity in his life?
5. What would Roger define as his identity in life?
6. Why did Roger say, "People only love me for my fries"?
7. How do you think Roger would have responded if his french fries were not famous?
8. Are human beings important because of what they do? Why?
9. Should human beings be valued based on what they do? Why?
10. If Roger did not make french fries, would people still like him? Why?
11. Should you value yourself based on how people value you? Why?
12. What does it mean for something to have worth?
13. Is it important for people to find worth intrinsically in themselves? Why?
14. Do famous people have more value than non-famous people? Why?
15. Do we only have value in our life if we discover the meaning of life? Why?
16. How are the meaning of life and self-identity connected?

Story Matrix

Points in the Story	What does Roger want?	Is Roger happy?	Does Roger's happiness last?
When Roger wanders around town			
When Roger has his potato idea			
When Roger opens up his French Fry Stand			
When Roger becomes the French Fry King			
When Roger abandons his French Fry Stand			
When Roger meets Charlotte			
When Roger Tells Charlotte Stories			
When Roger and Charlotte open up a stand			