

Dystopia

Definition of Dystopia

Dystopia is a world in which everything is imperfect, and everything goes terribly wrong. Dystopian literature shows us a nightmarish image about what might happen to the world in the near future. Usually the main themes of dystopian works are rebellion, oppression, revolutions, wars, overpopulation, and disasters. On the other hand, [utopia](#) is a perfect world – exactly opposite of dystopia.

Characteristics of Dystopia

Generally, there is no government, or if there is, it is an oppressive and controlling government.

Either there is a huge income gap between the poor and the rich, or everyone faces extreme poverty.

[Propaganda](#) put forth by the government or ruling class takes control of human minds.

Examples of Dystopia in Literature

Example #1: *The Hunger Games* (By Suzanne Collins)

Suzanne Collins depicts a dystopic world, Panem, in a futuristic society in her series, *The Hunger Games*. Consisting of a central government referred to as “Capitol,” and thirteen remote districts, Panem displays a model of dystopian society due to harsh separation and discrimination between the unkind Capitol and the poor, enslaved outlying districts.

We notice throughout the novel that Panem’s Capitol makes use of intimidation and violence to control its people living in the Districts. It forces the districts to engage in “The Games” to enforce servitude under the guise of celebrating an absence of war. Though Capitol itself might

appear utopian, due to an excessive availability of opulent consumer goods, its abundance of riches comes at the expense of the remote Districts.

Example #2: *1984* (By George Orwell)

In his classic novel, *1984*, George Orwell shows a dystopian society. He has written this novel to describe the future, and the ways government takes advantage of new technologies in order to rule and control the people. The leading [character](#), Winston Smith, falls in a trap where Big Brother, a leader of the party always watches him and other low-grade members of that society.

Inner party members live a life of luxury, while outer members live in dirty apartments. Besides, there is no emotional and mental freedom. The party does not allow anyone to rebel, even by using their minds. We see violence everywhere in this dystopic society, and the majority of people are poor, which further proves it as a fine example of dystopia. We notice everything goes decrepit, and its scenes are often dreary and dark.

Example #3: *Brave New World* (By Aldous Huxley)

Aldous Huxley, in his most challenging novel, *Brave New World*, depicts a futuristic society where individual sacrifices for the cause of state, science controls and subjugates all types of history, and the arts are outlawed. Shortly, this book perfectly fits into a classic form of dystopian literature.

Huxley draws dystopia through emotional and political events. He brings a dystopian [setting](#) by the mention of technology and higher authorities. With the increased use of technology, the need for a human work force decreases, leaving them with a great deal of depression. The novel explores the dark side of an apparently successful world, where everyone looks satisfied and contented with excessive pleasures of technology, which they achieve by sacrificing their personal freedoms.

Example #4: *The Giver* (By Lois Lowry)

Lois Lowry wrote a dystopian [fiction](#), *The Giver*, because she thought it to

human beings about their dependence upon each other, their surroundings, and their environment. By using ironical situations of the utopian appearances, she exposes dystopian realities, in order to provoke readers to raise questions, and value their individual identities and freedom.

In this novel, Jonas' [community](#) has no starvation, poverty, lack of housing, unemployment, or prejudice, and everything seems perfect. However, as the novel advances, Jonas gets insight into people's personal lives, and notices that they have given up their individualities and freedoms. Besides, the community is a hypocrite conforming to false ideas and becoming a bad place in which to live.

Function of Dystopia

Through dystopia, authors express their concerns about issues of humanity and society, and warn the people about their weaknesses. Authors use dystopia as a literary technique to discuss reality, and depict issues that might happen in the future. Thus, the role of dystopia in literary works is to educate and give awareness to the [audience](#). Dystopias also serve as warnings about the current state of affairs of a government, or of those in power. In dystopic writings, authors point out the wrong-doings in a society or a system – the reason that it is often called a [critique](#).