

Utopias and Dystopias

Elizabeth Jasperse

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Dr. Smagorinsky

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Rationale:

This unit is designed for a rural North Georgia town on block scheduling with 90 minute class periods. The students to whom this unit is directed are 9th graders who are at grade level or a little below; perhaps there are some inclusion students in the class.

A unit on utopian and dystopian literary works can be valuable for many reasons. First, it shows students examples of how life could be different. In the community for which this unit is designed, students rarely travel more than two hours away from home; it is rare that a student will have traveled to another region in the United States, much less out of the country. With a limited set of geographical and cultural experiences, viewing different communities could be very informative for them. It would be great if one could use authors of other ethnicities and national origins, but it is exceedingly difficult to find any non-white utopian or dystopian authors. The unit can express diversity by drawing works from a variety of time periods in an attempt to make up for the lack of variety of authors.

Sometimes, students may take their personal freedoms for granted, and learning about dystopias will help them more appreciate “the good life.” If they value their talents and strengths, “Harrison Bergeron” would help them to appreciate our culture, which prizes individuality and excellence. If they are intensely independent students, they will appreciate their freedoms more after reading *The Giver* and “The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas.”

Reading about utopias will help students ascertain what *they* consider to be a utopia; they may hope to cure social ills or improve equality among the races or genders. These idealistic improvements are necessary for young people to hope for. Part of our job as a teacher is to inspire and inform the student, and if they can develop

an idea of a utopian society in their mind, some of those idealistic improvements may become hope for a better nation in the future. Students in this insulated community have seen very little to no extreme poverty, homelessness, murder, rape, arson, or even graffiti. When they compare authors' and their own ideas of utopia with the harsh reality, they may be inspired to start their own social reforms, thus becoming part of the larger community.

The unit begins with *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. *The Giver* is a commonly read book, usually in the 7th or 8th grade for traditionally higher achievers and 8th or 9th for other students. It is a short novel, which would make it unintimidating for less proficient readers. Even if students have read *The Giver* before entering into this unit, there is much to be learned each time one reads it. It is a book that is easy to read (the vocabulary is not difficult; it is not very long), but it is difficult to read *well* (intense and thought-provoking themes). It brings up heavy and controversial topics such as euthanasia, freedom of choice, and the value of the individual. Perhaps a student has read *The Giver* before my class, but one reads a new book every time one reads a book, even if they have read it before. Their experiences have changed since they read it last (if ever), and the summation of their experiences is what adds value to anything they read and the discussions that come from those readings. Students will appreciate their status as a free thinker more after seeing a world in which everyone thinks the same way.

If students *have* read *The Giver* before, it can segue into a genre of literature that may be brand-new for them. By using the familiar as an entryway into the unfamiliar, the new material will be less intimidating and less overwhelming. Books like *The Giver* can be valuable resources on standardized tests because their "simple" appearance is deceiving; there is a lot to unpack in such a small space. Knowing about this artificial

simplicity and learning how to do that unpacking will help students as they learn to read critically and question and analyze texts.

Mixing up types of literature is important; there are several short stories and poems that go very well with a unit on utopias and dystopias. Reading the Bible's description of utopia will be interesting for these students; the vast majority of these students are Protestant Christians, and thus, they will have probably read Genesis 2 before, but they have probably never read it as literature. They have probably never thought about how Eden was a utopia and how it compares to modern life and the life portrayed in the other works we will read. When studying the Bible, we will not be taking a religious perspective, but simply reading it as another example of a utopia in literature. No personal beliefs of mine will be introduced in the class, and I will encourage literary responses. If they would like to write a religious perspective in their journals, that is perfectly acceptable, but classroom discussion will focus mainly on the Bible as a text.

"The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" by Ursula K. Le Guin is a great short story with a message that can be very relatable to youth of high school age. Some may argue that this is a really tough text, more suitable for older students, but once in the mindset of this unit, I think students will be able to understand it well. Particularly if it becomes relatable to them, "The Ones..." can be really impactful. In an age in which peer pressure and the need to be socially accepted is so important, learning to stand up for what you believe in or for what is "right" is a valuable lesson. If they put themselves in the shoes of citizens of Omelas, they will be learning about themselves—as they contemplate what choices they would make in that situation, they are exploring the self, what they value, and what their society values. They will ponder the question "is having a utopian society worth it if its existence is based on the absolute suffering of

another human?" They will learn that making the choice between right and wrong is not always easy but necessary.

Finally, "Harrison Bergeron" by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. is an accessible work that is very telling of what a society values. It will spark students to question what they really value; is true equality what they really desire? This may bring up some touchy subjects like discrimination and prejudice, but those conversations are necessary for an age group in the process of defining themselves. Students will observe a society that does not place value on individuality and individual excellence as we do in the United States, and it may be disconcerting for them. They also may learn to appreciate their strengths and weaknesses more because they are considered "dangerous" by the government Vonnegut portrays. The lengths to which the government goes to equalize the individuals in society may make students realize all of the different kinds of diversity—not just race, gender, and ethnic group, but athletic ability, size, and intelligence, too. In 9th grade, students are struggling with defining and asserting their individuality, and to see a world in which this is not an option may make them think about what they find valuable.

Studying the lyrics to music is a literary route that is rarely taken inside the English classroom. I believe that lyrics can be literature, and it is a genre that is often overlooked but extremely interesting to students. In a world in which most students have an mp3 player, it would be remiss of us as educators to ignore an element so fundamental to the lives of most of our students. The songs I have selected to study are ones that specifically bring up the issue of utopias and dystopias. "Blowin' in the Wind" (Dylan) and "Imagine" (Lennon) are very popular songs, and paired with the lesser known "Utopia" (Morissette), we have a good musical definition of both utopia

and dystopia. We also have a springboard for a discussion on how the definition of “utopia” can be different for all of us.

Some may argue that most utopian and dystopian literature is not part of the traditional canon and therefore, not as valuable or necessary. I don't think this is true. I think utopian and dystopian literature is not usually taught as a cohesive unit; a unit and the repetition it provides would increase the impact of the message those authors are trying to convey for younger students. The “moral” to most utopian and dystopian works of literature is to appreciate personal freedom and one's individuality. By creating a utopia or dystopia, one must limit free choice and human nature, thus stifling the individual. Some of the themes in this unit can be argued as more mature; older students generally read some of these texts, but I think the combination of works and discussion will make the literature more accessible to students as they try to navigate this new season of their lives. Students will take that great lesson from this unit, and that lesson can become valuable as they become better citizens of their school and community as they learn to appreciate freedoms and other individuals as they are, not as they would be in “utopia.” This unit can inspire them to be better stewards of their personal freedom and realize the repercussions of their actions; this unit also could inspire them to think about the elements that add the “dys” to “dystopia” and to think about the “dys” in our society. These students have the ability to correct social ills, but they have to discover for themselves what those ills are. A study of utopian and dystopian literature may help them to do just that.

Materials:

Novels:

The Giver by Lois Lowry

Short Stories, Poems, etc:

Genesis 2 from the Bible—the description of the Garden of Eden

“The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” by Ursula K. Le Guin

“Harrison Bergeron” by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

“Blowin’ in the Wind” by Bob Dylan (song)

“Imagine” by John Lennon (song)

“Utopia” by Alanis Morissette (song)

Activity Materials for the Unit:

12 pieces of Post-it chart sticky paper

6 packs of magic markers

large bag of fun-sized KitKats

burnable CD

transparency paper

3 7-ft lengths of white butcher paper

white paper

colored paper

scissors

glue sticks

colored pencils

3 black-and-white disposable cameras

3 pieces of poster board

3 Sharpies

Goals and Rubrics

Journals and Reflective Writings

We will be writing journal entries for fifteen minutes three days a week during class: Mondays, Tuesdays, and either Wednesday or Thursday. You are also welcome to write at non-required times.

Our goal with journal entries is to become quick thinkers and responders; it is important to be able to translate thoughts to paper. Most responses will deal with our readings and your personal responses to them, but some will concern current events, social or personal questions. Most of the journal entries with a given prompt will have a persuasive theme to better prepare us for our final essay. These journals are not graded on grammar and conventions of language, but instead, the importance is placed on the ideas, textual relationships, and questions produced. I want to know what you think, not just a summary of what we read and discussed today.

Feel free to decorate and personalize your composition book! You will be using it all semester, so let it reflect you, your personality, and your style! There will be crates in the back of the room for during-the-week storage.

Entry length guidelines: $\frac{1}{2}$ page in a wide-ruled composition book. I will be checking your journals at random intervals, so stay on your toes!

An example prompt: "The society in *The Giver* is based on Sameness. Competition has been eliminated; the climate is controlled. What are the benefits of Sameness? What would be lost if everything were the same? Advantages and disadvantages to diversity?"

Journal Rubric

For an **A**, your journal must:

- Have an entry for each day (100%) assigned.
- Meets or exceeds the entry length requirement.
- Be insightful.
- Address the readings, if applicable.
- Be neat and organized (in chronological order).
- Be turned in on time.

For a **B**, your journal must:

- Have an entry for most days (80%) assigned.
- Meets the required length for most entries.
- Be moderately insightful.
- Address the readings, if applicable.
- Be neat and organized (in chronological order).
- Be turned in on time.

For a **C**, your journal must:

- Have an entry for 50% of days assigned.
- Meets the required length for half of the entries.
- Be minimally insightful.
- Address the readings in few entries.
- Is not very neat and organized.
- Is not turned in on time.

For a **D**, your journal must:

- Have an entry for 25% (or less) of days assigned.
- Does not meet the required length for most of the entries.
- Show no insight.
- Does not address the readings in most entries.
- Is not neat and organized.

- Is not turned in on time.

For an **F**, your journal must:

- Not be turned in.

***Keep in mind that I am required by law to share any thoughts or suggestions of violence, suicide, substance abuse, family abuse, or other harmful behavior with the school counselors. Please don't write anything I cannot read, but please feel open to write about anything.*

"Harrison Bergeron" Short Story Interpretation

You will be re-writing the short story "Harrison Bergeron" with one of your own. You will be writing from the perspective of the Handicapper General, and your purpose for writing is to persuade your reader that your mode of equalization is best for the citizens. It should inspire us to agree with you. You can use the folded-paper method to develop your points of argument; you should state your opinion clearly; you should think about your audience; you should use examples of inequality and how they negatively affect us to convince us.

Paper Rubric:

For an **A**, your paper must:

- Be 2 – 3 pages in length.
- Have a clear and focused topic.
- Hold the reader's attention, speaking to the intended audience in a clear and engaging tone.
- Include relevant examples and anecdotes that enhance the persuasiveness of the paper.
- Include accurate details that enhance the persuasiveness of the paper.
- Anticipate and answer the readers' questions and skepticism.
- Have organization that enhances your thesis.
- Have an order of information that is compelling and flows smoothly.

- Include thoughtful transitions.
- Have well-placed examples.
- Have an original title.
- Use specific and accurate words.
- Use varied sentence length and structure.
- Use conventions of English language and MLA format very well.
- Spelling and grammatical issues do not detract from the effectiveness of the work.
- Be turned in on time.

For a **B**, your paper must:

- Is within ½ page of the length requirement of 2 – 3 pages.
- Use good persuasive examples, but they seem misplaced.
- Use accurate details.
- Have a good thesis.
- Have transitions.
- Have an order of information that flows somewhat smoothly.
- Hold the reader's attention moderately well.
- Use conventions of English language and MLA format well.
- Have grammar and spelling mistakes that detract little from the work and its ability to persuade.
- Be one to two days late.

For a **C**, your paper must:

- Is within 1 page of the length requirement.
- Uses examples, but they are not very persuasive.
- Be poorly organized.
- Have a thesis, but it is unclear.
- Have very few transitions.
- Have reasonably clear ideas, but they are not supported with details.
- Generally stay on topic.
- Have some sentence variation, but it is mostly routine.
- Use most conventions of English language and MLA format.

- Have grammar and spelling mistakes that detract from the work and its ability to persuade.
- Be three to four days late.

For a **D**, your paper must:

- Is further than 1 page from the length requirement.
- Have little to no logical organization.
- Persuades the reader very little, if at all.
- Seem to still be searching for a thesis.
- Have no transitions.
- Be redundant.
- Use very choppy sentences.
- Connections between ideas are confusing.
- Does not persuade the reader with good examples.
- Does not use conventions of English language and MLA format.
- Have grammar and spelling mistakes that make reading your essay very difficult.
- Be more than four days late.

For an **F**, your paper must:

- Not be turned in.

Travel Brochure

You will be making a travel brochure for the community in *The Giver*. You can include things like a map of the area, types of industry, climate, customs, religions, foods, government, recreational activities, public services, and places to go and see. Feel free to make this as colorful as possible. You will receive a pass/fail grade on this activity. To pass, you must use details from the novel, be persuasive, and stretch your creative muscles.

The Job Search

You will be writing a persuasive letter to a fictional potential employer when we read *The Giver*. Previously in the day, you will have written a list of your strengths and weaknesses, and your job is to convince the employer that s/he should hire you based on your qualifications. Use your list of strengths and your past experience as evidence for you being a great choice to hire. You will receive a pass/fail grade on this activity. To pass, you must define the job you wish to have, use specific examples about yourself that make you qualified, and be convincing in your argument for employment

Persuasive Essay

We have been talking a lot about personal choice and the pros and cons of different situations. We have also written many persuasive pieces in preparation for the final essay. In this essay, you will argue your stance on Omelas. If you lived in Omelas, would you stay or leave? Why? Why should others stay or leave with you? Synthesize your ideas and convince your audience to side with you.

Paper Rubric

For an **A**, your paper must:

- Be 3 – 5 pages in length.
- Have a clear and focused topic.
- Hold the reader's attention, speaking to the intended audience in a clear and engaging tone.
- Include relevant examples and anecdotes that enhance the persuasiveness of the paper.
- Include accurate details that enhance the persuasiveness of the paper.
- Anticipate and answer the readers' questions and skepticism.
- Have organization that enhances your thesis.
- Have an order of information that is compelling and flows smoothly.

- Include thoughtful transitions.
- Have well-placed examples.
- Have an original title.
- Use specific and accurate words.
- Use varied sentence length and structure.
- Use conventions of English language and MLA format very well.
- Spelling and grammatical issues do not detract from the effectiveness of the work.
- Be turned in on time.

For a **B**, your paper must:

- Is within ½ page of the length requirement of 3 – 5 pages.
- Use good persuasive examples, but they seem misplaced.
- Use accurate details.
- Have a good thesis.
- Have transitions.
- Have an order of information that flows somewhat smoothly.
- Hold the reader's attention moderately well.
- Use conventions of English language and MLA format well.
- Have grammar and spelling mistakes that detract little from the work and its ability to persuade.
- Be one to two days late.

For a **C**, your paper must:

- Is within 1 page of the length requirement.
- Uses examples, but they are not very persuasive.
- Be poorly organized.
- Have a thesis, but it is unclear.
- Have very few transitions.
- Have reasonably clear ideas, but they are not supported with details.
- Generally stay on topic.
- Have some sentence variation, but it is mostly routine.
- Use most conventions of English language and MLA format.

- Have grammar and spelling mistakes that detract from the work and its ability to persuade.
- Be three to four days late.

For a **D**, your paper must:

- Is further than 1 page from the length requirement.
- Have little to no logical organization.
- Persuades the reader very little, if at all.
- Seem to still be searching for a thesis.
- Have no transitions.
- Be redundant.
- Use very choppy sentences.
- Connections between ideas are confusing.
- Does not persuade the reader with good examples.
- Does not use conventions of English language and MLA format.
- Have grammar and spelling mistakes that make reading your essay very difficult.
- Be more than four days late.

For an **F**, your paper must:

- Not be turned in.

Participation

Your participation will be a pass/ fail grade. I will base this decision upon your thoughtful contributions to class discussion, participation in class activities, behavior and cooperation during class, participation in Sustained Silent Reading, and being on time for class.

At the beginning of the semester, if you are uncomfortable with speaking up in group discussion, you can replace the oral participation in class with a follow-up email

or journal, which should be substantive, thoughtful, and of a reasonable length (no less than $\frac{1}{2}$ page, but it can be as long as you'd like). This cannot be a mere summary of the day's discussion.

**Week 1:
Day 1 (Monday):**

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: quixotic—extravagantly chivalrous or romantic; visionary, impractical, or impracticable; like Don Quixote.

Quote of the Day: “The human soul has still greater need of the ideal than the real. It is by the real that we exist; it is by the ideal that we live.” --Victor Hugo

Transparency:

Quickwrite 1: Write about what would make the perfect school.

Quickwrite 2: Write about what would make the worst school.

Group Work: The left side of the room is illustrating/depicting the perfect school. The right side is illustrating the worst school.

Materials:

individual pencil and paper

6 pieces of Post-it chart sticky paper

6 packs of magic markers

dry erase board and markers

5 KitKats (one for each member of the winning group, one for the scribe)

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

5 minutes: explain the assignment, put up transparency: you will be writing two different Quickwrites... what do you think would make the perfect school? What do you think would make the worst possible school? Don't worry about grammar and punctuation—you can even make a list!

5 minutes: individually Quickwrite about the perfect school

5 minutes: individually Quickwrite about the worst school

5 minutes: get into 6 groups of 4, move desks, pass out markers and Post-it chart sticky paper

20 minutes: illustrate in groups what you think would make perfect/worst schools (left side = perfect school, right side = worst school). Try to illustrate, don't just make a list. KitKats to the group with the best Post-it.

27 minutes: present and discuss findings. Use these definitions to define “utopia” and “dystopia.” Break down the words (dys= ill or bad, etc.). The scribe can write a list of our findings on the board, divided into the two categories. Are all of the items obviously utopian or dystopian, or is there some debate?

5 minutes: return desks, stick Post-it paper to the wall for display

15 minutes: journaling, SAT problem of the day, pack up, pass out KitKats

Day 2 (Tuesday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: dystopia: a society characterized by human misery, as squalor, oppression, disease, and overcrowding.

utopia: an ideal place or state, any visionary system of political or social perfection.

Quote of the Day: "Did perpetual happiness in the Garden of Eden maybe get so boring that eating the apple was justified?" --Chuck Palahniuk

Handout: copy of Genesis 2 and 3

Transparency:

Quickwrite: Is the Garden of Eden a utopia or a dystopia? What characteristics make it so? Would you like to live there?

Materials:

Individual paper and pencil

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

15 minutes: read handout of Genesis 2 and 3 and Quickwrite on this topic: Is the Garden of Eden a utopia or dystopia? What characteristics make it so? Would you like to live there?

5 minutes: get in groups of ~5, move desks

10 minutes: discuss Quickwrite/prompt within the group

3 minutes: move desks back

39 minutes: discuss as a class ... What did you talk about within your groups? Would you like to live in Eden? Would the temptation be too great? "Eden" comes from the Hebrew for "delight." Would you be delighted to live there? Maybe for a few days? How about years? How about eternity? What details make the Garden of Eden a utopia? A dystopia? Are we dissatisfied with perfection? Do we like a challenge? Why are we motivated by someone saying "I bet you can't..."? Has that motivated you before? (have them tell a story).

15 minutes: journaling, SAT problem of the day, pack up

Day 3 (Wednesday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: chimerical: unreal; imaginary; visionary; wildly fanciful; highly unrealistic.

Quote of the Day: "Reality does not conform to the ideal, but confirms it." --Gustave Flaubert

Handout: song lyrics

Materials:

A CD with the 4 songs:

- 1) "All You Need Is Love"
- 2) "Blowin' in the Wind"
- 3) "Imagine"
- 4) "Utopia"

KitKat for the scribe

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping, play "All You Need Is Love" (The Beatles).

10 minutes: the scribe can write our findings on the board. Ask students what they know about hippies. Have they ever heard of a commune? Do we know what hippies stood for? How they traveled? How their beliefs still affect us today? (if we have extra time: What would hippies feel about today's society? The Patriot Act? The war in Iraq?) Talk about their previous knowledge, supplement with handout attached, if needed (it probably won't be needed).

If you need support:

The hippie subculture was originally a youth movement, beginning in the United States during the early 1960's and subsequently spread throughout the world. Hippies embraced a set of beliefs that revolved around the ideas of peace and love as essential in an increasingly globalized society. They are often associated with ideas of "free love," Volkswagens, anti-war protests, long hair, and Woodstock (1969). Many poets and artists (like The Grateful Dead, Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, etc) claim their roots in the hippie movement of the '60's. They are considered to have liberal political leanings (the left). Being called a "hippie" is sometimes meant as an insult from the conservative right wing. Hippies would create their own communities (often called communes), which usually worked on some basis of communism. They were vocal during the American Civil Rights Movement. They oppose organized religion and government control (called "The Man," "Big Brother," or "The Establishment"). They rejected established institutions, criticized middle class values, opposed nuclear weapons and the Vietnam War (even burning their draft cards in 1968 and the Democratic National Convention), embraced Eastern philosophy, and were often vegetarian and eco-friendly

(hence the name “tree hugger”). Hippie culture spread through music and soon, its fashion, film, and song had touched most of the world, for better or for worse. Their unkempt appearance was a deliberate symbol that they were willing to question authority and the norm. Many hippies traveled by hitchhiking (economical, eco-friendly, helped them meet people). The peace symbol was a UK symbol for nuclear disarmament, and it was adopted as a symbol of the entire hippie movement by popular culture after being embraced by anti-war protesters in the ‘60’s.

3 minutes: pass out song lyrics

16 minutes: read aloud (3 minutes) and then analyze “Blowin’ in the Wind” (Bob Dylan). Released in 1963—what does this mean to you? What defines utopia to Dylan? Is war a necessary part of living in peace? What particular social ills make his current situation a departure from utopia? Does he provide solutions?

16 minutes: read aloud (3 minutes) and then analyze “Imagine” (John Lennon). Released in 1971—what does this mean to you? Would you like a life without: countries, war, religion, possessions, hunger? Let’s talk about the pros and cons.

16 minutes: read aloud (3 minutes) and then analyze “Utopia” (Alanis Morissette). Define nirvana: a place or state characterized by freedom from or oblivion to pain, worry, and the external world. Released in 2001—what does this mean to you? Morissette only includes positive things descriptors; what affect does that have on you as a listener/reader? What other positive things would you have included? (you will want to write these in your journal for safekeeping)

4 minutes: SAT problem of the day

20 minutes: Sustained Silent Reading

Day 4 (Thursday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: mediocre: of only ordinary or moderate quality; neither good nor bad; barely adequate.

Quote of the Day: “Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it’s time to pause and reflect.” --Mark Twain

Handout: “Harrison Bergeron” and the Declaration of Independence.

Transparency:

Journal Prompt: What skills/attributes are you most proud of? Why?

Materials:

Individual paper and pencil

YouTube video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sI0INJIMI4k&NR=>

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

2 minutes: pass out pass out copies of “Harrison Bergeron” (Kurt Vonnegut) and the Declaration of Independence

18 minutes: read together “Harrison Bergeron”

8 minutes: fold a piece of notebook paper in half and on one half, write the pros of living in this society. On the other half, write the cons.

10 minutes: read the Declaration of Independence

8 minutes: following the half-paper technique, write the pros and cons of living in a society outlined by the Declaration of Independence.

12 minutes: discuss our pros and cons in small groups of 4 or 5. Have students think of how they’d argue for and against each one. Have each group think of the 2 pros and 2 cons they find most important to present to the class.

14 minutes: as a whole group, discuss the findings of the small group (for stills in the conversation: how does imposing mediocrity on everyone affect the whole society? how does equality-centered societies stifle everyone? make others happy?)

[if there is extra time: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sI0INJIMI4k&NR=1>

a YouTube video for fantasy football, highlighting the best players in the nation and specific skills that make them great. It can further spark discussion on the celebration of people with exemplary skills. And it’s super-impressive.]

15 minutes: journaling (prompt: what skills/attributes are you most proud of? Why?), SAT problem of the day, pack up

Day 5 (Friday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: preeminent: eminent above or before others; superior; surpassing; distinguished, peerless, supreme.

Quote of the Day: “The most important kind of freedom is to be what you really are. You trade in your reality for a role... You give up your ability to feel, and in exchange, put on a mask.” --Jim Morrison

Transparency:

Writing assignment: re-write “Harrison Bergeron” from the perspective of the Handicapper General; be persuasive!

Materials:

“Harrison Bergeron” for reference
Individual paper and pencil
KitKat to the book review volunteer

YouTube video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MphdRo5_7Us

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

2 minutes: make sure everyone still has “Harrison Bergeron”

6 minutes: review plotline

5 minutes: assignment: re-write the short story with one of your own from the perspective of the Handicapper General. The goal of your story is to persuade us that your mode of equalization is best for the citizens. It should inspire us to agree with you. You are practicing argumentation, so write very persuasively. You can use the folded-paper method to develop your points of argument; you should state your opinion clearly; you should think about your audience; you should use examples of inequality and how you plan to fix them to help convince us. Pass out rubric.

50 minutes: write individually

[if there is extra time, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MphdRo5_7Us
a YouTube video of America’s Got Talent—violin players, for more examples of how America even has TV shows dedicated to exceptionalism.]

3 minutes: SAT problem of the day

15 minutes: Sustained Silent Reading

5 minutes: a volunteer to talk about the book s/he is reading during Sustained Silent Reading time? Pitch it to the class. If no volunteers, pitch *1984*.

2 minutes: turn in story (they will be handed back Monday)

Week 2: Day 6 (Monday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: adherence—steady devotion, support, allegiance, or attachment.

Quote of the Day: “The average man does not want to be free. He simply wants to be safe.” --H.L. Mencken

Handout: Anticipation Guide

Name: _____

The Giver by Lois Lowry
Anticipation Guide

- _____ 1. An ideal community would not have any hunger or starvation.
- _____ 2. An idea community would not have any jealousy or competition.
- _____ 3. An ideal community would not have any unemployment.
- _____ 4. All children should have equal possessions and privileges at a certain age, regardless of the status of their families.
- _____ 5. Families are much closer when they share their families.
- _____ 6. Life would be better and easier if we did not carry bad memories in our heads.
- _____ 7. Overpopulation is such a problem that families should not be allowed to have more than two children.
- _____ 8. There is no real need to learn about world history.
- _____ 9. There is no real need to learn about one's own family's history.
- _____ 10. One's job or occupation in life should be a careful match of one's interests, talents, and skills.

Be prepared to explain your answers to the class!

Transparency:

Discussion in pairs on Handicapper General story: Did your partner portray the Handicapper General differently? Did you partner think of an argument you didn't? Can your partner think of counter-arguments for your arguments? Can you offer your partner suggestions for improving their argument? Were you persuaded?

Discussion in small groups on Anticipation Guide: On what don't you agree and why? What opposing viewpoints (and arguments for those viewpoints) are there? Are you swayed by your groupmates' opinions? What real-life experiences do you have to back up your opinions?

Materials:

pencil

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

5 minutes: address Friday's ticket out the door questions

3 minutes: give back their versions of "Harrison Bergeron"

15 minutes: discuss specific class-wide problems I saw in their writing (an example: agreement issues, there/their/they're, etc.)

10 minutes: get into pairs and discuss the specific arguments you made in your paper. Did your partner portray the Handicapper General differently? Did your partner think of an argument you didn't? Can your partner think of counter-arguments for your arguments? Can you offer your partner suggestions for improving their argument? Were you persuaded?

5 minutes: move desks back. Explain that if they re-write/correct their story, they can replace their current story grade. Address any concerns they have, ask for sharing of noteworthy arguments they or their partners had as Handicapper General.

1 minute: pass out Anticipation Guide

4 minutes: fill out Anticipation Guide

13 minutes: get into groups of 4 or 5 and discuss your answers. Discuss the ones everyone doesn't agree on. Why don't you agree? What opposing viewpoints (and arguments for those viewpoints) are there? Are you swayed by your groupmates' opinions? What real-life experiences do you have to back up your opinions?

2 minutes: move desks back.

14 minutes: discuss the Anticipation Guide as a class. What did you talk about in your small groups? What were your disagreements about?

15 minutes: journaling, SAT problem of the day, pack up

Day 7 (Tuesday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: euphemism—the substitution of a mild, indirect, or vague expression for one thought to be offensive, harsh, or blunt.

Quote of the Day: "The more syllables a euphemism has, the further divorced from reality it is." –George Carlin

Materials:

1 KitKat for each winner

Pencil and paper

Class set of *The Giver*

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

5 minutes: pass out class set of *The Giver*; explain that even though they may have read this book before, no one reads the same book twice. Also explain that I will have higher expectations for discussion while reading this book. It is easy to read, but difficult to read *well*, and we will be reading well.

15 minutes: read chapter 1 aloud as a class. (stop and talk: What do you think happens when someone is Released? Do you think the ritual of sharing Feelings is good or bad? Would you think that is helpful? How is that different from the modern American family?)

7 minutes: what is a euphemism? We use many euphemisms in our society, for softening the reality of death, for politely describing bodily functions, having children, etc.

3 minutes: get into groups of 4

4 minutes: explain the game: as a group, you will compile as many euphemisms as possible. We will get back together, and we'll see who has the most and most unique euphemisms.

10 minutes: euphemism brainstorm in groups

10 minutes: start with team 1, and they will announce one euphemism to the class. Any other group with that same euphemism has to strike it from their list. I will write them on the board. We will move in number order through the groups, compiling a list of euphemisms as a class (and each group striking the repeated euphemisms). The group with the most euphemisms at the end wins a KitKat each.

10 minutes: What euphemisms did you notice in Chapter 1? (Lowry's euphemisms: "released" (2), "feelings" (4), "animals" (5), "Nurturer" (5)). What do each of those words mean in our society? What do they mean in Jonas' society? Do euphemisms lessen the blow of the truth? Are they dishonest? Do they make the truth worse?

3 minutes: SAT problem of the day

20 minutes: Sustained Silent Reading

Day 8 (Wednesday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: adherence—the quality of adhering; steady devotion, support, allegiance, or attachment.

gravitate—to move or tend to move under the influence of gravitational force; to tend toward the lowest level; sink; fall.

Quote of the Day: Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive. --Harold Whitman

Transparency:

Journal Prompt: What is your job? How do you feel about your assignment? Do you think you would be well-suited? Why or why not? What would be the worst and best thing about this job?

Materials:

Class set of *The Giver*

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

16 minutes: read chapter 2 aloud as a class (stop and talk: who is the Receiver? Why might he be so important? Why is the Ceremony of 12 so important? How would you feel if careers were assigned this way?)

12 minutes: read chapter 3 aloud as a class (stop and talk: what do you think about the discouragement of mirrors? What would you think about a world without animals? What does Jonas notice about the apple?)

32 minutes: activity: the Job Search! Fold a piece of notebook paper in half vertically. On one side, write your strengths and on the other side, write your weaknesses. You can do this individually or use a partner's help. When you have finished compiling your strengths and weaknesses, brainstorm a list of jobs you might like to have someday. This list can have both practical and idealistic occupations on it. When you have finished brainstorming, pick the job on the list you would like the most or feel you are most qualified for. You will be writing a persuasive letter to a fictional potential employer; you are trying to convince him/her that you are qualified and perfect for this job. Use your list of strengths and your past experience as evidence.

12 minutes: discuss: Why do you think the community in *The Giver* is devoid of color? What could be the purpose? What are the advantages and disadvantages to having the emotional associations that come with seeing color?

15 minutes: assign homework (read chapter 4), hand out cards with job assignments while students do the SAT problem of the day, journaling (prompt: What is your job? How do you feel about your assignment? Do you think you would be well-suited? Why or why not?)

What would be the worst and best thing about this job? Why is the one you chose better; why are you better suited for that one?), pack up.

Day 9 (Thursday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: palpable—readily or plainly seen, heard, perceived, etc.; obvious; evident; capable of being touched or felt; tangible.

chastise—to discipline, esp. by corporal punishment; to criticize severely.

Quote of the Day: “Character is power.” --Booker T. Washington

Transparency:

Body Biography: Trace a group member onto the butcher paper. Illustrate the characteristics that define Jonas and make him unique. Choose things that promote discussion. Use words, visual symbols, pictures, and at least 4 quotes from the novel.

Materials:

Class set of *The Giver*

3 6½-7ft pieces of white butcher paper

1 magic marker per student

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

20 minutes: read chapter 5 aloud as a class (stop and talk: What was Jonas’ dream? What are the Stirrings? Why would it be important to the community to quell those feelings?)

20 minutes: read chapter 6 aloud as a class (stop and talk: What have we learned about Release? How does the ceremony of Release differ from our death traditions? Is one better or worse?)

30 minutes: Body Biography activity: In groups of 8, grab a piece of butcher paper. Each student gets a magic marker. Trace the outline of a group member onto the butcher paper. Your Body Biography should illustrate the characteristics that define Jonas and make him unique, and it should promote classroom discussion about him. Feel free to use words, visual symbols, pictures, and your Body Biography should have at least 4 quotes from *The Giver*. Pick your quotes wisely—they should describe Jonah perfectly!

14 minutes: each group presents their Body Biography, telling the class why they picked each of the descriptors of Jonah.

3 minutes: SAT problem of the day, assign homework (read chapter 7)

Day 10 (Friday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: transgression—violation of a law, command, etc.; sin.
infraction—breach; violation; infringement.

Quote of the Day: “We come to love not by finding a perfect person, but by learning to see an imperfect person perfectly.” --Sam Keen

Materials:

Movie trailer for “The Stepford Wives”: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3HASgMS7w0>
Class set of *The Giver*

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping, play “Little Moments” by Brad Paisley

20 minutes: read chapter 8 aloud as a class (stop and talk: from ch.7—“Thank you for your childhood”—what does this mean? What is the difference between being “assigned” and being “selected”? Why is Jonas selected for this job? What do you think is “the capacity to see beyond?”)

20 minutes: read chapter 9 aloud as a class (stop and talk: What does Jonas think of his rules? What do you think of his rules?)

20 minutes: read chapter 10 aloud as a class (stop and talk: What is different at the Receiver’s home? Why are there different standards for the Receiver and for the rest of the community?)

3 minutes: watch movie trailer for “The Stepford Wives”

13 minutes: discuss perfection in each other. What would life be lacking if we were all “perfect?” Would you *really* want a perfect mate? Would you want to be held to that same standard? Do you trust others to choose your mate for you (like in *The Giver*)? What about arranged marriages?

3 minutes: SAT problem of the day

5 minutes: a volunteer to talk about the book s/he is reading during Sustained Silent Reading time? Pitch it to the class. If no one volunteers, pitch *Gathering Blue*.

3 minutes: Next Tuesday, we will be having Show and Tell. Everyone will be bringing a token of a memory to share with the class. It can be a picture, article, trinket, or souvenir. Remember to bring something that is school-appropriate and be ready to share!

Week 3:
Day 11 (Monday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: reprieve—to delay the impending punishment or sentence of (a condemned person); to relieve temporarily from any evil.

integral—of, pertaining to, or belonging as a part of the whole; constituent or component; necessary to the completeness of the whole.

Quote of the Day: “Almost all words have color and nothing is more pleasant than to utter a pink word and see someone’s eyes light up and know it is a pink word for him or her, too.” –Gladys Taber

Transparency:

Journal Prompt: If you could choose to transmit *one* memory, what would you give? Why? Why is this *the* most important memory to you?

Materials:

Class set of *The Giver*

6 pieces of Post-it chart sticky paper, labeled (red, yellow, blue, green, black, white)

1 magic marker per student

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping, put up 6 pieces of Post-it chart sticky paper, labeled red, yellow, blue, green, black, white.

15 minutes: read chapter 11 aloud as a class (stop and talk: Why do you think the Giver chose those specific memories to give Jonas first? What would you have chosen?)

20 minutes: read chapter 12 aloud as a class (stop and talk: What do you think about using a discipline wand on the Old? (we usually respect the old and don’t treat them like children...how is this different?))

37 minutes: Color association activity. Explain activity: In groups, you will be rotating through the different color-labeled papers, writing emotions, words, memories, images, and thoughts associated with the color. For example, red is associated with death, love, and passion, among other things. Be creative and really think about the emotions each color evokes. Pass out markers (one per student). Divide students into groups of 4. Each group will be sent to a piece of paper for 4 minute rotations. Every 4 minutes, have the group rotate clockwise.

15 minutes: assign homework (read chapter 13), journaling (prompt: If you could choose to transmit *one* memory, what would you give? Why? Why is this *the* most important memory to you?), SAT problem of the day, pack up, remind students about Show and Tell tomorrow!

Day 12 (Tuesday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: buoyancy—the power to float or rise in a fluid; relative lightness; lightness or resilience of spirit; cheerfulness.

indolence—having or showing a disposition to avoid exertion; slothful; lazy; slow.

Quote of the Day: “The past is never dead; it is not even past.” –William Faulkner

Materials:

Class set of *The Giver*

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

20 minutes: read chapter 14 aloud as a class (stop and talk: Why do you think the Giver gave Jonas *that* painful memory? Which painful memory would *you* give first?)

20 minutes: read chapter 15 aloud as a class (stop and talk: Do memories like these make you think twice about keeping all memories? If you could choose between this pain and personal choice....?)

24 minutes: Show and Tell!! (if Show and Tell doesn't use up the allotted time, begin reading chapter 16 aloud as a class)

3 minutes: SAT problem of the day, assign homework (read chapter 16). Tell students we'll be making travel brochures to the community in *The Giver* tomorrow, so if they have special craft items they want to use, they should bring them tomorrow.

20 minutes: Sustained Silent Reading

Day 13 (Wednesday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: benign—having a kindly disposition; gracious; showing or expressive of gentleness or kindness; not malignant.
deftly—dexterous; nimble; skillful; clever.

Quote of the Day: “Differences challenge assumptions.” –Anne Wilson Schaef

Transparency:

Journal Prompt: The society in *The Giver* is based on Sameness. Competition has been eliminated; the climate is controlled. What are the benefits of Sameness? What would be lost if everything were the same? Advantages and disadvantages to diversity?

Materials:

White paper, colored paper, scissors, glue sticks, markers, colored pencils
Class set of *The Giver*

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

20 minutes: read chapter 17 aloud as a class (stop and talk: How is Jonas changing? Would you react similarly to Jonas when he sees his friends playing “war”?)

20 minutes: read chapter 18 aloud as a class (stop and talk: What would you have done in Rosemary’s shoes? What would happen to the community if Jonas died or the Giver died before his memories are transferred to Jonas?)

32 minutes: Travel Brochures activity: Individually, create a persuasive travel brochure for the community in *The Giver*. You can include things like a map of the area, types of industry, climate, customs, religions, foods, government, recreational activities, public services, and places to go and see. Feel free to make this as colorful as possible. Use specific details from the novel! On the front table, I have craft supplies and a few examples of travel brochures, if you need a little inspiration. Be as creative and as persuasive as possible.

15 minutes: assign homework (read chapter 19), journaling (prompt: The society in *The Giver* is based on Sameness. Competition has been eliminated; the climate is controlled. What are the benefits of Sameness? What would be lost if everything were the same? Advantages and disadvantages to diversity?), SAT problem of the day, pack up.

Day 14 (Thursday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: rueful—causing sorrow or pity; pitiable; deplorable; feeling, showing, or expressing sorrow or pity; mournful; doleful.
ecstatic—subject to or in a state of ecstasy; rapturous.

Quote of the Day: “In the early days, I had a very black-and-white view of everything.” –Cat Stevens

Materials:

3 black and white disposable cameras
Class set of *The Giver*

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

20 minutes: read chapter 20 aloud as a class (stop and talk: Was anyone surprised about Release? Should Jonas be angry with his father? Should Jonas be disappointed with Fiona? How much of your conversations involve memories? Can you imagine the loneliness of not being able to share them? What do you think of the plan? And Rosemary was the Giver’s daughter! Do you think that is a conflict of interest? Would that make the pain of losing her worse?)

44 minutes: Black-and-White Photography: Get into groups of 8. Each group will be given a black-and-white disposable camera, with which you will take artistically-styled photographs. These photographs should be of objects/places in the school that are either beautiful in black and white or are indiscernible/ugly without color. You will be making a poster with captions of your best photographs, so make sure you are taking pictures with the end goal in mind. All pictures must be appropriate.

3 minutes: SAT problem of the day, assign homework (read chapter 21) (I will be getting the film developed this weekend)

20 minutes: Sustained Silent Reading

Day 15 (Friday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: permeate—to pass into or through every part of; to be diffused through; pervade; saturate.

assuage—to make milder or less severe; relieve; ease; mitigate; to appease; satisfy; allay; relieve; to soothe, calm, or mollify.

Quote of the Day: “Too many people are thinking of security instead of opportunity; they seem more afraid of life than of death.” –James F. Bymes

Materials:Euthanasia survey

Euthanasia: The intentional killing by act or omission of a dependent human being for his or her alleged benefit.

True or false:

- ___ 1. Your doctor should be allowed to help you die.
 - ___ 2. Doctors' jobs are to help heal, not help kill.
 - ___ 3. As long as the patient asks for assisted suicide, it should be okay.
 - ___ 4. We should be looking at the bottom line of healthcare, and providing extensive care for people who are terminally ill (and wish to die) is a waste of money.
 - ___ 5. Americans should be allowed freedom of choice, and euthanasia is another example of a right we should have.
-

Wikipedia article on Jack Kevorkian

Class set of *The Giver*

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

20 minutes: read chapter 22 aloud as a class (stop and talk: What is happening to Jonas' memories? What do you think is happening back in the community? To the Giver?)

20 minutes: read chapter 23 aloud as a class (stop and talk: What do you think about a world without music? What do you think about the ending? But don't get too in-depth—they are journaling on the ending)

4 minutes: Give out 5-question survey on euthanasia. Fill it out individually.

15 minutes: Get into groups of 4 and discuss your answers. Where were any discrepancies? What didn't you agree on? Hand out Wikipedia article on Jack Kevorkian (the suicide doctor). Do you think the courts did the right thing?

10 minutes: Move chairs back to full-class mode, talk about your thoughts on euthanasia. What did you think at the beginning of our discussion? Has this changed at all? Do you think the courts did the right thing in the case of Dr. Kevorkian?

3 minutes: SAT problem of the day

10 minutes: journaling (topic: are you satisfied with the ending of *The Giver*? How would YOU have ended it?)

5 minutes: a volunteer to talk about the book s/he is reading? Pitch it to the class. If no one volunteers, pitch *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Week 4:
Day 16 (Monday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: admonition—counsel, advice, or caution; a gentle reproof.
ominous—portending evil or harm; foreboding; threatening; inauspicious; having the significance of an omen.

Quote of the Day: “Selfishness is not living as one wishes to live, it is asking others to live as one wishes to live.” –Oscar Wilde

Transparency:

Journal Prompt: What are the pros and cons of staying in the community in *The Giver*? What are the pros and cons of leaving? Which is ethical? Which is practical? Or do they both line up for you?

Black-and-White Photography Assignment: Decide whether the subjects depicted are beautiful in black and white or are indiscernible/ugly without color. Arrange them on the poster. Write captions (Is it better or worse in black-and-white? What is lost? Is anything gained?). Write an introduction to your project (2 paragraph minimum: what you learned, your observations, your plans to see the world differently in the future).

Materials:

Pencil and paper
3 pieces of poster board
glue sticks, scissors, colored paper, Sharpies

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

3 minutes: Black-and-White Photography Follow-up: get into the black-and-white photography groups of 8

~24 minutes: decide which pictures developed best. Decide whether the items depicted are beautiful in black and white or are indiscernible/ugly without color. Arrange them on the poster. Write captions for the pictures. The captions can include the place or item you photographed, the photographer, and your analysis of the picture. Is it a better or worse picture because it is in black-and-white? What is lost? Is anything gained?

~25 minutes: write an introduction (2-paragraph minimum) to your poster and collection of photographs. Tell us anything you learned, your observations, and your plans to see the world differently in the future, if applicable.

(Times are approximate because it is up to the group to budget their time wisely. These are just my suggestions. They can also divide up the work and be working on both parts simultaneously, but it is ultimately up to them.)

20 minutes: present your posters, hang them on the wall when we are finished

15 minutes: journaling (prompt: What are the pros and cons of staying in the community in *The Giver*? What are the pros and cons of leaving? Which is ethical? Which is practical? Or do they both line up for you?), SAT problem of the day, pack up.

Day 17 (Tuesday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: sinuous—having many curves, bends, or turns; winding; indirect; devious.

relinquish—to renounce or surrender (a possession, right, etc.); to give up; put aside or desist from; to let go; release.

Quote of the Day: “Thinking is easy, acting is difficult, and to put one’s thoughts into action is the most difficult thing in the world.” –Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Transparency:

Quickwrite: would you be willing to sacrifice the happiness of someone else to be perfectly happy yourself for the rest of your life? Why or why not?

Small Group Discussion: Did everyone agree? Is it moral to sacrifice someone else’s happiness for your own? Would you be able to be happy knowing someone else wasn’t happy because of you?

Materials:

“The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas”

Pencil and paper

Movie trailer for “The Box”: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVK-hVGqCpo>

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

3 minutes: show trailer for movie “The Box” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVK-hVGqCpo>)

10 minutes: Quickwrite individually: would you be willing to sacrifice the happiness of someone else to be perfectly happy yourself for the rest of your life? Why or why not?

16 minutes: get into groups of 4 and discuss your answers. Did everyone agree? Is it moral to sacrifice someone else's happiness for your own? Would you be able to be happy knowing someone else wasn't happy because of you?

35 minutes: read "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas" aloud as a class. (stop and talk: Do we consider only pain and evil intellectual and worth talking about? Is that why the news is filled with bad things? Do we think being happy is childish and uninteresting? Or do we thrive on the drama? Why do you think there is no guilt in Omelas? What would feel guilty for? Are guilt and happiness mutually exclusive? Are you surprised the people of Omelas have such a secret? And that they don't feel guilty? What parallels do you notice between "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas" and *The Giver*?)

3 minutes: SAT problem of the day

20 minutes: Sustained Silent Reading

Day 18 (Wednesday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: augmented—to make larger; enlarge in size, number, strength, or extent; increase.

lethargy—the quality or state of being drowsy and dull, listless and unenergetic, or indifferent and lazy; apathetic or sluggish inactivity.

Quote of the Day: "Whatever you say, say it with conviction." –Mark Twain

Materials:

Pencil and paper

Handout:

Rubric for final persuasive essay

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

5 minutes: explain their final project. You will be writing a persuasive essay to persuade others to follow you, either to leave or stay in Omelas. Pass out the rubric.

15 minutes: Fold a piece of paper in half vertically. On one side, write the pros for staying in Omelas. On the other, write the cons. Choose whether you would stay or leave.

3 minutes: those who would stay, move to the right side of the room. Those who would leave, move to the left side.

15 minutes: get a partner who agrees with you and each of you will make a pro/con list and preliminary list of arguments to convince others to leave or stay with you.

29 minutes: individually write.

3 minutes: SAT problem of the day

20 minutes: Sustained Silent Reading

Day 19 (Thursday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: emphatically—uttered, or to be uttered, with emphasis; strongly expressive; forceful; insistent; very impressive or significant; strongly marked; striking.

languid— lacking in vigor or vitality; slack or slow; lacking in spirit or interest; listless; indifferent; drooping or flagging from weakness or fatigue; faint.

Quote of the Day: “Never forget that only dead fish swim with the stream.” – Malcolm Muggeridge

Materials:

Pencil and paper

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

30 minutes: write independently. I will be circling around for advice and troubleshooting. If I see several people having the same issue, I will address the issue to the class; otherwise, this will be a very informal circulating teacher conference.

15 minutes: Peer Conferencing: find a partner who has taken the opposite stance; you will help each other provide counter-arguments. Using those arguments may help the persuasiveness of your paper. Your partner should also proofread what you have so far, helping you with the mechanical, organizational, and argumentation issues s/he notices (they have done this before, so they are semi-independent in this activity, but I will be circulating, keeping everyone on task).

19 minutes: write more, more informal teacher conferencing.

3 minutes: SAT problem of the day

20 minutes: Sustained Silent Reading

Day 20 (Friday):

Write on the board:

Word of the Day: imperceptibility—very slight, gradual, or subtle; not perceptible; not perceived by or affecting the senses.

Quote of the Day: “As you become more clear about who you really are, you’ll be better able to decide what is best for you—the first time around.” –Oprah Winfrey

Materials:

Pencil and paper

3 minutes: attendance, housekeeping

30 minutes: write independently; I will be circulating.

15 minutes: get a partner (it doesn’t matter which stance they chose), peer conference (proofread and help your partner get an idea of how persuasive his/her essay is; give plenty of compliments *and* suggestions).

14 minutes: write independently; I will be circulating.

3 minutes: SAT problem of the day, assign homework (if they don’t finish their persuasive essays, they are homework due on Monday).

20 minutes: Sustained Silent Reading

5 minutes: a volunteer to talk about the book s/he is reading? Pitch it to the class. If no one volunteers, pitch *Fahrenheit 451*.

Reading Materials

From Week 1:

Questions to consider: Is the Garden of Eden a utopia or dystopia? What details would make it either?

Genesis 2

¹Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ²And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. ³And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. ⁴These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. ⁶But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. ⁷And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. ⁸And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. ¹⁰And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. ¹¹The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; ¹²And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. ¹³And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. ¹⁴And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. ¹⁵And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: ¹⁷But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. ¹⁸And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. ¹⁹And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. ²⁰And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. ²¹And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; ²²And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. ²³And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. ²⁵And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Genesis 3

¹Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? ²And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: ³But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. ⁴And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: ⁵For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. ⁶And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. ⁷And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. ⁸And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. ⁹And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? ¹⁰And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. ¹¹And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

¹²And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. ¹³And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. ¹⁴And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: ¹⁵And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. ¹⁶Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. ¹⁷And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; ¹⁸Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; ¹⁹In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. ²⁰And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. ²¹Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. ²²And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: ²³Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. ²⁴So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Questions to consider: What defines utopia to each artist? Do they provide solutions? What would it take to create their utopia? What are your reactions to the work? Would you like to live in their utopia?

Blowin' In The Wind

Bob Dylan

How many roads must a man walk down
 Before you call him a man?
 Yes, 'n' how many seas must a white dove sail
 Before she sleeps in the sand?
 Yes, 'n' how many times must the cannon balls fly
 Before they're forever banned?
 The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,
 The answer is blowin' in the wind.
 How many years can a mountain exist
 Before it's washed to the sea?
 Yes, 'n' how many years can some people exist
 Before they're allowed to be free?
 Yes, 'n' how many times can a man turn his head,
 Pretending he just doesn't see?
 The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,
 The answer is blowin' in the wind.
 How many times must a man look up
 Before he can see the sky?
 Yes, 'n' how many ears must one man have
 Before he can hear people cry?
 Yes, 'n' how many deaths will it take till he knows
 That too many people have died?
 The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,
 The answer is blowin' in the wind.

Imagine

John Lennon

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today...

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace...

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world...

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will live as one

Utopia

Alanis Morissette

We'd gather around
All in a room
Fasten our belts
Engage in dialogue
We'd all slow down
Rest without guilt
Not lie without fear
Disagree sans judgement

We would stay and respond and expand and include and allow and forgive and enjoy and evolve and discern and inquire and accept and admit and divulge and open and reach out and speak up

Chorus:

This is utopia
This is my utopia
This is my ideal
My end in sight
Utopia
This is my utopia
This is my nirvana
My ultimate

We'd open our arms
We'd all jump in
We'd all coast down
Into safety nets

We would share and listen and support and welcome
Be propelled by passion, not invest in outcomes
We would breathe and be charmed and amused by difference
Be gentle and make room for every emotion

Chorus

We'd provide forums
We'd all speak out
We'd all be heard
We'd all feel seen

We'd rise post-obstacle, more defined, more grateful
We would heal, be humbled, and be unstoppable
We'd hold close and let go and know when to do which
We'd release and disarm and stand up and feel safe

Chorus

Harrison Bergeron

by Kurt Vonnegut (1961)

THE YEAR WAS 2081, and everybody was finally equal. They weren't only equal before God and the law. They were equal every which way. Nobody was smarter than anybody else. Nobody was better looking than anybody else. Nobody was stronger or quicker than anybody else. All this equality was due to the 211th,

212th, and 213th Amendments to the Constitution, and to the unceasing vigilance of agents of the United States Handicapper General.

Some things about living still weren't quite right, though. April, for instance, still drove people crazy by not being springtime. And it was in that clammy month that the H-G men took George and Hazel Bergeron's fourteen-year-old son, Harrison, away.

It was tragic, all right, but George and Hazel couldn't think about it very hard. Hazel had a perfectly average intelligence, which meant she couldn't think about anything except in short bursts. And George, while his intelligence was way above normal, had a little mental handicap radio in his ear. He was required by law to wear it at all times. It was tuned to a government transmitter. Every twenty seconds or so, the transmitter would send out some sharp noise to keep people like George from taking unfair advantage of their brains.

George and Hazel were watching television. There were tears on Hazel's cheeks, but she'd forgotten for the moment what they were about.

On the television screen were ballerinas.

A buzzer sounded in George's head. His thoughts fled in panic, like bandits from a burglar alarm.

"That was a real pretty dance, that dance they just did," said Hazel.

"Huh?" said George.

"That dance – it was nice," said Hazel.

"Yup," said George. He tried to think a little about the ballerinas. They weren't really very good – no better than anybody else would have been, anyway. They were burdened with sashweights and bags of birdshot, and their faces were masked, so that no one, seeing a free and graceful gesture or a pretty face, would feel like something the cat drug in. George was toying with the vague notion that maybe dancers shouldn't be handicapped. But he didn't get very far with it before another noise in his ear radio scattered his thoughts.

George winced. So did two out of the eight ballerinas.

Hazel saw him wince. Having no mental handicap herself she had to ask George what the latest sound had been.

“Sounded like somebody hitting a milk bottle with a ball peen hammer,” said George.

“I’d think it would be real interesting, hearing all the different sounds,” said Hazel, a little envious. “All the things they think up.”

“Um,” said George.

“Only, if I was Handicapper General, you know what I would do?” said Hazel. Hazel, as a matter of fact, bore a strong resemblance to the Handicapper General, a woman named Diana Moon Glampers. “If I was Diana Moon Glampers,” said Hazel, “I’d have chimes on Sunday – just chimes. Kind of in honor of religion.”

“I could think, if it was just chimes,” said George.

“Well – maybe make ‘em real loud,” said Hazel. “I think I’d make a good Handicapper General.”

“Good as anybody else,” said George.

“Who knows better’n I do what normal is?” said Hazel.

“Right,” said George. He began to think glimmeringly about his abnormal son who was now in jail, about Harrison, but a twenty-one-gun salute in his head stopped that.

“Boy!” said Hazel, “that was a doozy, wasn’t it?”

It was such a doozy that George was white and trembling and tears stood on the rims of his red eyes. Two of the eight ballerinas had collapsed to the studio floor, were holding their temples.

“All of a sudden you look so tired,” said Hazel. “Why don’t you stretch out on the sofa, so’s you can rest your handicap bag on the pillows, honeybunch.” She was referring to the forty-seven pounds of birdshot in canvas bag, which was padlocked around George’s neck. “Go on and rest the bag for a little while,” she said. “I don’t care if you’re not equal to me for a while.”

George weighed the bag with his hands. "I don't mind it," he said. "I don't notice it any more. It's just a part of me."

"You been so tired lately – kind of wore out," said Hazel. "If there was just some way we could make a little hole in the bottom of the bag, and just take out a few of them lead balls. Just a few."

"Two years in prison and two thousand dollars fine for every ball I took out," said George. "I don't call that a bargain."

"If you could just take a few out when you came home from work," said Hazel. "I mean – you don't compete with anybody around here. You just set around."

"If I tried to get away with it," said George, "then other people'd get away with it and pretty soon we'd be right back to the dark ages again, with everybody competing against everybody else. You wouldn't like that, would you?"

"I'd hate it," said Hazel.

"There you are," said George. "The minute people start cheating on laws, what do you think happens to society?"

If Hazel hadn't been able to come up with an answer to this question, George couldn't have supplied one. A siren was going off in his head.

"Reckon it'd fall all apart," said Hazel.

"What would?" said George blankly.

"Society," said Hazel uncertainly. "Wasn't that what you just said?"

"Who knows?" said George.

The television program was suddenly interrupted for a news bulletin. It wasn't clear at first as to what the bulletin was about, since the announcer, like all announcers, had a serious speech impediment. For about half a minute, and in a state of high excitement, the announcer tried to say, "Ladies and gentlemen – "

He finally gave up, handed the bulletin to a ballerina to read.

“That’ s all right –” Hazel said of the announcer, “he tried. That’ s the big thing. He tried to do the best he could with what God gave him. He should get a nice raise for trying so hard.”

“Ladies and gentlemen” said the ballerina, reading the bulletin. She must have been extraordinarily beautiful, because the mask she wore was hideous. And it was easy to see that she was the strongest and most graceful of all the dancers, for her handicap bags were as big as those worn by two-hundred-pound men.

And she had to apologize at once for her voice, which was a very unfair voice for a woman to use. Her voice was a warm, luminous, timeless melody. “Excuse me –” she said, and she began again, making her voice absolutely uncompetitive.

“Harrison Bergeron, age fourteen,” she said in a grackle squawk, “has just escaped from jail, where he was held on suspicion of plotting to overthrow the government. He is a genius and an athlete, is under – handicapped, and should be regarded as extremely dangerous.”

A police photograph of Harrison Bergeron was flashed on the screen – upside down, then sideways, upside down again, then right side up. The picture showed the full length of Harrison against a background calibrated in feet and inches. He was exactly seven feet tall.

The rest of Harrison’ s appearance was Halloween and hardware. Nobody had ever worn heavier handicaps. He had outgrown hindrances faster than the H – G men could think them up. Instead of a little ear radio for a mental handicap, he wore a tremendous pair of earphones, and spectacles with thick wavy lenses. The spectacles were intended to make him not only half blind, but to give him whanging headaches besides.

Scrap metal was hung all over him. Ordinarily, there was a certain symmetry, a military neatness to the handicaps issued to strong people, but Harrison looked like a walking junkyard. In the race of life, Harrison carried three hundred pounds.

And to offset his good looks, the H – G men required that he wear at all times a red rubber ball for a nose, keep his eyebrows shaved off, and cover his even white teeth with black caps at snaggle – tooth random.

“If you see this boy,” said the ballerina, “do not – I repeat, do not – try to reason with him.”

There was the shriek of a door being torn from its hinges.

Screams and barking cries of consternation came from the television set. The photograph of Harrison Bergeron on the screen jumped again and again, as though dancing to the tune of an earthquake.

George Bergeron correctly identified the earthquake, and well he might have – for many was the time his own home had danced to the same crashing tune. “My God –” said George, “that must be Harrison!”

The realization was blasted from his mind instantly by the sound of an automobile collision in his head.

When George could open his eyes again, the photograph of Harrison was gone. A living, breathing Harrison filled the screen.

Clanking, clownish, and huge, Harrison stood in the center of the studio. The knob of the uprooted studio door was still in his hand. Ballerinas, technicians, musicians, and announcers cowered on their knees before him, expecting to die.

“I am the Emperor!” cried Harrison. “Do you hear? I am the Emperor! Everybody must do what I say at once!” He stamped his foot and the studio shook.

“Even as I stand here –” he bellowed, “crippled, hobbled, sickened – I am a greater ruler than any man who ever lived! Now watch me become what I *can* become!”

Harrison tore the straps of his handicap harness like wet tissue paper, tore straps guaranteed to support five thousand pounds.

Harrison’s scrap-iron handicaps crashed to the floor.

Harrison thrust his thumbs under the bar of the padlock that secured his head harness. The bar snapped like celery. Harrison smashed his headphones and spectacles against the wall.

He flung away his rubber-ball nose, revealed a man that would have awed Thor, the god of thunder.

“I shall now select my Empress!” he said, looking down on the cowering people. “Let the first woman who dares rise to her feet claim her mate and her throne!”

A moment passed, and then a ballerina arose, swaying like a willow.

Harrison plucked the mental handicap from her ear, snapped off her physical handicaps with marvelous delicacy. Last of all, he removed her mask.

She was blindingly beautiful.

“Now” said Harrison, taking her hand, “shall we show the people the meaning of the word dance? Music!” he commanded.

The musicians scrambled back into their chairs, and Harrison stripped them of their handicaps, too. “Play your best,” he told them, “and I’ll make you barons and dukes and earls.”

The music began. It was normal at first – cheap, silly, false. But Harrison snatched two musicians from their chairs, waved them like batons as he sang the music as he wanted it played. He slammed them back into their chairs.

The music began again and was much improved.

Harrison and his Empress merely listened to the music for a while – listened gravely, as though synchronizing their heartbeats with it.

They shifted their weights to their toes.

Harrison placed his big hands on the girl’s tiny waist, letting her sense the weightlessness that would soon be hers.

And then, in an explosion of joy and grace, into the air they sprang!

Not only were the laws of the land abandoned, but the law of gravity and the laws of motion as well.

They reeled, whirled, swiveled, flounced, capered, gamboled, and spun.

They leaped like deer on the moon.

The studio ceiling was thirty feet high, but each leap brought the dancers nearer to it. It became their obvious intention to kiss the ceiling.

They kissed it.

And then, neutralizing gravity with love and pure will, they remained suspended in air inches below the ceiling, and they kissed each other for a long, long time.

It was then that Diana Moon Glampers, the Handicapper General, came into the studio with a double-barreled ten-gauge shotgun. She fired twice, and the Emperor and the Empress were dead before they hit the floor.

Diana Moon Glampers loaded the gun again. She aimed it at the musicians and told them they had ten seconds to get their handicaps back on.

It was then that the Bergerons' television tube burned out.

Hazel turned to comment about the blackout to George.

But George had gone out into the kitchen for a can of beer.

George came back in with the beer, paused while a handicap signal shook him up. And then he sat down again. "You been crying?" he said to Hazel.

"Yup," she said,

"What about?" he said.

"I forget," she said. "Something real sad on television."

"What was it?" he said.

"It's all kind of mixed up in my mind," said Hazel.

"Forget sad things," said George.

"I always do," said Hazel.

"That's my girl," said George. He winced. There was the sound of a riveting gun in his head.

"Gee - I could tell that one was a doozy," said Hazel.

"You can say that again," said George.

“Gee –” said Hazel, “I could tell that one was a doozy.”

The Declaration of Independence

When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected, whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefit of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & Perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms:

Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have

reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these united Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States, that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

Week 4

The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas

By Ursula Le Guin

With a clamor of bells that set the swallows soaring, the Festival of Summer came to the city Omelas, bright-towered by the sea. The rigging of the boats in harbor sparkled with flags. In the streets between houses with red roofs and painted walls, between old moss-grown gardens and under avenues of trees, past great parks and public buildings, processions moved. Some were decorous: old people in long stiff robes of mauve and grey, grave master workmen, quiet, merry women carrying their babies and chatting as they walked. In other streets the music beat faster, a shimmering of gong and tambourine, and the people went dancing, the procession was a dance. Children dodged in and out, their high calls rising like the swallows' crossing flights over the music and the singing. All the processions wound towards the north side of the city, where on the great water-meadow called the Green Fields boys and girls, naked in the bright air, with mud-stained feet and ankles and long, lithe arms, exercised their restive horses before the race. The horses wore no gear at all but a halter without bit. Their manes were braided with streamers of silver, gold, and green. They flared their nostrils and pranced and boasted to one another; they were vastly excited, the horse being the only animal who has adopted our ceremonies as his own. Far off to the north and west the mountains stood up half encircling Omelas on her bay. The air of morning was so clear that the snow still crowning the Eighteen Peaks burned with white-gold fire across the miles of sunlit air, under the dark blue of the sky. There was just enough wind to make the

banners that marked the racecourse snap and flutter now and then. In the silence of the broad green meadows one could hear the music winding through the city streets, farther and nearer and ever approaching, a cheerful faint sweetness of the air that from time to time trembled and gathered together and broke out into the great joyous clanging of the bells.

Joyous! How is one to tell about joy? How describe the citizens of Omelas?

They were not simple folk, you see, though they were happy. But we do not say the words of cheer much any more. All smiles have become archaic. Given a description such as this one tends to make certain assumptions. Given a description such as this one tends to look next for the King, mounted on a splendid stallion and surrounded by his noble knights, or perhaps in a golden litter borne by great-muscled slaves. But there was no king. They did not use swords, or keep slaves. They were not barbarians. I do not know the rules and laws of their society, but I suspect that they were singularly few. As they did without monarchy and slavery, so they also got on without the stock exchange, the advertisement, the secret police, and the bomb. Yet I repeat that these were not simple folk, not dulcet shepherds, noble savages, bland utopians. They were not less complex than us. The trouble is that we have a bad habit, encouraged by pedants and sophisticates, of considering happiness as something rather stupid. Only pain is intellectual, only evil interesting. This is the treason of the artist: a refusal to admit the banality of evil and the terrible boredom of pain. If you can't lick 'em, join 'em. If it hurts, repeat it. But to praise despair is to condemn delight, to embrace violence is to lose hold of everything else. We have almost lost hold; we can no longer describe a happy man, nor make any celebration of joy. How can I tell you about the people of Omelas? They were not naive and happy children--though their children were, in fact, happy. They were mature, intelligent, passionate adults whose lives were not wretched. O miracle! but I wish I could describe it better. I wish I could convince you. Omelas sounds in my words like a city in a fairy tale, long ago and far away, once upon a time. Perhaps it would be best if you imagined it as your own fancy bids, assuming it will rise to the occasion, for certainly I cannot suit you all. For instance, how about technology? I think that there would be no cars or helicopters in and above the streets; this follows from the fact that the people of Omelas are happy people. Happiness is based on a just discrimination of what is necessary, what is neither necessary nor destructive, and what is destructive. In the middle category, however--that of the unnecessary but undestructive, that of comfort, luxury, exuberance, etc.--they could perfectly well have central heating, subway trains, washing machines, and all kinds of marvelous devices not yet invented here, floating light-sources, fuelless power, a cure for the common cold. Or they could have none of that; it doesn't matter. As you like it. I incline to think that people from towns up and down the coast have been coming in to Omelas during the last days before the Festival on very fast little trains and double-decked trams, and that the train station of Omelas is actually the handsomest building in town, though plainer than the magnificent

Farmers' Market. But even granted trains, I fear that Omelas so far strikes some of you as goody-goody. Smiles, bells, parades, horses, bleh. If so, please add an orgy. If an orgy would help, don't hesitate. Let us not, however, have temples from which issue beautiful nude priests and priestesses already half in ecstasy and ready to copulate with any man or woman, lover or stranger, who desires union with the deep godhead of the blood, although that was my first idea. But really it would be better not to have any temples in Omelas--at least, not manned temples. Religion yes, clergy no. Surely the beautiful nudes can just wander about, offering themselves like divine soufflés to the hunger of the needy and the rapture of the flesh. Let them join the processions. Let tambourines be struck above the copulations, and the glory of desire be proclaimed upon the gongs, and (a not unimportant point) let the offspring of these delightful rituals be beloved and looked after by all. One thing I know there is none of in Omelas is guilt. But what else should there be? I thought at first there were not drugs, but that is puritanical. For those who like it, the faint insistent sweetness of *drooz* may perfume the ways of the city, *drooz* which first brings a great lightness and brilliance to the mind and limbs, and then after some hours a dreamy languor, and wonderful visions at last of the very arcana and inmost secrets of the Universe, as well as exciting the pleasure of sex beyond belief; and it is not habit-forming. For more modest tastes I think there ought to be beer. What else, what else belongs in the joyous city? The sense of victory, surely, the celebration of courage. But as we did without clergy, let us do without soldiers. The joy built upon successful slaughter is not the right kind of joy; it will not do; it is fearful and it is trivial. A boundless and generous contentment, a magnanimous triumph felt not against some outer enemy but in communion with the finest and fairest in the souls of all men everywhere and the splendor of the world's summer: this is what swells the hearts of the people of Omelas, and the victory they celebrate is that of life. I really don't think many of them need to take *drooz*.

Most of the procession have reached the Green Fields by now. A marvelous smell of cooking goes forth from the red and blue tents of the provisioners. The faces of small children are amiably sticky; in the benign grey beard of a man a couple of crumbs of rich pastry are entangled. The youths and girls have mounted their horses and are beginning to group around the starting line of the course. An old woman, small, fat, and laughing, is passing out flowers from a basket, and tall young men wear her flowers in their shining hair. A child of nine or ten sits at the edge of the crowd, alone, playing on a wooden flute. People pause to listen, and they smile, but they do not speak to him, for he never ceases playing and never sees them, his dark eyes wholly rapt in the sweet, thin magic of the tune.

He finishes, and slowly lowers his hands holding the wooden flute.

As if that little private silence were the signal, all at once a trumpet sounds from the pavilion near the starting line: imperious, melancholy, piercing. The horses rear

on their slender legs, and some of them neigh in answer. Sober-faced, the young riders stroke the horses' necks and soothe them, whispering, "Quiet, quiet, there my beauty, my hope...." They begin to form in rank along the starting line. The crowds along the racecourse are like a field of grass and flowers in the wind. The Festival of Summer has begun.

Do you believe? Do you accept the festival, the city, the joy? No? Then let me describe one more thing.

In a basement under one of the beautiful public buildings of Omelas, or perhaps in the cellar of one of its spacious private homes, there is a room. It has one locked door, and no window. A little light seeps in dustily between cracks in the boards, secondhand from a cobwebbed window somewhere across the cellar. In one corner of the little room a couple of mops, with stiff, clotted, foul-smelling heads stand near a rusty bucket. The floor is dirt, a little damp to the touch, as cellar dirt usually is. The room is about three paces long and two wide: a mere broom closet or disused tool room. In the room a child is sitting. It could be a boy or a girl. It looks about six, but actually is nearly ten. It is feeble-minded. Perhaps it was born defective, or perhaps it has become imbecile through fear, malnutrition, and neglect. It picks its nose and occasionally fumbles vaguely with its toes or genitals, as it sits hunched in the corner farthest from the bucket and the two mops. It is afraid of the mops. It finds them horrible. It shuts its eyes, but it knows the mops are still standing there; and the door is locked; and nobody will come. The door is always locked; and nobody ever comes, except that sometimes--the child has no understanding of time or interval--sometimes the door rattles terribly and opens, and a person, or several people, are there. One of them may come in and kick the child to make it stand up. The others never come close, but peer in at it with frightened, disgusted eyes. The food bowl and the water jug are hastily filled, the door is locked, the eyes disappear. The people at the door never say anything, but the child, who has not always lived in the tool room, and can remember sunlight and its mother's voice, sometimes speaks. "I will be good," it says. "Please let me out. I will be good!" They never answer. The child used to scream for help at night, and cry a good deal, but now it only makes a kind of whining, "eh-haa, eh-haa," and it speaks less and less often. It is so thin there are no calves to its legs; its belly protrudes; it lives on a half-bowl of corn meal and grease a day. It is naked. Its buttocks and thighs are a mass of festered sores, as it sits in its own excrement continually.

They all know it is there, all the people of Omelas. Some of them have come to see it, others are content merely to know it is there. They all know that it has to be there. Some of them understand why, and some do not, but they all understand that their happiness, the beauty of their city, the tenderness of their friendships, the health of their children, the wisdom of their scholars, the skill of their makers, even the abundance of their harvest and the kindly weathers of their skies, depend wholly on this child's abominable misery.

This is usually explained to children when they are between eight and twelve, whenever they seem capable of understanding; and most of those who come to see the child are young people, though often enough an adult comes, or comes back, to see the child. No matter how well the matter has been explained to them, these young spectators are always shocked and sickened at the sight. They feel disgust, which they had thought themselves superior to. They feel anger, outrage, impotence, despite all the explanations. They would like to do something for the child. But there is nothing they can do. If the child were brought up into the sunlight out of that vile place, if it were cleaned and fed and comforted, that would be a good thing indeed; but if it were done, in that day and hour all the prosperity and beauty and delight of Omelas would wither and be destroyed. Those are the terms. To exchange all the goodness and grace of every life in Omelas for that single, small improvement: to throw away the happiness of thousands for the chance of the happiness of one: that would be to let guilt within the walls indeed.

The terms are strict and absolute; there may not even be a kind word spoken to the child.

Often the young people go home in tears, or in a tearless rage, when they have seen the child and faced this terrible paradox. They may brood over it for weeks or years. But as time goes on they begin to realize that even if the child could be released, it would not get much good of its freedom: a little vague pleasure of warmth and food, no doubt, but little more. It is too degraded and imbecile to know any real joy. It has been afraid too long ever to be free of fear. Its habits are too uncouth for it to respond to humane treatment. Indeed, after so long it would probably be wretched without walls about it to protect it, and darkness for its eyes, and its own excrement to sit in. Their tears at the bitter injustice dry when they begin to perceive the terrible justice of reality, and to accept it. Yet it is their tears and anger, the trying of their generosity and the acceptance of their helplessness, which are perhaps the true source of the splendor of their lives.

Theirs is no vapid, irresponsible happiness. They know that they, like the child, are not free. They know compassion. It is the existence of the child, and their knowledge of its existence, that makes possible the nobility of their architecture, the poignancy of their music, the profundity of their science. It is because of the child that they are so gentle with children. They know that if the wretched one were not there sniveling in the dark, the other one, the flute-player, could make no joyful music as the young riders line up in their beauty for the race in the sunlight of the first morning of summer.

Now do you believe in them? Are they not more credible? But there is one more thing to tell, and this is quite incredible.

At times one of the adolescent girls or boys who go to see the child does not go home to weep or rage, does not, in fact, go home at all. Sometimes also a man or woman much older falls silent for a day or two, and then leaves home. These people go out into the street, and walk down the street alone. They keep walking, and walk straight out of the city of Omelas, through the beautiful gates. They keep walking across the farmlands of Omelas. Each one goes alone, youth or girl, man or woman. Night falls; the traveler must pass down village streets, between the houses with yellow-lit windows, and on out into the darkness of the fields. Each alone, they go west or north, towards the mountains. They go on. They leave Omelas, they walk ahead into the darkness, and they do not come back. The place they go towards is a place even less imaginable to most of us than the city of happiness. I cannot describe it at all. It is possible that it does not exist. But they seem to know where they are going, the ones who walk away from Omelas.

SAT Questions of the Day

Week 1

Day 1 (Monday):

Ramona had never visited Niagara Falls, but she could appreciate their splendor ----- through the descriptions of others.

- a) vicariously **
- b) heedlessly
- c) innocuously
- d) mystically
- e) voluminously

Day 2 (Tuesday):

The addition of descriptive details to the basic information serves to ----- the book by producing a fuller account.

- a) invalidate
- b) objectify
- c) incite
- d) celebrate
- e) enrich **

Day 3 (Wednesday):

The novel's protagonist, a pearl diver, naïvely expects that the buyers will compete among themselves to pay him the best price for his pearl, but instead they ----- to ----- him.

- a) venture ... reward
- b) pretend ... praise
- c) conspire ... reimburse
- d) refuse ... cheat
- e) collude ... swindle **

Day 4 (Thursday):

A discerning publishing agent can ----- promising material from a mass of submissions, separating the good from the bad.

- a) supplant
- b) dramatize
- c) finagle
- d) winnow **
- e) overhaul

Day 5 (Friday):

There is no doubt that Larry is a genuine ----- : he excels at telling stories that fascinate his listeners.

- a) braggart
- b) dilettante
- c) pilferer
- d) prevaricator
- e) raconteur **

Week 2

Day 6 (Monday):

Hoping to ----- the dispute, negotiators proposed a compromise that they felt would be ----- to both labor and management.

- a) enforce ... useful
- b) end ... divisive
- c) overcome ... unattractive
- d) extend ... satisfactory
- e) resolve ... acceptable**

Day 7 (Tuesday):

Because King Philip's desire to make Spain the dominant power in sixteenth-century Europe ran counter to Queen Elizabeth's insistence on autonomy for England, ----- was -----.

- a) reconciliation ... assured
- b) warfare ... avoidable
- c) ruination ... impossible
- d) conflict ... inevitable**
- e) diplomacy ... simple

Day 8 (Wednesday):

Although some think the terms "bug" and "insect" are -----, the former term actually refers to ----- group of insects.

- a) parallel ... an identical
- b) precise ... an exact
- c) interchangeable ... a particular**
- d) exclusive ... a separate
- e) useful ... a useless

Day 9 (Thursday):

Members of the research team were initially so adversarial that ----- seemed impossible; the project's inauspicious start made its final success all the more -----.

- a) concentration ... incidental
- b) disagreement ... incongruous
- c) collaboration ... predictable
- d) hostility ... dazzling
- e) cooperation ... remarkable**

Day 10 (Friday):

Joshua's radical ideas were frowned on by most of his coworkers, who found them too ----- for their conservative tastes.

- a) Heretical**
- b) meticulous
- c) precise
- d) incoherent
- e) sagacious

Week 3

Day 11 (Monday):

Today Wegener's theory is -----; however, he died an outsider treated with ----- by the scientific establishment.

- a) unsupported ... approval
- b) dismissed ... contempt
- c) accepted ... approbation
- d) unchallenged ... disdain**
- e) unrivalled ... reverence

Day 12 (Tuesday):

The revolution in art has not lost its steam; it ----- on as fiercely as ever.

- a) trudges
- b) meanders
- c) edges
- d) ambles
- e) rages**

Day 13 (Wednesday):

Each occupation has its own -----; bankers, lawyers and computer professionals, for example, all use among themselves language which outsiders have difficulty following.

- a) merits
- b) disadvantages
- c) rewards
- d) jargon**
- e) problems

Day 14 (Thursday):

----- by nature, Jones spoke very little even to his own family members.

- a) garrulous
- b) equivocal
- c) taciturn**
- d) arrogant
- e) gregarious

Day 15 (Friday):

Biological clocks are of such ----- adaptive value to living organisms, that we would expect most organisms to ----- them.

- a) clear ... avoid
- b) meager ... evolve
- c) significant ... eschew
- d) obvious ... possess**
- e) ambivalent ... develop

Week 4

Day 16 (Monday):

The peasants were the least ----- of all people, bound by tradition and ----- by superstitions.

- a) free ... fettered**
- b) enfranchised ... rejected
- c) enthralled ... tied
- d) pinioned ... limited
- e) conventional ... encumbered

Day 17 (Tuesday):

Many people at that time believed that spices help preserve food; however, Hall found that many marketed spices were ----- bacteria, moulds and yeasts.

- a) devoid of
- b) teeming with**
- c) improved by
- d) destroyed by
- e) active against

Day 18 (Wednesday):

If there is nothing to absorb the energy of sound waves, they travel on -----, but their intensity ----- as they travel further from their source.

- a) erratically ... mitigates
- b) eternally ... alleviates
- c) forever ... increases
- d) steadily ... stabilizes
- e) indefinitely ... diminishes**

Day 19 (Thursday):

The two artists differed markedly in their temperaments; Palmer was reserved and courteous, Frazer ----- and boastful.

- a) phlegmatic
- b) choleric**
- c) constrained
- d) tractable
- e) stoic

Day 20 (Friday):

The intellectual flexibility inherent in a multicultural nation has been ----- in classrooms where emphasis on British-American literature has not reflected the cultural ----- of our country.

- a) eradicated ... unanimity
- b) encouraged ... aspirations
- c) stifled ... diversity**
- d) thwarted ... uniformity
- e) inculcated ... divide