

# Year 9- Knowledge Organiser – Dystopian Genre

**Definition of dystopian writing:** literature that describes an imaginary society that is as dehumanising and as unpleasant as possible.

Typical genre features:	A Dystopian Protagonist:	Typical settings:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Propaganda is used to control the citizens of society.</li> <li>Information, independent thought and freedom are restricted.</li> <li>A leader/concept is worshipped by the citizens of the society.</li> <li>Citizens have a fear of the outside world.</li> <li>Citizens live in a dehumanized state.</li> <li>Citizens conform to uniform expectations. Individuality and dissent are bad.</li> <li>The society is an illusion of a perfect utopian world.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>often feels trapped and is struggling to escape.</li> <li>questions the existing social and political systems and attempts to rebel but in a way that is still morally acceptable</li> <li>believes or feels that something is terribly wrong with the society in which he or she lives.</li> <li>Lacks the selfish nature of those in charge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Futuristic, industrial cities</li> <li>Destroyed natural habitat with little connection to nature</li> <li>High levels of surveillance</li> <li>Environments and weather that creates a strong sense of oppression or constraint</li> </ul>

Social and Historical Context	Relevant vocabulary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dystopian ideas within literature have existed for a long time, but the genre itself is one of the newer genres within literature. <i>Utopia</i> written by Thomas More in 1516, which, despite its title, reflects a dystopian society. Although it's presented as an ideal world, we know that in reality, it would not successfully function. So even when trying to describe a utopia, writers may actually end up portraying a society that is flawed or dysfunctional.</li> <li>With the increase of social media, public surveillance, fear over nuclear weaponry and an increased awareness of social issues such as racism, greed or poverty, writers have written about the extreme cases of controlling such issues.</li> <li><b>BIG QUESTION: Orwell writes in 1984, "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face – for ever." Is this the true depiction of human life? Does this lead us to assume that humans have an ingrained capability to be evil?</b></li> <li>Several dystopian books have been adapted for film, fuelling our obsession with the imperfect society and 'what if' scenarios. However, some are less successful than we would expect. P.D. James, who wrote "The Children of Men", acknowledged that it could be seen as science fiction but was anxious that it was instead identified as dystopian to recognise the moral of the story. "The Children of Men" didn't sell nearly as well as her detective novels. Why might this be?) H.G. Wells abandoned his dystopian science fiction to write a different genre. <b>Why might that be?</b></li> </ul>	Utopia Dystopia Dehumanising Dictatorship Totalitarian Tyrannical Oppressive Repressive Liberation Captive Constrained Censorship Compliance	Propaganda Revolution Dissent Compliance Apocalypse Conformity Free will Democracy Dysfunction Omnipresent Dehumanisation Surveillance

## Notable Dystopian texts

1984 George Orwell	Brave New World Aldous Huxley	The Giver Lois Lowry	Fahrenheit 451 Ray Bradbury	The Running Man Stephen King	The Maze Runner James Dashner	A Handmaid's Tale Margaret Atwood	I am Legend Richard Matheson	Delirium Lauren Oliver	Noughts and Crosses Malorie Blackman	More than This Patrick Ness	The Hunger Games Suzanne Collins
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