

LANGUAGE

ARTS

Surviving in a Dystopian Society

Fiction Book Talk

March 2012

Know: What are the characteristics of a “dystopian society.”

Understand: Authors use the setting of a dystopian society as a metaphor for unrest, dissatisfaction, & protest against government control. YA authors identify the teen protagonists as leaders of change in society.

Do: Choose and read a YA fiction title with the theme of Survival in a Dystopian Society.

Activity Suggestions

Tasks for **creative** thinkers: Make a pair of collages that compare you and a character from your novel in physical and personality traits. Label your collages so viewers can understand your thinking.

Draw pictures or comic strip panels of key scenes from your novel that reflect the concepts of culture, values, traditions, heritage or change in the dystopian society.

Get together with others reading the same novel and choose a pivotal or key scene from the book to change into a scene in a play. Videotape or act out the scene and explain its significance.

Find several songs that you think reflect an important message from your novel. Put together an audio collage and include exhibit cards that help listeners understand how you think these songs express the book’s meaning.

Tasks for **analytical** thinkers: Describe a tradition, value, or social concept from today’s society that one of the major characters from your novel would have difficulty understanding or adjusting to and discuss why it would be difficult for him/her.

Write a letter to one of the characters in your novel and give him/her advice about how to handle a problem they are facing with either a family member or other character in the book then write the character’s letter back to you.

Write a biographical profile or poem about yourself and one of the main characters from your novel that demonstrates how you and the character are alike and different. Be sure and include the most important traits in each profile or poem.

Imagine what happens to the main character in your novel 20 years after the novel ends. Write a feature article that details what has happened to the character and what they are doing. Then, write an article that describes what you are doing 20 years from now.

Tasks for *practical* thinkers: Research a town/geographic area you feel is similar to the one in which the novel is set. Use sketches, maps, population and other demographic data to help you make comparisons and contrasts.

Write directions or a recipe for how you would solve a problem in the novel and how a main character would solve a problem. Your list should include details that allow the reader to know about you and the character.

Develop a list of things you would need in order to survive in your novel's dystopian society and explain why each is essential.

Trace the route a main character's life journey takes them in the novel on a map. Be sure and identify the major events that happen in each location.

SURVIVAL IN A DYSTOPIAN SOCIETY

Austen, C. All Good Children. In the not-too-distant future, Max tries to maintain his identity in a world where the only way to survive is to conform and obey.

Bertagna, Julie. Exodus. In the year 2100, as the island of Wing is about to be covered by water, fifteen-year-old Mara discovers the existence of New World sky cities that are safe from the storms and rising waters, and convinces her people to travel to one of these cities in order to save themselves. Sequel: Zenith.

Bick, Ilsa. Ashes. Alex, a resourceful seventeen-year-old running from her incurable brain tumor, Tom, who has left the war in Afghanistan, and Ellie, an angry eight-year-old, join forces after an electromagnetic pulse sweeps through the sky and kills most of the world's population, turning some of those who remain into zombies and giving the others superhuman senses.

Cline, Ernest. Ready Player One. In the year 2044, Wade Watts, like the rest of humanity, chooses to escape reality and spends his waking hours in the limitless, utopian virtual world of the OASIS, but when Wade stumbles upon the first of the fiendish puzzles set up by OASIS creator James Halliday he finds he must compete with thousands of others--including those willing to commit murder--in order to claim a prize of massive fortune.

Collins, Suzanne. Hunger Games. Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen accidentally becomes a contender in the annual Hunger Games, a grave competition hosted by the Capitol where young boys and girls are pitted against one another in a televised fight to the death. Sequels: Catching Fire and Mockingjay.

Crewe, Megan. The Way We Fall. Sixteen-year-old Kaelyn challenges her fears, finds a second chance at love, and fights to keep her family and friends safe as a deadly new virus devastates her island community.

Condie, Ally. Matched. All her life, Cassia has never had a choice. The Society dictates everything: when and how to play, where to work, where to live, what to eat and wear, when to die, and most importantly to Cassia as she turns 17, who to marry. When she is Matched with her best friend Xander, things couldn't be more perfect. But why did her neighbor Ky's face show up on her match disk as well? Sequel: Crossed.

Dashner, James. Maze Runner. Sixteen-year-old Thomas wakes up with no memory in the middle of a maze and realizes he must work with the community in which he finds himself if he is to escape. Sequels: The Scorch Trials; The Death Cure.

Derting, Kimberly. The Pledge. In a dystopian kingdom where the classes are separated by the languages they speak, Charlaina "Charlie" Hart has a secret gift that is revealed when she meets a mysterious young man named Max.

Jordan, Hillary. When She Woke. Accused of murdering her unborn child, Hannah Payne is turned into a Chrome. Transplanted into a new body that matches the color classification of her crime--red for murder--she is left in a bare room where cameras broadcast her every move to the public for their entertainment. Hannah vows to protect the identity of her child's father, a public figure who would be ruined if their affair is revealed.

Lu, Marie. Legend. In a dark future, when North America has split into two warring nations, fifteen-year-olds Day, a famous criminal, and prodigy June, the brilliant soldier hired to capture him, discover that they have a common enemy.

Michelle, Sara. The Aftermath. The old normal was Cecilia living the good life in Denver and dating her boyfriend, Ryan. Then a horrific earthquake destroyed most of the surrounding area (maybe more), leaving Cecilia and Ryan to make their way in a world where everything is crumbling, and death waits around every corner. Sequel: The Inside.

Meyer, Marissa. Cinder. Cinder, a gifted mechanic and a cyborg with a mysterious past, is blamed by her stepmother for her stepmother's illness while a deadly plague decimates the population of New Beijing, but when Cinder's life gets intertwined with Prince Kai's, she finds herself at the center of an intergalactic struggle.

O'Brien, Caragh. Birthmarked. Sixteen-year-old Gaia Stone, a midwife who dutifully delivers at least three babies a month and hands them over to the Enclave, a community within walls where the children are adopted and live with conveniences which are not available to the outside world, begins to question her loyalty to the group after her mother is brutally taken away from her by the people she serves. Sequel: Prized.

Oliver, Lauren. Delirium. Lena looks forward to receiving the government-mandated cure that prevents the delirium of love and leads to a safe, predictable, and happy life, until ninety-five days before her eighteenth birthday and her treatment, she falls in love. Sequel: Pandemonium.

Revis, B. Across the Universe. Amy, having been cryogenically frozen and placed onboard a spaceship which was supposed to land on a distant planet three hundred years in the future, is unplugged fifty years too early and finds herself stuck inside an enclosed world ruled by a tyrannical leader and his rebellious teenage heir and confused about who to trust and why someone is trying to kill her.

Snyder, Maria. Inside Out. I'm Trella. I'm a scrub. A nobody. One of thousands who work the lower level, keeping the Inside clean for the Uppers. I've got one friend, do my job, and try to avoid the Pop Cops. So what if I occasionally use the pipes to sneak around the Upper levels? Until I accidentally start a rebellion....

Wells, Robison. The Variant. After years in foster homes, seventeen-year-old Benson Fisher applies to New Mexico's Maxfield Academy in hopes of securing a brighter future, but instead he finds that the school is a prison and no one is what he or she seems.

Westerfeld, Scott. Uglies. Tally is faced with a difficult choice when her new friend Shay decides to risk life on the outside rather than submit to the forced operation that turns sixteen year old girls into gorgeous beauties, and realizes that there is a whole new side to the pretty world that she doesn't like. Sequels: Pretties, Specials, Extras.

Example of Differentiated Instruction
Language Arts-RAFT strategy

Types of Differentiated Instruction: All three are possible! You can differentiate for interest, readiness, and learning profile throughout the RAFT options.

Objective(s): By either identifying the causes of, describing the consequences of, or analyzing events of the Armenian Genocide, students will understand that the events of the Armenian Genocide affect United States policy today, that various religious and political reasons contributed to the Armenian Genocide, and that there were multiple consequences to the Armenian Genocide.

Instructions: A RAFT is a creative, fun strategy that encourages students to:

- Assume a role
- Consider their audience, while
- Work in a particular format
- Examine a topic from their chosen perspective, and
- Is motivating because it gives students *choice*, appeals to their *interests* and *learning profiles*, and can be adapted to student readiness levels.

After students finish reading *Forgotten Fire* by Adam Bagdasarian, students will synthesize what they learned about World War I, the Armenian Genocide, the Ottoman Empire, and conflicts between Christian and Muslim groups with the plot of the story to create a writing assignment based on the options below. **This can be adapted to fit any novel! You can have students write and then share in small groups; you can also have students present their information to the class.**

Sources: Format based on work of Doug Buehl cited in *Teaching Reading in the Content Areas: If Not Me, Then Who?* Billmeyer and Martin, 1998

Essential materials: *Forgotten Fire* by Adam Bagdasarian (or other novel), any historical background material necessary to set up context/setting of story, RAFT handout below, computers if necessary

(FLIP PAGE FOR RAFT!)

Forgotten Fire RAFT Directions: Pick one row to complete!

ROLE (Good spot for interest differentiation)	AUDIENCE (Good spot for interest and/or readiness differentiation)	FORMAT (Good spot for learning profile differentiation)	TOPIC (Good spot for interest and/or readiness differentiation)	OPTIONAL COLUMN: Hints, required points, etc.
Armenian child	Future child	Diary entry	How I survived the genocide	Must explain the major groups involved in the time period.
Turkish government	United States government	Press release	What happened during 1914-1917 was war, not genocide	What happened to the people and how it ended
Documentary movie-maker	Movie-goer/history buff	Interview	How did you survive?	Focus on the Armenian people and their struggles while touching on the events
President Obama	The people of the world	Memoir	Why does the United States not acknowledge this genocide?	Must connect to actual reasons- may need additional research

Novel Think-Tac-Toe

Directions: Select and complete one activity from each horizontal row to help you and others think about your novel. Remember to make your work:

*thoughtful. *rich with detail. *original. *accurate.

Character	Make a pair of collages that compare you and a character in your book in physical and personality traits. Label your collages so that viewers understand your thinking.	Write a bio-poem about yourself and another about a main character in the book. Your readers should be able to see how you and the character are alike and different. Be sure to include the most important traits in each poem.	Write a recipe or set of directions for how you would solve a problem in your life and another for how a main character in your book would solve a problem. Your list should help us know you and the character better.
Setting	Draw (or paint) and write a greeting card that invites us into the scenery and mood of an important part in the book. Be sure the greeting card helps us understand what is important in the scene and why.	Make a model or a map of a key place in your life and of an important place in the novel. Find a way to help viewers understand both what the places are like and why they are important in your life and the character's life.	Make two timelines. The first should illustrate and describe at least six to eight shifts in setting in the book. The second should illustrate and explain how the mood changes with the changes in setting.
Theme	Using books of quotes or internet sites containing quotes, find at least six to eight that you feel reflect what's important about the novel's theme. Find at least six to eight that do the same for your life. Display and explain your choices in a creative manner.	Interview a key character from the book to find out what lessons she thinks we should learn from events in the book. Use a question-and-answer format to present your material. Be sure the interview is meaningful.	Find songs you think reflect an important message from the book. Prepare an audio collage. Write an accompanying card that helps listeners understand why and how you think the songs express the book's meaning. Do the same with your life and its themes.

Name: _____

Part I: _____/25

Part II: _____/20

TOTAL SCORE: _____/45

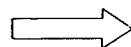
Part II - *FENCES* Writing Assessment

Directions: Please **choose two** of the following three prompts and respond to them in paragraph form. You will write one concise, thorough, and organized paragraph for each response. Please write neatly and legibly using your own paper and number your responses by prompt number. Before you hand in your assessment, please underline and label the topic sentence and the concluding sentence of your paragraph. Also, number the specific examples and details used in your response. Each response is worth 10 points. Good Luck!

Prompt 1: The play *Fences* addresses multiple familial relationships and the conflicts within those relationships. In the end of the play, the fence is built, but the Maxson family is broken in many ways. Some believe that Troy is responsible for many of the troubles that evolve in the Maxson family. Others believe that Troy is not to blame for the problems within the family. In your opinion, should Troy bear the brunt of the blame for the issues that contributed to “breaking” the family. In your paragraph, take a position on this question. You may write about either one of the two points of view given, or you may present a different point of view on this question. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

Prompt 2: Authors often use their literary pieces to convey their ideas on a central issue or concept. In the literary world, we call these issues and ideas that the author is trying to convey, themes. The goal of the reader or audience is to determine the true intent of the author or playwright. Some readers believe that August Wilson wrote *Fences* to portray the effects of civil rights on African Americans as generations have evolved. Others believe that Wilson wrote *Fences* to discuss other issues that are involved in relationships and human nature. In your opinion, was the central theme of the play *Fences* related to civil rights or was the central theme of *Fences* related to human relationships? In your paragraph, take a position on this question. You may write about either one of the two points of view given, or you may present a different point of view on this question. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

Additional prompt on reverse...



Prompt 3: In the literary world, a tragic hero is the main character in a work who makes an error in his or her actions that leads to his or her downfall. The main character in *Fences* is Troy Maxson, and it is clear that he makes several choices that affect his situation among his family members. Some readers believe that Troy Maxson is a tragic hero because of the decisions he makes that lead to his downfall. Others believe that Troy is in no way a hero in the play and his actions are a result of his selfishness. In your opinion, is Troy a tragic hero in the play *Fences*? In your essay, take a position on this question. You may write about either one of the two points of view given, or you may present a different point of view on this question. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

When you are finished, please turn in this sheet as well as your paper with your answers stapled together.