READING & TRAINING

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Rain, Rain, Go Away!

Audio CD

BLACK CAT

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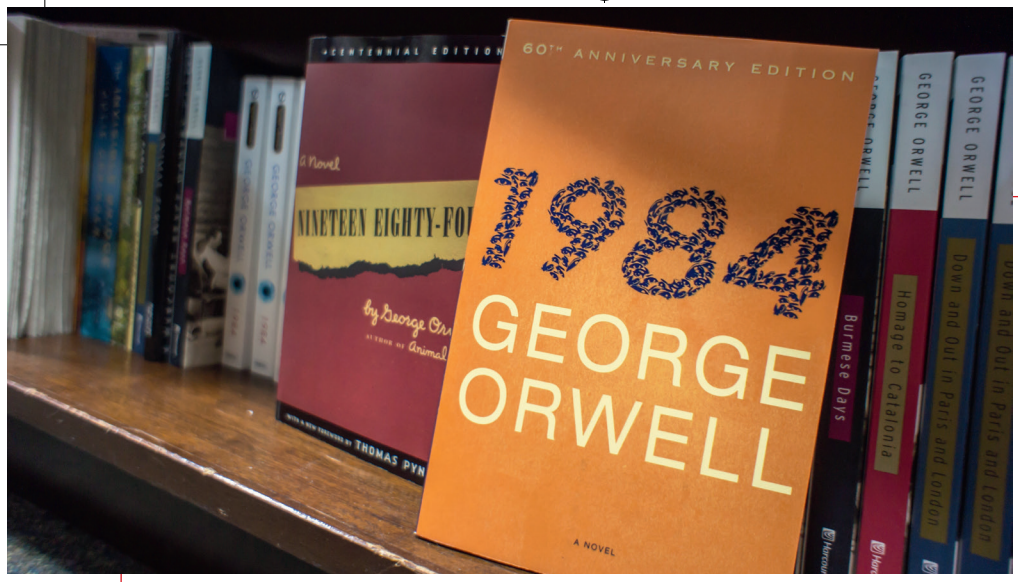

Dystopian stories

The word '**utopia**' was first used in 1516 in a book called *Utopia* by Sir Thomas More. His book was part fiction, part political philosophy about an island with perfect political, religious and economic systems. Thomas More made up the word 'utopia' from Greek words, and it means both 'nowhere' and 'perfect place'. In a utopian world there would be no poverty, no illness, no war and no disasters.

The opposite of this perfect world is the idea of **dystopia**. A dystopian world is an **extreme version of the bad things about our society**. Common features of dystopias are oppressive governments, limits on freedom and equality, extreme environmental disaster or the end of civilisation. The word 'dystopia' was first used in 1868 by philosopher John Stuart Mill in a speech that criticised the British government.

Dystopian stories, a branch of science fiction, are popular with writers because the situations present many opportunities for dramatic conflict and problems for the characters to solve. Literature is full of examples, from classics like *1984* to best-selling Young Adult books and films like *The Hunger Games*.

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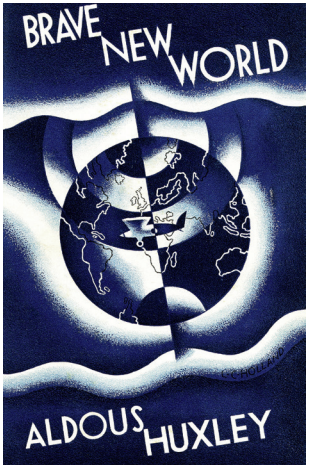
Brave New World by Aldous Huxley



Huxley originally planned to write a parody of H.G. Wells's utopian stories in 1931. However, he got so excited about his ideas that the parody became one of the earliest dystopian novels. The ideas in the book were inspired by the **Industrial Revolution** and the technology behind mass production of things like cars and radios. *Brave New World* is set in a futuristic, Americanised world state where people are born into one of five groups. The group a person is in determines their place in society. Alpha children will become the top level of leaders and thinkers while the Epsilons will become workers. Thanks to a drugged chewing gum called 'soma' the worker groups think they're happy.

Minority Report by Philip K. Dick

Originally a short story written in 1956, *Minority Report* was turned into a film starring Tom Cruise in 2002. In the original story, John Anderton is the head of **Pre-Crime**, a special police force. They use three 'precogs', people with abilities to see events before they happen, to see the future. In this world there is no crime because **the police arrest people before they can do anything wrong**. Anderton sees a report that shows he will commit a murder of a man he has never met. In the film Anderton tries to stop his future self committing the murder but the short story has a different ending. Although it seems as if a world without crime would be a utopia, the story asks if we can have a perfect world with no free will or justice.

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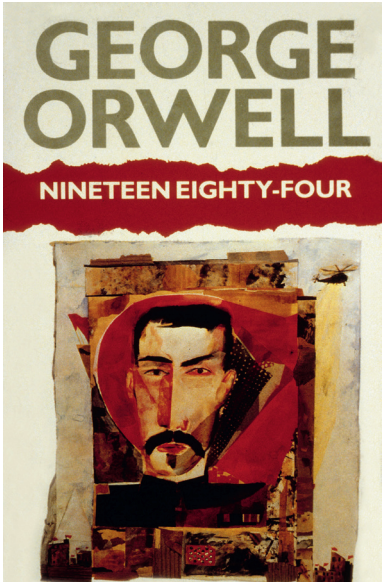
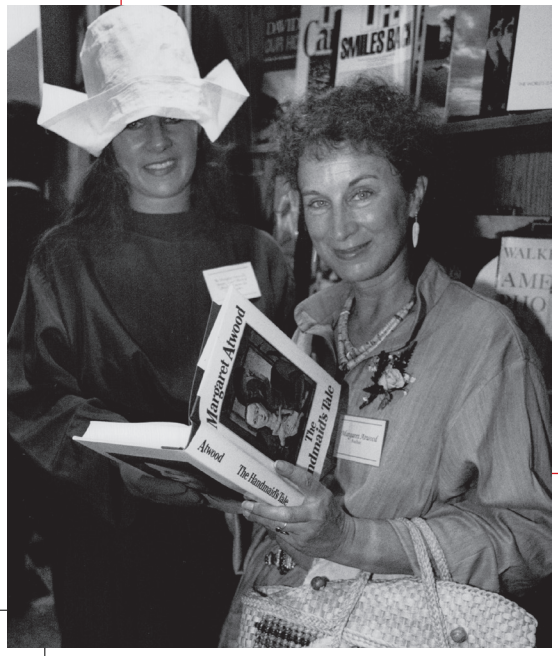
1984 by George Orwell



1984 is one of the most famous dystopian classics. It was published in 1949 after the end of the Second World War, when many people were afraid of Communism under Stalin. Some of the ideas and words from *1984* have made their way into our language. For example, the popular TV show ***Big Brother*** is named after the Party leader in *1984*, a society where citizens are constantly watched through TV screens. In this society, history is rewritten, people are put in prison for '**thought crimes**' and every part of life is controlled by the government. In the story, Winston Smith, a worker in the Ministry of Truth, falls in love with Julia and begins to break the rules.



The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

The book, written in 1985, is set in the fictional totalitarian state of Gilead which has replaced America. **Women in this society have no rights and are not even allowed to read**. Very few women are able to have babies because of the effects of pollution so some women are forced to produce babies for rich

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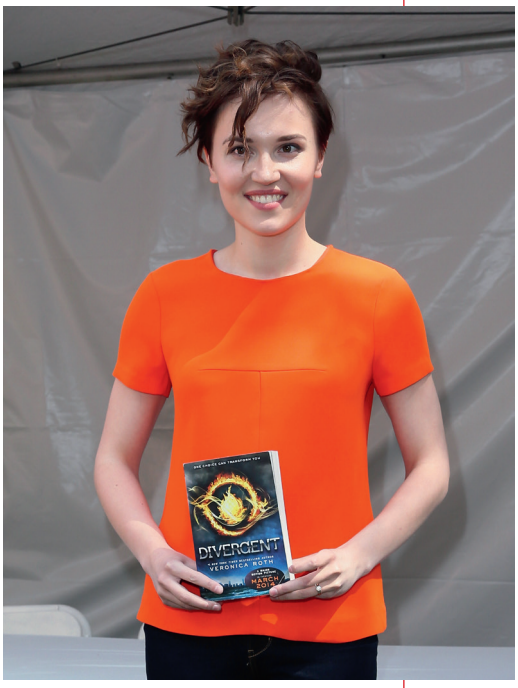
people. The book tells the story of Offred, a so-called 'handmaid', who is assigned to a high-level commander and his wife to have their baby. She becomes involved in a rebellion against the regime.

Divergent by Veronica Roth



Divergent is a trilogy for Young Adults which has similarities to both *The Hunger Games* (see page 82) and *Brave New World*. In a futuristic Chicago, **society is divided into five groups according to personality type**. People take a test when they're sixteen years old and then they choose to join the group indicated by the test or to stay with their families. The books follow a girl, Tris, whose test results show she has the characteristics of three of the personality groups. Her mixed results mean she is a divergent, which is something she has to keep secret.

Comprehension check

1 Answer the following questions.

1. What is the difference between 'utopia' and 'dystopia'?
2. Why do writers like dystopian stories?
3. Which book is about women's rights?
4. Which two books have a similar system for organising people in society?
5. Why is the pre-crime system of *Minority Report* dystopian?
6. Do you know any other utopian or dystopian stories?

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The Characters

From left to right: **Kailani, Dylan, the Old Keeper, Murrey, Viviana**

Before you read

1 Listening

Listen to the sounds from Chapter 1 and match them to the description.

A ☐ Kailani shouting and knocking on doors
B ☐ sirens screaming
C ☐ loudspeakers giving announcements
D ☐ Dylan singing
E ☐ acid rain falling

2 Prediction

A Now you've heard the sounds, what do you think is going to happen in Chapter 1?

B Look at the characters from the story on page 8. Who do you think will help Kailani in Chapter 1?

3 Reading

Read the text and answer the following questions.

The word *hydra* comes to English from Latin. But the word is even older than that as it was originally the Greek word *hudra*. In English we find it in the verbs *hydrate*, *rehydrate* and *dehydrate* which are words connected to water.

- Hydrate: to add water to something
- Rehydrate: to put water back into something
- Dehydrate: to remove water

In Ancient Greek mythology the Hydra is a nine-headed monster or sea snake that Hercules fights. Every time Hercules cuts off one of its head, it grows two heads in its place. So Hercules uses fire to burn each neck after he cuts its head off and manages to kill it.

1 Which language does the word *hydra* come from?
2 Which verb goes with the action of having a glass of water after doing exercise?
3 Why was the Hydra so difficult to fight?

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CHAPTER **1**

Deadly rain

The scream[1] of the sirens broke the calm of the sunny day. The rain was coming.

Kailani looked up at the sky, along with everyone else.

'Is it going to rain?' asked her six-year-old brother, Dylan. His yellowish[2] face grew white and he pulled at her arm.

'It looks like it,' she said.

The sirens screamed again. Everywhere, people were moving as quickly as possible.

'I want to go now!'

1. **scream** : a very loud sound.
2. **yellowish** : a little bit yellow.

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'Two more minutes,' she said. Kailani looked hopelessly at the line of people. They were almost at the front. She opened her bag and counted the soft, grey Hydration Pellets although she knew very well there were only six. They had enough for the rest of the day, but that was it. She was thirsty but she closed the bag.

Just ten more minutes, she thought. But the Keeper, in his blue uniform, was closing the windows and pulling the shutters [3] down. There was no point waiting because there would be no more rations [4] today.

'OK, Dylan! OK. We have time to get to the shelter.' [5]

She looked at the sky again. The clouds were moving towards the city. They started to walk as fast as Dylan could. He was too big for her to carry but he wasn't strong enough to go as fast as they needed to go.

'No running!' Loudspeakers in the streets started giving out their usual, unnecessary warnings. 'Walk calmly to your nearest shelter.' And then another siren screamed.

Kailani couldn't remember seeing anyone run. You would need a lot of energy to do that and most people needed all their energy just to finish a day's work.

They hurried past the huge TV screens. They were switched on, ready for the show. Kailani turned her face away. She already felt sick.

A crowd of people was outside the shelter when they arrived. She knew they were too late for this one. Dylan knew it too.

'You said we had time!'

'It's OK, there's another shelter two streets from here.'

3. **shutters** : wooden or metal doors that cover windows.
4. **rations** : something limited so you can't have much of it.
5. **shelter** : places under the ground where people hide from danger.

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CHAPTER **1**

People pushed past them as they had the same idea. This was the worst time for the rain to come. Everyone was outside to queue for their rations. *The shelters would all be full*, she thought.

She pulled Dylan into a corner and waited for people to pass them.

There must be somewhere else we can shelter, she thought.

Above their heads, the clouds now blocked out the sun and everything looked grey. From the loudspeakers, the singing started and people joined in.

'Rain, rain, go away. Come again another day.' Dylan shut his eyes tight and sang as loudly as he could.

Kailani started knocking on doors.

'Open up, please!' She moved down the street, door by door, but no one answered. Dylan's singing wasn't loud enough to hear over the sirens but she could see his mouth moving. Kailani knocked on the last door in the street.

'Please, I have a child with me. Please, open the door!'

The door opened and an arm reached out, grabbed Dylan and pulled him inside. He screamed. Kailani screamed too. The arm was covered in the blue coat of a Keeper. The door opened wider and the same arm pulled her into the house and shut the door.

The silence inside the house made Dylan's screaming sound like it was on the loudspeakers.

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The text and **beyond**

1 Comprehension check

Are the following statements true (T) or false (F)? Correct the false ones.

		T	F
1	People in the city get food from the Ration Centres.	☐	☐
2	Dylan is a healthy six-year-old boy.	☐	☐
3	Dylan and Kailani are too far away from the first shelter to get in.	☐	☐
4	They didn't know why the sirens were screaming.	☐	☐
5	Kailani wants to watch the TV screens.	☐	☐
6	Dylan and Kailani are afraid of the rain.	☐	☐
7	They get help from a Keeper.	☐	☐

2 PRELIMINARY Sentence transformation

For each question complete the second sentence so it means the same as the first sentence. Use no more than three words.

1 'Is it going to rain?' asked Dylan.

Dylan asked if it ..... to rain.

2 There was no point waiting for rations because the rain was coming.

The rain was coming ..... there was no point waiting for rations.

3 They didn't have enough time to get to the shelter.

They were too ..... to get to the shelter.

4 There would be no more rations today.

There wouldn't be ..... rations today.

5 Dylan sang too quietly for Kailani to hear over the loudspeakers.

Dylan didn't sing ..... for Kailani to hear over the loudspeakers.

6 A Keeper opened the door.

The door ..... by a Keeper.

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His yellowish face grew white and he pulled at her arm.

The suffix ***-ish*** is often used to create the idea of "a little".
It can be used with adjectives, numbers, ages and times.

3 Word formation: *-ish*

Write short answers to the questions using the ideas in brackets to help you. The first one has been done as an example.

0 How hungry are you? (a little bit hungry)
.....hungryish.....

1 What time do you want to leave? (at about six o'clock)
.....

2 How old is he? (about 30)
.....

3 What's the weather like today? (a little bit warm)
.....

4 How many people are you inviting to your party? (approximately 40)
.....

5 What colour is her hair? (slightly red)
.....

6 How much does lunch cost at the café? (about $10)
.....

4 Vocabulary: odd one out

Circle the word that does not belong and say why.

1 thirsty — strong — calmly — unnecessary
.....

2 sirens — loudspeakers — TV screens — screaming
.....

3 sky — Hydration Pellets — clouds — rain
.....

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CULTURE SPOT

Nursery rhymes!

Rain, rain, go away,
come again another day.
Little Johnny wants to play.
Rain, rain, go to Spain,
never show your face again!

This is a real English nursery rhyme that can be found in books as far back as the 17th Century. As it rains a lot in England, it isn't surprising that people wanted to stop bad weather!
Other countries have weather rhymes, too, and rain is a common topic. German children sing 'It rains when it wants to rain' while Indian children sing a poem that describes very heavy rain. Greece and Spain are hot countries so maybe that's why their nursery rhymes ask for the rain to come.
Every society, dating back as far as the Romans, has had lullabies[1] – songs that were sung to babies to help them sleep. English nursery rhymes that we know today are mostly from the 17th and 18th Century.

Answer these questions.

1 Is there a nursery rhyme about the weather in your country?
2 What can we learn about your country from its nursery rhymes?
3 Do you know any English nursery rhymes?
4 Weather is a popular topic for nursery rhymes. What other topics are common?

1. **lullabies** : plural of lullaby.

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5 Speaking

What do you think? Discuss the following questions with your partner.

1 Who are the Keepers?
2 Why don't the people have much energy?
3 What is everyone afraid of? Why?
4 Why does the Keeper pull Dylan and Kailani into his house?
5 How do you feel when bad weather is coming?

Before you read

4

1 Prediction

Listen to the first part of Chapter 2. Which of the following do you think will happen? Why?

1 ☐ The Keeper will arrest them because they didn't go to the shelter.
2 ☐ The Keeper will save their lives.
3 ☐ The Keeper will send them back out into the rain.
4 ☐ Dylan will escape from the Keeper's house.

.....

.....

2 Reading pictures

Look at the picture on page 21 and answer these questions.

1 How do you know the old man is a Keeper?
2 Look at the expression on the Keeper's face. How does he feel?
3 What can you tell about Dylan's feelings from his body language?
4 Describe the Keeper's house.
5 What can you see outside the window? Does the rain look dangerous?

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