

Year 8 English: Dystopian Fiction

1

Key Words

Dystopia - An imagined state or society in which there is great suffering or injustice, typically one that is totalitarian or post-apocalyptic.
Allusion - An imagined state or society in which there is great suffering or injustice, typically one that is totalitarian or post-apocalyptic.
Protagonist - The leading or major character in a play, film, novel etc.
Conformity - Compliance with standards, rules or laws. Behaving or acting in an accepted way to fit in with others.
Impose - To force (an unwelcome decision or ruling) on someone.
Surveillance - Close observation, especially of a suspected spy or criminal.
Scapegoat - A person who is blamed for the mistakes, or faults, of others.
Dictatorship - A society with a ruler who has total power over everything and everyone – typically by force.
Tyranny - Cruel, unreasonably and oppressive use of power or control.
Satire - The use of humour, exaggeration, ridicule or irony to expose and criticise stupidity – usually political or topical issues.
Totalitarianism - A government that requires complete subservience.



2

Characteristics of Dystopian fiction



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 fear the outside world



Citizens live in a dehumanised 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 world.


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Plot Prompts




Decide a year, preferably in the future
Decide a location
Chose an adjective to describe that location in the year you chose (grim / frozen)
Who now rules that place (robots / aliens / fascists)
An adjective to describe the ruler or rules / laws (destructive)
A landmark that has been damaged (The London Eye)
An adjective to describe that landmark (shattered / decaying)
What event caused the world to become like this (meteor strike / nuclear attack)
Your protagonist – name / gender / job
An adjective to describe your protagonist (brave / resilient)
The name of a revolutionary organisation (The Sisterhood / The Alliance / The Freedom hunters)
Select 2 things the organisation could use to save the world (oxygen / brains)
An enemy – title / first name / last name / one negative adjective / job


4




The moon like a freshly minted silver coin
Bluebells exploded from gardens
Tender ribbons of light
Turbo-winged blackbirds



Orpine purple night skies
Crepuscular light
Saffron orange
Fleecy clouds shackled to the limitless sky
Honeysuckle sweetness



Wheezing winds
Canopy of scorched leaves
Gorging on sweet chestnuts
Feverish yellows
Broiling oranges
Eerie tendrils of moonlight



Mangling winds
Skull white
An unearthly soundlessness
Skin seeping cold
Myrrh-scented candles

← Interesting vocabulary to capture seasons →

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1984 by George Orwell
Surveillance
Propaganda

Ready Player One by Ernest Cline
Information & freedom restricted
Citizens fear the outside world


The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins
Freedom is restricted
Surveillance

The Handmaid's Tale
Freedom is restricted
Independent thought is restricted

Animal Farm by George Orwell
Society is an illusion of a perfect world
Propaganda




6



helicopter

+



bluebottle

Ask questions like the ones below

In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a bluebottle

What are bluebottles seen as or connected to?

Why might the writer connect the helicopter to pests or to death and decay?

What mood / feeling do bluebottles evoke in the reader? How does this link to the story?

