

# What have you learned?

1. Fill in the blanks to recap the main ideas of the novel. You can use the following words to help you.

adopted • appendix • Aunts • breeding • captured • categories • censorship • Ceremony • chauffeur • child • coup • daughter • eating • errands • fate • forbidden • Gilead • Handmaid • hierarchy • lecture • liberties • life • Mayday • narrator • outfits • pregnant • question • red • religious • rivalry • silence • sinners • totalitarian • wife

In the Republic of (1) \_\_\_\_\_, the population is divided into different (2) \_\_\_\_\_ and a strict (3) \_\_\_\_\_ has been set. (4) \_\_\_\_\_ of different colours visually mark this hierarchy.

Some women, called Handmaids have been selected for their (5) \_\_\_\_\_ capacities in order to get pregnant and thus give their Commander and his Wife a (6) \_\_\_\_\_.

Our (7) \_\_\_\_\_, Offred, tells us about her everyday life in this (8) \_\_\_\_\_ regime where rules have to be strictly respected and (9) \_\_\_\_\_ are non-existent.

It all started with a (10) \_\_\_\_\_ when the President of the USA was assassinated and Congressmen shot dead. Then, little by little, (11) \_\_\_\_\_ of the media, strict identity controls and (12) \_\_\_\_\_ laws were set up. Some people tried to flee the country (as they were considered (13) \_\_\_\_\_ under the Gilead Laws), like our narrator who failed to cross the Canadian border with her (14) \_\_\_\_\_ and husband, Luke. The authorities took her daughter away from her so that she could be (15) \_\_\_\_\_ by a Commander and his Wife. As for Luke, she has no means of knowing what happened to him.

The narrator was (16) \_\_\_\_\_ and was then sent to the Leah and Rachel Center – ruled by (17) \_\_\_\_\_ — in order to learn how to be a good (19) \_\_\_\_\_. This is where she first donned her (19) \_\_\_\_\_ costume before integrating her Commander's family.

Her everyday life consists of running (20) \_\_\_\_\_ and (21) \_\_\_\_\_ the meals prepared for her. Regularly, she has to get ready for the (22) \_\_\_\_\_ during which the Commander has sex with her in order for her to get (23) \_\_\_\_\_.

For a Handmaid, life in Gilead is marked by (24) \_\_\_\_\_ and obedience.

As the Commander gets on well with Offred, he regularly invites her in his office to play Scrabble, a leisurely activity (25) \_\_\_\_\_ in Gilead. As for his (26) \_\_\_\_\_, Serena Joy, despite their (27) \_\_\_\_\_, she also tries to give Offred some freedom, encouraging her to meet Nick, their (28) \_\_\_\_\_ who may also be a (29) \_\_\_\_\_ member.

At the end of her story, Offred enters a black van but her (30) \_\_\_\_\_ is mysterious as she doesn't know what entering the van means: it could be her end or a new (31) \_\_\_\_\_.

The (32) \_\_\_\_\_ at the end of the novel (which looks like the transcript of a (33) \_\_\_\_\_ / symposium) sheds light on the way a story is reconstructed and told, from different perspectives and leads us to (34) \_\_\_\_\_ the role of the narrator.

2. For each quote, say which key feature of the novel it illustrates.

symbolism of food • deadly sins • metafiction • synesthesia

a. ...does that make him angry or lustful or envious or anything at all? (Chapter 36)

b. It didn't happen that way either. I'm not sure how it happened; not exactly. All I can hope for is a reconstruction: the way love feels is always approximate. (Chapter 40)

c. Envy radiates from them, I can smell it, faint wisps of acid, mingled with their perfume. (Chapter 21)

d. I wait for the arrival of the inevitable egg, which will be lukewarm like the room and will have a green film on the yolk and will taste faintly of sulphur. (Chapter 31)

3. Connect the events to the correct points on the timeline.

a. The narrator meeting Luke and having a daughter.

b. The narrator at the Leah and Rachel Center.

c. The narrator trying to cross the border.

d. The US president shot dead and Congress overthrown.



e. Women losing their jobs.

f. Luke patronising the narrator.

g. Digital money taking over paper money.

4. What about you and the novel?

Answer these questions in your notebook.

- What's your favourite passage? Quickly sum it up and explain why it's your favourite.
- What passage shocked you? Why?
- What passage would you choose for a book trailer? Why?
- What questions would you ask Margaret Atwood?
- What topics made you think? Why?