

Year 8 Spring 1 Homework Tasks: Dystopian Fiction

For Staff: (deleted before printing for students) you will need to note the date each piece of homework will be set and due in the right hand column. The levels of challenge can be omitted depending on the ability of your class. You might want to just keep two levels of challenge so that there is an easier and more difficult option. Please pay attention to when homework is handed in / used / peer assessed / marked by teacher, so that you have starters ready for these.

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1	<p>Research: what is the most famous dystopian text to be written? Find out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who wrote it? • Where and when was it written? • What was happening in that place and the world at that time? • What was it about? What was its message? Is it still relevant today? <p>SPaG: explain your ideas using complex sentences.</p>	<p>Research: what is the most famous dystopian text to be written? Find out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who wrote it? • Where and when was it written? • How did the time / place / society it was written in influence what the text was about? • What was it about? What was its message? Is it still relevant today? <p>SPaG: explain your ideas using complex sentences.</p>	<p>Research: Dystopian texts are written about flawed, imperfect societies. Which Dystopian text is most relevant to our society today?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who wrote it, when and why? • What is it about? • What parallels can we draw between this text and our own society? <p>SPaG: explain your ideas using complex sentences.</p>	
	Key Words: learn these words for your spelling test			
	Dystopia Utopia Flaw Imperfect Politics Socialist Community Society Equality	Labour Turbulent Parable Depression Capitalism Fascism Exploit Depression Capitalism	Exile Irony Censorship Dissident Industrialisation Soviet Subjugate Propaganda	
2	Wider Reading: see text and tasks on the other side of this sheet.			
3	<p>Big Question: Which text from the unit so far has had the biggest impact on you? Why do you think this is? How has it made you view the world you live in?</p>	<p>Big Question: Why is it important for writers to produce dystopian texts? What impact do they have on society?</p>	<p>Big Question: Some of the most influential dystopian texts were banned when they were first written? Why do you think this was? What were the governments afraid of and what does this tell you about the importance and impact of dystopian texts?</p>	

NEW PRETTY TOWN

The early summer sky was the color of cat vomit.

Of course, Tally thought, you'd have to feed your cat only salmon-flavored cat food for a while, to get the pinks right. The scudding clouds did look a bit fishy, rippled into scales by a high-altitude wind. As the light faded, deep blue gaps of night peered through like an upside-down ocean, bottomless and cold.

Any other summer, a sunset like this would have been beautiful. But nothing had been beautiful since Peris turned pretty. Losing your best friend sucks, even if it's only for three months and two days.

Tally Youngblood was waiting for darkness.

She could see New Pretty Town through her open window. The party towers were already lit up, and snakes of burning torches marked flickering pathways through the pleasure gardens. A few hot-air balloons pulled at their tethers against the darkening pink sky, their passengers shooting safety fireworks at other balloons and passing parasailers. Laughter and music skipped across the water like rocks thrown with just the right spin, their edges just as sharp against Tally's nerves.

Around the outskirts of the city, cut off from town by the black oval of the river, everything was in darkness. Everyone ugly was in bed by now.

Tally took off her interface ring and said, "Good night."

"Sweet dreams, Tally," said the room.

She chewed up a toothbrush pill, punched her pillows, and shoved an old portable heater—one that produced about as much warmth as a sleeping, Tally-size human being—under the covers.

Then she crawled out the window.

Outside, with the night finally turning coal black above her head, Tally instantly felt better. Maybe this was a stupid plan, but anything was better than another night awake in bed feeling sorry for herself. On the familiar leafy path down to the water's edge, it was easy to imagine Peris stealing silently behind her, stifling laughter, ready for a night of spying on the new pretties. Together. She and Peris had figured out how to trick the house minder back when they were twelve, when the three-month difference in their ages seemed like it would never matter.

"Best friends for life," Tally muttered, fingering the tiny scar on her right palm.

The water glistened through the trees, and she could hear the wavelets of a passing river skimmer's wake slapping

at the shore. She ducked, hiding in the reeds. Summer was always the best time for spying expeditions. The grass was high, it was never cold, and you didn't have to stay awake through school the next day.

Of course, Peris could sleep as late as he wanted now. Just one of the advantages of being pretty.

The old bridge stretched massively across the water, its huge iron frame as black as the sky. It had been built so long ago that it held up its own weight, without any support from hoverstruts. A million years from now, when the rest of the city had crumbled, the bridge would probably remain like a fossilized bone.

Unlike the other bridges into New Pretty Town, the old bridge couldn't talk—or report trespassers, more importantly. But even silent, the bridge had always seemed very wise to Tally, as quietly knowing as some ancient tree.

Her eyes were fully adjusted to the darkness now, and it took only seconds to find the fishing line tied to its usual rock. She yanked it, and heard the splash of the rope tumbling from where it had been hidden among the bridge supports. She kept pulling until the invisible fishing line turned into wet, knotted cord. The other end was still tied to the iron framework of the bridge. Tally pulled the rope taut and lashed it to the usual tree.

She had to duck into the grass once more as another river skimmer passed. The people dancing on its deck didn't spot the rope stretched from bridge to shore. They never did.

New pretties were always having too much fun to notice little things out of place.

When the skimmer's lights had faded, Tally tested the rope with her whole weight. One time it had pulled loose from the tree, and both she and Peris had swung downward, then up and out over the middle of the river before falling off, tumbling into the cold water. She smiled at the memory, realizing she would rather be on that expedition—soaking wet in the cold with Peris—than dry and warm tonight, but alone.

Hanging upside down, hands and knees clutching the knots along the rope, Tally pulled herself up into the dark framework of the bridge, then stole through its iron skeleton and across to New Pretty Town.

Answer these questions in full, detailed sentences, with examples:

1. What dystopian features can you find in this extract. Underline and label them.
2. Which feature do you find most disturbing? Why?
3. You've studied several dystopian texts in your lessons. Which one does this extract remind you of the most? Why?