

Knowledge Organiser: Y8 Dystopian Fiction

Typical Dystopian Features

Protagonists: • Often feels trapped and is struggling to escape • Questions existing systems and attempts to rebel • Believes or feels that something is terribly wrong with the society in which they live • Lacks the selfish nature of those in charge and holds strong moral values

Settings: • Futuristic, industrial cities • Destroyed natural habitat with little connection to nature • High levels of surveillance • Environments and weather that creates a strong sense of oppression

Context: Dystopian fiction is rarely about the future, instead, it reflects the time in which it is written. In the 1930s, writing was connected with experiences of military life and grand political narratives such as fascism and communism. Post WW2, dystopias often reflected dominant concerns such as consumerism and equality, and the ever-present technological world. More recently, literary dystopias have returned to the idea of the conflict between scientific advancement and human freedom.

Key Dystopian Vocabulary

Dystopia	an imaginary place where everything is as bad as it can be
Utopia	where society is perfect and everyone is happy
Totalitarian	there is only one political party which controls everything and does not allow any opposition
Apocalyptic	the total destruction of something, especially of the world.
Propaganda	information, often inaccurate , which a political organisation uses to influence people.
Surveillance	the careful watching of someone, especially by an organisation such as the police or the army .
Oppression	the cruel or unfair treatment of a group of people
Moral	principles and beliefs about right and wrong behaviour.



Novels Taught

<i>The Wall</i> William Sutcliffe	<i>The Hunger Games</i> Suzanne Collins
<i>1984</i> George Orwell	<i>Divergent</i> Veronica Roth
<i>The Knife of Never Letting Go</i> Patrick Ness	

Key Subject Vocabulary

Protagonist	the main character
Narrative	a story
Figurative language	phrases that are not literal – eg metaphors, similes, personification
Pathetic fallacy	when the weather represents the mood of a character or place
Connotations	layers of meanings of a word
Semantic field	words that all link together and relate to the same topic

Wider Reading

<i>Gone</i> Michael Grant <i>Maze Runner</i> James Dashner <i>How I Live Now</i> Meg Rosoff <i>Legend</i> Marie Lu <i>The Giver</i> Lois Lowry	<i>The Road</i> Cormac McCarthy <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> Ray Bradbury <i>The Last Man</i> Mary Shelley <i>Lord of the Flies</i> William Golding <i>The War of the Worlds</i> HG Wells
--	--