

Features of the Genre:

- Propaganda is used to control the citizens of society.
- Information, independent thought and freedom are restricted.
- A leader/concept is worshipped by the citizens of the society. Citizens have a fear of the outside world.
- Citizens live in a dehumanized state.
- Citizens conform to uniform expectations. Individuality and dissent are bad.
- The society is an illusion of a perfect utopian world.



A Dystopian Setting:

- Futuristic, industrial cities with poor living conditions
- Destroyed natural habitat with little connection to nature
- High levels of surveillance and government control
- Environments and weather that creates a strong sense of oppression or constraint

A Dystopian Protagonist:

- Often feels trapped and is struggling to escape.
- Questions the existing social and political systems and attempts to rebel but in a way that is still morally acceptable
- Believes or feels that something is terribly wrong with the society in which he or she lives.
- Lacks the selfish nature of those in charge.



Structural Features

Cliffhanger

A dramatic moment leaving suspense over what is going to happen next.

Foreshadowing

When the author hints at what might happen in the future of the story.

Flashback

When present action is temporarily paused so the reader can see past events.

Key Vocabulary

apocalypse

A very serious event resulting in great destruction and change.

dictatorship

A form of government where one person (a dictator) or political party has the power to do whatever they want.

regime

A government, especially an authoritarian one.

manipulation

Controlling someone or something to your own advantage, often unfairly or dishonestly.

oppression

Unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power.

surveillance

The careful watching of a person or place.

tyranny

Cruel and oppressive government or rule.

totalitarian

A government where the ruler or ruling group has complete control.

propaganda

False information used by a government or political group to make people agree with them.



George Orwell

“War is peace.
Freedom is slavery.
Ignorance is strength.”



Aldous Huxley

“One believes things because one has been conditioned to believe them”

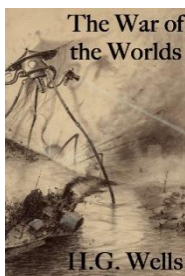
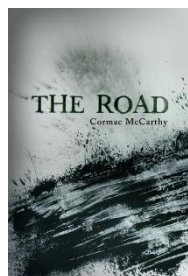
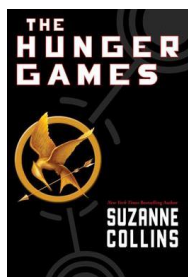


Dystopian Blurbs

Modern Dystopias	The Hunger Games: In a future dystopian world, pairs of teenagers from the twelve “Districts” are forced to participate in an annual televised fight to the death as punishment for a past failed rebellion.
	The Maze Runner: Boys find themselves trapped in an enormous maze with no memory about who they are or why they are there. They try to survive whilst mapping the maze and finding a way out.
Classic Dystopias	1984: A brutal totalitarian government rules Britain, led by the possibly imaginary “Big Brother.” Citizens are fed propaganda, surveilled, tortured, and executed if they go against the regime.
	Brave New World: Children are genetically engineered for predetermined roles within a futuristic society. Emotions and individuality are conditioned out of them; life is pain-free but meaningless.
Post-Apocalyptic	The Road: A father and son travel across an American landscape blasted by an unknown cataclysm, trying to fend off starvation, the weather and patrols of cannibalistic hunters.
	The Stand: The US Department of Defense accidentally releases a highly contagious and deadly flu, killing 99% of the world’s population, as society collapses and violence erupts across the globe.
Monster Invasion	War of the Worlds: The South of England is invaded by Martians – oily, grey, tentacled creatures the size of a bear, who crash to Earth in a cylinder. A war breaks out, with the humans initially losing.
	I Am Legend: All humans on earth are turned into vampiric/zombie-like creatures – except one. He must survive on his own against these monstrous creatures that come to his home every night.

Fact of Fiction?

The storylines we see in Dystopian novels seem extreme and outlandish, but they are actually uncomfortably close to reality in many ways. For example, North Korean citizens live under constant surveillance just like in 1984; the Martian invaders of War of the Worlds were inspired by the British Empire’s own invasions of developing countries; and the apocalyptic landscape of The Road is a real possibility if climate change is not resolved. Even reality TV can sometimes have similarities to the televised spectacle found in The Hunger Games!



Dystopian Themes

environmental destruction	Extreme weather conditions, loss of natural resources and deforestation are all very relevant themes to our lives.
nuclear disaster	Humanity causing its own destruction is another possibility for how the world as we know it might end.
government control	Dystopian governments oversee mass surveillance and appalling living conditions; citizens fear for their safety.
technological control	The dangers of technology, through its abuse or an inability to properly control it, is becoming increasingly relevant.
survival	The struggle for survival can highlight both the best and worst characteristics of humanity.
loss of individuality	This could be through loss of choice, freedom or even appearance, as people are forced into roles within society.