

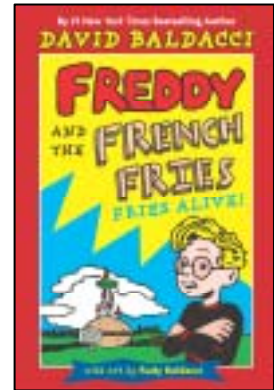
## *Freddy and the French Fries: Fries Alive!* Reading Guide

---

### About the Book

Meet Theodore, Wally, Curly, Ziggy, Si, and Meese—French fries you’ll love so much you *won’t* want to eat them! But shoestring, waffle, wedge, curly and crinkle-cut potatoes were *never* more irresistible than in David Baldacci’s zany adventure about five giant fries that come to life.

It all begins when Freddy Funkhouser, an offbeat nine-year-old with a knack for science, embarks on an ambitious plan to win new customers for the family business, The Burger Castle. But when his secret invention ends up working better than he’d ever dreamed, his plans go wildly awry as his kooky companions wreak havoc in every corner of Freddy’s world.



### About the Author

David Baldacci is the *New York Times* bestselling author of several novels and many international hits including *Absolute Power* and *The Christmas Train*, as well as the critically acclaimed *Wish You Well*, which is currently taught in schools across the country and has been adopted for use by state and national reading programs. He lives in Virginia.



### Web Site

Visit Freddy and the Fries on their Web site at: [www.FreddyandtheFrenchFries.com](http://www.FreddyandtheFrenchFries.com).

## **Discussion Questions:**

- Describe the Burger Castle. What are the unique architectural features?
- How does the Burger Castle differ from traditional burger restaurants?
- What do you already know about Freddy Funkhouser?
- Describe Freddy workshop. Why does he keep the workshop a secret?
- What ideas does Freddy have for bringing the potatoes to life?
- Why does Freddy want to enter the Flounder's Day Parade?
- Why does Freddy and Howie head to the Pookesville Dam?
- What happens at the dam?
- How do the Fries come to life?
- Describe the various personalities of the Fries.
- How does Freddy think he can become a famous kid?
- What happens when the Fries are spotted by Nancy?
- Describe the baseball game that Si, Meese and Curly stumble onto.
- What is happening with Wally and Ziggy at the pie factory?
- What trouble does Theodore get in at the chess match?
- What do Freddy, Howie and the Fries see when they get back to Freddy's home?
- How do the Fries help Freddy with the float contest?
- How does the Spanker gang find out about the Founder's Day Parade floats?
- What happens when Freddy is confronted by the Spanker gang?
- What happens with the Founder's Day floats?
- How does the adventure end?

## **Table of Contents**

Chapter 1	Freddy Funkhouser
Chapter 2	The Funkhouser Experiment
Chapter 3	The Jiggy-Watts Caper
Chapter 4	Six Fries if You Count Heads
Chapter 5	The Flight of the Fries
Chapter 6	The World's Most Famous Kid
Chapter 7	Curly Runs the Bases
Chapter 8	Too Many Pies
Chapter 9	The Pookesville Chess Match
Chapter 10	All Fall Down
Chapter 11	Queen Nancy the Nicest of Nantucket
Chapter 12	The Calm Before the Storm
Chapter 13	French-Fried Miracle
Chapter 14	Howie Kapowie Spills the Beans
Chapter 15	The Attack of the Spanker Gang
Chapter 16	Fries vs. Guys
Chapter 17	Purpulis Enormosis
Chapter 18	The Spankers Strike Back
Chapter 19	The Float That Really Floats
Chapter 20	The Burger Castle's a Hit
Chapter 21	The Final Showdown

## Chapter 1 Freddy Funkhouser

### Chapter Summary

Freddy, Nancy and Alfred Funkhouser dress up as a chicken, a ketchup bottle, and a tomato, respectively, to help advertise the family restaurant the Burger Castle, but it's not working. Then nine-year-old Freddy Funkhouser tells his father, Alfred, and 13-year-old sister, Nancy, about his plan to upgrade their float in the annual Founder's Day Parade to help their restaurant business. Nancy is skeptical. She's an aspiring actress and is constantly spouting off lines from movies, TV, and stage plays. Alfred Funkhouser, a former government scientist, has developed healthy alternatives to the traditional burger and fries that are served at their rival restaurant Patty Cakes, owned by the Spanker family. Adam Spanker, the town bully, collides with Freddy at the Burger Castle and Freddy and the Burger Castle are slimed with paintballs. Freddy is scared of the much bigger Adam, but wisely decides to use his brain and not his muscle to beat his rival in the float competition.

#### Can You Define These Words?

competition  
flounce  
mischievous  
miserable  
rigorous  
snigger  
turret

## Chapter 2 The Funkhouser Experiment

### Chapter Summary

Freddy's friend Howie Kapowie visits Freddy in his secret underground lab where he is experimenting with his father's secret potatoes and microchips to create life-size French fries that move and talk for the parade float. All Freddy needs is the electric power to kick-start his creations to life.

#### Can You Define These Words?

consequences  
hydroelectric  
nanotechnology

## Chapter 3 The Jiggy-Watts Caper

### Chapter Summary

Freddy and Howie head out on a raft to the Pookesville Dam on a special mission to "power up" Freddy's creations -- the Fries. After a seemingly failed attempt to generate enough energy to help them come to life, Freddy and Howie head home. Just as they pack up the lifeless Fries and head out, a thunderstorm starts and Freddy and Howie jump out and swim for shore. Howie makes it, but when Freddy turns back to rescue his Fries, a huge wave washes over him and he goes underwater.

#### Can You Define These Words?

divert  
electrodes  
inflatable  
turbine

## Chapter 4 Six Fries if You Count Heads

### Chapter Summary

Freddy is rescued by the Fries, who came to life when a bolt of lightning hit Freddy's raft. Freddy gets to know the Fries and their very unusual personalities. There's Wally, the big purple Fry, whose goal in life is to eat all the world's food; Theodore, the incredibly smart blue Fry; Ziggy, the tiny yellow Fry with the big voice; Curly, the green curlicue Fry; and Si and Meese, the conjoined red Fries, with happy and gloomy personalities, respectively. All the Fries can morph into different shapes, and they have other special powers too. Freddy is tremendously excited because he knows that his "invention" will make him world famous. He forgets all about the Burger Castle and the parade float competition. He just wants to be the world's most famous kid.

#### Can You Define These Words?

authoritative  
combustion  
conjoined  
discernible  
incognito  
kinetic  
nauseate  
neuromuscular  
posthaste

## Chapter 5 The Flight of the Fries

### Chapter Summary

Freddy makes the Fries promise to keep out of sight while he figures out the best way to introduce them to the world. However, Wally, the huge purple Fry, gets hungry and goes looking for food. He's spotted by pretending-to-be-sick-but-really-playing-hooky Nancy Funkhouser, who runs off to get her father. But when the two of them return the Fries are gone. Nancy gets a mouthful of disgusting medicine and she vows revenge on her brother.

#### Can You Define These Words?

concoction  
expedite  
laboratory  
rutabagas  
slink

## Chapter 6 The World's Most Famous Kid

### Chapter Summary

Thinking about the Fries, Freddy is distracted from his schoolwork. Howie reminds Freddy that his original plan for the Fries was to win the Founder's Day Parade and save his family's Burger Castle restaurant. But Freddy isn't buying that. He wants world fame. When Freddy and Howie return to the barn after school they find the Fries are gone.

#### Can You Define These Words?

animation  
anthropomorphic  
shish-kabob

## Chapter 7 Curly Runs the Bases

### Chapter Summary

After running into the woods to hide from Nancy, the Fries split up and Freddy and Howie go in search of them. When Si, Meese and Curly stumble onto a baseball game and disrupt an important play the Fries find themselves running for their lives, leaving a bunch of players and fans in a total mess. Howie catches up with the Fries just in time and leads them back to find Freddy.

#### Can You Define These Words?

apprehensively	negative
astonish	reluctantly
bawl	unpretentious
collapse	wailed
huffily	

## Chapter 8 Too Many Pies

### Chapter Summary

While Si, Meese, and Curly are creating havoc at the baseball field, Wally and Ziggy come upon a pie factory and they sneak in. Wally can't resist the temptations of the pies and talks Ziggy into allowing him "just one bite." However, Wally's one bite creates an enormous vacuum that sucks all the pies in the factory into his mouth. The factory workers hear the commotion and go after the Fries as Freddy races into the factory. Running away, Ziggy bumps his head on a table, and his arms, legs, and face fall off. Freddy immediately kicks Ziggy in the butt and everything springs back into place; this is a special feature of the little Fry that Freddy built in for fun. Outside, Wally gets sick and ruins an entire forest causing a squirrel to bite him in the butt. After meeting up with the others, Freddy discovers that Theodore is heading toward downtown Pookesville. He races to stop him.

#### Can You Define These Words?

commotion	phenomenon
conductivity	plump
enormous	polarity
extent	quiver
frantic	reattach
frenzy	resistance
gaping	reverse
heave	shrank
humongous	suction
intruder	theory
magnetic	whiff
papoose	yelp

## Chapter 9 The Pookesville Chess Match

### Chapter Summary

In downtown Pookesville, Theodore happens upon a chess match between two very old men. Theodore loves chess and suggests a winning move to one of the players. The two men look up and see the blue Fry and think he's an alien. Theodore doesn't realize that they're referring to him until the entire town is after him. Freddy spots Theodore and they duck down a nearby street. From the street Freddy eyes an elevated railroad track and he uses Theodore's amazing jumping ability to get them on the train and safely away from the angry crowd.

#### Can You Define These Words?

advantageous	humility
alien	regiment
aluminum	scholarly
ambition	skeptically
awning	statue
blunder	stellar
coot	surrender
demeanor	trajectory
friction	trampoline
gravitation	velocity
grumble	veteran
haste	wander
hobble	

## Chapter 10 All Fall Down

### Chapter Summary

Freddy and Howie hide the Fries in Freddy's secret lab and head back to the Funkhouser farmhouse. There they get a big shock. Police Chief Stewie Spanker is there along with Adam Spanker and his gang. It seems the Fries' antics have caused lots of complaints, and Spanker is blaming Alfred Funkhouser because he's the only one who could have invented these strange, colorful "monsters." Chief Stewie arrests Alfred while a guilty Freddy tearfully watches. And Freddy learns that a big reward has been posted for the capture of these "monsters." When they're gone, the Spanker gang attacks the Funkhouser's parade float, destroying it. After they flee, Nancy arrives and sees what happened to the float and blames Freddy, who doesn't know what to do. His dream of being the world's most famous kid has turned into a nightmare.

#### Can You Define These Words?

disrupter  
indignantly  
ionosphere  
mayhem  
meteorological  
monologues  
thingamajig  
undignified

## Chapter 11 Queen Nancy the Nicest of Nantucket

### Chapter Summary

Nancy Funkhouser finds out that Freddy has been hiding his inventions from his father and that they're the reason Alfred was arrested. She threatens to tattle on Freddy unless he agrees to her demands, which include doing her chores, giving her his allowance, and helping her with her homework. Freddy reluctantly agrees.

#### Can You Define These Words?

mutter  
triumphantly

## Chapter 12 The Calm Before the Storm

### Chapter Summary

Freddy learns that the Spankers have hired an expensive New York designer to build their float for them. Meanwhile, the Burger Castle float lies in ruins. The gang assembles in Freddy's lab where Wally, nicknamed *purpulis enormosis* by Theodore, picks up Howie and dangles him upside down while looking for cheese cubes, Howie's favorite snack. Seeing that Freddy is very sad, the Fries ask him what's wrong. Freddy confides in the Fries about the contest and what Adam did to their float. The Fries want to help Freddy and he finally agrees.

**Can You Define These Words?**  
despondently  
expeditiously  
limburger  
refurbish  
scenario

## Chapter 13 French-Fried Miracle

### Chapter Summary

The Fries morph into various tools and Theodore and Freddy plan out the new float. Then they all get to work and rebuild the float the way Freddy originally wanted it. The next morning, when Nancy goes to tattle on Freddy to Alfred about what happened, the float is better than ever. Alfred jumps for joy while Nancy is very suspicious.

**Can You Define These Words?**  
conceptual  
configure  
helium  
morph  
restore  
solitary  
turbo-charge

## Chapter 14 Howie Kapowie Spills the Beans

### Chapter Summary

The Spanker Gang ambushes Howie and after threatening to take away his cheese cubes forever, he tells them everything he knows.

**Can You Define These Words?**  
allergic  
ambush

## Chapter 15 The Attack of the Spanker Gang

### Chapter Summary

Spanker and his gang surround Freddy and force him to take them to the monsters so Adam can get the big reward. But Freddy tricks them and escapes to his lab to join up with Howie and the Fries. There they plan their defense.

**Can You Define These Words?**  
hustle  
modify  
muck  
plummet  
vital

## Chapter 16 Fries vs. Guys

### Chapter Summary

When the Spanker gang attacks with their paintballs, Freddy tricks them into thinking that he is unarmed. When they enter the barn, Freddy and Howie fly around with their antigravity belts, hitting the gang with their seed shooters that fire tiny fruit and vegetables. The seeds quickly grow huge and slam into Adam and his gang. Then the gang is hit with Jelly-leggers, that make their legs go squishy. The Fries get into the battle, and soon the gang is on the run. But when the antigravity belts go haywire and Adam is about to cream Freddy, Wally gets into the act. Adam runs off screaming, and the gang re-attacks with Big Benny, the biggest paintball cannon in the world. When it fires, Wally swallows the ball and it blows up inside him. Then he shoots the goop out of his mouth and nails the Spanker gang with the disgusting, smelly goo. Freddy and the gang are triumphant, but then they freeze! In the distance they hear police sirens coming.

#### Can You Define These Words?

antigravity  
conduct  
distasteful  
droopy  
hayloft  
scheme  
sniffle  
twerp

## Chapter 17 Purpulis Enormosis

### Chapter Summary

Freddy and the gang run for the woods, but discover that their way is blocked by the raging river. When Freddy thinks all is lost, Wally comes up with a great idea. Under his direction he and the Fries morph into parts of a boat. With Freddy and Howie steering they race down the river away from the police but straight for the dam! If they go over that, they're goners. At the last possible second Theodore yells to Wally to grab onto a tree branch. The purple Fry does and his arm stretches almost to breaking, but they fly over the dam and land safely on the ground. Wally makes everyone laugh when he realizes he's not hungry anymore.

#### Can You Define These Words?

abyss	plunge
anxiously	port
assuredly	seep
devour	shiver
mainsail	starboard
myriad	

## Chapter 18 The Spankers Strike Back

### Chapter Summary

When Freddy returns home he finds out that his father, and even his sister, were very worried about him. Then his father tells him that even if they win the float competition they won't have enough workers to handle all of the customers at the Burger Castle. Freddy has an idea. He grabs some costumes and old clothes from his sister's room and heads out.

#### Can You Define These Words?

clout	prophecy
commencem	reproduction
ent	sabotage
crackle	sputter
disturbance	suspicious
glide	swaddle
glum	vibrant
perplexity	

The next morning they drive the float to the competition. The Burger Castle float looks just like

the Burger Castle restaurant, except it's hollow inside. Inside are all the Fries. The float is pulled along by a small tractor hooked to the front of the float. When Freddy isn't looking, Stewie Spanker pours shampoo into the gas tank of the tractor, sabotaging it. When the competition starts, Freddy finds that Nancy is atop the turret reciting lines from Shakespeare. Then the mighty Patty Cakes float is wheeled out and stuns everyone because it's so big and elaborate. Freddy's tractor conks out and the Burger Castle float stops moving. The Patty Cakes float passes it. Adam, who's on the Patty Cakes float, reminds Freddy that the rules say that any float that doesn't make it past the reviewing stand is disqualified. Freddy realizes that the Spankers have played dirty, but he has an idea.

## Chapter 19 The Float That Really Floats

### Chapter Summary

Freddy sneaks inside the Burger Castle float and reveals his plan to the Fries. Then he jumps into the driver's seat of the tractor and, using his walkie-talkie, tells the Fries to hit it. Si and Meese immediately hold their breath causing a chemical reaction inside their bodies that creates helium. The Float lifts into the air to the delight and amazement of the crowd. Nancy, who thinks the crowd is amazed at her performance, suddenly looks down and sees that she's way up in the air. Then she gets really angry when she realizes her brother is driving. Freddy orders the float into a nosedive and Si and Meese let out their breath. The float is headed right for the Patty Cakes float. The people on that float run for their lives. But then Freddy realizes that if he messes up the Patty Cakes float he's as bad as Adam. He orders the Fries to turn the float and they come into a pinpoint landing in front of the review stand. The Burger Castle float is declared the winner by Judge Thackery, but the Spankers immediately cry foul. Deflecting Freddy's protests that the Spankers sabotaged the Burger Castle float, the Spankers look like they might prevail until Freddy spots the big-shot designer who built the Patty Cakes float. Within earshot of the judge Freddy tricks the man into saying that he built the Patty Cakes float for the Spankers, which is against the rules. The Funkhousers are declared the winners!

#### Can You Define These Words?

behemoth  
bewildered  
delinquent  
encore  
enthrall  
hysterical  
mesmerize  
vertical

## Chapter 20 The Burger Castle's a Hit

### Chapter Summary

Freddy flies the Burger Castle float to the Burger Castle restaurant. Huge crowds are headed to eat there. When Freddy arrives he tells his dad that he's found people to help them at the restaurant. The Fries come out dressed in the French Fry uniforms the previous waiters always wore. Everything works great, and the Fries are a big hit with the customers. Then in walks Stewie Spanker, Judge Thackery, Adam and his gang, and a reporter and photographer from the local newspaper.

#### Can You Define These Words?

cue  
intimidate  
modifications

## Chapter 21 The Final Showdown

### Chapter Summary

Adam claims that the Funkhousers are hiding monsters at their farm. As Adam looks at Wally and the other Fries in their costumes he suddenly declares that these are the monsters. After much prompting, the Fries take off their costumes. Underneath, they're dressed in ordinary clothes that Freddy had taken from his sister's room the night before. He'd also dyed their skin to make it look normal. Everyone is disguised as a guy except Wally, who is dressed as a GIRL! Seeing this, Judge Thackery turns on the Spankers and they're in big trouble. When Adam threatens Freddy, Nancy defends her little brother by shoving a pooper pill in Adam's mouth and making him swallow it. He runs out holding his bottom and screaming for a bathroom. The crowd cheers.

After the restaurant closes for the day, Freddy and the Fries are outside the Burger Castle. Freddy tells them that he doesn't want to be the world's most famous kid, but is very happy to have them as friends. Suddenly, Freddy notices that Wally is missing. An instant later there's a big splash and they're all drenched with Vroom shake from the moat that encircles the Burger Castle restaurant. Wally has jumped in the moat and is drinking it dry. They all jump in to stop him, screaming WALLLY!!!!

#### Can You Define These Words?

defeat  
drench  
khaki  
pompadour  
scowl  
suede  
teeter  
tinge

## Vocabulary Guide

abyss	something that is bottomless or immeasurable
advantageous	an event or thing that works to benefit someone
alien	a person or thing that is foreign to the place or situation
allergic	to have a medical reaction to something in the environment
aluminum	a hard but light metal
ambition	a strong drive to succeed
ambush	a surprise attack on a person or group
animation	giving life and activity to something
anthropomorphic	giving inanimate objects or animals human traits
antigravity	being free of gravity
anxiously	to act nervously
apprehensively	to act anxious or afraid
assuredly	to act with confidence
astonish	to fill with wonder and excitement
authoritative	someone acting like a leader
awning	a building overhang
bawl	to cry or sob
behemoth	a large beast or something enormous
bewildered	to be lost or confused
blunder	to make a mistake due to stupidity or carelessness
clout	to have power or prestige
collapse	to fall apart
combustion	the process of burning
commencement	the act of beginning something
commotion	excitement or confusion caused by a disturbance
competition	the act of competing, a contest
conceptual	an idea or plan that is still in the thinking stage
concoction	something made up using skill and intelligence
conduct	to transmit a substance, usually electricity
conductivity	the ability of a material to transfer something to another place, usually electricity
configure	to arrange parts together
conjoined	to be joined together
consequences	a logical conclusion
coot	a foolish person
crackle	to make a series of steady snapping noises
cue	a prompting or signal
defeat	to win a victory over
delinquent	failing to do what is required, usually dealing with the law
demeanor	the way a person behaves
despondently	acting sad or in low spirits
devour	to eat quickly and completely
discernible	ability to think through
disrupter	to stop or break apart

distasteful	not tasty or offensive
disturbance	to cause disorder
divert	to distract
drench	to make completely wet
droopy	an object that loses its form
electrodes	something that carries an electric current
encore	a request for a repeat performance
enormous	very large
enthrall	to hold spellbound
expedite	to speed up
expeditiously	to act quickly
extent	the range or area of something
flounce	to move in a lively manner
frantic	to be out of control with worry or anxiety
frenzy	a time of temporary, intense excitement
friction	rubbing of one object or surface against another
gaping	something that is deep and wide open
glide	to move in a smooth way
glum	to be sad or in low spirits
gravitation	the force of attraction the pulls objects together
grumble	to mutter complaints
haste	to move quickly
hayloft	a space, usually in barns, where hay is stored
heave	to lift with great effort
helium	a gas that provides lift, usually used with balloons
hobble	to walk with difficulty
huffily	acting irritated or annoyed
humility	to be humble
humongous	very large
hustle	to move quickly
hydroelectric	generating electricity by running water
hysterical	the act of not acting calm
incognito	when one's identity is disguised or unknown
indignantly	acting with anger caused by something unfair
inflatable	something designed to be filled with water, air or gas
intimidate	to threaten
intruder	someone who enters but is not welcome or invited
ionosphere	an electrical layer of the atmosphere
khaki	a light brown or olive color or study cloth of the same color
kinetic	making motion or movement
laboratory	a room where science experiments take place
limburger	a type of cheese, noted for its smelliness
magnetic	when an attraction exists between two objects
mainsail	to primary sail on a sailboat
mayhem	a great disturbance or disorder
mesmerize	to hypnotize

meteorological	an event that is connected to a weather occurrence
mischievous	playful and troublesome
miserable	to be very unhappy
modifications	the changes that were made to an object
modify	to make changes to something
monologues	a long speech by one person
morph	to change shape or structure
muck	a moist sticky mess
mutter	to speak in a low voice
myriad	a very large number of something, can also sometimes be endless
nanotechnology	the science of building electronic circuits
nauseate	to make one's stomach sick
negative	a denial or refusal
neuromuscular	relating to a person's nerves and muscles
papoose	a Native American word for a young child or baby
perplexity	to be in a state of confusion
phenomenon	an unusual event or thing
plummet	to drop straight down
plump	being full and round
plunge	to fall down quickly and often violently
polarity	two opposites coming together
pompadour	a hairstyle where the hair is brushed straight back and up
port	the left side of a boat or raft
posthaste	with great speed or quickly
prophecy	to predict something
quiver	shaking, usually from fear
reattach	to put back together
refurbish	to rebuild something
regiment	a unit of people, usually having to do with the military
reluctantly	unwillingly
reproduction	to produce an object that looks like its original
resistance	to put up a fight against
restore	to bring something back to its original condition
reverse	to move in the opposite direction
rigorous	difficult, tight, strict attention
rutabagas	a vegetable
sabotage	to destroy something of your enemy's to defeat them
scenario	an outline of a chain of events
scheme	a plan
scholarly	very intelligent and well educated
scowl	a facial expression that expresses disapproval
seep	to flow or pass slowly into something, such as water into a boat
shish-kabob	food cooked on a stick
shiver	to shake in a constant motion, usually due to fear or cold
shrank	when something has become smaller
skeptically	to treat with question and doubt

slink	to move quietly and/or secretly
sniffle	the sound made by a person's nose during a head cold or when crying
snigger	to snicker or laugh at
solitary	to be alone
sputter	to spit out small, explosive sounds
starboard	the right side of a boat or raft
statue	A sculpted or carved likeness of something
stellar	outstanding
suction	an action that causes objects to be drawn inside of another object
suede	soft leather material
surrender	to give something up or to give back
suspicious	to be untrusting
swaddle	to wrap something tightly
teeter	to be shaky or unsteady
theory	a story designed to explain something
thingamajig	an unusual item difficult to classify
tinge	to affect slightly
trajectory	the path that something moves
trampoline	a canvas drawn across a frame and connected by springs, used to jump
triumphantly	to act victorious
turbine	machines that use energy of moving fluid or air to mechanical power
turbo-charge	to add more energy to an object
turret	a small tower-shaped building
twerp	a silly person
undignified	without honor, importance or worth
unpretentious	average or plain
velocity	the quickness of an object
vertical	in an up and down direction
veteran	someone with a long record of service
vibrant	very bright and/or lively
vital	very important
wailed	cried loudly
wander	to move around with no clear direction
whiff	to smell
yelp	to cry out in surprise or pain