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| **Overview of topic:** In this unit, students will study a variety of extracts and short stories from the dystopian genre. Most dystopian works present a world in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained. Dystopias are often characterized by [dehumanization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dehumanization), [tyrannical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyrant) governments, [environmental disaster](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_disaster), or other characteristics associated with a decline in society. | |
| **Key content/ ideas/ concepts**  **Types of Dystopian Controls**  Most dystopian works present a world in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through one or more of the following types of controls:  • **Corporate control:** One or more large corporations control society through products, advertising, and/or the media. Examples include *Minority Report* and *Running Man*.  • **Bureaucratic control:** Society is controlled by a mindless bureaucracy through a tangle of red tape, relentless regulations, and incompetent government officials.  • **Technological control:** Society is controlled by technology—through computers, robots, and/or scientific means. Examples include *The Matrix*, and *I, Robot*.  **• Philosophical/religious control:** Society is controlled by philosophical or religious ideology often enforced through a dictatorship or theocratic government. | **Keywords/ Glossary** |
| **Characteristics of a Dystopian Society**  • Propaganda is used to control the citizens of society.  • Information, independent thought, and freedom are restricted.  • A figurehead or concept is worshipped by the citizens of the society.  • Citizens are perceived to be under constant surveillance.  • Citizens have a fear of the outside world.  • Citizens live in a dehumanized state.  • The natural world is banished and distrusted.  • Citizens conform to uniform expectations. Individuality and dissent are bad.  • The society is an illusion of a perfect utopian world.  **About the texts:**   |  | | --- | | ‘**Hunger Games’**:is a [trilogy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trilogy) of [young adult](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young_adult_fiction) [dystopian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dystopian_fiction) novels written by American novelist [Suzanne Collins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suzanne_Collins). Set in [Panem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hunger_Games_universe#Panem), a country consisting of the wealthy Capitol and 12 districts in varying states of poverty. Every year, children from the districts are selected to participate in a compulsory annual televised death match called [The Hunger Games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hunger_Games_universe#The_Hunger_Games).. (2009) | | **‘1984’**: is a [dystopian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dystopia) novel published in 1949 by English author [George Orwell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Orwell). The novel is set in the year 1984 when most of the world population have become victims of [perpetual war](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perpetual_war), [omnipresent government surveillance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_surveillance) and public manipulation. | | ‘**The pedestrian’**: is a [short story](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_story) by American writer [Ray Bradbury](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray_Bradbury), published, 1951. Leonard Mead,is a writer and a citizen of a [television](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Television)-centered world in 2053. He defies societal expectations and is thus taken to the Psychiatric Center for Research on Regressive Tendencies and the story concludes. | | ‘**Examination day’**: Dickie Jordan is an intelligent and curious youth. He and his family live in a dystopian future as its Dickie's twelfth birthday. He is required by law to report to a government testing facility for a mandatory IQ test his [intelligence quotient](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intelligence_quotient) exceeded the legal limit that the totalitarian government allows and was therefore executed. | | **‘The Lottery** ’: is a [short story](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_story) written by [Shirley Jackson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shirley_Jackson), first published in the, 1948. The story describes a fictional small town which observes an annual ritual known as "the lottery", which results in the killing of one individual in the town. |   **Other ideas/Themes**   * **Trust** * **Hard choices** * **Hardship** * **Power and Control** * **Helplessness** * **Competition** * **Evolution/Extinction** * **Hope/Despair** | **Dystopian-** relating to an imagined state or society where there is great suffering or injustice.  **Cataclysmic**- large-scale and violent natural event  **Dehumanization**- the process of depriving a person or group of positive human qualities.  **Totalitarian-** a system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete subservience to the state.  **Tyrannical-** exercising power in a cruel or arbitrary/oppressive way   * 1. **Bureaucracy-** a government in which decisions are taken by state officials only   **Austerity-** difficult economic conditions created by government measures to reduce public expenditure.  **Tradition-** a long-established custom or belief that has been passed on from one generation to another  **Ritual-** a religious or solemn ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order.  **Dissent-** the holding or expression of opinions at variance with those commonly or officially held.  **Entropy-** lack of order or predictability; gradual decline into disorder |
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| **Self-Quiz Questions** | **Self-Quiz Questions** | Challenge Self-Quiz Quizzing |
| 1. Write a definition of dystopia. | 1. Write a definition of Dissent. | 1. What is Austerity? Does it exist in today’s society? Explain how. |
| 2. Write a definition of utopia. | 2. Write a definition of tradition. | 1. Which of the texts address the theme of tradition/philosophical or religious control? |
| 3. List the main conventions for dystopian fiction. | 3. Write a definition of Tyrannical. | 1. Are there any countries that exercise ‘control’ similar to ‘The Pedestrian’? |
| 4. Summarise, using your own words, what Hunger Games is about. | 4. How many districts are there in Panem (Hunger Games? | 1. Write a definition of cataclysmic. Give an example |
| 5. Where is Hunger Games set? | 5. What is corporate control? | 5. Write a definition of Tyrannical. Give an example. |
| 6. What year was ‘1984’ published? | 6. What is bureaucratic control? | 6. Why might a number of the texts include death? How does this relate to dystopian society? |
| 7. List three things about Leonard Mead from ‘The pedestrian’? | 7. Explain how society might be presented in ‘Hunger Games’ | 7. Why might setting be an important device to use when writing a dystopian story? |
| 8. What year is ‘The pedestrian’ set? | 8. What control is exercised in ‘The pedestrian’? | 8. Briefly compare and contrast two of the dystopian short stories. |
| 9. What test does Dickie take in ‘Examination Day’?  How old is Dickie? | 9. Which texts could reference a totalitarian government? | 9. Briefly compare and contrast the setting of two of the dystopian short stories. |
| 10. Write a definition of ritual. | 10. Which of the texts address the theme of censorship? | 10. Write the opening paragraph of a dystopian story |
| **Total score:** | **Total score:** | **Total score:** |