

BRAVE NEW WORLD

THE COMPLETE GUIDE AND RESOURCE FOR GRADE 12

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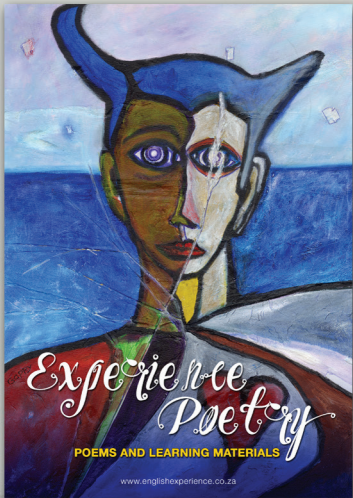
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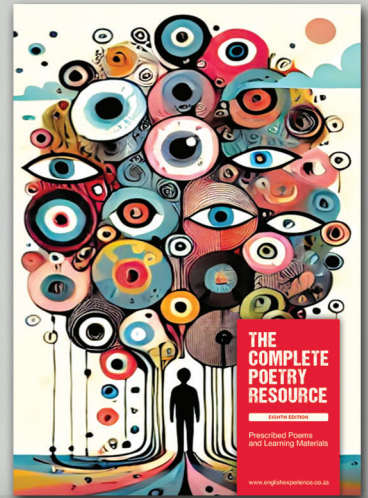
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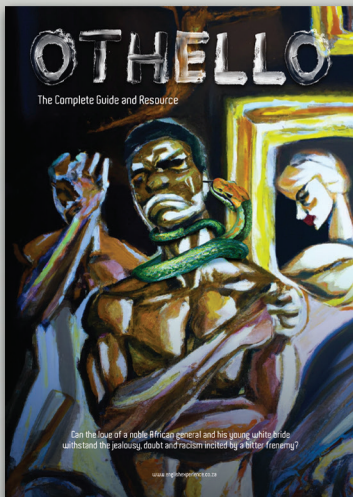
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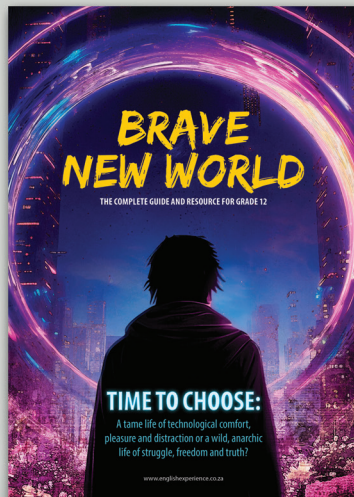
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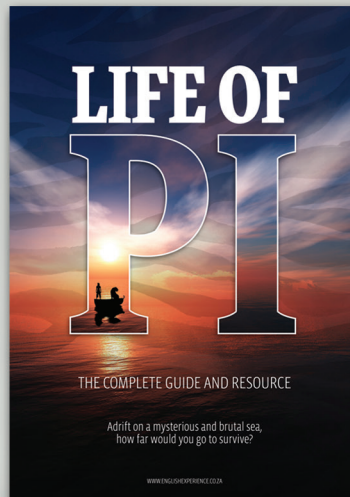
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Brave New World

THE COMPLETE GUIDE AND RESOURCE FOR GRADE 12

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All references made to the novel in this resource and the companion *Suggested Answers* booklet refer to the 2020 Vintage Classics edition of the novel (ISBN 978-1-784-876-258).

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Foreword

About the English Experience

The English Experience is an independent South African publishing house that specialises in developing high-quality English and Life Orientation educational resources for IEB educators and students. The team of passionate, talented experts behind the English Experience works tirelessly to ensure that every resource encourages insight, growth and debate — enriching and challenging both educators and students — without losing sight of the important goals of academic success and examination readiness.

Focused on bringing the subject to life, every resource the English Experience publishes incorporates a range of features — including content and contextual questions and stimulating enrichment materials — designed to encourage a critical appreciation of the subject and to inspire the higher-order thinking for which examiners are always looking.

The world-class English Experience team includes highly experienced educators, some with over 20 years of classroom experience, passionate literary experts in various fields, such as historical fiction, poetry and Shakespeare, fanatical historians and researchers, creative writers, skilled editors, pernickety proof-readers and obsessive fact-checkers — together with spirited university lecturers and enthusiastic young minds who help to ensure our approach remains unique and fresh.

While academic success is a non-negotiable consideration, our aspiration is to inspire a genuine interest in, and love of, English literature.



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Our approach

Perhaps the toughest challenge with teaching literature to modern students is convincing them that the extra effort required in reading a novel — compared with the passive immediacy of movies and TV shows — is worth it. Decoding the language and bringing the text to life in the imagination can be taxing for young adults so it is perhaps not surprising that many of them see novels as works through which they must slog to earn marks or pass an examination.

This resource has been written with this reality in mind. Even though the language, themes and settings of the novel are likely to be easily accessible to Grade 12 students, particular attention has been paid to providing the kind of context and insight necessary to help them empathise fully with the characters and their struggles.

We passionately believe that studying literature rewards us with a broader, deeper understanding of ourselves and those around us. Our experience of this rewarding understanding is why this resource does more than provide students with a comprehensive, detailed analysis of the text. It also encourages them to engage with the novel on a personal level and to develop their own responses through the extensive chapter-specific questions, enrichment tasks and essay topics.



Reading a written description of a person, event or place encourages us to use our imaginations as we picture everything in our minds, which is unlike watching a movie or TV show that creates these images for us on the screen. When we read, we are only limited by what we can imagine.

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Throughout this resource, students are challenged to agree or disagree with both the characters and events in the novel and the analysis that has been suggested. By formulating and expressing their own responses to the opinions, ideas and themes explored in the novel, students are encouraged to reflect and grow as individuals, as well as learners.

Ultimately, we have approached *Brave New World* the same way we approach every text — with two interrelated goals in mind. Our first, non-negotiable objective is to ensure examination readiness and academic success. Our second ambition is to inspire a genuine interest in, and appreciation of, the work being studied.



Using this resource

This comprehensive resource includes: an extensive introduction to the author, the novel and its context; detailed summaries; rich literary analyses; diverse, chapter-specific short questions; challenging essay questions; and stimulating enrichment tasks — in short, everything needed to study the novel intensively and bring it to life.

Preparing with the right mindset

We recommend working through the **Background to the novel** section first so that students become familiar with the author and the context within which the novel was created. This section starts with an introduction to the author so that students can gain an understanding of the experiences that helped shaped his perspectives and inspired him to write the novel, together with his explanation of the issues he wished to explore and his interpretation of the novel.

Even though the novel is set in a distant dystopian future, Huxley was influenced by the times within which he lived. So a brief overview of the major historical events, intellectual currents and social movements that occurred during the early 20th century is provided to help students locate the work within its historical context.



Next, a succinct discussion of the literary movement (category) and genres into which the novel fits is provided to help students situate the novel within its literary context.

The **Introduction to the novel** completes the preparatory section of this resource. It provides students with an initial overview and appreciation of the plot, characters and themes of the work, before they engage with the text itself.

By working through this comprehensive introductory section first, students will be prepared, engaged and able to read the novel with the right mindset.

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Assimilating the novel methodically

Once students have been prepared and have read through the novel, the chapter-based summaries and analyses provided in the **Critical Commentary** section ensure that a solid foundation of knowledge is laid. Each chapter is summarised and analysed separately. Extensive glossaries are included, and students are required to engage with the content directly through chapter-specific questions.

Students can then methodically build on this foundation, only dealing with the whole novel once they have worked through it step by step.

At the end of the summaries, there is also a series of enrichment tasks that encourages students to assess (evaluate) the novel in its entirety.

Analysing the novel intensively

When students are familiar and comfortable with the novel, they can begin analysing the text more intensively and critically. The **Literary analysis** section includes detailed analyses of the plot, narration and structure, characters, themes, motifs and symbols in the work. It also highlights key quotations from the novel, with suggested interpretations.

Ensuring examination readiness and success

To ensure examination readiness and success, the resource also features an extensive section on the **Literary essay**. This section provides guidelines for writing literary essays, two annotated examples from which to learn, and a selection of essay topics that students may use to practise their essay-writing skills. It also includes suggestions on how to prepare for an examination.



What do you think?

We hope you enjoy using this resource as much as we enjoyed putting it together. If you have any comments, queries or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us by emailing info@englishexperience.co.za, calling our offices on (011) 786-6702 or scanning this QR code to launch our WhatsApp channel automatically.

Key to using the boxes in this resource:



Definition or Glossary

Provides the meanings of words and terms used in the text



Alert

Something to which you need to pay attention or of which you need to be aware



Checklist

A list of items or activities required to complete a task satisfactorily



Information

Provides additional details or facts about a topic



Quirky Fact

Fun, interesting, extraneous information



Quote

An interesting or important quotation from the novel

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Background to the novel

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Author background

In *Brave New World*, author Aldous Huxley has crafted a compelling dystopian vision that explores themes of technological control, dehumanisation, and how easily individuality may be sacrificed in exchange for stability, convenience and comfort. In this section, we present a short biography of the author, followed by a collection of his comments and reflections on the novel, including what inspired him to write it and the issues he wished to explore in the text.



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Author biography

Aldous Leonard Huxley was living on the French Riviera (Mediterranean coastline of southern France) near the city of Toulon when he wrote *Brave New World*. He had purchased a villa in the village of Sanary-sur-Mer in 1930 and moved there with his first wife, Maria, and their 11-year-old son, Matthew. By all accounts, 37-year-old Huxley was living an idyllic, simple life of picnics, trips to the beach and socialising with friends like Virginia Woolf, Cyril Connolly and Katherine Mansfield. Of life on the Cote d'Azur, Huxley wrote, '[h]ere, all is exquisitely lovely. Sun, roses, fruit, warmth. We bathe and bask'.

It was also a creative and productive time for Huxley. He was contracted to his publishers to produce at least two works a year, one of which needed to be a full-length novel, and he wrote *Brave New World* in four months, from May to August in 1931. The same year, he compiled an anthology of poetry with commentaries, titled *Texts and Pretexts*, and edited a collection of the letters of his dear friend and 'intellectual soul mate', the writer D.H. Lawrence, at whose bedside Huxley had been when Lawrence died of tuberculosis in March 1930.

The idylls of life on the French Riviera may seem at odds with the ominous tone and message of *Brave New World* but, like most of the European literati at the time, Huxley was alarmed by the meteoric rise to power of the Nazi Party in Germany, the growing popularity of its ideas about using eugenics to 'perfect' society (see page 128 for further discussion) and the increasing likelihood of another war. Indeed, within four years of writing *Brave New World*, Huxley had become a prominent member of the British peace movement and published three works promoting pacifism: the novel *Eyeless in Gaza*, the pamphlet *What Are You Going to Do About It?* and the essay *Ends and Means*. In all three of the works, he preached that wars would be eliminated if people focused on connecting to the spiritual nature of reality through such means as meditation and yoga. He remained a committed pacifist for the rest of his life and he was denied American citizenship in 1953 for refusing to agree to fight or 'bear arms' for the country.

Huxley's pacifism was most probably initially inspired by his experience of the First World War. He was a 20-year-old young man when the fighting broke out in Europe. It was a devastating conflict that claimed more than 10 million lives and those who survived were left traumatised in one way or another. The moment he graduated from university in 1916, Huxley tried to enlist but was deemed physically unfit for combat and had to content himself with working on a farm producing supplies for the army. A year later, he found temporary work as a teacher at his old school, Eton College. He disliked teaching, though, and left for London as soon as the war ended in 1918, securing employment as a journalist and critic. It is interesting to note that one of his former students at Eton was Eric Blair, who later adopted the pen name George Orwell and wrote *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm*.



© Aldous Huxley Centre Zurich

Early tragedies

Three tragedies shaped Huxley's early life. The first was the sudden death of his mother when he was 14 years old. He had been extremely close to her and was devastated when she died. The second tragedy occurred a little over two years later when an eye infection (keratitis) left him almost completely blind for nearly two years. Recuperating at home, 17-year-old Huxley taught himself to read Braille, to touch-type, and to play the piano. Unfortunately, he only ever recovered 25 per cent of his vision in one eye and spent the rest of his life experimenting with alternative therapies and surgery to improve his sight. Huxley had wanted to forge a career in medicine or science, but his damaged sight made such aspirations impractical and so he turned to writing instead. By using a combination of drops to dilate his pupils, strong glasses and a large magnifying glass, Huxley was able to read, and he won a scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford, to read English language and literature in 1913. The third tragedy was the suicide of his elder brother, Noel Trevenen Huxley, a year later. Huxley's brother had looked after Huxley while he recuperated from his eye infection, acting as his younger brother's tutor and protector. He had also taken on postgraduate work in order to remain at Oxford University and help Huxley when his younger brother enrolled at Balliol College.

Oxford university

Even though Huxley's time at Oxford university was overshadowed by his brother's suicide and the outbreak of World War One, it was a formative time for him. By all accounts, he made a great many friends, and his room became a hub of activity and socialising, with others drawn to him for his intellectual brilliance, unusual tastes and ability to play early jazz novelties on his piano. He also met Lady Ottoline Morrell, who invited him to join a group of prominent and promising literary figures she was hosting at her residence during the war. The group included luminaries such as D. H. Lawrence, Bertrand Russell, Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, and T. S. Eliot, and many of them became lifelong friends of Huxley's.

An unconventional marriage

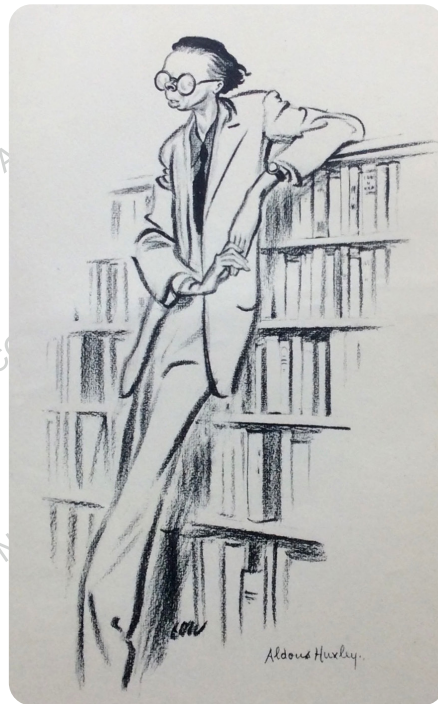
While he was staying with Lady Morrell, Huxley also met and fell in love with a Belgian refugee, Maria Nys (pictured below right), whom he married in 1919. He found employment working for a literary magazine, *The Athenæum*, and so the newlyweds moved to London. Their son, Matthew, was born a year later. For the next three years, Huxley worked as a freelance journalist, while continuing to write collections of poetry and short stories in his spare time. In 1921, he also wrote and published his first novel, *Crome Yellow* (pictured left). By 1923, his work had received enough critical acclaim for his publishers to offer him the first of what would become five three-year contracts.

According to Huxley's biographer, Nicholas Murray, Huxley and Nys had an open relationship. He suggests they were devoted to each other, but both engaged in affairs throughout their 35 years together. Their marriage only ended when Nys died in 1955, which a distraught Huxley compared to an 'amputation'. Huxley's first affair had nearly ended their relationship because he had become deeply unhappy and disorientated by the experience, but Nys intervened and helped him make up his mind by announcing one night that she was leaving England for Italy the next morning, with or without him. He helped her pack up their house and they caught the first train leaving England the next day. Huxley spent the next two months writing a novel about the affair, *Antic Hay*, and once he had finished the work, Nys reported that 'it was all out; it was over'.

In the decades that followed, Nys was tolerant of Huxley's affairs and even helped arrange for him to 'go to dinner and bed' with women in whom he was interested. She also engaged in affairs of her own, and both of them even had an affair with the same woman at one point. This particular arrangement lasted for several years, with Huxley and Nys arranging for one another to spend time



Huxley was an unusually tall boy, and his childhood nickname was 'Ogie', a substitute for 'Ogre'. As an adult, he was six feet four and a half inches tall (1.94 m) and his friend, the writer Virginia Woolf, reportedly described him as 'infinitely long' and as 'that gigantic grasshopper'.



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Maria Nys Huxley in October 1934.

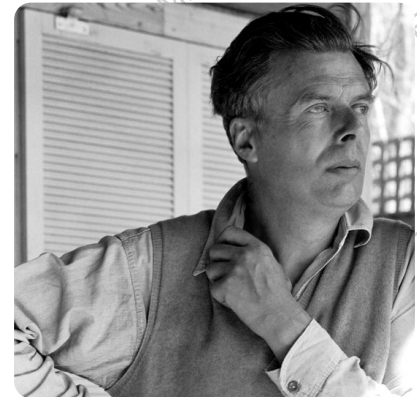
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alone with the woman. In spite of these romantic liaisons, Huxley and Nys were devoted to one another. She was his best-loved companion. Her unconventional reactions and opinions amused and amazed him. She not only ran their household, but also functioned as his secretary, typist and chauffeur. She also protected him from the 'swarms of bores, pests, and ridiculous disciples' who were attracted to him as his fame grew.

America and the cultural elite

With the situation steadily worsening in Europe and the prospect of another war looking ever more probable, Huxley and Nys decided to take an extended trip to the United States of America. Shortly after they arrived in Los Angeles in 1938, they decided to settle there permanently. They enjoyed life in California and soon became part of the cultural elite, regularly socialising with actors like Greta Garbo, Helen Hayes, Charlie Chaplin and Orson Welles, writers like Christopher Isherwood, Anita Loos and Thomas Mann, and prominent scientists like Edwin Hubble. A year later, Huxley published, *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*, a novel dissecting the morality and vanities of wealth. It would be his last novel for five years because he found it 'too difficult to write fiction during a war'. He began writing screenplays for the movie industry instead, adapting works such as *Pride and Prejudice*, *Jane Eyre* and *Alice in Wonderland* for the screen. It was lucrative work, and Huxley was able to send much of his salary to his and Nys' families in war-torn Europe.



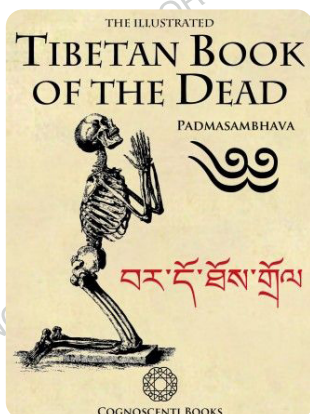
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Spirituality and psychedelics

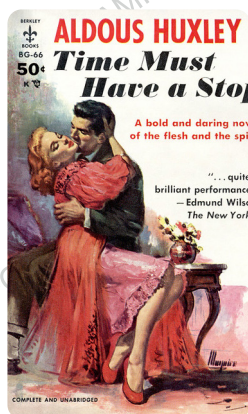
Huxley returned to writing literature full-time after World War II ended in 1945, but with a notable shift in his interest and subjects. He was less interested in writing about society and the external, social world and now focused on the spiritual and inner world of the individual. Critics have suggested that this shift reflected the impact of the war and how it had all but destroyed the social world about which he had written previously. It was the start of a period of studying and experimenting for Huxley. He studied Hinduism first with Swami Prabhavananda and later with Jiddu Krishnamurti. His reading of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* led to his novel, *Time Must Have a Stop*, which he claimed as his personal favourite and in which he argued that 'the only hope for the world of time lies in being constantly drenched by that which lies beyond time'. Shortly afterwards, he published *The Perennial Philosophy*, a guide to help readers find meaning in life.

Huxley also began experimenting with practices such as hypnosis, which he described in his 1950 book, *Themes and Variations*, scientology, animal magnetism, ESP, telekinesis, psychic prediction, séances, and chemically induced mysticism. In 1953, Huxley invited a young doctor who was researching the effects of the psychedelic drug mescaline to experiment on him. He was convinced that the drug had transported him into a higher spiritual state and wrote about his experience in *The Doors of Perception*, taking his title from the poem "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" by William Blake. In 1956, Huxley followed this book with *Heaven and Hell*, another work based on his experiences with psychedelic drugs. He proceeded to experiment with psychedelic drugs until the day he died, requesting (and receiving) a large dose of LSD an hour or so before his death.

Despite his focus on the spiritual and inner world, Huxley maintained his interest in new scientific ideas and technological advances. A good friend observed how he was quick to question 'any statement about scientific and technological "progress" that omitted to take into account its effect on the quality of human life'. He also chose to re-examine the ideas he presented in his most famous novel by writing *Brave New World Revisited* in 1958. In the extended essay, Huxley warns that the nightmarish 'prophecies [he] made in 1931 are coming true much sooner than [he] thought they would'. Notably, he also returns to the idea of how to construct a utopian society in his final novel, *Island*, published in 1962. In this work, Huxley describes his version of an authentic utopia (presumably, the 'sane' alternative between the World State and the Savage Reservation he does not offer John in *Brave New World*) and on the island, technology is used only when it directly and demonstrably improves the lives of the people.



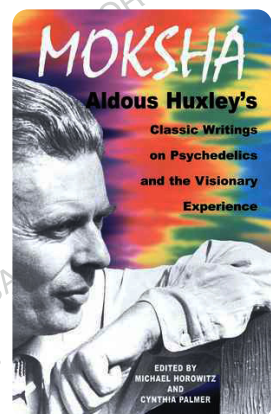
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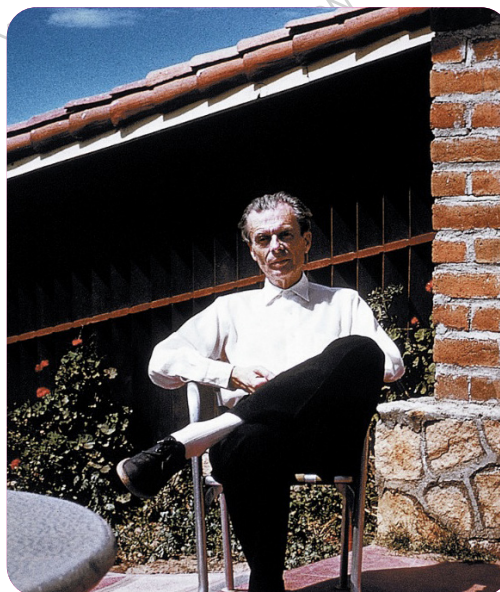


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'The world's fundamental All-Rightness'

Huxley died a year after *Island* was published, on Friday 22 November 1963. In spite of his failing health and battles with cancer throughout his later years, Huxley continued to work. As well as finishing *Island*, he enjoyed visiting college campuses around the country to lecture on topics like religion, human nature, language and nationalism. He wrote a short, optimistic book titled *Literature and Science* and, in his last weeks of life, he was determined to complete an essay that he had promised to write on *Shakespeare and Religion*, finishing it the day before he died.

He appears to have been content and happy at the end of his life; for example, accepting the loss of his personal library, which included his manuscripts and notes, and his and Nys's letters and diaries, without complaint when his house was destroyed by fire in 1961. At the time, he suggested to a good friend, 'I am evidently intended to learn, a little in advance of the final denudation, that you can't take it with you'. It is a sentiment echoed in one of the last pieces of correspondence he wrote before he died: 'I have known that sense of affectionate solidarity with the people around me and the Universe at large—also the sense of the world's fundamental All-Rightness, in spite of pain, death, and bereavement.'



© Rancho La Puerta

'The world is an illusion, but it is an illusion that we must take seriously, because it is as real as it goes[.] Our business is to wake up.'

Author quotes: The author in his own words

What are Aldous Huxley's perspectives on the issues raised in *Brave New World*? What did he hope to convey through the work? This section consists of a selection of quotes from interviews with the author and extracts from related writings, such as his foreword to the 1946 edition of the novel and his 1958 non-fiction follow up, *Brave New World Revisited*, in which he compares the predictions he made in his original work to contemporary developments.

On writing:

'Writers write to influence their readers, their preachers, their auditors, but always, at bottom, to be more themselves.' — *Texts and Pretexs*

'And as the young man still looked rather disappointed, I volunteered a final piece of advice, gratuitously. "My young friend," I said, "if you want to be a psychological novelist and write about human beings, the best thing you can do is to keep a pair of cats." And with that I left



© Getty Images

him. I hope, for his own sake, that he took my advice.' — *Collected Essays*

'Thanks to language and culture, human behaviour can be incomparably more intelligent, more original, creative and flexible than the behaviour of animals, whose brains are too small to accommodate the number of neurons necessary for the invention of language and the transmission of accumulated knowledge. But, thanks again to language and culture, human beings often behave with a stupidity, a lack of realism, a total inappropriateness, of which animals are incapable. — *Moksha: Aldous Huxley's Classic Writings on Psychedelics and the Visionary Experience*

'Every man with a little leisure and enough money for railway tickets, every man, indeed, who knows how to read, has it in his power to magnify himself, to multiply the ways in which he exists, to make his life full, significant and interesting.' — *Jesting Pilate*

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On Brave New World:

'[Brave New World's] defects as a work of art are considerable; but in order to correct them I should have to rewrite the book – and in the process of rewriting, as an older, other person, I should probably get rid not only of some of the faults of the story, but also of such merits as it originally possessed.' (Foreword, pp. xxiii-xxiv)

'[T]he most serious defect in the story[.] The Savage is offered only two alternatives, an insane life in Utopia, or the life of a primitive in an Indian village, a life more human in some respects, but in others hardly less queer and abnormal.' (Foreword, p. xxiv)

'If I were now to rewrite the book, I would offer the Savage a third alternative. Between the utopian and the primitive horns of his dilemma would lie the possibility of sanity – a possibility already actualized, to some extent, in a community of exiles and refugees from the [World State], living within the borders of the Reservation. In this community economics [and politics] would be decentralis[ed, local, communal] and co-operative. Science and technology would be used as though, like the Sabbath, they had been made for man, not [...] as though man were to be adapted and enslaved to them. Religion would be the conscious and intelligent pursuit of man's Final End, the unitive knowledge of the [supreme spiritual truth]. And the prevailing philosophy of life would be a kind of High Utilitarianism, in which the Greatest Happiness principle would be secondary to the Final End principle [i.e. spiritual truth would be valued more highly than happiness].' (Foreword, p. xxv)



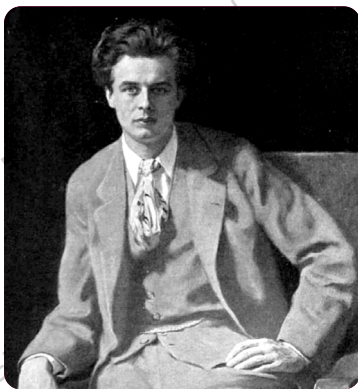
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On the future:

'The most distressing thing that can happen to a prophet is to be proved wrong; the next most distressing thing is to be proved right.' — Moksha: Aldous Huxley's Classic Writings on Psychedelics and the Visionary Experience

The future is the present projected. Our notions of the future have something of that significance which Freud attributes to our dreams. And not our notions of the future only: our notions of the past as well. For if prophecy is an expression of our contemporary fears and wishes, so too, to a very great extent, is history.' — Brave New World at 75

'The most important Manhattan Projects' of the future will be vast government-sponsored enquiries into what the politicians and the participating scientists will call "the problem of happiness" — in other words, the problem of making people love their servitude.' (Foreword, p.xxx)



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'All things considered it looks as though Utopia were far closer to us than anyone, only fifteen years ago, could have imagined. Then, I projected it six hundred years into the future. Today it seems quite possible that the horror may be upon us within a single century.' (Foreword, p.xxxii)

'There will be, in the next generation or so, a pharmacological method of making people love their servitude, and producing dictatorship without tears, so to speak, producing a kind of painless concentration camp for entire societies, so that people will in fact have their liberties taken away from them, but will rather enjoy it, because they will be distracted from any desire to rebel by propaganda or brainwashing, or brainwashing enhanced by pharmacological methods. And this seems to be the final revolution.' — Aldous Huxley, Travistock Group, California Medical School, 1961

'Technically and ideologically we are still a long way from bottled babies and Bokanovsky groups of semimorons. But by A.F. 600, who knows what may not be happening?' (Foreword, p.xxxi)

On totalitarianism:

'A really efficient totalitarian state would be one in which the all-powerful executive of political bosses and their army of managers control a population of slaves who do not have to be coerced, because they love their servitude.' (Foreword, p.xxix)

'As political and economic freedom diminishes, sexual freedom tends compensatingly to increase. And the dictator [...] will do well to encourage that freedom. In conjunction with the freedom to daydream under the influence of dope and movies and [music], it will help to reconcile his subjects to the servitude which is their fate.' (Foreword, p.xxxi)

'Given a fair chance, human beings can govern themselves, and govern themselves better.' — Brave New World Revisited

'Most kings and priests have been despotic, and all religions have been riddled with superstition.' — Brave New World Revisited

The Manhattan Project was an American-led research and development programme undertaken during World War II to produce the first nuclear weapons.

On science and technology:

'The theme of *Brave New World* is not the advancement of science as such; it is the advancement of science as it affects human individuals.' (Foreword, p. xxvi)

'[Technology could] iron [humans] into a kind of uniformity, if you were able to manipulate their genetic background [...] if you had a government unscrupulous enough you could do these things without any doubt. [...] We are getting more and more into a position where these things can be achieved. And it's extremely important to realise this, and to take every possible precaution to see they shall not be achieved. This, I take it, was the message of the book: This is possible: for heaven's sake be careful about it.' — extracted from an interview given at the University of California, Berkeley in 1962.

'[S]cience has 'explained' nothing [...] the more we know, the more fantastic the world becomes and the profounder the surrounding darkness' — *Along the Road: Notes and Essays of a Tourist*

'Technological progress has merely provided us with more efficient means for going backwards.' — *Ends and Means*

'People will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think.' — *Ends and Means*

'A human being in a highly technicised productive unit is simply not allowed to be spontaneous. It just interferes with the plan laid down in advance by the engineers and technicians who decide how he should work, and in this way he, the human being, is profoundly diminished, because he is not permitted to be spontaneous.' — *Moksha: Aldous Huxley's Classic Writings on Psychedelics and the Visionary Experience*

On propaganda and distraction

'[I]n the life of civilized human beings massed entertainment now plays a part comparable to that played in the Middle Ages by religion.' — *Brave New World Revisited*

'The effectiveness of political and religious propaganda depends upon the methods employed, not upon the doctrines taught. These doctrines may be true or false, wholesome or pernicious—it makes little or no difference.' — *Brave New World Revisited*

'In regard to propaganda, the early advocates of universal literacy and a free press envisaged only two possibilities: that propaganda might be true, or it might be false. They did not foresee what in fact has happened, above all, in our Western capitalist democracies—the development of a vast mass communications industry, concerned in the main neither with the true nor the false, but with the unreal, the more or less totally irrelevant. In a word, they failed to take into account man's almost infinite appetite for distraction.' — *Brave New World Revisited*

'The survival of democracy depends on the ability of large numbers of people to make realistic choices in the light of adequate information.' — *Brave New World Revisited*

'Life is short and information endless: nobody has time for everything.' — *Brave New World Revisited*

On being human:

'The really hopeless victims of mental illness are to be found among those who appear to be most normal. They are normal not in what may be called the absolute sense of the word; they are normal only in relation to a profoundly abnormal society. Their perfect adjustment to that abnormal society is a measure of their mental sickness. These millions of abnormally normal people, living without fuss in a society to which, if they were fully human beings, they ought not to be adjusted.' — *Brave New World Revisited*

'Assembled in a crowd, people lose their powers of reasoning and their capacity for moral choice.' — *Brave New World Revisited*

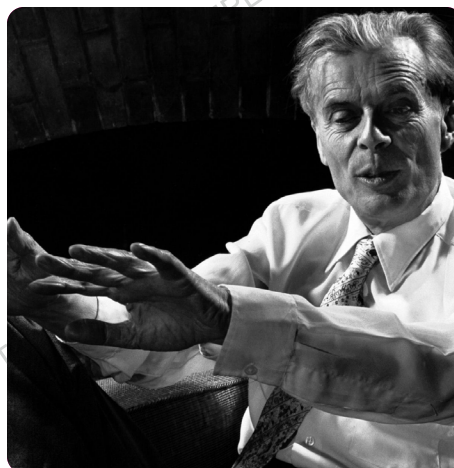
'In the course of evolution, nature has gone to endless trouble to see that every individual is unlike every other individual [...] Physically and mentally, each one of us is unique. Any culture which, in the interests of efficiency or in the name of some political or religious dogma, seeks to standardise the human individual, commits an outrage against man's biological nature.' — *Brave New World Revisited*



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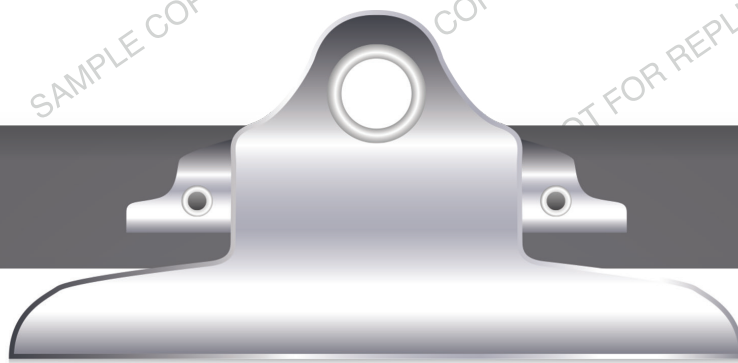
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Introduction to the novel



Fast facts

A quick reference guide to the key details of Brave New World.

Title:	Brave New World
Author:	Aldous Huxley
Date published:	1932
Genre:	Speculative fiction/science fiction/satire
Narrative style and structure:	Third-person (omniscient), linear (chronological)
Setting:	'AF 632' (2540 CE). City of London (and surrounds) in the World State, and a Savage Reservation in New Mexico
Protagonist:	John (the Savage)
Antagonist:	Mustapha Mond (i.e. the World State)
Key themes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science and Technology (dehumanisation, eugenics, genetic engineering, hypnopaedia, soma, and the replacement of religion and art with the worship of science and technological distractions) Totalitarianism (control, conditioning, propaganda, censorship, the caste system and consumerism) Individuality (liberty, free will, happiness, family, sex, art, and religion/spirituality)
Symbols:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soma Feelies Henry Ford (and the Model T) Hatchery and Conditioning Centre Zippers Whips Bottles Malthusian belt
Motifs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caste system Shakespeare Promiscuity 'Pneumatic'

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Synopsis

What is the main message of *Brave New World* and how is it communicated? This synopsis offers an overview of the novel, including its setting, central conflict and plot, which is designed to introduce the structure, narrative arc, characters and themes being used to present its message.

Overview

Published in 1932, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* is a work of speculative science fiction that describes a future dystopian society in which a global government, known as the World State, has combined advanced science and technology with a rigid caste system to control all aspects of human life. The World State maintains control over its citizens through genetic engineering, psychological conditioning, and a distracting culture of consumerism and instant gratification. Thus the novel presents a critique of totalitarianism, the loss of individuality and the dangers of unchecked technological control. It raises profound questions about what it means to be human in an age of mechanisation and social engineering. The narrative is structured around the conflict between this meticulously controlled society and the characters who question or resist its values.

Setting

Set in the year 632 A.F. (After Ford) or 2540 CE, the novel describes how society has solved the inefficiency and disruption associated with labour shortages and surpluses by artificially mass-producing humans, who are conditioned to fit into predetermined social and economic castes. These castes range from the elite, highly intelligent Alphas, designed for leadership roles, to the deliberately stunted Epsilons, who are designed for menial labour. The citizens of the World State are conditioned from birth to accept their roles and to find happiness through mindless consumption, distracting pleasure, and passive conformity.

Central conflict

The central conflict of the novel arises from the experiences of two of the main characters: Bernard Marx, an Alpha Plus who feels alienated from the superficial society around him, and John, a man who feels alienated from both the Savage Reservation in which he was born and the unnatural, emotionless world of the World State. The narrative arc of the novel is driven by their individual struggles against the oppressive societal norms they encounter.

Plot

The World State controls every aspect of life through genetic engineering, psychological conditioning, and a rigid caste system. People are mass-produced in Hatcheries, designed for specific societal roles, and conditioned from birth to accept their place. The population is kept docile with the drug soma, shallow entertainment, and casual sex, while individuality, family, religion, and emotional depth are suppressed.



Bernard Marx, an Alpha who feels alienated from this society, visits a Savage Reservation outside the World State with Lenina Crowne, where they meet John, the son of a World State woman, Linda, who was abandoned there. Bernard brings John and Linda back to London in the World State, where John becomes a sensation, but soon grows disillusioned with the artificiality of its society. John, raised on Shakespeare's works, struggles with the clash between his values and the shallow culture of the World State.

John's grief over his mother's death, disgust with the superficial, hedonistic values of the World State, and conflict about his monogamous love for Lenina culminates in his incitement of a riot and to a confrontation with



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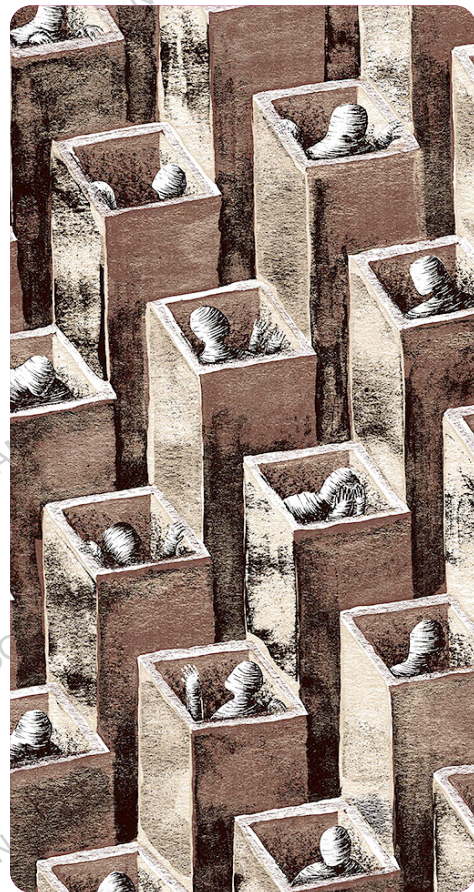
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Mustapha Mond, one of the World Controllers. They debate the World State and Mond defends the suppression of art, religion, and individuality in favour of stability and superficial happiness.

John rejects Mond's arguments, longing for the freedom to experience life in all its complexity, including suffering and pain. He isolates himself in a lighthouse, attempting to live a life of self-discipline and purity. He is hounded by curious citizens of the World State, however, who view his self-imposed exile and asceticism as another form of entertainment. In a final, tragic act of despair, John takes his own life, unable to reconcile the conflict between his ideals and the world around him.

Conclusion

Brave New World is a powerful exploration of how the trends in (1) industrialisation, (2) scientific and technological advancement, and (3) ever more shallow forms of entertainment, which had begun when Huxley was writing the novel 100 years ago, could lead to a future society in which individuality and freedom have been sacrificed for the sake of 'progress' and stability. Through the experiences of Bernard, John, and others, Huxley critiques the dangers of totalitarianism, the dehumanising effects of scientific and technological progress, and the possible consequences of a society deciding to prioritise comfort and convenience over the complexities of the full human experience. The narrative arc of the work, from Bernard's dissatisfaction with the World State to John's tragic end, explores the conflict that will arise when the demands of an increasingly conformist society inevitably restrict the innate human desire for personal freedom and meaning.



© Ralph Zabel

Major characters

Who are the people in *Brave New World*? This section offers a brief introduction to the major characters in the novel (presented in order of appearance). For in-depth descriptions of the main and supporting characters, refer to the **Character analysis** section on page 100 of this resource.

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The Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning (DHC) for Central London is the head of the Central Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, where many of the characters work and much of the narrative takes place. Through the tour he gives a group of newly arrived students, the reader is introduced to the facility and the fundamentals of the futuristic society of the World State. It is the director's accident while visiting the Savage Reservation years earlier that provides the impetus for the second half of the novel.

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Henry Foster is one of Lenina's boyfriends and accompanies the director on the student tour of the Hatchery in the first section of the novel. Henry is the model conditioned citizen and serves as a foil or counterpoint to Bernard Marx.

© Joe Average (DFA)



Lenina Crowne also works in the Hatchery and accompanies Bernard to the Savage Reservation in New Mexico. Her beauty attracts John, and she becomes the object of his romantic and possessive love. As John's love interest, she serves as the bridge between 'civilized' and 'savage' society. She feels a strong attraction to John and is confused by what appears to be a growing preference for monogamy. She is unable to abandon the promiscuous dictates of her conditioning, however, which serves as the catalyst for the inner conflict experience by John during his time in the World State.

© Adron Dozat



Mustapha Mond is one of 10 World Controllers, and his sphere of influence includes England. His position as one of the major defenders of conditioned society is complicated by his understanding of the sacrifice necessary for such a strict society. His secret stash of forbidden religious and literary texts, for instance, and his personal history as a young man faced with exile or the renunciation of his pursuit of scientific knowledge, demonstrate that individual awareness has not been eradicated in the 'civilized' World State but merely suppressed.

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Bernard Marx is an example of unsuccessful, or incomplete, conditioning. Perhaps due to an accident of his conditioning while he was still 'bottled', Bernard is noticeable shorter and thinner than his fellow Alpha Plus males. His physical imperfection makes him stand out and this unwanted individuality makes him feel insecure and miserable. Bernard feels like an outsider and rejected by his peers and so attempts to bolster his pride and self-respect by putting on a display of unorthodoxy and dissent. He chooses to be contemptuous of the way his fellow citizens engage in superficial activities and numb themselves with soma and he complains about the lack of individuality and freedom available in the World State. Bernard is responsible for bringing John and Linda to London and is ultimately exiled for his tendency to criticise the state and the potential threat he poses to the stability of conditioned society.



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Fanny Crowne also works in the Hatchery and is Lenina's friend. Like Henry, Fanny is a model citizen and cannot contemplate behaving against her conditioning; for example, she serves as a warning voice when her friend expresses a desire for monogamy, first with Henry and, later, with John. When Lenina considers the strange passion she feels for John, Fanny simply counsels her to date him and sleep with him, and she dismisses Lenina's surprising depression as merely a sign that she needs a Violent Passion Surrogate (adrenal purge).



© Adron Dozat

Helmholtz Watson is Bernard's friend. He has an abnormally elevated level of intelligence, which makes him feel like an outsider in society. He writes propaganda for several state-sanctioned publications but yearns to write something more meaningful and passionate. He and John connect immediately and become friends. Helmholtz is enthralled by the writing of Shakespeare, which John reveals to him. Like Bernard, Helmholtz is ultimately exiled by Mond to the Falkland Islands, where he can pose no threat to the stability of conditioned society. In contrast to Bernard, though, Helmholtz looks forward to his exile as an opportunity to escape the limited society of the World State and to enjoy the freedom to explore his individuality through writing.



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John (the Savage) is the son of Linda and the director, born on the Savage Reservation. He presents a unique problem, as he is the son (in itself, an abomination) of a conditioned woman who tries to condition him as best she can without the technology of the World State, but he is raised in an unconditioned society. As a result, he is unable to identify with or 'fit in' to either world. He is rejected by the people of the Reservation because of his strange complexion, mannerisms and ideas, and he is viewed as sideshow entertainment, both fascinating and foreign, by the citizens of the World State. The passionate and monogamous attachments he forms towards his mother and Lenina highlight his loneliness and alienation. His lack of place and belonging and, therefore, heightened sense of individuality is one of the major themes of the novel.



© Anna Arty

Linda is the Beta Minus who accompanies the director to the Savage Reservation decades before the time frame of the novel. She is lost during a storm and is left in New Mexico, where she spends the next 25 years. She is pregnant at the time of her accident and, without the availability of the abortion centres of the World State, is forced to give birth viviparously (naturally) to John, the son of the director. Linda is a tragic figure. She never fully adjusts to 'uncivilized' life in the Reservation and is rejected by the people there for being too different. Similarly, her natural, but worn-out body and appearance leads to her being rejected by the citizens of the World State when she returns to London. Alienated by society and haunted by the pain and trauma of her past life on the Reservation, Linda falls into a deep dependency on soma to the extent that it functions as a form of euthanasia.

Settings

Setting plays a significant role in *Brave New World*. Three distinct settings* are used in the novel: the City of London in the World State, the Savage Reservation in New Mexico, and the abandoned lighthouse to which John the Savage retreats in the English countryside. These settings would appear to offer a stark choice between civilised sterility and primitive shabbiness. Indeed, so sharp is the contrast between the sanitised submissiveness of the City of London and the grimy wildness of the Savage Reservation that the settings act as foils to each other. Yet scholars have also noted how the two settings mirror each other; for example, history is as irrelevant to the inhabitants of the Savage Reservation as it is to the citizens of the World State. In addition, both societies are morally coercive and even the debasing violence of the fertility ritual in Malpais finds its attenuated counterpart in the repressed violence of the communal orgies of London. In the Foreword to the 1946 edition of the novel, Huxley describes both societies as 'queer and abnormal' and suggests that the European city offers a life of 'insanity', and the Indian village offers one of 'lunacy'.



© Philippe Ramette

The City of London

The greater part of the novel is set in the City of London in 2540 CE. The setting is designed to be plausible and a parody of modern Western society since Huxley was being critical of the way he perceived governments were intruding into people's private lives to enforce communal or socialist values. Huxley uses descriptions of the city to illustrate how sterile it is, emotionally and spiritually, as well as physically. The 'squat, grey' (p.1) Hatchery, for instance, in which 'frozen, dead' (p.1) light illuminates 'pale corpse-coloured' (p.1) workers in the Fertilizing Room as they create new life, functions as an extremely ironic symbol of the controlling and structured nature of the dystopian society. Similarly ironic are the 'bright and sunny' (p.15) Infant Nurseries in which terror and pain are used to strip any budding love of learning or nature from babies. For all of its technological marvels and extravagant distractions, the City of London is evidently a dystopian setting, disguised only by the conditioned ignorance of its citizens, who are subjected to relentless dehumanising conformity and alienating superficial entertainments.



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The Savage Reservation

The primitive society on the Reservation is far from glamorous. Huxley ironically names it 'Malpais', using the French words 'mal' (bad or evil) and 'pays' (country or place). It is where 'savages' or 'uncivilised' humans live. Even though the people in the Savage Reservation are portrayed as cruel and primitive, their values — such as the importance of freedom and personal agency, individuality, religious practices and rituals, parenting and family, personal connections and emotional bonds — actually resemble those of contemporary society more closely than those of the World State. Thus the Savage Reservation serves as a foil to the World State, emphasising the differences between natural, uncontrolled human existence and artificial, regulated societal order.

Through its traditional practices, natural landscapes, and lack of technological control, the Savage Reservation emphasises the sacrifice of individuality, authentic experiences, and emotional depth required by the World State. It may be an equally unattractive alternative, but for characters like John, the Reservation represents a place in which true meaning and significance can be found through the complexity of real human emotion and connection.



'There is no escape from a Savage Reservation. [...] Those [...] who are born in the Reservation are destined to die there.' (p.88)



© Isaac Spellman (Cup Publishing)



'The dirt, to start with, the piles of rubbish, the dust, the dogs, the flies. Her face wrinkled up into a grimace of disgust.' (p.94)

The abandoned lighthouse

Located in the countryside, far from the bustling City of London, the abandoned lighthouse is John's 'hermitage' (p.215) or site of spiritual retreat. Disillusioned with the superficial and dehumanising society of the World State, John chooses to exile himself to the lighthouse in an attempt to live a life of purity, solitude, and self-discipline. Its rural location symbolises his desire to return to simpler, more natural ways of living. Ironically, even though it has been abandoned, the building is so well made, using modern materials, that it is 'in excellent condition [and] almost too comfortable' (p.215). Used to guide ships safely through dangerous waters and rocky shores, a lighthouse is also a symbol of hope, guidance and direction. So it initially seems to be a fitting place for John to seek refuge and to find his direction in life. It becomes an ironic symbol though when it becomes the stage for the final tragic act of John's story.



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** It should be noted that the possibility of living in another setting is mentioned: the islands of exile, such as Iceland and the Falkland Islands, where malcontents like Bernard and Helmholtz are sent, but Huxley does not provide enough detail about these places to determine whether they offer an alternative to the grim lives depicted elsewhere in the novel.*

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Timeline of events

The following occurrences are offered as a brief overview of the significant events or 'plot points' that occur in Brave New World.

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1. Introduction

- Tour of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre (chapters 1 to 3)
- Physical conditioning is explained (chapter 1)
- Psychological conditioning is explained (chapter 2)
- History of World State is explained by Mond (chapter 3)
- Lenina agrees to vacation with Bernard (chapter 4)
- Bernard and Helmholtz socialise (chapter 4)
- Henry and Lenina go on a date (chapter 5)
- Bernard attends a Solidarity Service (chapter 5)
- Bernard and Lenina start dating (chapter 6)

2. Vacation and Revelation

- Bernard and Lenina vacation at the Savage Reservation (chapters 6 and 7)
- Bernard meets John and Linda (chapter 7)
- John recounts his life story to Bernard (chapter 8)
- Bernard returns to London with John and Linda (chapter 9)

3. Life in London

- The director confronts Bernard (chapter 10)
- John experiences life in London (chapter 11)
- John refuses to attend Bernard's pretentious party (chapter 12)
- Helmholtz and John discuss Shakespeare (chapter 12)
- Lenina and John clash romantically (chapter 13)
- Linda dies (chapter 14)
- John starts a riot (chapter 15)

4. Judgement and Exile

- Bernard, Helmholtz and John meet with Mond (chapter 16)
- John and Mond debate (chapter 17)
- Exile (chapter 18)
 - Bernard and Helmholtz are sent into exile
 - John chooses self-exile in an abandoned lighthouse
 - John commits suicide

Themes

What are the main themes explored in *Brave New World*? This section offers a brief introduction to the major themes of the novel. For in-depth discussion and analysis of the main themes and symbols in the text, refer to the **Themes** section on page 113 of this resource.

Science and technology

In Huxley's own words, 'the theme of *Brave New World* [...] is the advancement of science as it affects human individuals' (*Foreword*, p.xxvi). In other words, he wanted his readers to consider the relationship between scientific and technological progress and the wellbeing and needs of humans. The dystopian vision presented in the novel suggests that he was particularly concerned with how science and technology could be misused to undermine individuality and freedom and could lead to the loss of the authentic human experience.



What science and technology can do

vs

What humans actually need and want

This theme is introduced at the very beginning of the novel through a detailed description of how advanced scientific and technological methods — such as eugenics and genetic engineering, and hypnopædia and other forms of classical and operant psychological conditioning — have been used to control and dehumanise the citizens of the World State from the time they are embryos.

From the perspective of this theme, the novel encourages readers to consider the implications of our ever-increasing dependency on technology.

Totalitarianism

Huxley has also stated it was never his intention to predict the future and that he simply wanted to write about the dictatorships that he believed would eventually come into being. In his opinion, members of the elite within any society naturally seek to take control and subjugate their fellow citizens because doing so allows them to secure their economic and social interests/advantages. What is original — and unnerving — about Huxley's envisioned dictatorship is the idea that it will use endless superficial pleasure and entertainment, including powerful drugs, casual sex and consumerism, to keep its citizens distracted, compliant and accepting of their slavery.

Happiness, comfort and peaceful stability

vs

Freedom, autonomy and agency



This theme is explored in the descriptions of how the World State has eliminated anything that threatens its stability and the status quo, including free thought and knowledge, parental and familial bonds, religion, diversity and individuality, and any form of exclusivity like monogamy and even solitude. It is the breadth of control the World State has achieved — over every aspect of the lives of its citizens — that makes it a truly totalitarian regime.

The theme of totalitarianism is embodied by Mustapha Mond, '[o]ne of the Ten World Controllers' (p.28) and so Huxley uses his debate with John in chapter 17 to highlight the logical and philosophical foundations of this system of government. Throughout their exchange, Mond expresses the view that the conflict and suffering that are part of freedom and individuality are worth sacrificing for the happiness, comfort and peaceful stability of the World State.

From the perspective of this theme, the novel invites readers to consider the subtle and insidious ways in which a totalitarian regime might manipulate us — not through fear, pain nor the use of brute force, but by satisfying our desires and distracting us to prevent dissent or critical thought.

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Chapter I (pp. 3–42)

Themes

Science and technology	Dehumanisation, alienation, genetic engineering.
Totalitarianism	Control, physical conditioning, caste system.

New characters

The director	Head of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre.
Henry Foster	Alpha. Scientist at the Hatchery.
Lenina Crowne	Beta*. Nurse at the Hatchery.

* Assumption, but highly probable.

Summary

The opening chapter describes the inner workings of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre. A group of newly arrived students is being given a tour of the facility by the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning. The students are shown each stage of the artificial, industrialised reproductive process used to mass-produce human beings. This process is the ‘scientific triumph’ (p.12) that makes the dystopian World State possible. The methods used to begin the conditioning of the beings for their ‘unescapable social destin[ies]’ (p.12) while they are still embryos is also outlined, and the caste system that is used to manage and maintain the entire process is described as well. Two of the people who work in the facility, Henry and Lenina, are also introduced. The chapter ends with the tour leaving the lower levels of the facility to visit the infant nurseries above.



abjectly: in a humble or servile manner (p.2)

bouillon: a clear soup, a broth (p.3)

burgeoned: grew, expanded rapidly (p.4)

callow: immature (p.2)

caste: a system of rigid social class structure sanctioned by custom, law, or religion (p.11)

conditioning: a process involving the formation, strengthening, or weakening of an association between a stimulus and a response (p.1)

decanted: poured out; transferred; unloaded as if by pouring (p.6)

deferential: showing respect (p.13)

excised: removed, cut out

freemartin: a female human intentionally made sterile in utero (in context) (p.10)

ingenuous: showing innocent or childlike simplicity (p.11)

interminable: seeming to have no end, long and drawn out (p.7)

largesse: liberal generosity extended to others in the form

of gifts or money (p.4)

pallid: lacking vitality and colour (p.1)

peritoneum: the membrane that lines the cavity of the abdomen of a mammal (p.6)

piddling: trivial (p.4)

postulated: assumed or claimed something to be true (p.12)

prodigious: extraordinary in bulk or quantity (p.4)

proliferate: to grow by rapid production of new parts, cells, buds, or offspring (p.3)

sententiously: in a manner that is excessively moralising or preachy (p.12)

soliloquizing: talking to oneself (p.2)

sultry: very hot and humid (p.8)

tremulous: characterised by nervousness and trembling (p.5)

vivacious: lively in temper, conduct, or spirit (p.6)

viviparous: producing living young instead of eggs (p.4)

zealous: marked by fervent support for or belief in a person, a cause, or an ideal (p.2)

Analysis

In this short first chapter, the theme of dehumanisation is introduced right away. The tone is detached, cold and impersonal, mirroring the clinical, scientific environment being described. It heightens the sense of unease created by the factual, emotionless presentation of the 'modern fertilising process' (p.3) and draws attention to the alienation and dehumanisation in the society being depicted. The imagery is industrial and mechanical, and the dialogue is filled with technical jargon and scientific details, further emphasising the lifelessness and lack of warmth and humanity in the process. The chapter is structured to reveal the horrifying nature of the World State gradually as the tour progresses through the Hatchery. The mood is also one of indifference and detachment, interspersed with moments of dark irony; for example, the enthusiasm of the explanations when contrasted with the horror of the actual processes being described. Like the overwhelmed students on the tour, readers are left disorientated and alienated as they confront the dreadfulness of the artificial, industrialised process.

Note: In the first two chapters of the novel, Huxley uses the tour to provide the exposition (background information) needed to explain the methods used to physically condition people in the dystopian world he has created.



'The principle of mass production at last applied to biology.' (p.5)



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Questions

1. What does the first sentence (line 1) suggest about the structure being described and the society that built it? (2)

2. What is the motto of the World State? (1)

3. What does the motto of the World State suggest about its priorities? (3)

4. How are people classified? (1)

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5. What is the Bokanovsky Process? How is it used to produce the various castes? (2)

6. How, at what speed and for what duration are the bottled embryos moved? (2)

7. Why are some females allowed a normal, sexual development? What percentage? (2)

8. What happened when the maturation process was shortened? (1)

9. How does the introduction of Henry Foster enhance the feeling of detachment and scientific objectivity? (2)

10. What does Lenina's reaction to the director's familiarity suggest about their relationship and interactions between men and women in the World State? (4)

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Literary analysis

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Introduction

Whenever you ‘consume’ or engage with a piece of media — such as a meme, social media post, song, advertisement, image, painting, film or novel — there are two questions you should ask: Why did someone choose to create this? and What do I think and feel about it? These two questions are the fundamental elements of any media analysis. We analyse a piece of media to gain a clearer, more thoughtful understanding of its message, together with a deeper awareness of ourselves through our response to its message. When it comes to analysing a complex construction like a novel, we assess what the author’s stylistic, structural, thematic and symbolic choices reveal about his or her intention and how these elements blend to shape meaning and influence us as readers. An awareness of these elements, and how they combine, helps us to interpret the text with more insight and appreciation. The information offered in this section is provided to help you examine *Brave New World* as a work of literature, and so includes brief discussions of plot, narration, structure, characters, themes and symbols, along with a selection of significant quotations from the text.



Why did Huxley write *Brave New World*?

The purpose of asking yourself this question is not to establish a definitive answer. Indeed, a definitive answer is extremely unlikely when it comes to a complex, nuanced piece of art like a novel, and even more so when one considers that humans are dynamic, mysterious beings who may not fully understand their reasons for creating something in the first place. Rather, the purpose of asking the question is twofold: firstly, because it is likely to yield a multitude of different answers, each of which will probably be useful and interesting in its own right, and, secondly, because it reminds us of our duty as readers to engage with the text in a conscious, active manner.



‘We live together, we act on, and react to, one another; but always and in all circumstances, we are by ourselves. The martyrs go hand in hand into the arena; they are crucified alone. Embraced, the lovers desperately try to fuse their insulated ecstasies into a single self-transcendence; in vain. By its very nature, every embodied spirit is doomed to suffer and enjoy in solitude. Sensations, feelings, insights, fancies — all these are private and, except through symbols and at second hand, incommunicable. We can pool information about experiences, but never the experiences themselves. From family to nation, every human group is a society of island universes.’

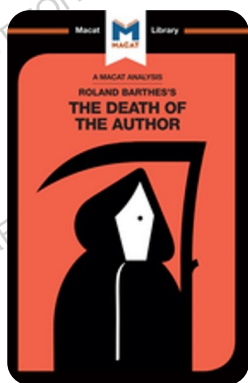
– Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*

Huxley himself once stated that he wrote *Brave New World* because he was concerned about how the incredible discoveries in science and technology could be misused by authoritarian leaders to enslave humans, and this may be a good place to start. Yet, on another occasion, he suggested that he had other things on his mind ‘besides the nightmarish future’. Like many of the European intellectuals of the early 20th century, he also famously deplored American culture, with its ‘vulgar thrills’ and ‘unrelenting consumerism’. He called Los Angeles, ‘the City of Dreadful Joy’. He read Henry Ford’s biography, *My Life and Work*, when he visited America for the first time in 1926 and so it is easy to imagine him envisioning the World State as a satire of the American way of life and the corporate statism he saw and later publicly criticised.

Ultimately, whatever motivation or motivations you believe to be most significant, remember that writing *Brave New World* was an intentional act. Huxley did not have to sit at his desk for four months writing it; he chose to do so. As you engage with his work, consider that Huxley had something he wanted to say, and he wrote the novel to communicate it.

What do you think and feel about *Brave New World*?

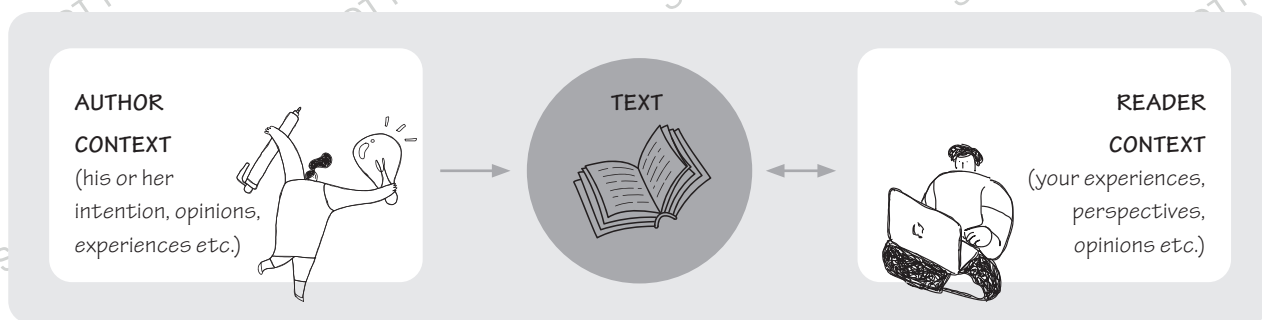
As noted, the purpose of analysing a work of literature is to recognise the stylistic and structural choices made by the author in order to clarify the message he or she wanted to communicate. The reason why we seek such clarity is to use it to establish what we think and feel about what the author intended to say.



This is perhaps the most important part of your analysis. Indeed, some literary critics, such as Roland Barthes in his famous essay, *The Death of the Author*, even argue that an individual reader's interpretation of a work is more important than any 'definitive' meaning intended by the author since that is to impose 'an unnecessary limit on the meaning' of the text.

In the end, a perspective that encompasses both the author — his or her context and intentions — and you as the reader — your experiences and perspectives — is no doubt the most balanced and useful, but the point is that your perspective matters.

This is especially true when it comes to the Grade 12 examination. You will achieve a reasonable mark if you show an awareness and appreciation of the author's choices and intentions, but the examiners will reward you amply for demonstrating that you have understood and thought about the issues raised by the material. You will earn marks for having formed your own opinions about the issues — provided these opinions are considered and can be substantiated with reference to the text, of course. In other words, if you are able to justify your opinions by referring to things that happen and/or that the characters do and say, the examiners will be delighted to reward you with marks as this is exactly the kind of response for which they are looking.



Summary

The following description is intended as a brief account of the significant events that occur in the novel. For more in-depth analysis and commentary, see the detailed summaries and analyses in the preceding Critical commentary section on page 42 of this resource.

The World State is introduced

Brave New World begins with the Director of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre giving a group of young students a tour of the facilities. An assembly line creates embryos using the latest advancements in science. The students view the various techniques for producing more babies and watch as the process segregates babies into various castes. After the babies are decanted from their bottles, they are conditioned through Neo-Pavlovian conditioning and hypnopaedia. In Neo-Pavlovian conditioning, babies enter a room filled with books and roses. When the babies approach the books or the roses, alarms and sirens sound, and the babies receive a small electric shock, which frightens them so that when they confront the same items a second time, they recoil in fear. Hypnopaedia teaches babies and children while they are asleep by playing suggestive phrases repeatedly so that the phrases become embedded in the subconscious of each person. The students continue their tour outside of the Hatchery and are shown how children are conditioned to be promiscuous from an early age.



Community, Identity, Stability

The novel is set approximately 700 years in the future in a place called the World State, which is managed/ruled by 10 World Controllers. Social stability is the dominant principle of the World State. Stability is ensured by mass-producing citizens, as needed. Citizens are created to belong to one of five castes: Alphas and Betas are the genetically engineered elite and function as the politicians, scientists and other leaders, while Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons are mass-produced identical twins and function as the industrial working class. Along with genetic engineering, extensive pre- and post-natal conditioning further ensures social stability. Last, but not least, a drug called soma ensures that no one ever feels pain or remains unhappy, and members of every caste receive free rations of the drug.

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Narration and structure

What is the author trying to say? How are we encouraged to react to the ideas presented in the novel? In this section, we examine some of the literary devices, writing techniques and structural elements that the author, Aldous Huxley, uses to convey the message of his novel.

Narration

Huxley narrates *Brave New World* from a **third-person**, omniscient (all-knowing or god-like) perspective. This panoramic, unrestricted style offers several benefits; for example, it allows the narrator to provide insights into the interiors (internal worlds) of multiple characters, granting readers a comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of the story. In other words, the reader does not have to rely on the protagonist's interpretations of the other characters. One prominent example of this benefit is how the reader has direct access to both Bernard's and John's thoughts and feelings.

When discussing narrative point of view, the narrative voice (who is speaking) and the focalisation (from whose perspective the story is told) need to be considered; for example, a story that is told in the first-person (using the pronoun 'I') is narrated and focalised by the same character. That character is both the speaker and the person from whose perspective the story is told. In contrast, a story which is told in the second-person (using the pronoun 'you') is narrated by one character to another character, for example, an author narrating to his or her audience. A story that is told in the **third-person** (using the pronouns 'he', 'she' or 'they') is narrated from 'outside' by a speaker who is not a character in the story. The narrative voice is typically detached and objective. The focalisation or perspective from which the story is told shifts because the narrator can move freely between characters, locations, and times.

The narrative point of view in terms of 'distance' from the reader

CLOSER ————— FURTHER

Second Person First Person Third Person Limited Third Person Omniscient

This perspective also allows the narrator to offer insights into the shifting thoughts and feelings of all the characters involved in an interaction; for instance, when Bernard asks the director for approval to visit the Reservation in chapter six, the narrator can describe both the director's guilt and shame after recounting Linda's disappearance and how he tries to mask these feelings with angry, righteous 'indignation' (p.85), and how Bernard's 'discomfort' (p.83) morphs into envy and then, after the encounter, an unfamiliar feeling of exulting [...] elated [...] confidence' (p.85).



In addition, this narrative style allows the narrator to shift focus between different characters and scenes seamlessly, allowing for a dynamic storytelling approach. Huxley exploits this benefit particularly in chapter three, when the fragments of the three simultaneous scenes and conversations are woven together with increasing rapidity and abruptness to draw connections and contrasts between them; for example, the juxtaposition of Henry baiting 'glum' (p.46) Bernard with soma while the Controller lectures the students about the benefits of this 'perfect drug' (p.46).

An omniscient narrator can also provide background information, context, or commentary that the characters themselves might not know. This is particularly useful when constructing an imaginary world or fictional universe like the World State. Huxley regularly exploits this benefit to add satirical commentary, for instance, describing Bokanovsky's Process as '[t]he principle of mass production at last applied to biology' (p.5), or drolly observing how '[a] love of nature keeps no factories busy' (p.18).

The third-person omniscient perspective allows the narrator to remain objective and impartial when describing the processes and practices of the World State as well. This lets Huxley describe shocking procedures like the conditioning of babies in a neutral way, which helps maintain the credibility of the dystopia and draws the attention of readers to their own responses to what is being described.

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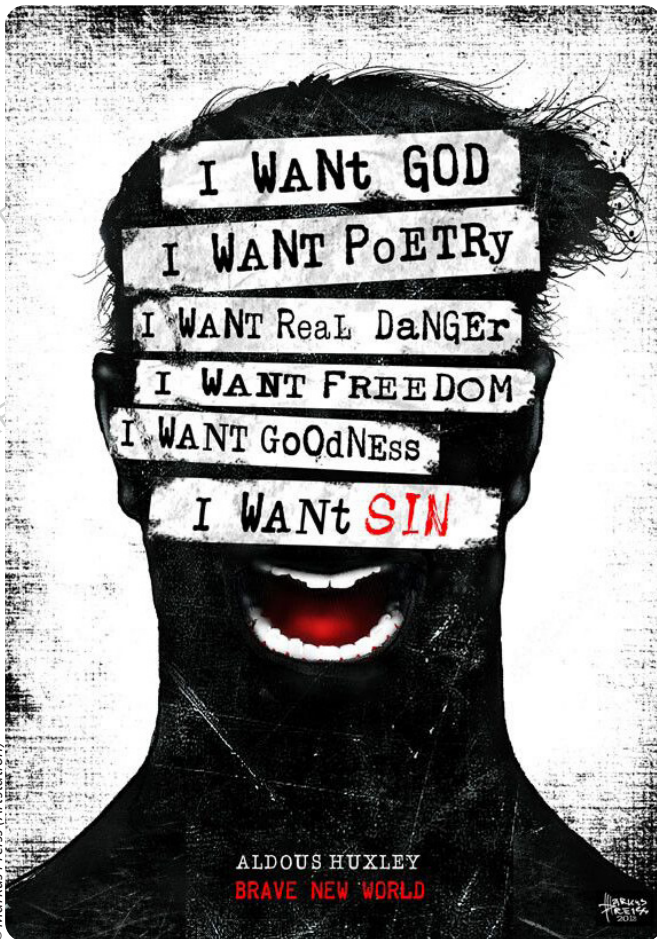
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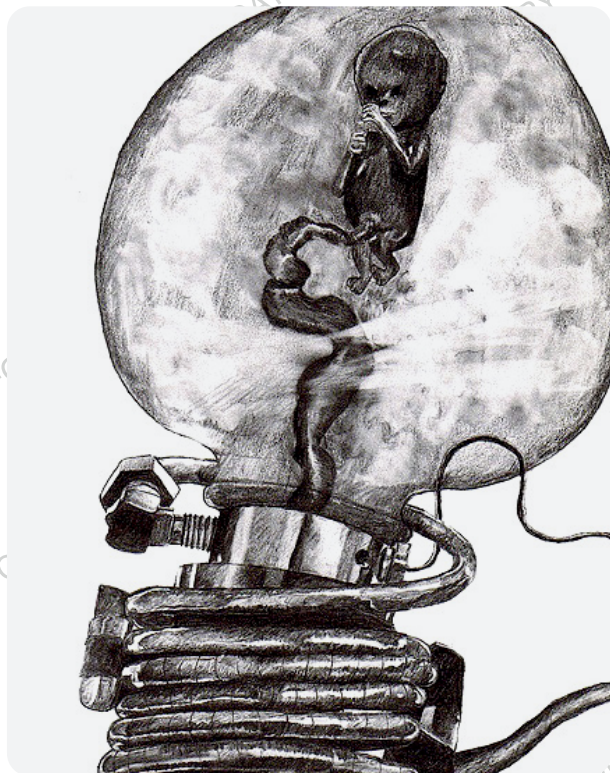
In other words, Huxley does not tell his readers how to feel about what is being described, which places the moral burden on them to evaluate the ethics of what is happening. Readers are likely to find the procedures horrifying and the contrast between their reaction and the detachment of the narrator (and other characters) encourages readers to reflect on the dangers of such dehumanisation becoming normalised.

A third-person, omniscient narrator also allows Huxley to create tension through dramatic irony since the narrator can provide the reader with information of which the characters are not aware. It is a technique Huxley uses throughout the novel; for example, while the citizens of the World State are oblivious to the implications of their superficial happiness and even how limited their perceptions of their society are, the narrator ensures that the reader understands the dark undercurrents of control and conformity that enslave the citizens and the true consequences of having sacrificed their individuality for stability. This creates tension as the reader anticipates how characters will react when confronted with the realities of their world. A similar example of dramatic irony is Lenina's confusion about the monogamous romantic feelings she develops for John and her 'annoyed incomprehension' (p.167) at his rejection of her sexual advances. The confrontation between them creates dramatic irony because the reader is painfully aware — while she remains oblivious — of how her conditioning has deprived her of the capacity to experience a genuine emotional connection and intimacy beyond the physical.

The story is also narrated in a linear fashion and the plot consists of a straightforward progression of events. From the opening tour of the Hatchery, the story progresses step by step, following characters like Bernard Marx, Lenina Crowne and John as they navigate the events of the novel in chronological sequence. Even when background information about how the World State came to be is provided, such as discussions about the Nine Years' War, this information is revealed through dialogue and exposition. The only exceptions are the flashbacks used by John to describe his childhood on the Reservation in chapter eight. During these episodes, the story temporarily shifts to the past and the events are described as if they are happening in the present. The reader is taken out of the current timeline and immersed in John's childhood with the same level of detail and immediacy as the main storyline.

Structure

The novel consists of 18 chapters. The chapters of the novel can be grouped to aid the reader in understanding the progression of the plot; for example, it can be useful to consider the novel as being composed of two 'halves' or parts of nine chapters each. The first half introduces the two societies: the City of London in chapters one to six, and the Savage Reservation in New Mexico in chapters seven to nine. In the second half, the two societies collide as John is brought back to London and experiences life in the World State. The first third of this second half, chapters 10 to 12, describes the effect John's presence has on the other characters and his growing disillusionment. In the second third, chapters 13 to 15, John's interactions develop into a series of violent crises that form the climax of the novel. The final third, chapters 16 to 18, describes the debates, judgements and final acts that decide the fates of the characters.



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Character analysis

Who are the people in *Brave New World* and what are they like? This section provides succinct descriptions of the main and supporting characters, focusing on their personalities, relationships and roles in the novel.

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A 'novel of ideas,' rather than characters

It is worth noting that *Brave New World* is often described as a 'novel of ideas' to emphasise the fact that Huxley wrote it to explore theories, ideologies and the potential effects of the trends he saw developing in modern society, rather than as an exploration of the complexities of human beings and the way they are shaped and changed by their experiences. It is a criticism that the author himself did not dispute.

In the novel, the clash of competing ideologies and ideas about society, freedom, technology and individuality takes precedence over complex character development. As a result, most of the characters exist more as avatars — symbols or embodiments of concepts — than as fully developed, three-dimensional, complex, contradictory, changing human beings. Rather than focusing on the personal complexities of the characters, Huxley uses them to explore the ideas they represent. Thus the characters are simplified and exaggerated to illustrate particular points about the dystopian society described in the novel.

Avatars of conditioning and conformity

Characters like **Lenina** and **Henry**, for example, are not fully fleshed-out human beings but are instead used to represent the conformist mindset of the World State. Their unthinking embrace of soma, casual sex, and shallow pleasures highlights its emphasis on maintaining happiness through superficial means. Shaped by their conditioning, they do not grow, develop emotionally or change substantially during the novel; instead, they remain symbols of societal conditioning and conformity. Indeed, Huxley appears to have made these characters flat deliberately to emphasise his critique of the dehumanising effects of conditioning and societal control.



© Shelly Peiken

Avatars of discontent

Bernard and **Helmholtz** are somewhat more developed, but even they are primarily used to voice dissatisfaction with the system in different ways. Bernard represents a desire for individuality but is ultimately revealed to be self-serving, while Helmholtz is more sincerely interested in art and intellectual freedom. Nonetheless, they serve to articulate opposing viewpoints within the society rather than function as complex individuals.



© Julien Pacaud

Avatar of the future dystopia

Mustapha Mond, the World Controller, is the embodiment of the ideology of the World State, of course, defending its principles of stability and happiness through suppression of freedom, art, religion and genuine human connection. Even though he engages in philosophical discussions with John, he is unmoved and unchanged by these and demonstrates neither internal conflict nor psychological growth afterwards.



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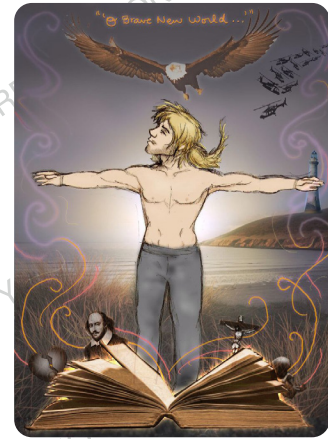
Avatar of contemporary society

John is perhaps the most fully realised character in the novel. He has a developed internal life and the most independent agency. Yet even he serves as an avatar for moral and romantic idealism, freedom and suffering, and primarily as a vehicle for Huxley's critique of the World State. John's debate with the World Controller perhaps helps him clarify and express his thoughts and feelings but does not change him. His state of inner turmoil and conflict intensifies in the days before his tragic end but he does not change in any significant way.

John, the Savage

John, also known as 'the Savage' (p.135) by the citizens of the World State, is the most significant and complex character in *Brave New World*. He serves as the moral and emotional focal point of the novel. He embodies the clash between the natural human condition and the artificially engineered condition of the citizens of the World State. His unique background and exposure to both worlds allow Huxley to explore themes of identity, freedom, individuality, and the inherent flaws in both the 'civilized' and 'savage' ways of life. John is the moral compass of the novel and through his experiences Huxley explores the conflict that occurs when natural human desires and needs meet the constraints required to create a stable, consistent, predictable, conflict-free society.

Even though he is only introduced in chapter seven (p.100), John is the protagonist of the novel since it is his internal struggles (against his thoughts, feelings and beliefs) and external challenges (against the values and practices of the World State) that form the central conflict of the story and the main basis for the exploration of its themes.



A unique upbringing

John is the son of Linda, a woman originally from the World State who became stranded on the Savage Reservation, and the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning, making him a product of both worlds yet belonging to neither fully. John has light-coloured hair, blue eyes, and a pale 'complexion' (p.100) or skin. His physical appearance is not described in great detail, but he is noted to be different enough from both the inhabitants of the Reservation and those of the World State to stand out in both places

“All right then,” said the Savage defiantly, “I’m claiming the right to be unhappy.” (p.212)



Raised on the Reservation, John’s upbringing is marked by hardship, exclusion, and the absence of the technological comforts and societal norms of the World State. Despite — or perhaps because of — his challenging upbringing, John develops a deep appreciation for human emotion, relationships, and the complexities of life, largely influenced by his mother’s stories of the World State and his reading of Shakespeare, whose works profoundly shape his worldview.

As a result of his upbringing, John develops a unique moral and philosophical framework that is based on the old-fashioned morality he learns from reading Shakespeare and his exposure to the mixture of Christianity and Native American beliefs — ‘Pookong and Jesus’ (p.101) — that inform the cultural and spiritual practices of the Reservation.

Identity crisis

John is highly idealistic and romantic. He feels deeply and expresses his emotions openly. In stark contrast to the people around him, he is easily and often moved to anger and tears. His idealism and romanticism lead him to seek purity and higher meaning in life; however, they also make him particularly vulnerable to disillusionment. He values emotional depth, personal freedom and the natural human experience, including love, pain, spirituality, suffering, and growth. In contrast to the citizens of the World State, John believes in the significance of individuality and human dignity. Ultimately, his inability to reconcile the realities of the World State with his moral values and emotional truths results in intolerable inner conflict and despair.

‘If one’s different, one’s bound to be lonely.’ (p.119)



His personality is characterised by a deep sensitivity, intellectual curiosity and a capacity for intense emotional experiences, traits that are starkly at odds with the conditioned responses of World State citizens. His inclination towards introspection and his struggle with conflicting ideals and desires highlight his status as an outsider and serve as a focal point for the novel’s exploration of human nature.

As part of this, John struggles with his identity and sense of belonging. He is torn between his traditional upbringing in the Savage Reservation and his desire to connect with the hi-tech World State and its citizens. He is both fascinated and repulsed by the values and norms of the World State, and this conflict causes him emotional turmoil throughout the novel. He longs

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Themes

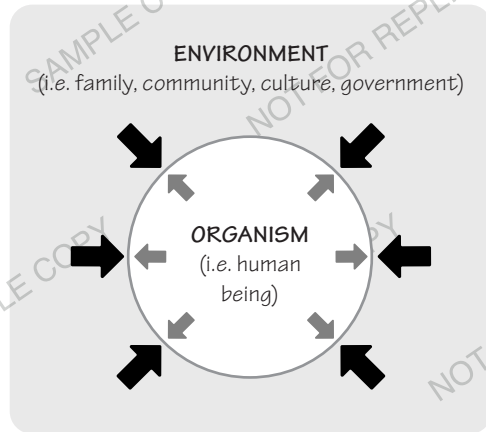
Authors use themes, symbols and motifs to give their work more meaning and to make their novels about more than just the events they describe. A theme in a work of fiction can be described as a central message or idea or topic in that work. A sophisticated text will usually explore several interrelated themes. Among the main themes in *Brave New World* are (1) the harm that could be caused by unregulated science and technology, (2) the threat of totalitarianism and (3) the importance of individuality to living a meaningful human existence. While each theme will be discussed separately in this section, remember that each one often overlaps or interweaves with other themes; for example, the issues related to conditioning, control and dehumanisation are relevant to both the theme of science and technology and the theme of totalitarianism.

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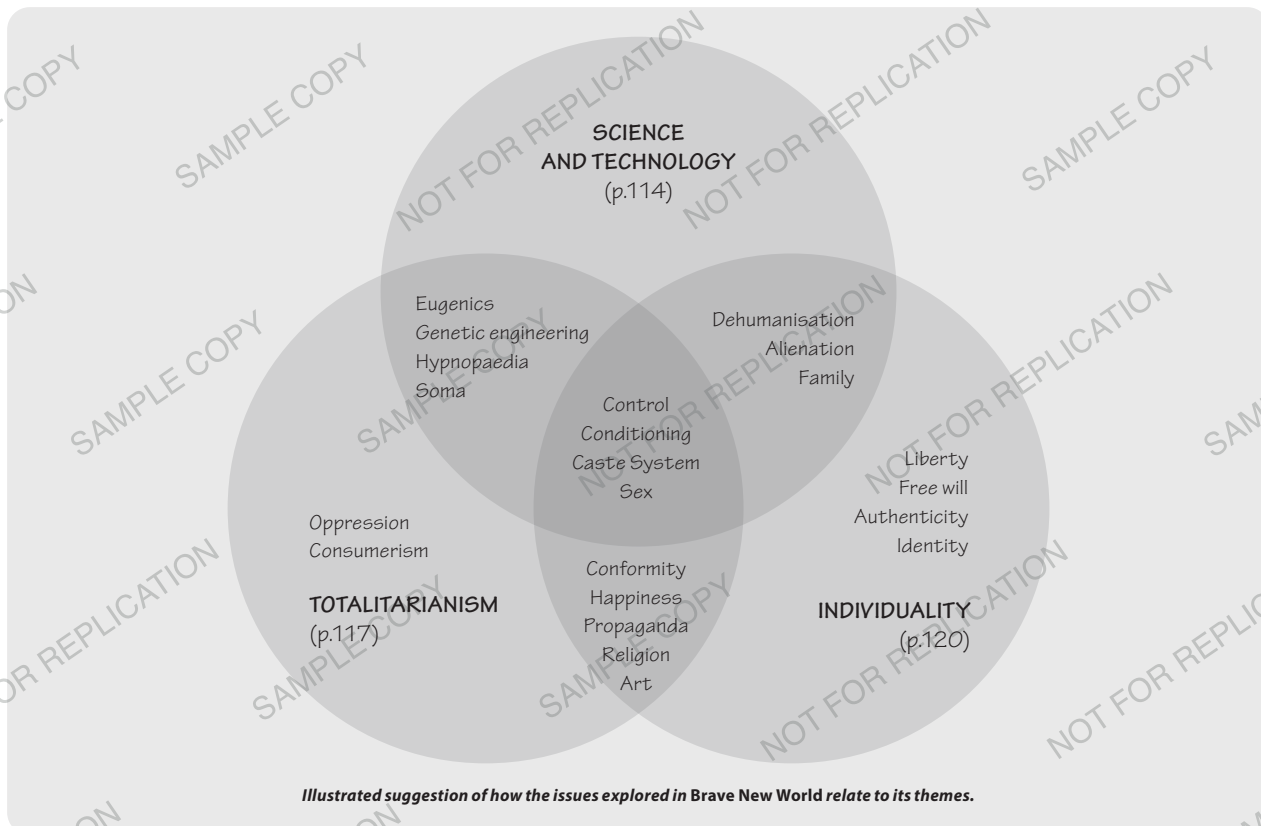
Environmental/social pressure

Before examining the major themes Huxley explores in the novel, it is worth considering an important, overarching aspect of his message: that an individual organism is not separate from its environment. In other words, because an organism relies on its environment to get its needs met, it is highly susceptible to the influence of its environment. In the case of complex organisms like human beings, these needs range from the physical (food, water, shelter etc.) to the emotional and psychological (connection, validation, belonging etc.). Thus an individual's need to belong and be accepted by his or her family or community, for instance, may encourage him or her to behave in ways that compromise his or her values. This environmental or social pressure is why Huxley argues that meaningful individuality and freedom cannot be experienced or expressed by a person living in isolation, for example.



In *Brave New World*, Huxley depicts an extreme illustration of this point — a dystopian society that exerts total control over individuals through environmental manipulation — to remind each one of us to be consciously aware of the influences being exerted on us by our leaders, our peers, our families and communities, the companies in our society, and to question any seductive, but unnecessary encroachments on our freedoms and personal agency.

Issues and themes



Science and technology

This theme examines the relationship between scientific and technological 'progress' and the wellbeing and needs of humans. In particular, it considers how science and technology could be misused to undermine individuality and freedom and could lead to the loss of the authentic human experience. Consequently, it includes issues relating to eugenics, genetic engineering, hypnopaedia and soma, along with the replacement of religion with the worship of science and the replacement of art with superficial technological distractions. From the perspective of this theme, the novel encourages us to consider the implications and consequences of our ever-increasing dependency on technology.



Start with ethics

Note how Huxley's stated aim was to use this theme to examine science and technology from the perspective of the impact they have on individuals. Thus his focus is on what fulfils, supports and improves the lives of human beings, not on what becomes scientifically or technologically possible. In other words, he is presenting the World State as a warning of what could happen if we fail to consider every new advancement from an ethical and moral perspective first. A notable current example of this is Artificial Intelligence (AI), of course, which has taken a leap forward and offers the potential to transform our lives for the better but also has the potential to lead to widespread job losses, increased surveillance, increased alienation, loss of independence, and greater inequality.



© Samir Kulkarni

Are we enslaved by our technology?

In *Brave New World*, Huxley raises the terrifying prospect that advances in the sciences of biology and psychology could be transformed into technologies that will be used to change the way that human beings think, feel and act. Huxley argues that the more human beings harness technology to guarantee human happiness, the more they will end up enslaved by technology, to the neglect of higher human aspirations.

This theme is introduced at the very beginning of the novel through a detailed description of how advanced scientific and technological methods — such as eugenics and genetic engineering, hypnopaedia and other forms of classical and operant psychological conditioning — have been used to control and dehumanise the citizens of the World State from the time they are embryos.

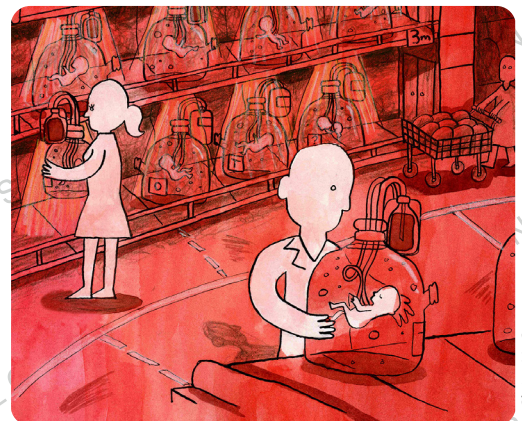
Should a human being be cloned?

During the student tour of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre in chapter one, the idea of genetic engineering combined with industrialised mass production is introduced. The director, Henry Foster and the Narrator explain how this process, the Bokanovsky Process, has become the cornerstone of authoritarian control in the World State. As the narrator clarifies: 'One egg, one embryo, one adult — normality. But a bokanovskified egg will bud, will proliferate, will divide. [...] Making ninety-six human beings grow where only one grew before. Progress.' (pp.3-4). Note how Huxley's use of terms like 'bud', 'proliferate' and 'divide', which are associated with plant biology and cell division, strips away the mystery and dignity usually related to the process of creating new human life and compares humans to plants — the grains, fruits and vegetables that we manipulate and mass-produce on a large scale agriculturally.

As the gruesome tour continues, the idea of how embryos could be physically modified *in vitro* (or 'in bottle', in this case) is introduced. Huxley draws on the pioneering research that was being conducted on the womb and placenta, into the effects of alcohol, fluoride etc., at the time he was writing the novel to envision the various ways in which the developing embryos could be manipulated before being 'decanted' or born.



'The principle of mass production at last applied to biology.' (p.5)



© Claire McCann



'We [...] predestine and condition. We decant our babies as socialised human beings, as Alphas or Epsilons.' (p.10)

Should children be indoctrinated?

Having imagined how advances in science and technology could be used to alter the 'nature' of human beings, Huxley turns his attention to how these could be used to 'nurture' human beings to produce specific outcomes. Again, he references what was cutting-edge research and ideas in the early 1900s to introduce the idea of classical and operant conditioning being misused to programme children. The two processes he uses are classical conditioning — 'Neo-Pavlovian' in the World State — and sleep-teaching or hypnopaedia.

Pavlov's famous experiments with dogs in 1897 triggered considerable scientific interest in the possibilities of operant conditioning and greatly influenced behaviourism, an emerging branch of psychology that suggested even cognition and emotions were reflexive responses to positive and negative stimuli; for example, John B. Watson and his famous 'Little Albert' experiment (see page 109). Similarly, sleep research was proving to be an exciting field of study for scientists like Dr Nathaniel Kleitman, who opened the first sleep lab at the University of Chicago in 1925, and new theories and ideas were being published in prominent scientific journals throughout the 1920s.

While the theories of cognitive psychology have replaced those of behaviourism, and scientific research has concluded that sleep-learning or hypnopaedia is not possible, Huxley's chilling vision remains a potent reminder of the ability processes like conditioning and propaganda have to manipulate our thoughts, behaviours and values. One contemporary example is subliminal advertising — hiding visual and audio messages in other content by flashing them too quickly on screen or playing them too quietly for the conscious minds of the audience to notice — which is banned in countries like Britain and Australia because studies have shown that these messages are picked up by the subconscious minds of the audience.

In addition, Huxley was most probably inspired by what was happening in Nazi Germany and the Southern United States. In the early 1920s, the Nazi Party began a campaign of propaganda aimed at indoctrinating young Germans and started the Hitler Youth movement in 1926 to train children to be the Nazis of the future. As Adolf Hitler confidently stated: 'These boys and girls enter our organisations [at] 10 years of age, and often for the first time get a little fresh air; after four years of the Young Folk they go on to the Hitler Youth, where we have them for another four years [...] And if they are still complete National Socialists [after that], they go to Labour Service and are smoothed out there for another six, seven months [...] and whatever class consciousness or social status might still be left [the German armed forces] will take care of that!'

The American white supremacist group, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) adopted a similar approach in 1923, when it created the Junior Ku Klux Klan for teenage boys, the Tri-K-Klub for teenage girls, and the Ku Klux Kiddies for children and infants. According to some historians, these clubs were so successful that minors outnumbered adults in the KKK towards the end of the 1920s. Of course, indoctrinating children is an old idea; for example, St Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order of the Roman Catholic Church in 1534, famously said, 'Give me a child till he is seven years old, and I will show you the man.'



[T]here must be words, but words without reason. In brief, hypnopaedia. "The greatest moral[s]ing and social[s]ing force of all time." (p.23)

Should we numb our feelings?

The scientific field of pharmacology is another area where Huxley appears to have been prophetic. He introduces the wonder drug, soma, to explore the dangers of using pharmaceutical compounds to eliminate the anxieties and discomforts of life. While the use of mood-altering substances has been a part of the human experience from the dawn of time, the side-effects of most drugs have provided



natural constraints to their consumption (e.g. for many people, the hangover alone can discourage frequent drinking or drinking in excess). When he was imagining soma, Huxley was presumably inspired by the increased potency and lack of side-effects of the new classes of drugs being synthesised by German chemists in the early 20th century, such as chloral hydrate and the early barbiturates like secobarbital. Barbiturates, the forerunners of modern benzodiazepines, such as Xanax, exploded in popularity in the late 1920s and early 1930s as people began using them to 'take the edge off' by reducing brain activity and depressing the central nervous system.

1960s advertisement for Serax (a tranquilliser) to help a woman cope with the 'boredom, anxiety and emotional fatigue' of being a housewife. Benzodiazepines (tranquillisers) have been the top-selling drugs for the pharmaceutical industry since the 1950s and the FDA reports that more than 90 million prescriptions are dispensed in America every year.

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Symbols

Symbols are objects, characters, shapes or colours used to represent something else, usually an abstract idea or quality. Symbols usually represent something else by association, resemblance or convention, and provide subtle clues to the deeper layers of meaning in a literary work. There are numerous symbols used in *Brave New World*, including soma, feelies, Henry Ford and the Model T, the Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, zippers, whips, bottles and the Malthusian belt. In this section, we examine some of the more prominent symbolism Huxley uses in the novel.

Soma

Soma is a significant symbol in the novel. Literally, it symbolises the control the World State exerts over its citizens. Figuratively, it symbolises both the immense power of science and technology and the dangers of their misuse. Soma is a powerful tranquiliser that is promoted and distributed freely by the World State. The drug dulls discomfort, alleviates any negative emotions and creates a false sense of happiness. It offers instant relief and has no nasty side-effects. As a result, the citizens of the World State use it frequently to escape any anxiety, sadness, or dissatisfaction they may feel, and even minor discomforts like passing boredom. Thus using the drug prevents people from experiencing the difficult emotions that might encourage them to reflect on, or question, or seek a deeper meaning to their lives.



'Everybody's happy nowadays.' (p.79)

Soma appears throughout the novel. It is used everywhere and anywhere. Characters consume it throughout the day, while at work and at home, during informal meals and more formal rituals like a Solidarity Service. Its prevalence highlights not just the extent to which it is used but also its importance as a tool of social control. The chemically induced, numb happiness it offers is a critical part of how the World State manages to keep its citizens passive and obedient. As the narrator drolly observes, 'that second dose of soma had raised a quite impenetrable wall between the actual universe and their minds' (p.67). Soma's importance is also reflected in the numerous hypnopædic sayings related to it, including 'a gramme is always better than a damn' (p.47), 'a gramme in time saves nine' (p.77) and 'one cubic centimetre cures ten gloomy sentiments' (p.77).

Powerful drugs were easily available and popular at the turn of the last century. As well as drinking alcohol, the Victorians took opium, cannabis, coca, mescal, chloral hydrate and — after the invention of the hypodermic needle in the 1840s — morphine and heroin. Opium and cocaine, for instance, were only classified as dangerous drugs in 1921. When Huxley was writing *Brave New World*, new drugs were being discovered or formulated (and sold) at a dramatic rate. Nonetheless, Huxley does not seem to be criticising the use of tranquilisers or narcotics in themselves but the danger that such substances could be misused or overused to suppress individuality, mask emotional complexity, and stifle intellectual freedom. Once again, Huxley appears to be concerned that unless the use of mood-altering drugs is steered by ethical debate and they are prescribed to help people work through and understand their emotions, such drugs might instead be used to engineer compliance, prevent self-awareness, and undermine personal freedom and growth.



'And if ever, by some unlucky chance, anything unpleasant should somehow happen, why, there's always soma to give you a holiday from the facts. And there's always soma to calm your anger, to reconcile you to your enemies, to make you patient and long - suffering. In the past you could only accomplish these things by making a great effort and after years of hard moral training. Now, you swallow two or three half-gramme tablets, and there you are. Anybody can be virtuous now. You can carry at least half your mortality about in a bottle. Christianity without tears – that's what soma is.' (pp.209-10)



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Feelies

The feelies serve as a powerful symbol of the way technology can be used to replace meaningful human experiences with shallow, sensory-based entertainment. As fully-immersive films that captivate viewers through touch, sound, and sight, the feelies provide the citizens of the World State with an excess of instantly gratifying, pleasurable sensations. The excess of bodily sensation is offered as a substitute for intellectual and emotional stimulation. By indulging people's senses without challenging their minds, the feelies represent the way technology can be used to replace art. Unlike traditional art forms, which invite reflection, provoke thought and/or convey complex human experiences, the feelies distract and pacify with entertaining but meaningless experiences. Obviously, this aligns them perfectly with the World State's goal of creating a society free from complex, volatile emotions, critical thinking, and individual desires.

At the time that Huxley was writing, the 'talkies' – films or 'movies' with synchronised sound – were just starting to be released (*The Jazz Singer* premiered in 1927, for example) to huge popular acclaim. As a result, Huxley could readily envision how such technological advancements would continue. He could also note how the technological improvement itself – rather than the story being told – became the focus of much of the enthusiasm of the public. This innovation would have reminded Huxley of the way technological advancements that make an art form easier to consume quickly replace earlier art forms that are more challenging (i.e. the way silent movies require audiences to concentrate more than ones with sound, and books require readers to make more imaginative effort than films). Huxley is again warning us of (1) what could be lost if society sacrifices challenging, uncomfortable art, which has complexity and depth, for comfortable, thrill-focused entertainment that is easy to consume, and (2) the way endless, easy entertainment can be used to keep us distracted and passive.

Henry Ford (and the Model T)

Henry Ford and the Model T serve as powerful symbols of industrialisation and consumerism in the novel. The founders of the World State have based their civilisation on Ford's principles of efficiency, standardisation and mass production to such an extent that he is worshipped as a deity-like figure. The World State calendar is dated from 'the time of Our Ford' (p.200) and periodic 'Ford's Day' (p.45) celebrations are held. The citizens use his name in the same way that people might use names for God, for example, saying 'Our Ford' (p.27), 'Thank Ford' (p.68) and 'my Ford' (p.164). They also trace the letter 'T' on their stomachs, which represents the Model T Ford, to show their devotion to the power of mass production, mimicking the way Christians make the sign of the Cross to honour Jesus's sacrifice.

By making Ford a deity-like figure, Huxley was satirising the way society had already begun idolizing the industrialisation and consumerism for which Ford stood. Ford was already revered around the world for his industrial achievements, and his relentless focus on specialising and subdividing his workers makes him a fitting deity for a society in which individuality and uniqueness have been sacrificed for conformity and efficiency. Ford also believed in consumerism, to the extent that he even claimed it could 'help to bring about world peace', and many of his labour-related innovations reflected this belief; for example, he introduced the five-day, 40-hour workweek in 1926 because he believed decent leisure time was good for business since it would give workers more time to purchase and consume other goods and services. Hence, Huxley's elevation of consumerism to near-religious status draws attention to the absurdity of elevating it over human individuality, emotional depth and spiritual growth. Huxley's satire



'THREE WEEKS IN A HELICOPTER. AN ALL-SUPER-SINGING, SYNTHETIC-TALKING, COLOURED, STEREOSCOPIC FEELY. WITH SYNCHRONIZED SCENT-ORGAN ACCOMPANIMENT.' (p.145)



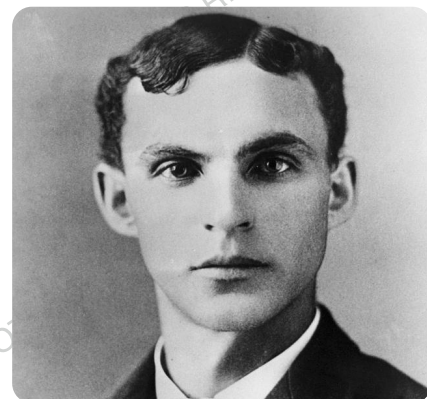
'You've got to choose between happiness and what people used to call high art. We've sacrificed the high art. We have the feelies and the scent organ instead.' (p.194)



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A famous American industrialist and car manufacturer, **Henry Ford** revolutionised factory production with his assembly-line methods in 1914. By combining constantly moving assembly lines with minutely subdivided, specialised and coordinated workers, Ford was able to reduce the time taken to manufacture a car from 728 to 93 minutes. The Model T Ford was the first mass-produced car, and its affordability made it possible for the average person to own a car for the first time.



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Important quotations

Quoting from the novel to illustrate your argument creates a good impression with your marker as it shows you are familiar with the novel and understand how to support your argument with evidence from the text you are studying. In this section, some important quotations are offered, along with suggested explanations. The quotes have been organised by theme, but it is worth remembering that a quote can often be related to several topics and more than one theme.

Science and technology

- ‘One egg, one embryo, one adult — normality. But a bokanovskified egg will bud, will proliferate, will divide. [...] Making ninety-six human beings grow where only one grew before. Progress.’** (p.3-4)

Topic(s): eugenics, genetic engineering, dehumanisation
Character: Narrator
Significance: This explanation of the Bokanovsky Process, which is the cornerstone of the World State’s authoritarian control, is an illustration of the potentially dehumanising effect of the application of science and industrialisation. Note how Huxley’s use of terms like ‘bud’, ‘proliferate’ and ‘divide’ compares humans to plants cultivated en masse agriculturally.
- ‘The principle of mass production at last applied to biology.’** (p.5)

Topic(s): genetic engineering, dehumanisation, industrialisation
Character: Narrator
Significance: This quote summarises the dangers of unchecked scientific advancement and industrialisation. By making humans subject to industrial processes, the novel warns that scientific and technological progress, without ethical boundaries, could easily start to undermine human freedom, uniqueness, and dignity.
- ‘Science is dangerous; we have to keep it most carefully chained and muzzled.’** (p.198)

Topic(s): science and technology, control
Character: Mustapha Mond
Significance: This quote is deeply ironic given that it is uttered by the representative of a society that has exploited scientific and technological advancements to control nearly every aspect of human life. The irony lies in the contradiction that while science is used to enforce order and suppress independence, it is simultaneously feared and censored by those using it. Huxley uses this hypocrisy to suggest that true science — in its spirit of inquiry and discovery — is ultimately incompatible with totalitarianism.
- ‘Call it the fault of civilization. God isn’t compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness. You must make your choice. Our civilization has chosen machinery and medicine and happiness.’** (p.207)

Topic(s): science and technology, industrialisation, religion/spirituality, happiness
Character: Mustapha Mond
Significance: Huxley includes this statement to highlight the dangers of a society that replaces spiritual depth and personal meaning with technology and a narrow definition of happiness. By illustrating the choice of the World State to prioritize ‘machinery and medicine’ over spirituality, Huxley critiques a society that neglects individuality, inner life, and spiritual fulfilment, warning of the emptiness that results when a culture values stability and pleasure above all else.
- ‘[We] can’t allow science to undo its own good work.’** (p.200)

Topic(s): science and technology, control
Character: Mustapha Mond
Significance: This quote summarises the approach of the World State to science - how it considers it to be a tool for control rather than a means of fostering knowledge, progress, or discovery. According to the regime, science has achieved its ‘good work’: eliminating disease, discomfort, ageing, along with diversity, curiosity, emotional pain (and depth) and personal bonds etc. This quote highlights the irony of using the scientific spirit of curiosity and discovery to develop and advance society to the point where science is used to prevent any further curiosity and discovery.
- ‘Christianity without tears – that’s what soma is.’** (p.210)

Topic(s): science and technology, soma
Character: Mustapha Mond
Significance: Soma is a powerful symbol of advanced science — a wonder drug — but also a symbol of how science can be misused. This quote captures how the World State has used science and technology to replace authentic spiritual or emotional fulfilment. The quote explains how the pharmaceutical provides the effects of a religious experience — comfort, relief, and a sense of connection — without requiring any of the challenging self-reflection, moral struggle, or deeper emotional journeying traditionally associated with spiritual growth or religious faith. Again, Huxley is warning against using science to eliminate all discomfort as struggle is often a necessary part of meaningful human experiences.

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Literary essay

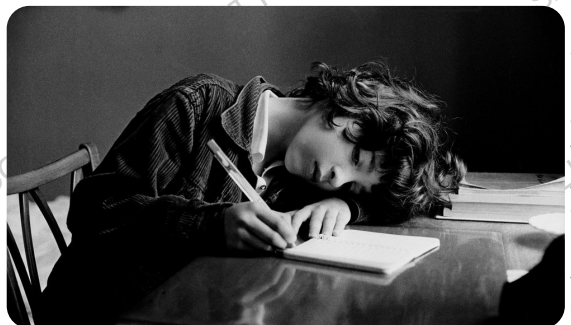
An essay is a short piece of writing that presents and develops an idea. The purpose of writing an essay is two-fold. The first reason is to demonstrate an understanding of the text in question. The second is to show that you can write about a topic in a focused and sustained way. In other words, an essay is not a rambling, disjointed collection of your thoughts regarding a topic, but an integrated and interconnected discussion that develops a clear, convincing argument. This section offers some basic guidelines on writing a literary essay, two annotated examples from which to learn, and a selection of essay topics that you can use to practise essay writing.

General guidelines

- Keep your writing direct, simple and unpretentious — avoid over-complicated sentence structures and unnecessarily wordy descriptions.
- Write in the Present Tense using the active voice as this helps to ensure your argument is more immediate and convincing.
- Write using a formal tone and register (i.e. avoiding slang, colloquialisms, jargon and abbreviations) as a literary essay is a piece of academic analysis, not creative writing.
- Remember that any statements you make must be supported with concrete, plausible examples and evidence from the text.
- Pay attention to the required word length, if stipulated. (In Grade 12, your essay should be approximately 600 words in length.) There is no need to include a word count at the end of your essay unless you are specifically instructed to do so. You should keep your response as concise as possible as you may be penalised if your argument strays off the topic.
- Present your essay in a neat and tidy manner as sloppy work makes a poor impression and could cost you marks, particularly if your essay is illegible or difficult to read.



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Planning your essay

It is important to plan your **essay** thoroughly before you start writing your response. Doing so will improve your marks by helping you to clarify your ideas and to structure your argument logically. If you plan your essay properly, it can feel as if it almost writes itself.



Common types of essays:

Argumentative — requires you to formulate an opinion or perspective regarding a topic, explain your reasoning and provide evidence from the text(s) to substantiate your stance. Task words for such an essay include: ‘argue’, ‘comment on’, ‘motivate’, ‘criticise’ and ‘justify’.

Discursive — requires you to present a balanced or objective discussion of an issue or topic by identifying the information that is relevant to each of the different perspectives or opinions regarding the issue (e.g. both arguments and counter-arguments) and describing it in a logical, organised manner. Note that you may be asked to conclude your essay with an evaluation of the information and offer an opinion or be asked to provide a neutral summary of the most salient points. Task words for such an essay include: ‘report’, ‘investigate’, ‘describe’, ‘discuss’, ‘explore’, ‘summarise’, ‘explain’, ‘illustrate’ and ‘distinguish’.

Analytical — requires you to evaluate an issue or subject by identifying the relevant information from the text(s) and reorganising it to create an appropriate response. Task words for such an essay include: ‘analyse’, ‘assess’, ‘compare’, ‘contrast’, ‘examine’, ‘evaluate’ and ‘identify’.

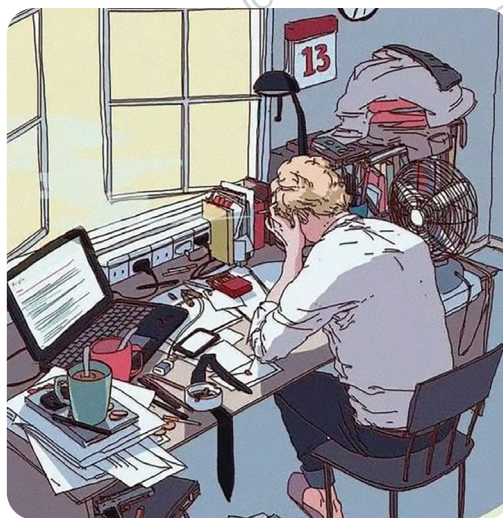
Writing your essay

Step 1: Analyse the question

The most important thing to do when writing an essay is to read and analyse the question carefully. You need to make sure you clearly understand what is being asked. This might sound obvious, but many people misread essay questions and write an essay that is not relevant to the question and lose marks as a result.

The first step is to identify the **task words** or **word** (i.e. the instructions) in the question. By way of illustration, consider the following example question: *Critically discuss how John's fascination with the works of William Shakespeare serves as a type of conditioning that shapes his mind and morals, paying particular attention to the way in which his values derived from Shakespeare contrast with the values of the World State.*

In this example, the task word is 'discuss', which means that you are being asked to provide details about, and evidence for or against, two or more different views or ideas.



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Task words

The following list includes some of the more common task words used in essay questions and offers a suggestion of how to interpret them. These suggested interpretations should only be considered guidelines, though, and your response should always be tailored to the requirements of a specific question.

analyse: break down the issue or topic into its component parts and describe how each part interrelates with the others (you may also be asked to relate the parts to a central theme).

assess: measure the value or importance of one or more aspects of a particular subject and describe the outcome of your assessment (you may also be asked to relate your assessment to a central issue or theme).

argue: provide a logical case to prove a particular point or opinion (you may also be asked to relate your argument to a central issue or theme).

compare and contrast: identify both the similarities and differences between two or more things or people (you may also be asked to relate these people or things to a central theme).

discuss: identify both the similarities and differences between two or more things or people (you may also be asked to relate these people or things to a central theme).

evaluate: assess the value or importance of one or more aspects of a particular subject in order to reach and present an overall judgement or conclusion based upon it.

examine: provide an in-depth investigation of a particular point and its implications (you may also be asked to relate the point to a central theme).

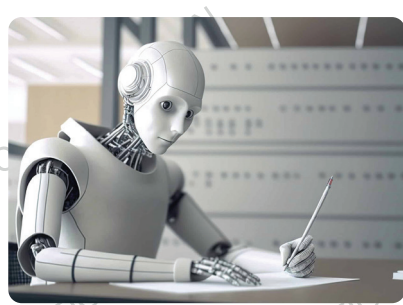
explain: describe how something works or show clearly how a particular conclusion is reached logically.

explore: consider an idea or topic broadly and present the related information in an organised manner, focusing on particularly relevant, interesting or debatable points.

identify: recognise the central characteristic(s) of a particular subject or issue and demonstrate how or why you reached this conclusion.

illustrate: provide a selection of examples from the text that describe or explain the specified topic or issue.

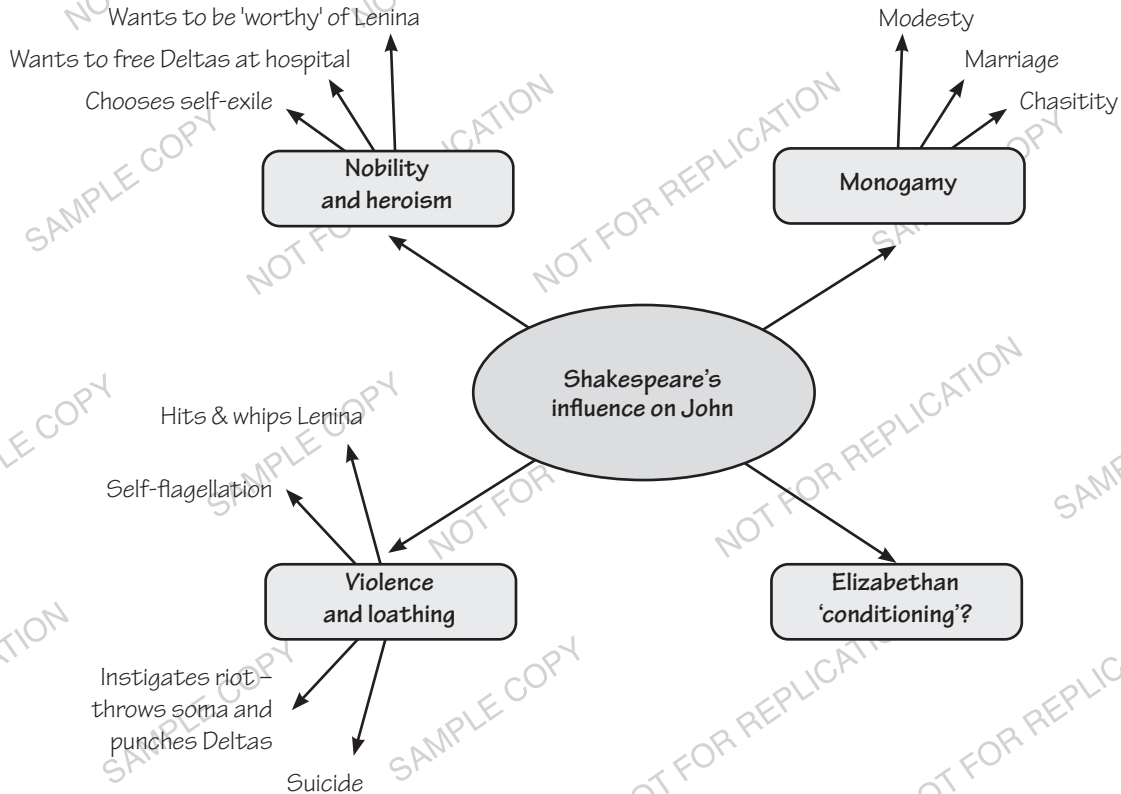
summarise: outline the most important points without providing any superfluous detail.



Once you have identified the task word, the second step is to consider the topic of the essay. The topic defines the theme or subject matter on which the essay should focus. Common topics include the characters in the text, their psychological motivations and relationships, the themes and motifs that inform and illuminate the text, and the author's use of language and literary techniques. In the preceding example, the topic focuses on the use of Shakespeare in the novel and requires you to consider (1) the way John uses Shakespeare and (2) whether his usage is similar to the way citizens of the World State have been conditioned, for example, the way they use hypnopædic sayings.

Step 2: Map your answer

You are no longer required to submit a plan with your essay and no marks are awarded for doing so; however, it is still highly recommended that you plan your response adequately. Plan your essay using any method you prefer. 'Mapping out' your response visually has been shown to be an effective way of generating, clarifying and linking ideas. An effective technique to use is a **concept map** (also known as a mind map or spider diagram). The following is a model concept map for the example question:



Suggested mind map for the example question.



Concept maps/mind maps or spider diagrams are a way of visualising your ideas and linking these together. The slight difference between the two techniques is that, technically, mind maps are used to freely associate ideas and spider diagrams are used to organise and structure ideas into hierarchies. This minor difference makes concept or mind maps particularly useful for creatively generating or brainstorming initial ideas and spider diagrams best suited to linking related ideas together and organising and planning the argument of your essay. In practice, though, people use either of these techniques to accomplish their goals.

Both are easy and quick to make. You start by writing down your fundamental question or topic in the centre of a piece of paper and drawing a bubble around it. Next, write down the first idea that comes to mind (related to the main topic) in a space off to the side of the paper, draw a bubble around it and a line linking its bubble to the bubble around the main topic.

If your next idea is connected or related to that idea, write it down close to your first idea and draw a line between them. If the idea is not directly related, write it in a different space off to the side of the paper, and keep repeating this classification process with each idea you have.

By structuring and linking your ideas in this manner, you will create a visual map of them that you can use to plan the argument of your essay, prioritising the points you wish to make in each paragraph.




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Step 3: Formulate your thesis statement

Once you have mapped your response, it is time to formulate your thesis statement. Your **thesis statement** is the most important part of your essay. It tells your readers how you will be answering the question and what your argument will be. Put simply, your thesis statement is how you might answer the essay question in one sentence. The rest of your essay should then argue the validity of your thesis statement convincingly. Your thesis statement should be included in both your introduction and your conclusion.

Imagine you have just mapped your response to the example question and decide that *Shakespeare's words give John the means to express what he is thinking and feeling, and Shakespeare's ideas provide him with a strong set of moral principles, but these Elizabethan values are so alien to the World State and its citizens that they make it impossible for him to survive there.* Then this is your thesis statement.

 A **thesis statement** should accomplish three things:

- refer to the main topic (*John's use of Shakespeare*);
- state the main point/thesis (*is a form of conditioning*); and
- outline the body of the essay (*enables John to express his emotions and provides him with a strong sense of morality, but his Elizabethan values are alien to the World State and its citizens*).



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Step 4: Link your ideas together

Once you have completed your brainstorming and formulated your thesis statement, you are ready to structure your essay by linking your ideas together to form a logical, convincing argument.

Your concept map/plan should already highlight the links between your ideas. Now you need to prioritise them and decide in what order to present them. A simple way to do this is to number each idea on your plan. Depending on the number of ideas you have, you may need to select only the most relevant.

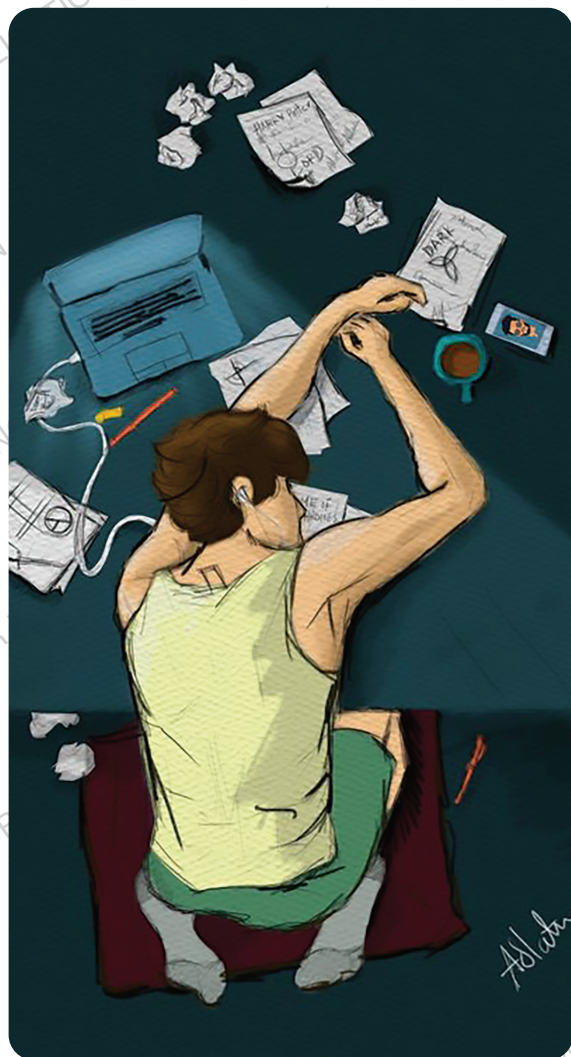
Once you have prioritised and organised your ideas, you can structure your argument and essay. There are three distinct parts to an essay that you should keep in mind when structuring: the introduction, the body and the conclusion.

The introduction:

First impressions count! A strong, well-written and attention-grabbing introduction is critical. Your introduction should tell your reader what to expect from your essay. You need to state (i) what you will be arguing and (ii) how you will be arguing it. Be sure to include your thesis statement and a short 'preview' of what you will be covering in the body of your essay.

It is often a good idea to use key words from the topic question in your introduction as this shows that your argument is focused and relevant but avoid copying the wording of the question too closely because this suggests a lack of imagination.

While your introduction is the first thing your marker will read, it does not have to be the first thing you write. It often helps to write the body of your essay first so that you know what needs to be previewed when you write your introduction.



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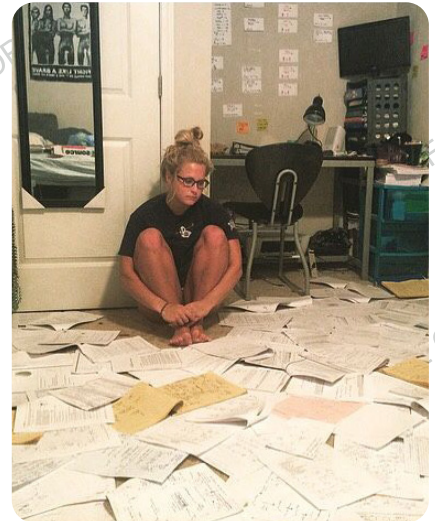
The body:

The body of your essay will be where you convince the reader of your argument by substantiating your thesis statement with analyses and examples from the text. The body will consist of several paragraphs (depending on your word count), each of which expresses one point, which you then explain and support with textual evidence.


When constructing the body paragraphs, it is useful to keep the **T-E-A model** in mind:

- **'T'** represents the **Topic** sentence of your paragraph. Just as a thesis statement summarises the main argument of your essay, a topic sentence summarises the main point of that particular paragraph. Remember, you should only be making *one point per paragraph*.
- **'E'** represents your **Evidence**, in other words, the examples you use from the text to support the point you are making. You should not rely on your examples to make your argument for you, however. These should rather illustrate or prove the point you have already made (in your topic sentence). Evidence can take the form of paraphrased examples in your own words or direct quotations from the text. If you choose to quote, make sure you do so accurately (*see next section*).
- **'A'** represents your **Analysis**, in other words, the explanation of how your point is relevant to your thesis statement and how it is illustrated by your examples. Keep asking yourself: *Is the point I am making relevant to my argument? Have I made it clear to my reader how this point relates to my thesis statement?*

Another important consideration to keep in mind is the linking of your paragraphs. Ensure that each paragraph follows on from the last in a logical manner and try to avoid sudden leaps from one disparate point to another, as this can be very jarring and negatively impact on the readability and flow of your essay.




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The PEEL deal:

An alternative writing model is P-E-E-L, which stands for Point, Evidence, Explanation and Link. It is a structure you can use when writing each paragraph of your essay as follows:

- **POINT** — State the point you are going to make.
- **EVIDENCE** — Back it up, support your point with evidence or an example. Typically, this will be a quotation or a description of an event from the text.
- **EXPLANATION** — Explain how the evidence or example supports your point.
- **LINK** — Conclude by connecting the point you have just made to either your thesis statement or the point you intend to make in the next paragraph.



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The conclusion:

Your conclusion should provide a summary of your argument. Review the main points of your essay (perhaps considering the topic sentences of each of your paragraphs) and write three or four effective sentences that demonstrate how these points have proved the validity of your thesis statement.

Your conclusion should not simply restate your introduction, however. You need to demonstrate how your argument has progressed. Your conclusion is the last thing your marker will read before scoring your essay, so it should leave a good impression.

Step 5: Proofread your essay

When you have spent a fair amount of time writing an essay, the last thing you may want to do is read through it again. Yet doing so will help you identify and correct any silly errors, spelling mistakes and typos that may have crept into your text — easily made mistakes that undermine the quality of your essay and can lead to the loss of important marks. A great habit to develop is proofreading every essay you write before you hand it in. If you do not correct avoidable mistakes, it will suggest to your marker that your attitude is careless. In the classroom context, you can even ask someone else to read through your essay for you, with fresh eyes and a fresh perspective. During an examination, make sure that you leave a few minutes at the end of your allotted time to read through your essay again before handing in your paper.



Quoting correctly

Quoting correctly is a tricky skill to master but should not prove too difficult with practice. If you are ever uncertain about quoting, remember that you can also paraphrase examples from the text (i.e. write them in your own words). This option will ensure that you still support your argument with examples from the text but that you will avoid losing marks because of quoting incorrectly (especially in an examination context). If you choose to quote from the text in an essay, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Quoting from the text is meant to support or illustrate your argument (i.e. the point you are trying to convey). Do not rely on the quote to make your argument for you. You need to be explicit about the significance of your quote and how it supports the point you are making.
- It is important to integrate your quote so that the entire sentence reads smoothly and coherently and is grammatically correct.
- Your quote must be copied accurately from the original text. Indicate where your quote begins and ends with the correct form of quotation marks and, if you must make slight changes to the quote so that it fits in grammatically with your own sentence, indicate these alterations with the use of square brackets.
- Use short quotations and only the word, words or lines that are necessary to support your argument. If you decide to leave unnecessary words out of the quote, indicate this with the use of ellipses and brackets [...] where you have omitted words.



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Learn from your mistakes

Before you begin writing, it may be worth reviewing your past essays and taking note of any mistakes or advice from your marker(s). Keep these pointers in mind when writing your essay and actively try to improve on these areas. Before you start writing an examination, reflect on what may have gone wrong in the past or on any bad habits your marker(s) may have identified.



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Bad Habit Bingo Card

A fun way to identify some of the bad habits you may have developed. Simply circle each of the habits in the grid that you recognise in your writing. The goal is to become more aware of these habits and work towards eliminating them.

Inadequate or no planning.	Giving up easily (e.g. incomplete answer or rambling to fill space).	Procrastinating.	Quoting incorrectly (e.g. not integrating quotes).
Mismanaging time and not finishing.	Making points without substantiating them.	Answering the question incorrectly.	Poor preparation.
Sloppy/untidy presentation.	Avoiding proofreading work.	Using too many quotes.	Failing to explain the significance of a quote.
Excessive use of adverbs.	Failing to organise and prioritise ideas before writing.	Plagiarism.	Repeating the same phrases and clichés throughout essay.

- FOREWORD
- BACKGROUND TO THE NOVEL
- INTRODUCTION TO THE NOVEL
- CRITICAL COMMENTARY
- LITERARY ANALYSIS
- LITERARY ESSAY
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

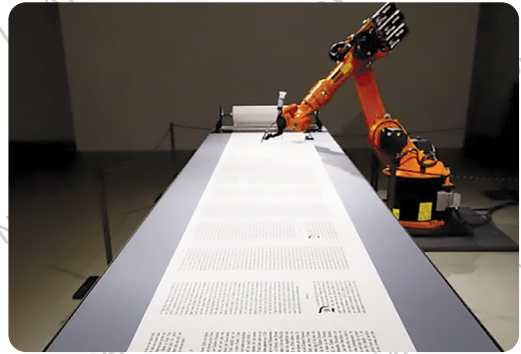


Using online information and artificial intelligence chatbots

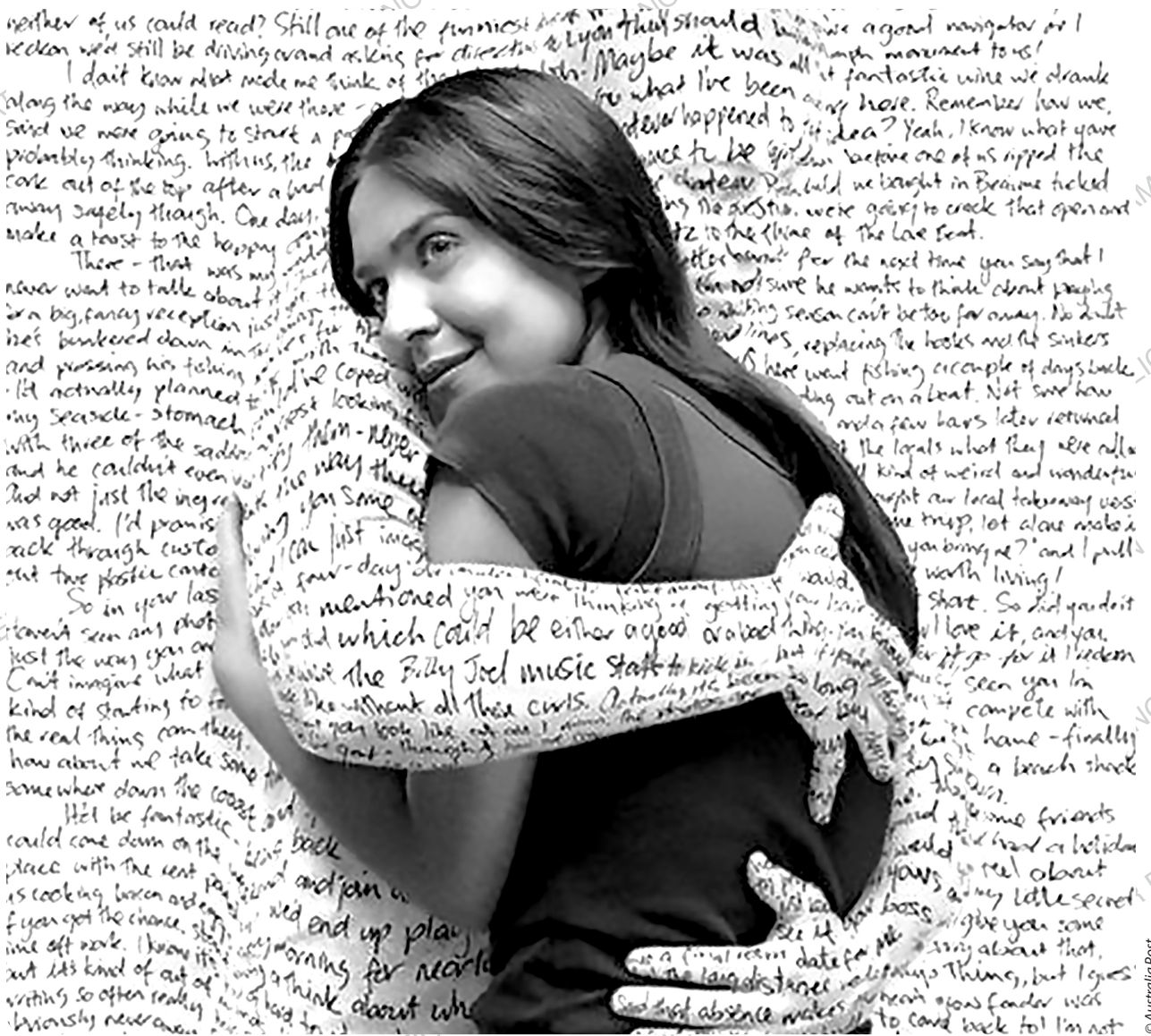
Remember that there are hazards and drawbacks to searching online for information or using artificial intelligence chatbots like ChatGPT. Anyone can post their ideas on the internet and these ideas may not necessarily be useful or even correct. A good deal of the free information related to literary texts online is quite poor. Likewise, artificial intelligence chatbots regularly ‘hallucinate’ and fabricate events and exchanges/quotes that do not occur in the actual text, as well as manufacturing the secondary sources and references they cite.

If you are tempted to use online resources, nonetheless, make sure that you evaluate and cross-reference every idea, every fact and every citation thoroughly before including it in your work. Also remember that you need to reference correctly every secondary source (website, forum, chatbot etc.) you include in your essay, both in the classroom and examination context. If you do not explicitly reference ideas that are not your own, you will be guilty of plagiarism, a form of intellectual theft that is highly likely to lose you marks and is, ultimately, a serious legal offence.

Lastly, remember that your marker is interested in what you think regarding the topic or issue about which you are writing, not the ideas and opinions of a random internet source or chatbot, and will seek to reward your personal ideas the most highly — provided they are feasible and substantiated, of course.



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FOREWORD

BACKGROUND TO THE NOVEL

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LITERARY ANALYSIS

LITERARY ESSAY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Annotated essay examples

The following section features two example essays that have been written to meet the format and requirements of the IEB Grade 12 Literary essay. The essays have been annotated to emphasise the structural elements that have been used. These examples are provided for students to review and from which to learn. Please note that these example essays are offered as guidelines to the recommended formatting and structure of essays only and that students are encouraged to develop their written 'voice' (vocabulary, tone, point of view and use of syntax) by practising the skill of essay writing.

Essay Question 1:

Read the following:

'John's fascination with the works of William Shakespeare functions as a profound form of intellectual conditioning, meticulously sculpting his mind and moral framework. Through Shakespeare, John internalises a set of values that sharply clash with those upheld by the World State; where his worldview reveres individual passion, tragedy, and the intensity of human emotion, the World State champions a sterile uniformity, repressing such fervour in favour of stability and conformity.'

— Peter Bowering

TOPIC:

Critically discuss how John's fascination with the works of **William Shakespeare** serves as a type of **conditioning** that shapes his **mind** and **morals**, paying particular attention to the way in which his values derived from Shakespeare contrast with the values of the World State.

[30]



Notes on the essay topic:

- This question requires you to consider (1) the way John uses Shakespeare and (2) whether his usage is like the way citizens of the World State have been conditioned, for example, the way they use hypnopædic sayings.
- Your discussion should encompass both (1) what John's intellectual and moral values are and (2) how these differ from those expressed by citizens of the World State.
- You will need to understand and comment on the roles played by (1) conditioning and (2) Shakespearean references in the novel.
- Key words include 'Shakespeare', 'conditioning', 'morals' and 'values'. You should try to use these words in the essay itself.

Response:

Essay:

As a boy eager to read, John is given a copy of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* in the pueblo, and it makes an indelible impression on his character and morals. As his mother knows so little and the men of the tribe refuse to share their knowledge with him, John learns from Shakespeare's plays instead. He describes how the 'strange words rolled through his mind [and] rumbled, like talking thunder'. He notes how the bard's words 'talked to him' and held 'a terrible beautiful magic'. **Throughout the novel, Shakespeare's words give John the means to express what he is thinking and feeling, and Shakespeare's ideas provide him with a strong set of moral principles, but these Elizabethan values are so alien to the World State and its citizens that they make it impossible for him to survive there.**

Introduction

Comments

Note the structure of the introductory paragraph: the thesis statement is indicated in **bold** (this is the main argument to which we will refer throughout the essay).

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