YEAR 9 ENGLISH · DYSTOPIAN FICTION · WEEK 1

Perfect World or Nightmare?

What is dystopian fiction?

- Explain what dystopian fiction is and how it differs from utopian fiction
- Identify the five key characteristics in texts and trailers
- Use new vocabulary to write about a dystopian world

Have your chat open. Today you will be typing a lot.

STARTER · 5 MINUTES · YOU ARE IN CHARGE

Design a perfect society

Step 1 · Make a rule

Type **one rule** that would make your society perfect. Wait for the countdown, then everyone hits send together.

Step 2 · Break it

Now read someone else’s rule. Type **how it could go badly wrong**. Who would suffer?

Think about it: could a perfect plan create a nightmare?

TASK 1 · PREDICT

Which two show a utopia and which two a dystopia?

A



B



C



D



Type your picks, then predict what **dystopia** and **utopia** might mean. Which clue in the picture helped most?

THE REVEAL

Utopia or dystopia?

Utopia · B and D

An imagined **perfect** society. The word was invented by Sir Thomas More in his 1516 book *Utopia*, about an ideal island.

Dystopia · A and C

An imagined society that is **frightening and unfair**. It explores how danger and control affect people.

So why do writers invent nightmare worlds? **Type your theory in the chat.**

Hint: Margaret Atwood says to take an idea from today and move it a little further down the road.

WATCH AND LISTEN · FEATURE HUNT

What makes a story dystopian?

Watch 1: just listen. No notes.

Watch 2: make notes on the features you spot.

Race: in 2 minutes, type as many features as you can into the chat. Most wins!

Clip: youtube.com/watch?v=6a6kbU88wu0

FIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF DYSTOPIAN FICTION

How many did you spot?

1
Government control

2
Environmental destruction

3
Technological control

4
Survival

5
Loss of individualism

Match your chat list to these. Which characteristic had you missed? **Which would be scariest to live under?**

QUICK-FIRE GAME · WHICH CHARACTERISTIC?

Type A to E with the number 1 to 5 that fits

A · *Feed*: a network is implanted into people’s brains.

B · *The Giver*: a society where everyone is the same and there is no pain.

C · *1984*: a dictator called Big Brother watches everyone.

D · *Lord of the Flies*: schoolboys stranded after their plane is shot down.

E · *The Road*: a father and son cross the ruins of America.

1 Government · 2 Environment · 3 Technology · 4 Survival · 5 Individualism

QUICK-FIRE GAME · ANSWERS

How did you score?

A = 3
Technological control

B = 5
Loss of individualism

C = 1
Government control

D = 4
Survival

E = 2
Environmental destruction

Type your score out of 5. Then: **which book would you pick up first, and why?**

TASK 2 · TRAILER DETECTIVES

Watch each trailer and complete the table in detail

	The Hunger Games	The Maze Runner	Noughts and Crosses
Setting · country, when, scenery			
Protagonist · age, gender, qualities, skills			
Antagonist · what do we learn?			
Plot · main problems			
Themes · fear, power, inequality…			

Trailers: Hunger Games · Maze Runner · Noughts and Crosses. Then vote in the chat: **which world would you least want to live in?**

TASK 3 · WORD DETECTIVES · TIER 2 VOCABULARY

Find each definition, then beat the clock

cataclysmic | **oppression** | **speculative** | **post-apocalyptic** | **censorship**

1. Use a dictionary and write each definition in your book.
2. **Beat the clock:** in 3 minutes type a sentence about a dystopian world using as many of the words as you can.

CHECK YOUR DEFINITIONS

Did your dictionary agree?

cataclysmic · causing sudden, widespread and violent destruction

oppression · cruel or unfair treatment, keeping people down by force or power

speculative · based on imagining what might happen rather than on known facts

post-apocalyptic · set after a disaster that has destroyed most of civilisation

censorship · banning or removing ideas, books or information considered unacceptable

Post your best sentence from the clock challenge. Class vote: which sentence is the most chilling?

DEBATE · TAKE A STAND

Would you accept this deal?

The government offers a world with no crime, no poverty and no pain. In return, there are cameras in every room, and some books and ideas are banned.

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely not		Unsure		Yes, deal

Type your number, then defend it in one sentence. Then read two classmates' views and **respond to one you disagree with**.

TASK 3 · READ THE ARTICLE

Read it twice, then do four things

1. Give the article a **title**.
2. Highlight the **10 most important** words or phrases.
3. Circle any words you do not know and find out what they mean.
4. **Summarise in 50 words or fewer.**

Challenge: post your title and summary in the chat. Can anyone say it in fewer words without losing meaning?

TASK 4 · THE 200-WORD CHALLENGE

Describe the world this image suggests



Challenge: include **oppression**, **censorship** and **post-apocalyptic**.

Plan first: what can you **see**, **hear** and **smell**? Who rules here? What is forbidden?

Hook: begin with a sentence that makes us want to know more.

Post your **best sentence** in the chat. The class votes on the most vivid one.

EXIT TICKET

Dystopias are warnings

1. **3** characteristics of dystopian fiction
2. **2** new words you can now use
3. **1** thing in today’s world that a writer could “move a little further down the road”

Type your 3-2-1 in the chat. Next lesson: we begin reading.