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### Dystopia and How it Warns Readers

Dystopia is a genre that always hooks readers in because of the themes which can be found in many dystopian novels. The common themes which can be found in dystopias are corruption, loyalty, propaganda, survival, sense of identity and hope. These are important themes which should be taught in a classroom because students should learn exactly what could happen if power falls into the wrong hands or how no matter what there will always be hope. Hope is an important lesson to convey. As students grow, they go through troubling times and they need encouragement to continue hoping. Dystopian novels are important for this lesson since they usually bring in a protagonist which becomes a symbol of hope. Since dystopian novels are usually very entertaining and engaging for a young reader, it would not be a difficult task to engage a young reader to take their time reading one of these works. Dystopian novels are often written for young readers because of the messages they convey and how the students are able to take that message and use it for everyday life. For example, George Orwell's *1984*, is a perfect example of a dystopian novel because it focuses on government control and it is considered as a cautionary tale. It is important to show how these young readers are in charge of the choices they make and how it impacts their future and everyone else's. Dystopian novels are a perfect form of

genre which teaches these young readers that they are in charge but there is hope for them and their future since dystopian novels usually have a happy ending.

#### Annotated Bibliography

1. *1984* George Orwell (Have Read) *1984* is a cautionary tale about the control and government monitoring. Winston Smith is the protagonist and he struggles with the control that “Big Brother” has on him and everyone else. His relationship with Julia makes matters more complicated and Winston dwells into the “Brotherhood” which gets him in trouble.  
  
*1984* is the perfect example of a dystopian society and a dystopian novel with a message that is important to teach to young readers. Government control is a topic which readers would be interested in as there are many real life examples which can be shown to compare *1984* with. *1984* warns readers on what could happen if a society allows the government control to go too far and unchallenged.
2. *Divergent* by Veronica Roth (Have Read) *Divergent* follows Tris as she changes communities than the one she was born in to join “Dauntless”. The novel and series follows Tris as she manages her new life in Dauntless. Then she learns that maybe the government which controls their society isn’t what it seems to be.  
  
*Divergent* is a great novel which can show young readers what it takes for personal growth. Corruption and fear mongering is a common theme in *Divergent* and readers follow Tris as she breaks the cycle of being controlled. Tris is also a symbol of hope as she does undetected in the novel as being a “divergent”. An

important lesson for young readers is to remember no one has the power to change or control you but yourself and *Divergent* is a great example of that.

3. *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card (Have Not Read)

“Andrew "Ender" Wiggin thinks he is playing computer simulated war games; he is, in fact, engaged in something far more desperate. The result of genetic experimentation, Ender may be the military genius Earth desperately needs in a war against an alien enemy seeking to destroy all human life.”

*Ender's Game* is an important novel because it teaches readers about compassion and how to be a leader. Ender is so good at the game he plays because he is able to understand his enemy and be compassionate towards them. Young readers take the time to grow with these characters and learn more things about themselves just like Ender does as the novel progresses.

4. *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline (Have Not Read)

“IN THE YEAR 2044, reality is an ugly place. The only time teenage Wade Watts really feels alive is when he's jacked into the virtual utopia known as the OASIS. Wade's devoted his life to studying the puzzles hidden within this world's digital confines, puzzles that are based on their creator's obsession with the pop culture of decades past and that promise massive power and fortune to whoever can unlock them.”

*Ready Player One* is about escaping. There are healthy and unhealthy ways of escaping one's realities and this is seen in *Ready Player One* with Wade. It is important for a reader to see Wade's journey and think if they have the same

habits of escapism themselves. The importance of learning what is and isn't healthy is evident in *Ready Player One* as well and can teach readers a valuable lesson on their own escape.

5. *The 5th Wave* by Rick Yancey (Have Not Read) 5 different waves cause different tragedies as Cassie's life is turned upside down. There is no one to trust because the monsters look like people. Cassie has to survive to find and save her brother and learn to trust others along the way.

*The 5th Wave* is a great novel to teach young readers about trust. Cassie has to learn how to survive and trust herself and others. It is an important message for readers to know it is okay to ask for help especially when you truly need it.

6. *The Giver* by Lois Lowry (Have Read)

*The Giver* centers around what seems like a utopia but is a dystopian future where they are assigned a role/career at a certain age, the career they will have for the rest of their lives. People only see in black and white; married couples are assigned babies, and there is no pain felt in this society. However, Jonas's career is known as the "Receiver of Memory," in which he receives and sees the memories of what the world was like in the past and is exposed to all the colors and emotions in the world.

*The Giver* is all about knowing. Knowing what is right and wrong, colors, feelings and more. The readers learn with Jonas as he receives all the memories of the past. This novel is essential for young readers as it shows them the power which

knowledge has. If you are knowledgeable, you are more likely to be able to form your own opinions and form ideas on how to move forward.

7. *The Grace Year* by Kim Ligget (Have Not Read)

*The Grace Year* centers on young girls when they turn a certain age they reach their “grace year”. The “grace year” is when girls turn sixteen and they develop powers and they are sent away so their powers can be released. Tierney Jones is the protagonist who wishes women would not be put against each other and for a different society.

*The Grace Year* is a great novel in which teaches young readers how to be brave and be true to oneself. Tierney is a headstrong female protagonist which is rare in some dystopian novels. It is important for readers to know how one can find the courage to be brave and be true to oneself because of the decisions they may have to face along the way of life or in their reading journey.

8. *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (Have Read)

*The Hunger Games* is a story set in a dystopian America called Panem. Katniss Everdeen volunteers in her sister’s place for the “Hunger Games” which is a big event where 24 “tributes” are picked from each “district,” and they have to fight to the death. The trilogy follows Katniss as she wins the Hunger Games and tries to bring down the government that continues the games.

*The Hunger Games* is a perfect example of the dystopian novel that teaches the readers about hope. Katniss Everdeen is a great example of finding hope and what to do when everyone expects you to become a symbol of hope. Katniss struggles

with the hope she needs to win the Hunger Games and later become the Mocking Jay, but as she does, readers can grow with her and find that same hope in themselves.

9. *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner (Have Read)

*The Maze Runner* follows Thomas who wakes up in a location he does not and he meets multiple boys who are used to this little community they have created.

Thomas and the group of other boys are stuck in the middle of a maze and their goal is to find the end. When a girl shows up in the maze, Thomas and the other boys begin to wonder more as to why they are in the maze and if they will ever find their way out of the maze.

*The Maze Runner* is another great example of finding hope and never giving up. It is these important lessons which have readers wanting to continue reading a story or even continuing hoping in their own lives as well. Since there is so much pain, uncertainty and learning how to trust others in *The Maze Runner* and other dystopian novels, readers learn and grow with the characters and can even find themselves relating to some of the problems these characters may face.

10. *The Selection* by Kiera Cass (Have Read) *The Selection* is a more light dystopian novel compared to the others on the list. Girls compete for the hand of the prince so they can become a princess and future queen. America is the protagonist who is in a love triangle with the prince and her lover back home.

*The Selection* is a lighter dystopian novel which follows America as she tries to follow her own heart. This is a great message for young readers as many other

dystopian novels focus on corruption, tyranny and false hopes. Following one's heart is an important message for young readers as it is a difficult time for most of them and they decide many things which impact their future. The same can be seen with America as her future is in her own hands.

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