Year 9

Dystopian Fiction Booklet



Dystopia: A community or society that is undesirable or frightening.

Name:_____

Class:_____

Teacher:_____

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‘1984’ by George Orwell

This is the description of the extract which you might find at the top of the extract in an exam paper. Read it and highlight what you consider to be the most important information.

The story takes place in an imagined future, the year 1984, when much of the world has fallen victim to perpetual war, omnipresent government surveillance and propaganda. Great Britain, known as Airstrip One, has become a province of a superstate named Oceania that is ruled by the Party who employ the Thought Police to persecute individuality and independent thinking. Big Brother, the leader of the Party, enjoys an intense cult of personality despite the fact that he may not exist. The protagonist, Winston Smith, is a diligent and skillful rank-and-file worker and Party member who secretly hates the Party and dreams of rebellion.

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his chest in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.
The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a metre wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. Winston made for the stairs. It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daylight hours. This was part of the economy drive in preparation for Hate Week. The flat was seven flights up and Winston, who was thirty-nine and had a varicose ulcer above his right ankle, went slowly, resting several times on the way. On each landing, opposite the lift shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran.

Inside the flat a fruity voice was reading out a list of figures which had something to do with the production of pig-iron. The voice came from an oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still distinguishable. The device (a telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of switching it off completely. He moved over to the window: a smallish, frail figure, the thinness of his body merely emphasised by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the Party. His hair was very fair, his face naturally ruddy, his skin roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades and the cold of the winter that had just ended. Outside, even through the shut window-pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The black-moustachio’d face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston’s own. Down at street level another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word INGSOC. In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a bluebottle, and darted away with a curving flight. It was a police patrol, snooping into people’s windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the Thought

Police mattered. *Winston looked out of his window towards a huge building several kilometres away.*

The Ministry of Truth was startlingly different from any other object in sight. It was an enormous pyramidal structure of glittering white concrete, soaring up, terrace after terrace, three hundred metres into the air. From where Winston stood it was just possible to read, picked out on its white face in elegant lettering, the three slogans of the Party:

WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

The Ministry of Truth contained, it was said, three thousand rooms above ground level and similar numbers below. Scattered about London there were just three other buildings of similar appearance and size. So completely did they dwarf the surrounding buildings that from the roof of Victory Mansions you could see all four of them simultaneously. They were the homes of the four Ministries between which the entire government was divided. The Ministry of Truth which concerned itself with news, entertainment, education and the fine arts. The Ministry of Peace which concerned itself with war. The Ministry of Love which maintained law and order. And the Ministry of Plenty which was responsible for economic affairs. Their names, in Newspeak: Minitrue, Minipax, Miniluv and Miniplenty.

The Ministry of Love was the really frightening one. There were no windows in it at all.

Winston had never been inside the Ministry of Love, nor within half a kilometre of it. It was a place impossible to enter except on official business, and then only by penetrating through a maze of barbed-wire entanglements, steel doors and hidden machine-gun nests. Even the streets leading up to its outer barriers were roamed by gorilla-faced in black uniforms, armed with jointed truncheons.

‘Noughts and Crosses’ extract by Malorie Blackman

‘OK,’ Callum said at last. ‘But Sephy, you should think above and beyond just us. You should free your mind and think about other cultures and other planets and oh, I don’t know, just think about the future.’

‘I’ve got plenty of time to think about the future when I’m tons older and don’t have much future left, thank you very much. And my mind is quite free enough.’

‘Is it?’ Callum asked slowly. ‘There’s more to life than just us Noughts and you Crosses.’

My stomach jerked. Callum’s words hurt. Why did they hurt? ‘Don’t say that...’

‘Don’t say what?’

‘Us Noughts and you Crosses.' I shook my head. ‘It makes it sound like... you’re in one place and I’m in another, with a huge, great wall between us.’

Callum looked out across the sea. ‘Maybe we are in different places...’

‘No, we aren’t. Not if we don’t want to be, we aren’t.’ I willed Callum to look at me.

‘I wish it was that simple.’

‘It is.’

‘Maybe from where you’re sitting.’ At last Callum turned towards me, but his expression stemmed the words I was about to say. And then, just like that, his expression cleared and his easy smile was back. ‘You’re very young, Sephy.’

‘Hunger Games’ by Suzanne Collins

When I wake up, the other side of the bed is cold. My fingers stretch out, seeking Prim’s warmth but finding only the rough canvas cover of the mattress. She must have had bad dreams and climbed in with our mother. Of course, she did. This is the day of the reaping.

I prop myself up on one elbow. There’s enough light in the bedroom to see them. My little sister, Prim, curled up on her side, cocooned in my mother’s body, their cheeks pressed together. In sleep, my mother looks younger, still worn but not so beaten-down. Prim’s face is as fresh as a raindrop, as lovely as the primrose for which she was named. My mother was very beautiful once, too. Or so they tell me.

Sitting at Prim’s knees, guarding her, is the world’s ugliest cat. Mashed-in nose, half of one ear missing, eyes the color of rotting squash. Prim named him Buttercup, insisting that his muddy yellow coat matched the bright flower. I le hates me. Or at least distrusts me. Even though it was years ago, I think he still remembers how I tried to drown him in a bucket when
Prim brought him home. Scrawny kitten, belly swollen with worms, crawling with fleas. The last thing I needed was another mouth to feed. But Prim begged so hard, cried even, I had to let him stay. It turned out okay. My mother got rid of the vermin and he’s a born mouser. Even catches the occasional rat. Sometimes, when I clean a kill, I feed Buttercup the entrails. He has stopped hissing at me.

‘The Weathermonger’ by Peter Dickinson.

(1) He woke up suddenly, as if from a deep sleep full of unrecoverable dreams. He was very uncomfortable. The light was too bright, even through closed eyes, and there was something sharp and hard jutting into one of his shoulder blades. His head hurt too.

He moved his right arm in search of something familiar, sheet or a wall, and found a quite different (5) feeling – hundreds of rough, scratchy lumps on a warm but slimy surface, like iron pimples. Familiar, though – barnacles on a sea rock. He was lying on a rock.

He opened his eyes and sat up.

His skull yelped with pain as he did so, and his hand moved instinctively to touch the smooth round thing that should have been hanging around his neck, and wasn’t.

(10) A voice beside him said, “They took it away. They hit you on the head and took it away, so that you wouldn’t be able to use it.”

She was a girl, about twelve, a kid with pigtails, very dirty her face blubbered with crying but wearing what looked like an expensive dress of green brocade with gold trimmings that would have come right down to her ankles if she stood up. She was sitting beside him, her knees under her chin.

(15)Beyond her the sea lay flat as a Formica tabletop, hard blue, joggling in one patch by a sunken rock just enough to catch a few glints of the vertical noon sun. A perfect day.

“Who took it?” said Geoffrey, not even remembering what “it” was.

“They did.”

Without looking round she jerked her chin over her shoulder and he turned. He was on a tiny rock (20) island, which shouldn’t have been there, in the middle of Weymouth Bay. The pretty doll’s houses ranged right and left along the Front above the crowded beach, and George IV’s great gift statue stood pompous at the far end. The pier was gone though, with only a few tarred and tiled timbers to show where it had been, and the crowd wasn’t a holiday crowd either. They were all standing, shoulder to shoulder, looking out to sea, and all fully dressed. There wasn’t a bathing suit (25) anywhere. As he turned they roared, a long jeering moo. They were looking at him.

“What on earth are they up to?” he said.

“They’re waiting for us to drown. When the tide comes in.”

‘Farenheit 451’ by Ray Bradbury

IT WAS A PLEASURE TO BURN

IT was a special pleasure to see things eaten, to see things blackened and changed. With the brass nozzle in his fists, with this great python spitting its venomous kerosene upon the world, the blood pounded in his head, and his hands were the hands of some amazing conductor playing all the symphonies of blazing and burning to bring down the tatters and charcoal ruins of history. With his symbolic helmet numbered 451 on his stolid head, and his eyes all orange flame with the thought of what came next, he flicked the igniter and the house jumped up in a gorging fire that burned the evening sky red and yellow and black. He strode in a swarm of fireflies. He wanted above all, like the old joke, to shove a marshmallow on a stick in the furnace, while the flapping pigeon-winged books died on the porch and lawn of the house. While the books went up in sparkling whirls and blew away on a wind turned dark with burning. Montag grinned the fierce grin of all men singed and driven back by flame.

'The Bees' by Laline Paull

One

The cell squeezed her and the air was hot and fetid. All the joints of her body burned from her frantic twisting against the walls, her head was pressed into her chest and her legs shot with cramp, but her struggles had worked – one wall felt weaker. She kicked out with all her strength and felt something crack and break. She forced and tore and bit until there was a jagged hole into fresher air beyond.

She dragged her body through and fell out onto the floor of an alien world. Static roared through her brain, thunderous vibration shook the ground and a thousand scents dazed her. All she could do was breathe until gradually the vibration and static subsided and the scent evaporated into the air. Her rigid body unlocked and she calmed as knowledge filled her mind.

This was the Arrivals Hall and she was a worker.

Her kin was Flora and her number was 717.

Certain of her first task, she set about cleaning out her cell. In her violent struggle to hatch she had broken the whole front wall, unlike her neater neighbours. She looked, then followed their example, piling her debris neatly by the ruins. The activity cleared her senses and she

felt the vastness of the Arrivals Hall, and how the vibrations in the air changed in different areas.

Row upon row of cells like hers stretched into the distance, and there the cells were quiet but resonant as if the occupants still slept. Immediately around her was great activity with many recently broken and cleared-out chambers, and many more cracking and falling as new bees arrived. The differing scents of her neighbours also came into focus, some sweeter, some sharper, all of them pleasant to absorb.

With a hard erratic pulse in the ground, a young female came running down the corridor between the cells, her face frantic.

'The Handmaid's Tale' by Margaret Atwood and '1984' by George Orwell

Paper 2 Question 4

For this question, you need to refer to the whole of **Source A** an extract from 'The Handmaid's Tale' by Margaret Atwood and the whole of **Source B** an extract from

Compare how each Source conveys an image of imprisonment and rebellion.

In your answer, you could:

- Compare the different settings
- Compare what they narrators are thinking
- Compare the methods used to convey the issues
- Support your response with reference to both texts.

[16 marks]

Source A – 'The Handmaid's Tale'

Chapter 2

A chair, a table, a lamp. Above, on the white ceiling, a relief ornament in the shape of a wreath, and in the centre of it a blank space, plastered over, like the place in a face where the eye has been taken out. There must have been a chandelier, once. They've removed anything you could tie a rope to.

A window, two white curtains. Under the window, a window seat with a little cushion. When the window is partly open - it only opens partly - the air can come in and make the curtains move. I can sit in the chair, or on the window seat, hands folded, and watch this. Sunlight comes in through the window too, and falls on the floor, which is made of wood, in narrow strips, highly polished. I can smell the polish. There's a rug on the floor, oval, of braided rags. This is the

kind of touch they like; folk art, archaic, made by women, in their spare time, from things that have no further use. A return to traditional values. Waste not want not. I am not being wasted. Why do I want?

On the wall above the chair, a picture, framed but with no glass: a print of flowers, blue irises, watercolour. Flowers are still allowed. Does each of us have the same print, the same chair, the same white curtains, I wonder? Government issue? Think of it as being in the army, said Aunt Lydia.

A bed. Single, mattress medium-hard, covered with a flocked white spread. Nothing takes place in the bed but sleep; or no sleep. I try not to think too much. Like other things now, though must be rationed. There's a lot that doesn't bear thinking about. Thinking can hurt your chances, and I intend to last. I know why there is no glass, in front of the water-colour pictures of blue irises, and why the window only opens partly and why the glass in it is shatterproof. It isn't running away they're afraid of. We wouldn't get far. It's those other escapes, the ones you can open in yourself, given a cutting edge.

So. Apart from these details, this could be a college guest room, for the less distinguished visitors; or a room in a rooming house, or former times, for ladies in reduced circumstances. This is what we are now. The circumstances have been reduced; for those of us who still have circumstances.

But a chair, sunlight, flowers: these are not to be dismissed. I am alive, I live, I breathe, I put my hand out, unfolded, into the sunlight. Where I am is not a prison but a privilege, as Aunt Lydia said, who was in love with either/or.

The bell that measures time is ringing. Time here is measured by bells, as once in nunneries. As in a nunnery too, there are few mirrors.

I get out of the chair, advance my feet into the sunlight, in their red shoes, flat-heeled to save the spine and not for dancing. The red gloves are lying on the bed. I pick them up, pull them onto my hands, finger by finger. Everything except the wings around my face is red: the colour of blood, which defines us. The skirt is ankle-length, full, gathered to a flat yoke that extends over the breasts, the sleeves are full. The white wings too are prescribed issue; they are to keep us from seeing, but also from being seen. I never looked good in red, it's not my colour. I pick up the shopping basket, put it over my arm.
The door of the room - not *my* room - I refuse to say *my* - is not locked. In fact it doesn't shut properly. I do out into the polished hallway, which as a runner down the centre, dusty pink. Like a path through the forest, like a carpet for royalty, it shows me the way.

Source B – '1984'

Outside, even through the shut window-pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the skiy a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The black-moustachio'd face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston's own. Down at street level another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word INGSOG.* In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a bluebottle, and darted away again with a curving

flight. It was the police patrol, snooping into people's windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the Thought Police mattered.

Behind Winston's back the voice from the telescreen was still babbling away about pig-iron and the overfulfilment of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live - did live, from habit that became instinct - in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinised.

Winston kept his back turned to the telescreen. It was safer; though, as he well knew, even a back can be revealing. A kilometre away the Ministry of Truth, his place of work, towered vast and white about the grimy landscape. This, he thought with a sort of vague distaste - this was London, chief city of Airstrip One, itself the third most populous of the provinces of Oceania. He tried to squeeze out some childhood memory that should tell him whether London had always been quite like this. Were there always these vistas of rotting nineteenth-century houses, their sides shored up with baulks of timber, their windows patched with cardboard and their roofs with corrugated iron, their crazy garden walls sagging in all directions? [. . .] But it was not use, he could not remember; nothing remained of his childhood except a series of bright-lit tableaux, occurring against no background and mostly unintelligible.

The Ministry of Truth - Minitrue, in Newspeak[1] - was startlingly different from any other object in sight. It was an enormous pyramidal structure glittering white concrete, [. . .] From where Winston stood it was just possible to read, picked out on its white face in elegant lettering, the three slogans of the Party:

WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH.

[. . . .]The Ministry of Love was the really frightening one. There were no windows in it at all. Winston had never been inside the Ministry of Love, nor within half a kilometre of it. It was a place impossible to enter except on official business, and then only by penetrating through a maze of barbed-wire entanglements, steel doors and hidden machine-gun nests. Even the streets leading up to its outer barriers were roamed by gorilla-faced guards in black uniforms, arms with jointed truncheons.

*** stands for English Socialism**

[1] Newspeak was the official language of Oceania.