

Dystopian Societies

Not the kind of place you want to be...

Definition

First, the definition of a utopia...

- A place, state, or condition that is ideally perfect in its politics, laws, customs, and conditions
- A paradise

Activity time!

With your tablemates...

- Choose one major problem you see in our society
- Create three laws (whether enforceable or not) that would eliminate that problem
 - Think about what would solve the problem, but also what to do with people who don't obey those laws
- Write down your answers and be ready to share

Definition

Dystopia: A futuristic, imagined universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society...

- Is maintained through restrictive control or complete lack of control
- Is an exaggerated worst-case scenario
- Makes a criticism about a trend, societal norm, or political system

Common elements

- Propaganda
- Restricted freedoms
- Constant surveillance
- Fear
- Dehumanization
- Loss of humanity
- Conformity
- Lack of real happiness

Types of control

- Corporate control:
 - One or more large corporations control society through products, advertising, and/or the media
- Governmental control:
 - Government controls society through a tangle of red tape, relentless regulations, an incompetent officials
- Technological control:
 - Computers, robots, or scientific means control society
- Philosophical/religious control:
 - A dictator or a theocratic government use philosophical or religious ideology to control society

Dystopian protagonists

- Feels trapped
- Is struggling to escape
- Questions the existing social/political systems
- Is pushed to act after the real or potential injury to or death of a loved one
- Believes/feels that something is wrong with the society
 - Thinks differently from others around him/her
- Helps the audience see the negative aspects of the society through his/her perspective

Activity time!

- With your tablemates, discuss how implementing the rules you created earlier could lead to the creation of a dystopian society
 - Basically, how might your rules backfire and make society worse instead of better?
- Write down your answer and be ready to share

Big ideas

- A true utopia cannot exist
 - Too many variables
- Absolute control creates dystopian societies
 - Limits freedom
- No control creates dystopian societies
 - Potential danger for all
- Every society has some dystopian elements
 - Often opinion-based
 - Can be supported with evidence