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Advanced Placement in
English Literature and Composition

Teaching Unit
Individual Learning Packet

Brave New World

by Aldous Huxley

Written by Patrick O'Bryan

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ISBN-13 978-1-58049-768-8
Reorder No. 302242

Brave New World

Objectives

By the end of this unit, the student will be able to:

1. discuss the extent to which this novel meets the criteria for a dystopian novel.
2. discuss the use of this novel as commentary on industrialization and science.
3. discuss how the author uses irony to critique and examine society.
4. trace the development of the major themes of this story as it applies to:
 - John the Savage,
 - Bernard Marx,
 - Helmholtz Watson.
5. understand the use and purpose of allusion, especially to Shakespeare, in this novel.
6. understand and analyze the various motifs in the novel.
7. discuss the use of this novel as an allegory and develop an understanding of what each character portrays.
8. discuss the ways in which this novel comments on contemporary society.
9. respond to multiple choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
10. respond to writing prompts similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
11. offer a close reading of *A Brave New World* and support all assertions and interpretations with direct evidence from the text, from authoritative critical knowledge of the genre, or from authoritative criticism of the novel.

A Brave New World

Background Information and Historical References

Two Worlds Collide

In most of Europe and America, the post-World War I world was vastly different from that which had begun the century. Not only had the carnage and destruction of lives and property shaken the ideas of what civilization was, but the modern world, as it would come to be known, was defined by speed, science, technological advances, and radically new ideas of government and culture.

- **The fall of the last great empires and the rise of totalitarianism:**
World War I saw the last great empires of Russia, Austria, and Britain fall to pieces. Ways of life that had earlier seemed absolutely stable were now left crumbling and in ruins. In countries that had suffered defeat, resentment grew over what they considered to be harsh, unfair treaty agreements. The 1920s and 30s saw the rise of new totalitarian leaders: Joseph Stalin in Russia, Benito Mussolini in Italy, and Adolph Hitler in Germany, charismatic leaders who would rule by fear and force, becoming the heads of quasi-democratic states while asserting absolute control. Stalin's Russia and communist vision, inching ever closer to western Europe, set off a battle of ideas and power that would culminate in World War II a few years later and would create waves that echoed throughout the twentieth century.

Germany

Initially, however, the rise of many dictators would largely be due to simply being in the right place at the right time. The Weimar Republic, established in Germany after World War I, was more heavily favored by most Germans than the Nazi party of Hitler. In 1925, the Nazis had fewer than 50,000 members; most Germans were more inclined to vote towards the center. Inflation had wiped out most of Germany's middle class in the mid-1920s, increasing agitation towards the new, democratic government. Even though Germany eventually won membership into the League of Nations in 1926, any prosperity felt in those years would vanish by the end of the decade.

Like similar events in other industrialized countries, the crash of the American Stock Exchange in 1929 caused the German economy to collapse. American bank loans, which had until then kept much of German business afloat, dried up. Unemployment rose, and Germany, along with the rest of Europe, plunged into economic and political chaos. The tenuous peace that had been maintained while at least some prosperity existed vanished as local street gangs—sometimes financed and aided by extremist political parties—battled in the streets of the major cities. Berlin became the East/West battleground between the Communists and Nazis, foreshadowing the Cold War. In 1930, upset and disillusioned by the government, the German people voted the Nazis into a near-majority. In 1933, Hitler was named Chancellor and quickly set about restructuring the country. With little to stop him, Hitler took over the military, schools and universities, as well as most media outlets. He disbanded the trade unions, made any other political parties illegal, and began mercilessly persecuting German Jews. Hitler believed that the future of Germany was in the East, and he began planning to invade and occupy most—and eventually all—of Eastern Europe and Russia. His master race of Germans, he believed, would need *Lebensraum*, or living space, if they were to fully succeed.

Russia

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, Russia was largely seen as a backward, reclusive serfdom ruled by authoritarian monarchs. At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, most Russians' lives were completely upended when the Bolsheviks—Communists led most famously by Vladimir Lenin—rose up against the monarchy, killed the entire royal family, and seized power over the country. Even at the end of World War I, while much of the world was celebrating the armistice, Russia was fighting a bloody civil war between the Bolsheviks and the White Russians (the Tsarist forces wishing to return the monarchy to power).

- **Communism**

Karl Marx wrote, “A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of communism,” implying that the old system of wealthy owners and poor workers would soon fail. Marx wrote his *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, just as industrialization was creating a small class of factory owners who made exorbitant profits, while the workers toiled away in dangerous conditions for little actual pay. Marx foresaw a revolution by the workers in which they would take control of the factories. He intended that this workers' revolution would both increase the workers' wages and free the means of production from ownership by any one single person. In pure communism, all people control the means of production without any supervision by a “ruling class.” Marx predicted that this revolution would eventually be world-wide and would create a proletarian, or worker, state. He believed that, once the revolution began, the ruling classes of other countries would simply surrender or find themselves overtaken economically by the worker state. Most communists believed that, initially, communism would require guidance from some sort of ruling class, but only briefly. A true socialist state (no one knew for sure what it would look like) would eventually unfold as power was diffused into the hands of the workers. Russia became the base for Communism after the fall of the Tsar and subsequent takeover by the Bolsheviks. Although proclaiming themselves true communists, the Bolsheviks began a campaign of fear and violence that suppressed dissension, and never truly relinquished any power. By the end of World War I, Russia's new “communist” government was firmly in power and looking to move west toward Europe.

Science and Technology: A world turned upside down

In 1919, Einstein's new General Theory of Relativity was confirmed. The world was no longer the straight lines, right angles, and absolutes of Newton, Euclid, and Galileo. Nothing was certain except uncertainty, which would lead society to increasingly accept moral relativity, something Einstein himself disliked (he continued to believe in moral absolutes with definite right and wrong). The industrialization of military force—seen powerfully during World War I—no longer seemed a far-off vision of science fiction. Advances in science and technology led some to believe the world would become a far better, far safer place, while others bemoaned the loss of tradition and feared the annihilation of the entire planet. Mass production of goods would become the norm for most western countries.

- Darwin's Theory of Evolution, first developed in the mid-nineteenth century, gave rise to the "logical" belief that the development of super-humans was possible through genetic selection, or eugenics. This belief came terribly into practice in Hitler's Germany—although it was powered largely by fear, racism, and xenophobia—with his attempt to exterminate anyone not of German, or Aryan, descent. Few realized, however, that this true German was an imaginary being of false historical realities and traditions, invented to appease the unemployed masses and shift blame away from the failures of the government.
- **Henry Ford**
Henry Ford is best known for introducing the assembly line to the manufacture of automobiles. Instead of building one car at a time, his system of replicated and interchangeable parts allowed several identical cars to be built at the same time in different stages. Ford's system made mass production a reality and led to more affordable automobiles.

Eventually, of course, other industries imitated Ford's manufacturing model, and all household goods from furniture and clothing to food products and houses themselves began rolling off of assembly lines.

Ford became one of the wealthiest and most famous men of his time. In an interview with a *Chicago Tribune* reporter in May 1916, Ford said, "History is more or less bunk. It's tradition. We don't want tradition. We want to live in the present, and the only history that is worth a tinker's damn is the history that we make today." Today this is often misquoted as, "History is bunk." The sentiment can certainly be seen in the attitudes of Huxley's *Brave New World* society.

- **Sigmund Freud**

Although Freud published his most famous work at the turn of the twentieth century (one of his most famous works, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, was published in 1900), it wasn't until after World War I that he received great recognition. Prior to the War, he had been something of a minor controversial figure in the medical and psychiatric fields. Some of the biggest reasons for Freud's fame were the after-effects of World War I, particularly the relatively new concept of trench warfare. Soldiers, many of them volunteers from well-to-do families, returned from their war experiences broken and suffering. Many were educated and could not simply be written off as mad, crazy, or degenerate. Typical treatments for mental disorders at the time consisted of drugs and electro-shock therapy, harsh punishments that rarely yielded positive results. Freud's psychoanalytical process was more easily accepted and, due in large part to its inclusion of sex, much more sensational.

- **Radio, Television, and the Propaganda Machines**

Virtually unknown at the end of World War I, the radio exploded in popularity in the 1920s and '30s. By 1939, over 27 million radios had been sold in the United States alone. Unlike newspapers and film, radio presented a unique way for millions of people to receive information *simultaneously*. Many leaders were quick to make use of this new technology (Franklin Roosevelt began delivering his famous "Fireside Chats" in the 1930s). It also became a means of pouring out party-line propaganda to millions of people, as was done by Hitler and Mussolini; companies also began using radio as a means of advertising their products.

- **Conditioning and Behaviorism**

First elaborated upon by the Russian scientist Ivan Pavlov, *conditioning* is the training of an individual to respond to a certain stimulus in a certain way, through the use of either positive or negative reinforcement. Pavlov's most famous demonstration of his theory was his training of dogs to salivate at the ringing of a bell. In the early part of the twentieth century, significant research was done in psychology by other behavioral theorists suggesting that individual behaviors could be preconditioned to respond in predetermined ways.

Another popular psychologist during this time was John Watson, best known as the father of what would become known as the School of Behaviorism. His famous statement that he could take any twelve healthy babies, regardless of family background, and make them into any type of person—rich, poor, intelligent—stressed the belief in nurture over nature. He eventually became the author of popular parenting books and also a successful advertising executive, applying many of his psychological findings.

- **Thomas R. Malthus**

An English economist and writer, Malthus's *Principle of Population* argued that, unless controlled, the population of the world would exceed the necessary supplies for survival. The result would be human extinction. He believed that natural causes (disasters, war, famine), and moral restraint, and vice, exemplified by murder, abortion, and homosexuality, were the only ways to avoid a population catastrophe. He was (ironically, in the context of *Brave New World*) against contraception and believed that late marriage and abstinence, especially among the poor, were the only ways to keep the population in check.

Importance of Names in the Novel

Huxley's choice of character names reflects different historical, political, social, and economic ideas that have helped to shape the novel's fictional World State. For example, Bernard Marx (one of the more obvious references) refers to Claude Bernard, a French physiologist, who helped establish the norms for scientific study, and Karl Marx, the philosopher and revolutionary best known for writing *The Communist Manifesto*. Note, however, that many of Huxley's names refer to people from all areas of thought and deed. While some were leaders and revolutionaries, others were scientists and industrialists.

Major characters and their historical references include:

Bernard Marx—named after Claude Bernard and Karl Marx. Claude Bernard was a French physiologist who helped to establish the norms for scientific study. His studies of the function of the liver and pancreas earned him great acclaim among scientists of the time. Karl Marx was an economist, philosopher, and revolutionary author best known for writing (along with Friedrich Engels) *The Communist Manifesto*, the work that inspired countless socialists, most famously Vladimir Lenin. Marx believed that, through class struggle, communism—the belief in a classless, equal society—would replace capitalism and the inherent inequalities it produces.

Mustapha Mond—named after Mustapha Kemal Ataturk and Sir Alfred Mond. Ataturk was a Turkish military figure as well as the founder and first President of the Republic of Turkey, who helped create a western-style, democratic, secular state after World War I. The name Ataturk means “Father Turk.” Sir Alfred Mond was a German-Jewish industrialist and politician during the early part of the twentieth century, as well as an advocate for labor reforms such as health care and profit sharing.

Henry Foster—named after Henry Ford and William Foster. Henry Ford was the founder and president of the Ford Motor Company in Detroit, Michigan. He is best known for developing the modern assembly line and for mass producing the automobile. He became one of the richest people in the world. William Foster was a popular trade union leader and General Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States. He ran for president of the United States in 1924, 1928, and 1932, but was unsuccessful. He was a staunch supporter of Joseph Stalin and Soviet Russia.

Helmholtz Watson—named after Hermann von Helmholtz and John B. Watson. Hermann von Helmholtz was a nineteenth-century scientist best known for inventing the ophthalmoscope, which allowed the inside of the human eye to be viewed, and for various other contributions to the science of ophthalmology. John B. Watson is best remembered as the founder of the school of behaviorism and later as a popular author of child-rearing books. He is also well-known for his statement that he could take any twelve healthy infants and, through behaviorism, create any type of person. He would eventually become a successful advertising executive.

Lenina Crowne—named after Vladimir Lenin; Crowne is most likely a metonym for the monarchy in general. Vladimir Lenin was an important leader of the Russian revolution and first head of the Soviet Union. After coming to power on the platform that Russia must be quickly advanced to compete with (and eventually overthrow) the rest of the modern world, he quickly made himself sole authoritarian of the state and destroyed any opposition during the “Red Terror,” advocating mass terror against any enemies of the state. Thousands were either killed or sent to work camps (gulags) during this time. Lenin died in 1924.

Benito Hoover—named after the fascist leader, Benito Mussolini, and former President of the United States Herbert Hoover. Benito Mussolini was the dictator of Italy, who ruled from 1922 until 1943. His reign of power is most often remembered for its militarism, nationalism, oppressive censorship, and wide-spread use of propaganda. He became a close associate of Adolf Hitler and allied Italy with Germany during World War II. He was eventually shot while trying to escape in 1945. Herbert Hoover was the 31st President of the United States, from 1929-1933. He is best remembered for presiding over the beginning of the Great Depression, was blamed for the Stock Market Crash of 1929, and was perceived as being unable to remedy the country’s economic problems. He lost his bid for reelection in 1932 to Franklin Roosevelt.

Utopian and Dystopian Literary Conventions

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* continues a long tradition of utopian literature. As far back as Plato's *Republic*, visions of a world in which everything is in its place have tantalized writers, philosophers, and sociologists. In the nineteenth century, utopias were not only written about, but actually attempted (see below). The realization that any imagined perfect world would be doomed to fail (combined with the fact that most of the attempted utopias *did* fail) gave rise to the dystopian—or anti-utopian—novel. Other popular dystopian novels include George Orwell's *1984* and *Animal Farm*. Although relatively few utopian or dystopian novels have been written, the genre has developed certain conventions and devices.

Everything goes; nothing goes: Dystopian novels usually contain an extreme dichotomy of rules, as in *Brave New World* where sexual morals have been abolished, yet almost all real knowledge has been banned. Similarly, in most utopian novels, the characters are either free to do as they please—worship as they please, have as many sexual partners as they please, and take for themselves what is need to survive (the “communal village” idea)—or they are blindly obedient to a higher power that is ruthlessly setting an unbending policy of order (the “World State” idea).

Satirical: Most dystopian writers make heavy use of satire as a means of pointing out the wrongs of the current, real society; that is, they exaggerate the current politics and public opinions in order to show just how misguided they are. For example, in *Brave New World*, Huxley takes the fascist, totalitarian policies of leaders such as Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin to their extremes by creating a World State in which only a handful of people are left to make any decisions at all. He also satirizes the apathy of the people by creating characters who seem oblivious to the fact that they are simply consumers of meaningless products and ideas.

Futuristic: Not quite science fiction, and not quite present day, most utopian and dystopian novels take place in the near future. The worlds created are often very similar to actuality and seem to have their reference points in the author's “real present,” as in *Brave New World*, which takes place in A.F. 632, 600 years from when it was written (which would make it, to us, 2532 A.D.). The reference point (A.F.) in history for the novel is Henry Ford and his assembly line for automobile manufacture. Similar works following this model include George Orwell's *1984*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano*, and Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*.

Attempts at Utopian Alternative Societies:

Struggling under the pressures of urbanization and other consequences of the Industrial Revolution, many people rebelled against the traditional norms of nineteenth-century society, where capitalism, industrialization, and immigration threatened to destroy the old order of an agrarian society in which “gentleman landowners” held the most economic and political power.

Some early attempts at Utopian “counter-societies” include:

- Scottish social reformer Robert Owen’s New Harmony in western Indiana: Established in 1825, this was a socialist community, in which everyone was to share equally in labor and profit. Less than a year after the writing of the community’s constitution, the residents split into sub-communities that then disintegrated into chaos.
- Also, in 1825, Francis Wright established a community, modeled after Owen’s ideals, called Nashoba, in Tennessee. Wright had hoped to show that free labor was economically and morally superior to slavery, but few settlers embraced the experiment, and the community shut down within a year.

Another form of Utopian society was envisioned by transcendentalist philosophers and writers, who believed that perfecting society lay in perfecting the individual. They hoped to teach others how to “transcend” the concrete world of the senses and strive for a more mystical communion with nature.

- The best-known transcendental utopia was Brook Farm, established in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, in 1841. Residents hoped to free themselves from the competition of capitalism and work as little as possible, while still enjoying the benefits of prosperity. Within five years, the commune’s intellectual life flourished, but administrative affairs languished, and not enough work was getting done to feed the residents. Eventually, founder George Ripley, a Unitarian minister from Boston, recruited more farmers than thinkers, and tensions in the commune ended the experiment.
- Fruitlands, Massachusetts, was organized in 1843 by Amos Bronson Alcott (father of Louisa May Alcott, author of *Little Women*) and Charles Lane. Alcott and Lane chose to model a life of subsistence farming, producing only what the community itself would need to survive. Fruitlands, however, attracted many eccentrics, including several “body purists” who advocated nude swimming by moonlight and held clothing made of cotton in disdain because it was manufactured by slave labor. They likewise rejected clothing made of wool because it was taken from sheep without their consent. They also refused to eat any root vegetables or animal food products, subsisting instead on a diet of fruit and corn meal. Alcott’s wife, Abigail, noted that women did most of the work of the commune, while the men passed the day in conversation. The colony lasted only through the end of 1844 and was eventually sold at auction. Charles Lane was jailed for nonpayment of taxes.

Many experimental Utopias were founded by religious groups: Ephrata Cloister (founded by Sabbatarians in 1732), Bethlehem (founded by Anabaptists in 1740), and Mount Lebanon (founded by the Shakers in 1787).

In fact, the United States itself can be said to have begun as a series of European utopian movements, especially the colonies of Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Georgia.

Secular Utopian communities were also common at the end of the nineteenth century. Many of these were socialist in nature, inspired by Edward Bellamy's 1888 novel, *Looking Backward: 2000–1887*. The book describes how the private capitalism of the late nineteenth century evolved into a state-sponsored, central economy that guaranteed equal wages and equality for all citizens.

- The ideas in the book inspired the Equity Colony in Washington. Founded by Wallace Lermond, the colony hoped to serve as a model for a socialist government that residents hoped the United States would one day adopt. The colony, however, eventually ran out of money.
- Another socialist colony was created in 1895 outside of Nashville, Tennessee, by Julius A. Wayland, publisher of the socialist newspaper, *The Coming Nation*. Wayland's idea was that middle-class urbanites, socialist intellectuals, and poor Tennessee farmers would all come together and interact because each was inter-dependent upon the others. As the commune grew, however, the social, economic, and academic differences between the groups intensified, and the community dissolved.

Some businesses in the United States perverted the concept of the planned utopian community for their own profits.

- One of the most famous is Pullman, Illinois, founded in the 1880s by George Pullman, who manufactured railway cars. All residents of Pullman, Illinois, worked for the Pullman Palace Car Company. No one was permitted to buy a home but all were required to rent from Pullman. Pullman employees were paid in "Pullman dollars" and had to buy their food, clothing, and other goods from the Pullman company store, often at inflated prices. In 1894, Pullman workers struck in protest of a planned wage reduction. The strike eventually led to a national boycott by the American Railway Union. George Pullman and his Pullman Palace Car Company have become symbols of the type of corporate control that resulted in the strong labor unions and anti-trust legislation of the twentieth century.

The depression of the 1930s led the U.S. government to attempt the creation of several “utopian” communities.

- The Resettlement Administration created a number of agricultural communities, the best-known and most successful of which were the three “green towns”: Greenbelt, Maryland; Greenhills, Ohio; and Greendale, Wisconsin. These communities were completely planned and constructed by the Resettlement Administration. The intent was to address the growing refugee problem among sharecroppers in the South and northern urbanites who had lost their manufacturing jobs.

All of these attempts at utopias have in common that they were formed by those disillusioned with the politics and, especially, the economy of the mainstream society. All were based on some form of socialist and egalitarian ideals that all persons are equal, regardless of social status or education, and all claimed to eschew the political or economic oppression of others.

Themes in the Novel

Technology

Technological advances have been essential to the stability of the World State. Every facet of life, from birth to death, has been mechanized and streamlined. The assembly line concept has been applied to human reproduction—the Bokanovsky Process—and even the process of death has been made useful through the harvesting of phosphorous during cremation. People are conditioned through hypnopaedia, or sleep teaching. Complicated technological machines have been built to keep everyone happy and consuming. Whether through the “feelies”—interactive movies with strong sexual implications—or soma, a drug promoted as a legitimate method of escape, technology is accepted as the key to happiness. Note, however, that technology does not necessarily equal science. While technology is touted as good, there are several places in the novel where actual science is suppressed for fear it will hurt the stability of the World State.

Totalitarianism

The World State is “democratic” only in that it will do whatever is necessary to keep most of the people “happy” most of the time. The World State is governed by several World Controllers; the one we meet in the novel is Mustapha Mond, World Controller for Western Europe. It is the job of the Controllers to make sure nothing happens that might hinder consumerism or stability or might alleviate the ignorance of the people. The only reason people are allowed to do as they please is because they have been conditioned to want to do only things that are allowed by the Controllers. According to Mustapha Mond, it was the people themselves who chose this path, and this is Huxley’s warning to the modern world.

Individualism

The main characters in the novel—Bernard Marx, Helmholtz Watson, and John the Savage—all struggle with their lives in the World State because they feel alone. The conditioning that has been so effective with the rest of the population has not completely penetrated them and, ultimately, it is their sense of individualism that gets them in trouble. Bernard and Helmholtz both feel that there is something more to life that they are missing. John, who has been educated as both a “savage” and a World State citizen, is the most individual of all. He has no world to call home; he finds solace only in the writings of William Shakespeare. According to Mustapha Mond, individualism is not compatible with a peaceful, stable world. Individualism, he says, leads to unhappiness and pain, which have been the causes of so much human suffering.

Consumerism

Brave New World is not simply a warning about the future of society, but is also a statement about the society in which Huxley lived. While the attitudes and behaviors of World State citizens might at first appear bizarre, cruel, or shocking, the novel strongly suggests that the World State is simply the product of our society's values amplified by several centuries of social evolution. To a very large extent, individual happiness in *Brave New World* is defined merely as the ability to amass physical comforts and satisfy physical needs and desires. Personal success is measured in terms of buying power, and the number of material possessions one is able to amass.

When one considers the typical titles of *political* leaders—president, prime minister, premier, secretary—and compares these titles with the titles of World State leaders—controller and director—it becomes apparent that the World State titles are *corporate* titles, and the World “State” is, thus, a World *Corporation*. The citizens are, therefore, mere consumers. Consider the sleep-learning message, “Ending is better than mending.” The lesson the Director gives his students about conditioning the lower castes to *consume* both transportation and expensive sporting equipment illustrates that the State's primary motive is profit. Remember that *Brave New World* was written during the Great Depression of the 1930s that affected Europe as well as the United States. Thus, the stability and prosperity of a society would be attached to its conspicuous consumption of goods.

Happiness and the Human Condition

Brave New World is full of characters who do everything they can to avoid facing the truth about their own situations. In truth, for a society that purports to be founded upon the principles of stability and happiness, not one of the major characters we meet is fully happy.

Bernard is short, moody, something of an intellectual, and a malcontent in his society.

Helmholtz Watson fits well into his caste and society, but still feels as though his “talent” would allow him to do something “better” or “more important” than he is allowed to do.

Mustapha Mond, the most powerful representative of the society, secretly enjoys the literature that is denied other citizens of the World State. He admits to having once been a malcontent himself and has a strong empathy for Bernard and Helmholtz.

Even Lenina, the most well-adjusted character we meet, is something of a misfit in her tendency to create emotional attachments. At the beginning of the novel, her friend Fanny chides her for dating Henry Foster almost exclusively for several months. She also admits to wanting to have a “false pregnancy,” even though she is much younger than most women who resort to this process. But the fact that a society that considers fertility a curse and regards fathering and bearing a child to be a tremendous source of shame would have to develop something called a “false pregnancy” indicates that the citizens feel something missing from their lives.

The widespread use of the *soma* is also a strong example of a fundamental unhappiness in the society.

According to Mustapha Mond, the World State values happiness even over truth. Yet, when anyone in this society talks about “happiness,” he or she seems to mean nothing more than the immediate gratification of physical desire: food, sex, drugs, material possessions. In the society’s pursuit of happiness, however, it has also tried to eliminate those things which might occasion unhappiness: defeat, jealousy, envy, etc. The result is that citizens know no allegiance to family or friends, no aspirations (and thus, no opportunity to fail), no sense of planning for a desired future, and—at least theoretically—no class conflict, which is supposedly eradicated in some of their sleep-learning lessons.

Happiness (or the lack thereof), truth, and what it really means to be human and alive become significant elements of the novel’s theme.

Motifs in the Novel

Ford

In Huxley's future, Henry Ford has achieved god-like status. His opening of the assembly line plant for automobiles is marked as the beginning of their calendar (A.F. stands for "After Ford"). Even expletives such as, "Oh, God!" have been altered to, "Oh, Ford!" The irony is that the World State Controller seems to pride himself on the World State's lack of religious necessity, yet deity worship still exists.

On the other hand, it is important to note that their "deity" is a twentieth-century captain of capitalist industry.

"T" sign

Any Christian crosses in the future have been altered to look like T's. The "T" stands for the Ford Model-T, Henry Ford's popular, mass-produced automobile. Characters in the novel even go so far as to cross themselves in the shape of the "T." Although religion has largely been suppressed, Huxley seems to be saying that the need for spirituality of some kind is apparently a necessity.

It is no coincidence that their "deity" is a capitalist/industrialist, and their "cross" represents the mass-produced product that made him one of the wealthiest men of his era.

Shakespeare

Shakespeare is frequently quoted by John the Savage, which shows the stark contrast between his world and view and the world of the Brave New World Society. Though squalid, primitive, and lacking in physical comforts, the reservation that John calls home is a place where honest human emotions are expressed, and Shakespeare's characters—Juliet, Othello and Desdemona, Miranda—nurture John's notions of love, betrayal, despair, and aspiration.

The plays quoted by John include *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, and *Othello*. The title of the novel comes from *The Tempest*. Miranda, a young woman who has lived her entire life on a deserted island with no company but her father and his two magical servants, exclaims on her first view of other humans: "O wonder!/How many goodly creatures are there here!/How beauteous mankind is!/O brave new world,/That has such people in it!" Miranda's character is similar to John's in her naivety and her narrow view of the world.

The rich and deep plays of Shakespeare also provide a stark contrast to the vacuous propaganda produced by Helmholtz Watson, who longs to do something more important.

Sex and Drugs

While the World State is ostensibly founded upon the principles of stability and happiness, we fairly quickly find that it is a fragile stability, and society's notion of happiness is little more than the instant gratification of any physical need or desire. Toward that end, the World State encourages—*demand*s—promiscuity of its members, making it a source of shame to form any kind of emotional bond to another human. Even their quasi-religious ceremonies, their solidarity meetings, are implicitly sexual orgies.

Whenever the World State is unable to fulfill a person's desire, when an individual feels *any* sort of dissatisfaction at all, he or she is trained from birth to take soma, and go on a holiday. Consider how Karl Marx criticized religion as the "opium of the people," suggesting that, as long as religious doctrines instructed people to bear their ills patiently, they would never gather the energy to rebel against their repressive government. Here, the World State provides its people with a literal opiate for the purpose of preventing dissatisfaction and insurrection.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the characteristics of a dystopian novel that are prominently illustrated in *Brave New World*.
2. Discuss how Huxley uses actual historical names as character names in the novel. In what ways do the characters reflect their historical names?
3. How does Bernard Marx's physical description match his personality?
4. Compare and contrast Bernard Marx with his friend, Helmholtz Watson. Who is the stronger character and why?
5. In what ways is John the Savage consistently the outsider?
6. What aspects of modern life can you infer that Huxley dislikes? What do you think his ideal society would look like?
7. Cite incidents in the novel to support this theme: He who controls and uses knowledge wields the power.
8. In the novel, how have science and technology made the world better? Worse?

Free Response (Essay) Items

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 1:

Read the passage in Chapter 2, beginning on page 22 with, “One of the students held up his hand,” and ending, “But then most historical facts *are* unpleasant” on page 24.

Write a well-organized essay in which you discuss Huxley’s use of satire to expose the shortcomings of his futuristic society. Do not merely summarize the passage.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 2:

Read the passage in Chapter 3 beginning on page 47 with, “But, my dear chap, you’re welcome, I assure you,” and ending on page 49 with, “I do love flying. I do love flying.”

Write a well-organized essay in which you discuss how Huxley’s technique of presenting multiple, differing ideas in short quips foreshadows coming events and works as an effective narrative device. Do not merely summarize the plot.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 3:

Read the passage in Chapter 5, beginning on page 73 with, “‘Why do smoke-stacks have those things like balconies around them?’ enquired Lenina,” and ending on page 75 with, “‘Yes, everybody’s happy now,’ echoed Lenina. They had heard the words repeated a hundred and fifty times every night for twelve years.”

Write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the essential contradictions in Lenina’s character and discuss how Huxley uses her to undermine the idea that the World State is perfect.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 4:

Read the passage in Chapter 16, beginning on page 219: “‘But why is it prohibited?’ asked the Savage,” and ending on page 221: “Happiness is never grand.”

In a well-written essay, discuss how Huxley uses the characters of John and the Controller to portray his own views on art, science, and beauty. What role does Huxley believe these things play in society, and can they be compatible with happiness? Do not merely summarize the passage.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 5:

One common characteristic of the dystopian novel is its perversion of a truth or ideal valued by the society being satirized.

In a well-written essay, discuss how Huxley takes the positive social values of community, identity, and stability and perverts them in his World State. Do not merely summarize the plot.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 6:

Most authors of novels and plays strive to create characters that are deep and well-rounded. Some writers, however, intentionally use flat and relatively simple characters to achieve their purpose. Write a well-organized essay in which you discuss the effectiveness of Huxley's use of such characters. Pay particular attention to what each character stands for in terms of ideas and beliefs. Do not merely summarize the plot.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 7:

Most dystopian or anti-utopian novels are their authors' means of pointing out flaws in their own societies. Write a well-organized essay in which you discuss *Brave New World's* effectiveness in getting Huxley's message across to readers. Be specific in terms of how the novel succeeds and how it fails. Do not merely summarize the plot.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 8:

In most novels, the main character is revealed at the beginning. In *Brave New World*, the most important character, John, is not revealed until the middle of the book. In a well-organized essay, discuss the effect this has on the novel and the reasoning Huxley might have had for doing this. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Multiple Choice Questions

PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 1—5:

Carefully read the passage in Chapter 1, beginning on page 3, (“A squat grey building of only thirty-four stories,”) and ending on page 6, (“Making ninety-six human beings grow where only one grew before. Progress,”) before you choose your answers.

1. The second paragraph contains all of the following except
 - (A) simile.
 - (B) personification.
 - (C) parallelism.
 - (D) metaphor.
 - (E) imagery.
2. In the sentence “Not philosophy but fretsawyers and stamp collectors compose the backbone of society,” the word “fretsawyers” most likely means
 - (A) loggers.
 - (B) professors.
 - (C) bookbinders.
 - (D) artists.
 - (E) dictionary writers.
3. “One egg, one embryo, one adult—normality,” is an example of
 - (A) humor.
 - (B) satire.
 - (C) metaphor.
 - (D) allusion.
 - (E) hyperbole.
4. “Begin at the beginning,” is an example of (a/an)
 - (A) epanalepsis.
 - (B) simile.
 - (C) alliteration.
 - (D) anastrophe.
 - (E) cliché.
5. According to the Director, Bokanovskification is a good thing because it
 - (A) creates intelligent humans.
 - (B) eliminates the need of providing a source of food.
 - (C) eliminates the unpredictability inherent in natural fertilization.
 - (D) promotes a sense of family.
 - (E) lacks the stability that is the hallmark of the World State.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 6—10:

Carefully read the passage in Chapter 2, part 2, beginning on page 67 with, “He wrote regularly for *The Hourly Radio*,” and ending on page 70 with, “When people are suspicious with you, you start being suspicious with them,” before you choose your answers to the following questions.

6. In what way are Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson most similar?
 - (A) They are physically equal.
 - (B) They both believe that there is something more to life.
 - (C) They both believe that soma is important.
 - (D) They are both psychologists.
 - (E) They both feel that women play an important role in the World State.
7. “Mental excess could produce, for its own purposes, the voluntary blindness and deafness of deliberate solitude, the artificial impotence of asceticism,” could best be restated by which of the following statements
 - (A) Being too smart will make you go blind and deaf.
 - (B) It is wise to intentionally look stupid.
 - (C) If one is very intelligent, he or she should emulate the lives of monks.
 - (D) No matter how hard you try, you’ll never have everything you want.
 - (E) Extreme intelligence can create an artificial sense of isolation.
8. Bernard’s sense of jealousy towards Helmholtz is caused largely by Helmholtz’s
 - (A) physical appearance.
 - (B) intelligence.
 - (C) job.
 - (D) ability to get women.
 - (E) ability to write catchy slogans.
9. Bernard becomes agitated and nervous when he thinks he hears someone at Helmholtz’s door because he
 - (A) fears someone will laugh at their conversation.
 - (B) fears someone will think their conversation illegal.
 - (C) is hiding from the World State police.
 - (D) doesn’t want anyone to know he is friends with Helmholtz.
 - (E) is supposed to be at work.
10. All of the following are purposes of this passage, except
 - (A) allowing the reader to gain a greater understanding of the caste system.
 - (B) helping the reader understand just how controlling the World State is.
 - (C) foreshadowing possible future conflicts for Helmholtz and Bernard.
 - (D) creating suspense.
 - (E) giving greater depth to the characters of Helmholtz and Bernard.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 11—15:

Carefully read the passage in chapter 6, beginning on page 95, (“The Director leaned back in his chair, frowning.”) and ending on page 99, (“And that was that,”) before you choose your answers to the following questions.

11. The Director’s attitude toward Bernard changes during this episode from
 - (A) humor to melancholy.
 - (B) anger to rage.
 - (C) anger to annoyance.
 - (D) nostalgia to anger.
 - (E) annoyance to humor.
12. Bernard is most disturbed by the Director’s story because he
 - (A) has been conditioned to dislike references to the past.
 - (B) feels sorry for the lost girl.
 - (C) is afraid what happened to the Director will happen to him.
 - (D) has a conditioned fear of being lost.
 - (E) finds the story boring.
13. Bernard seems “almost” envious of the Director’s experience at the reservation because he
 - (A) has never been there.
 - (B) has never experienced those kinds of emotions.
 - (C) has trouble getting dates.
 - (D) cannot ride a horse.
 - (E) has never lost his soma.
14. In this passage, “solecism” most likely means (a)
 - (A) misuse of a colloquialism.
 - (B) Freudian slip.
 - (C) violation of manners.
 - (D) non-traditional word choice.
 - (E) facial expression.
15. “And it poured and roared and flashed,” is an example of (a/an)
 - (A) anaphora.
 - (B) inversion.
 - (C) oxymoron.
 - (D) synecdoche.
 - (E) polysyndeton.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 16—20:

Carefully read the passage in Chapter 10, beginning on page 147 with, “Buzz, buzz! The hive was humming, busily, joyfully,” and ending on page 155 with, ““My father!” before you choose your answers to the following multiple choice questions.

16. According to the Director, Bernard’s greatest crime is
 - (A) infidelity.
 - (B) tax evasion.
 - (C) dissention against the World State.
 - (D) unorthodoxy.
 - (E) inciting violence.
17. In terms of plot structure, this episode is most accurately called
 - (A) falling action.
 - (B) denouement.
 - (C) the climax.
 - (D) a reversal.
 - (E) rising action.
18. The revelation of the Director’s own impropriety at the very meeting Bernard was to be humiliated at is an example of
 - (A) analogy.
 - (B) understatement.
 - (C) parody.
 - (D) farce.
 - (E) irony.
19. Bernard’s motive in bringing Linda and John to the meeting is to
 - (A) surprise the Director.
 - (B) further damage his own reputation.
 - (C) educate the audience.
 - (D) embarrass the Director.
 - (E) humor the audience.
20. Linda’s entrance into the Fertilizing room indicates that she
 - (A) still believes herself to be beautiful.
 - (B) has seriously injured herself.
 - (C) is embarrassed by the sight of herself.
 - (D) has lost her mind.
 - (E) no longer has accurate eyesight.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 21—25:

Carefully read the passage in Chapter 16, beginning on page 225 with, “Yes, but what sort of science?” asked Mustapha Mond sarcastically,” and ending on page 229 with, “And now, if you don’t mind, I’ll go and see how poor Bernard’s getting on,” before you choose your answers to the following multiple choice questions.

21. The main purpose of this passage is to
 - (A) inform the reader how the World State came to be.
 - (B) create suspense.
 - (C) create sympathy for the Controller’s character.
 - (D) foreshadow.
 - (E) create conflict between Bernard and John.
22. The Controller’s referring to himself as “the head cook now,” is an example of
 - (A) allusion.
 - (B) analogy.
 - (C) inversion.
 - (D) oxymoron.
 - (E) connotation.
23. Bernard’s being sent to an island is really a reward, according to the Controller, because he will
 - (A) never want for anything.
 - (B) be nearer to Lenina.
 - (C) live into old age.
 - (D) be around others who share his ideas.
 - (E) have as many women as he wants.
24. Helmholtz chooses the Falkland Islands because he
 - (A) believes them to contain the best people.
 - (B) believes the harsh conditions will be good for his writing.
 - (C) has never been there.
 - (D) enjoys warm weather.
 - (E) has family there.
25. According to the Controller, a life of happiness over one of truth, beauty, and knowledge was chosen by
 - (A) the World State Council.
 - (B) Mustapha Mond.
 - (C) the Alphas.
 - (D) the people.
 - (E) religious leaders.

MULTIPLE CHOICE ANSWERS

With Explanations

1. The descriptive second paragraph contains simile, A (“polished tubes like butter”); personification, B (the light is “hungrily seeking some draped lay figure”); metaphor, D (“the light was...a ghost”); and imagery, E (the whole paragraph). The only device not used by Huxley is (C), parallelism.
2. Fretsawyers is a difficult word, but, as it must be something similar in function to stamp collector (someone who does little to advance society), the best answer is (D).
3. *Brave New World* is a world in which nearly everything is the opposite of what we consider normal. The idea that “normal” is simply one egg and one embryo is a far cry from one man and one woman. Huxley’s is satirizing how scientific discoveries can easily be manipulated to seem as if they are good and only good. While the phrase may seem humorous because it is absurd, the best answer is (B), satire.
4. (B) and (E) can immediately be eliminated, and the sentence is not inverted, so (D) cannot be the answer either. The “b” sound is repeated, but not greatly and with no significant effect, so (C) is not the answer. The best answer is (A) because the word “begin” is at both the beginning and the end of the sentence.
5. The purpose of Bokanovskification is to create a race of humans that are identical in size and intelligence, eliminating differences and increasing the sense of conformity and, therefore, stability (by their logic). The best answer is (C).
6. Bernard and Helmholtz’s difference in size is stressed in the novel, eliminating (A). Neither chooses to take soma very much if at all, and, while Bernard is something of a psychologist, Helmholtz is a writer. They may both believe that women play an important role in the World State, but this is never mentioned. The best answer is (B), which is the basis of their friendship.
7. This quotation refers to Helmholtz, who is a great physical and mental specimen. In the same way that Bernard feels inferior because of his less-than-average size, Helmholtz feels isolated because of his great mind. The best answer is (E).
8. Even though Bernard would not admit it, he is very jealous of the ease with which Helmholtz attracts women. The best example of this is when Bernard visits Helmholtz at work and is interrupted by the various invitations Helmholtz receives from women wanting to be with him.
9. (C), (D), and (E) can immediately be eliminated. Both (A) and (B) are plausible answers, but (B) is best because Bernard doubts any one would even be able to understand their conversation.

10. This passage suggests the trouble Helmholtz and Bernard will encounter with the authorities later on. By making their meeting somewhat secretive, and by hinting at the power of the state, it also creates some suspense. We also learn much more about Bernard and Helmholtz. The only thing this passage does not do is (A), give the reader a greater understanding of the caste system.
11. The Director in this episode begins by reminiscing about a past event but quickly becomes angry when he realizes his *faux pas*. The best answer is (D).
12. The best answer is (A). Despite not being completely convinced of the greatness of life in the World State, some things are impossible to change. Bernard cannot get past the Director's inexcusable behavior. This comes up later with several other characters who become disgusted or disturbed by a sight or scene—not because of what is actually happening, but because of some small, conditioned response they have been made to feel. This has the effect of creating characters who, despite feeling somewhat alienated by their society, are still so conditioned that little can be done by them to change it.
13. One of Bernard's greatest complaints to others throughout the novel is that he has never really felt anything passionately. (D) can easily be eliminated. (A), (C), and (E) are all probably true, but that doesn't really create envy in Bernard. (B) is the best answer because Bernard really does want to feel something more.
14. As the reader has learned earlier in the book, recalling past events is seriously frowned upon in the World State. Doing this, therefore, would be a serious breach of etiquette. The answer is (C).
15. The sentence is neither repeated nor inverted, so (A) and (B) are eliminated. (C) and (D) are easily eliminated, leaving only (E), polysyndeton, which is the use of conjunctions in a series without commas to create a run-on feel.
16. (A) and (B) are easily eliminated. And although Bernard does not agree with all the policies of the World State, he isn't bold enough (C) to speak out against it, or (E) incite violence. Bernard is only really guilty of (D)—failing to be exactly like everyone else.
17. Because Bernard goes from nearly being sent to Iceland and humiliated to being an instant celebrity, the best answer is (D), a reversal.
18. (A) and (B) are easily eliminated. Since there is no situation to parody, (C) is eliminated. Because the episode is really happening, it cannot be (D). The best answer is (E), irony, because what happens (to the Director, at least) is the opposite of what is expected. This could more specifically be called dramatic irony because, while the Director does not know what is going to happen, the audience, or reader, does.

19. (A) and (D) are both acceptable answers, but, while he does surprise the Director (A), Bernard's real intention is to humiliate the Director in order to save himself. (D) is the best answer.
20. Linda is described as "coquettishly smiling" and entering "with what was meant to be a voluptuous undulation," indicating that, although she is horrifying to look at, she has still maintained enough of her conditioned sense of sexuality to make her believe (A), that she is still a beautiful woman.
21. This part of the novel is really the unraveling of the story, when the reader learns about the creation of the World State. John and Mustapha Mond's nearly Socratic dialogue also reveals the reasoning behind the creation of the World State. Although personalizing Mustapha Mond does create some feelings towards him, the best answer is (A).
22. (C) and (D) are easily eliminated. The Controller is not referencing anything, so it cannot be (A), an allusion. There are really no associations to be made with him calling himself the head cook, so (E) can be eliminated. The best answer is (B), an analogy, because of his extensive comparison of his job to the role of head cook.
23. (B) is false, and while (A) and (E) may be rewards, we don't know whether they are true. (C) is not really a reward. The best answer is (D). As Bernard later finds out, anyone who cannot be conditioned to accept the rules of the World State is sent to an island with others who have similar ideas.
24. Helmholtz is intelligent enough to understand that, because of his conditioning, he has never really understood suffering. He sincerely wants to feel more violent emotions, and believes that a harsh climate is one way to induce those feelings. The best answer is (B).
25. This is one of the most important lessons to take from the novel. Although it goes against rational thought, the World State was not created by an evil dictator. It was chosen by the people who were tired of wars and instability. Here Huxley is warning readers against the dangers of apathy and complacency; he believes that a better world can be had, but it will require much study, sacrifice, and hard work. The alternatives are a world of permanent war and hardship, or a world of ignorance and conformity. The best answer is (D), the people.

Brave New World

Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Teaching Unit

Study Guide Teacher's Copy

Chapter 1

1. What are the tone and effect of Huxley's description of the Fertilizing Room in the first two paragraphs of the book?

The first two paragraphs set the tone for the rest of the novel by introducing a sterile world in which conformity and order are paramount.

2. How does the Fertilizing Room's description fit the purpose of the novel?

The Fertilizing Room, despite being the place where life is created, is devoid of any real life. Light is personified by saying that it is "hungrily seeking some draped lay figure...but finding only the glass and nickel and bleakly shining porcelain of a laboratory. Huxley's purpose is to show how this perfect world is really more dead than any real world, where problems exist.

3. What is Bokanovsky's Process?

Bokanovsky's Process is the creation of several identical twins from one fertilized human egg. This process is done with the lower castes—the deltas and the epsilons—in order to minimize variety and increase conformity.

4. What effect does the repetition of the phrase "straight from the horse's mouth" have?

The phrase comes from horse racing, where gamblers would try to learn as much about a horse as possible before betting. The goal was to get as close to the horse as possible—owner, trainer, even witnessing the horse in training—and to say you heard it "from the horse's mouth" means that you have gotten as close to the horse as possible; you're a good source. Huxley's repetition of this phrase over and over again becomes absurd; a fitting tone for the subject matter the Director is discussing in the world in which everything seems turned on its head.

5. According to Henry Foster, what is the ultimate goal of decanting the lower castes?

Henry Foster, the Director, believes that the Bokanovsky process could be improved by creating more than the maximum ninety-six. The other problem, according to Foster, is shortening the time it takes for the lower castes to mature physically and mentally. As it is presently, they can either shorten the physical maturation or the mental maturation, never both. Huxley throws these little contradictions in throughout the novel; one moment a character will be preaching the perfection of the World State and its “science”; the next, he will be explaining some contradiction within the same system.

Chapter 2

1. What reason does the Director give for conditioning the babies to hate flowers and books?

Consumption is a big part of life in the World State. According to the Director, if Deltas aren't conditioned to hate flowers and books, they'll waste their time going into the country and reading—pastimes that involve little or no consumption. However, since they are needed to consume transportation, they have been conditioned to enjoy complex country sports. They now consume transport to get out to take part in the country sports as well as consume the apparatus necessary to take part in the country sports.

2. Briefly explain what hypnopaedia is.

Hypnopaedia is the process of sleep teaching.

3. In what ways is the World State's use of hypnopaedia different from its original use?

Originally, according the Director, the goal of hypnopaedia was to teach an “intellectual education.” This failed because, while phrases were memorized, the rationale and process was not. In the World State, hypnopaedia is used to teach moral education, which requires no rationale and no understanding of process, according to the Director.

4. What does this chapter reveal about Huxley's feelings towards moral and scientific education?

Huxley was skeptical of both science and morality. This section reveals the trouble he had justifying unqualified praise of either. During Huxley's time, science was seen as the be-all and end-all of everything, and every discovery was praised as being good for mankind. Huxley believed that, unchecked and without accountability, science could be used to hurt as well as heal (as was the case in World War I and, later, in World War II). Similarly, he also believed that morality was something to be skeptical of as well because, in the wrong hands and from the wrong people, it could also be used to hurt (as was the case in both World Wars).

Chapter 3

1. What is the attitude toward sexuality in the World State?

Sexuality in the World State is treated as if there are no longer any boundaries between what is wrong and what is right. The only thing that is discouraged is not being sexually active at all. "Every one belongs to every one else," is the oft-quoted phrase conditioned into the citizenry.

2. What word has replaced the use of God or Lord? What effect does this create?

"Ford" has replaced God or Lord, even in expletive use, as in "Oh, Ford!" This furthers the attitude that science is king in the World State, yet Huxley has created something of a new god; even in a religion-less state, the need for some form of spirituality is still present.

3. What is Mustapha Mond's attitude toward the past?

"History is bunk," is how the Controller (Mustapha Mond) prepares the students he is speaking with before beginning a lesson. History is held in disdain in the World State because passion for anything other than the here and now is discouraged. The leaders of the World State fear that too much nostalgia or love for things gone by will create unhappy people.

4. What is it about Bernard Marx's actions and thoughts that set him apart from everyone else?

Bernard is set apart because he is different both physically and mentally. Physically, he is shorter than the average male Alpha, slightly taller than an Epsilon. Mentally, he refuses to believe all the conditioning he has been given, in part because he himself is a psychologist specializing in hypnopaedia and also because he gets little satisfaction from his personal relationships and soma, the state drug.

5. What do people suspect happened to Marx that makes him different, both physically and intellectually?

His colleagues believe that his non-conforming stature and personality are a result of alcohol having been placed in his blood surrogate when he was a fetus.

6. Why is Lenina's relationship with Henry Foster frowned on by Fanny?

As the saying goes, "Every one belongs to every one else," and that can't happen if Lenina doesn't move on to other men and dates only Henry. Monogamous relationships are discouraged by the World State, and having multiple partners is the norm.

7. What effect is created by Huxley's juxtaposition of several episodes at once?

The short bursts of each episode juxtaposed against each other does several things: it allows the reader to get caught up on what has happened to the world in the hundreds of years before the creation of the World State, shows how these new rules have been conditioned into the people, and creates contradictions. While the Controller is busy telling the students how perfect the world is now that everyone is conforming, both Lenina and Bernard are going against the teachings, questioning the rules that have been conditioned into them.

Chapter 4

1. Why is Bernard embarrassed by his conversation with Lenina in the elevator?

Unlike nearly everyone else, Bernard is uncomfortable speaking frankly about sex and personal relationships in front of others. He also feels inadequate compared with others in his caste.

2. How does Lenina judge the men she has been with?

She judges most men on their physical appearance.

3. How does Bernard's physical appearance match his personality?

He is set apart by his less-than-Alpha stature, which matches his nonconforming behavior.

4. Why is Helmholtz Watson considered "different"?

Helmholtz Watson's peers believe that he does his work too well. In the World State, it is considered poor form to set yourself apart from others in any way, negatively or positively.

5. What do Bernard and Helmholtz think sets them apart from others?

They are unsure exactly why they are different; however, they both feel that there is more to life than simple physical pleasure and soma.

6. Why does Helmholtz feel his writing is inadequate?

He wishes his writing were more "piercing" and "violent." He knows he is good at his work, yet at the same time he understands how boring and meaningless his writing ultimately is.

Chapter 5

1. Why does Lenina feel that Epsilons should provide less phosphorous after their cremation?

Despite having been conditioned to believe otherwise, Lenina believes her caste to be superior to the Epsilons. She cannot help but believe that Epsilons are less useful in life and must therefore be less useful in death.

2. For what reason does Huxley include the dance club scene?

Huxley's inclusion of the dance scene reinforces the conformity present in the World State. Even at something as traditionally spontaneous and loose as a dance club, the patrons still move as one, and they all leave together.

3. Briefly describe the Solidarity Service.

The Solidarity Service consists of an opening hymn, soma-taking, more chanting, the anticipation of the coming of the "Greater Being," the coming of the "Greater Being," dancing, more chanting, and a final release of sexual energy.

4. What has the Solidarity Service replaced?

In the World State, the Solidarity Service has replaced the typical church service.

5. Why does Bernard consider his Solidarity Service experience a failure?

Unlike most of the other members in the circle, Bernard does not believe he sees the "Greater Being." He also leaves unsatisfied spiritually.

Chapter 6

1. Why does Henry Foster compare Bernard to a rhinoceros?

Henry Foster compares Bernard to a rhinoceros because he seems to be resistant to conditioning and to the present reality of the World State.

2. What reasons does Lenina give for thinking Bernard so odd?

Lenina thinks Bernard is odd because, unlike all the other men she's known, he is less interested in sleeping with her and more interested in being alone and having a conversation.

3. Why is Lenina so disturbed by the sight of the ocean?

Like most everyone else, Lenina has been conditioned to want to be with other people. Being alone is seen as a bad thing. The ocean, with its huge expanse of openness, silence, and solitude, frightens her and makes her uncomfortable.

4. What does Lenina suggest Bernard do to cure his unhappiness?

He should take soma and sleep with her.

5. Despite all of Bernard's talk of being unhappy with the present conditions of society, what does Lenina ultimately think is Bernard's reason for not wanting to go to bed with her?

Lenina believes that Bernard does not want to go to bed with her because of her physical appearance. She is afraid he is not attracted to her body.

6. Why does Bernard regret going to bed with Lenina?

Bernard was interested in developing a more personal relationship with Lenina, not simply a sexual one.

7. Briefly describe the Director's experience at the New Mexican Reservation.

The Director visited the reservation with "a girl [he] was having at the moment," (he cannot recall the girl's name). While out on a horseback ride, they got separated and he lost her. He searched for her for "hours" and, when he didn't find her, decided she must have died. He returned without her.

8. What is inappropriate about the Director's reflecting on his visit to the reservation?

Any reminiscing, or retelling of past events, is discouraged. People are conditioned not to dwell on the past, so that they do not get too sentimental, upset, or passionate.

9. What does the Director mean by Bernard's lack of "infantile decorum"?

As an Alpha, Bernard has more free will (he has been created to be more intelligent) and can therefore make more of his own decisions. Regardless of caste, however, the World State expects every citizen to accept its standard of morality, consumption, and pleasure, which it calls infantile decorum, or behavior. Bernard, according to the Director, has not been living up to this standard and is being scolded for being, ironically, too mature.

10. How does Bernard alter his report of his confrontation with the Director when telling it to Helmholtz?

Bernard, who is typically shy and non-confrontational, tells his own “heroic” version of the story, adding that he not only disagreed with the Director, but also told him to “go to the Bottomless past,” and then proceeded to walk out on him.

11. What does Bernard warn Lenina will not be available during their stay at the reservation?

She will not be able to enjoy the typical luxuries, such as Escalator-Squash courts, television, liquid air, and vibro-vacuum massage.

12. In what ways is the reservation different from the World State?

The reservation is different from the World State in almost every way. Most importantly, the people on the reservation have maintained the traditional family structure complete with marriage and mothers (who actually give birth to children). They also receive no conditioning, speak nearly extinct languages, and are not immune to the diseases, which have largely been eradicated in the World State.

13. How does Bernard react to the news that he is going to be sent to Iceland?

Bernard, who had previously been so bold in the face of the threat of being sent to Iceland, suddenly loses his courage, becomes fearful and angry.

14. What does the helicopter say to reassure Lenina and Bernard that they will be safe during their stay at the reservation?

He assures them that the savages are “perfectly tame,” due largely to their experience with gas bombs, presumably used by the World State to intimidate them.

15. How is suspense created in this chapter?

Huxley creates suspense initially by having the Director recount his story at the beginning of the chapter. We are also beginning to understand just how wild the reservation is, and how different it is. We assume that something important will happen to Bernard or Lenina at the reservation.

Chapter 7

1. What specifically does Lenina dislike about the Malpais's home?

She has been conditioned to dislike everything about their home, specifically the unpleasant smells, the dirt, the visibly old age in people, the mothering (breast feeding), and having to walk.

2. What does Bernard say that is particularly offensive to Lenina?

Bernard points out the relationship between a mother and her child. The word "mother" has become an almost obscene word in the future World State, and its use is discouraged. He continues pressing this fact and goes so far as to suggest that perhaps Lenina herself should consider becoming a mother.

3. What is the one thing about Lenina's visit that reminds her of home?

The beating of the drums reminds Lenina of the Solidarity Service.

4. Briefly describe the ritual that Lenina and Bernard witness?

The ritual they witness is a cross between a Native American and a Christian ceremony. It begins with drums, dancers, and the bringing out of snakes. It continues with a young boy being brought out for a type of blessing. The young boy walks in a circle around the snakes and then begins to get whipped by a man wearing a coyote mask. The boy continues walking and being whipped until he collapses. The snakes are then run out of the circle, and the people watching disperse.

5. What does Lenina find most disturbing about the whipping scene?

Lenina seems to be most disturbed by the sight of the blood. "Too awful!" she says, "That blood!" Like most people in the World State, Lenina has been conditioned to abhor the sight of blood.

6. What is Lenina's reaction to Linda?

Lenina is disgusted by the sight of Linda, who is fat, dirty, and missing several teeth.

7. Why does Bernard become excited by John's story of how he and his mother came to be at the reservation?

Bernard realizes that Linda is the woman who vanished in the Director's story. He realizes that he will now be able to use Linda and her son (who is the biological son of the Director) in order to keep his job.

8. What are Linda's feelings towards her son John?

Linda believes John has become more like the other savages and is "mad."

9. In what ways are the World State and the reservation similar?

Both the World State and the reservation are places governed by ignorance. The people in the World State lack any real education and blindly follow the conditioning they have been given, and the people on the reservation maintain their way of life based on superstitions. They both have customs and norms which are punishable if broken. This is brought into clear focus by Linda's behavior. She tells of how she would sleep with different men from the village because she believed that "every one belongs to every one." These actions, however, were a violation of the reservations rules that, once married, people were to remain with only one person.

10. What are Huxley's views towards life on the reservation?

Huxley seems to dislike the world of the reservation as much as that of the World State. His description of the reservation is of a place that is dirty and ruled by a mix of religious beliefs and superstitions. As in the World State, there are always contradictions; people consistently break the rules in both societies. He seems to be saying that any society built on ignorance and blind obedience will create unhappiness.

Chapter 8

1. What is the effect of not introducing John until the middle of the novel?

John is the most important character in the novel. He serves as a bridge between the "old" world and the World State. By not bringing him into the novel until the middle, Huxley is allowed to create a more solid picture of the World State. Until John arrives, the reader becomes almost acclimated to the World State, which begins to seem normal. John's arrival allows the reader to more accurately see through the flaws inherent in the creation of any single perfect world.

2. What memories does John describe?

John's memories are largely made up of his mother's indiscretions. He remembers, shamefully, the many men who visited and slept with his mother. He also recalls learning to read with his mother and her telling him of the Other Place (the World State).

3. What do John's memories tell us about his character?

John's memories reveal that he is the most balanced of all the characters. He seems to have developed his own sense of right and wrong, based on what he feels, through his own introspection. Unlike many of the characters, John has been allowed to discover his own feelings. He has not been conditioned to believe anything, and his isolation from the rest of the people on the reservation has made him skeptical of their beliefs as well.

4. What are the limits of what Linda can teach John?

Linda can only recite phrases and teach John how to read. She cannot tell him why things are the way they are. As with most members of the World State, she has never been taught to understand, only to parrot.

5. Where does John get the idea to kill Popé?

This comes from reading Shakespeare.

6. What are Huxley's feelings towards Shakespeare?

Huxley seems to have a profound respect for Shakespeare. John is able to discover his own set of values and beliefs almost solely from reading Shakespeare.

7. What does Bernard find most disturbing about the story of John's self-crucifixion?

Bernard finds most repulsive John's telling him of how he fainted, fell, and cut his head open. The thought of blood and the sight of the imperfect shadow leave Bernard feeling "squeamish."

8. What might the last line of the chapter foreshadow?

Bernard is warning John that the "Brave New World" may not be as great as Linda has made it out to be. John's experiences in the "Other Place" may not go well.

Chapter 9

1. What is ironic about the phrase "safe as helicopters"?

Helicopters have traditionally been one of the most unstable and dangerous forms of transportation.

2. What does John do when he discovers Bernard has gone?

He breaks into the room and goes through Lenina's suitcase.

3. What is the significance of quoting *Romeo and Juliet* in this scene?

Romeo and Juliet's relationship was tragic. By quoting from this play, the reader is being forewarned that John and Lenina's relationship may not turn out well.

Chapter 10

1. Why does the Director believe that the Fertilizing Room is the appropriate place to announce Bernard's transfer to Iceland?

According to the Director, this is the appropriate place to announce Bernard's transfer because it contains more high-caste workers than any other in the Centre. The Director's underlying motive is to humiliate Bernard, and it will be easier if there are people around who actually understand the severity of the punishment.

2. According to the Director, why is Bernard's talent all the more reason to let him go?

The Director believes that, because Bernard was fortunate enough to be an Alpha, he should be grateful and conform to society. He also equates intelligence with the ability to conform to the rules, which should cause the reader to question the World State's definition of intelligence.

3. What "reason" does Bernard give for proof of his innocence?

Bernard's "reason" for his innocence is actually proof of the Director's guilt. The Director asks if Bernard knows of any reason why he (the Director) should not execute judgment on Bernard. Bernard's response is literal: the Director should not execute judgment on him because he himself is guilty of a far greater indiscretion: fathering a child.

4. How does unorthodoxy threaten the World State?

Unorthodoxy threatens the World State's belief in absolute conformity and stability. If any one acts out of turn, the potential for jealousy and envy occurs, and happiness, which is the foundation of the World State, could be disrupted.

5. What is the effect of the detail in the first three paragraphs of this chapter?

The first three paragraphs again detail the importance of order and the pride the people of the World State place in it. Huxley again juxtaposes this sense of order against disorder: Bernard's and the Director's "crimes."

6. What is most humiliating to the Director?

The Director is humiliated most by the fact that he is the biological father of someone. Note that this is greatest concern. He doesn't seem to care about the well-being of Linda or John; rather, he is acting as if he were a small child being made fun of.

Chapter 11

1. Why were “the best people quite determined *not* to see Linda”?

As Linda was fat and unattractive, most people were disgusted by the sight of her.

2. What is Dr. Shaw’s argument for allowing Linda to take soma indefinitely?

Dr. Shaw’s convoluted argument goes like this: he argues that, by shortening Linda’s life with unrestricted access to soma, he’s actually lengthening it. The effects of soma, the doctor argues, allow her to get much more out of the time she has left.

3. In what ways does celebrity change Bernard?

Bernard now has easy access to women and an eager audience (as long as John the Savage is near). He exploits this and ultimately becomes like the men he was critical of at the beginning of the novel.

4. Briefly explain how the upper castes are educated at Eton?

They are educated in much the same way that they are conditioned. They are given information as a collection of facts and are not taught to think for themselves. The information they receive is sterile and boring; they are not expected to understand the processes behind the facts.

5. What are the differences in the lyrics Lenina chooses to recite versus the ones that John does?

Lenina is often singing the mindless songs she has been conditioned to know. These lyrics usually involve love-making and soma-taking. John frequently recites short bits of lyrics from the Shakespeare he has memorized. These lyrics are much more a commentary on what he is learning and are a way for him to try and make sense of his new world.

6. How is the “feely” used as a means of conditioning?

It is used to strengthen the beliefs already present in the viewers’ minds and to maintain the status quo.

Chapter 12

1. What is revealed about how Bernard is perceived after he tells them the news that John will not be appearing?

Bernard believed that he was being treated better because of his intellect and personality. After he gives the news that John is not attending, it becomes clear to him that people were tolerating him only because of John; no one's opinion of Bernard and his personality had ever really changed from the beginning of the novel.

2. What is Mustapha Mond's reasoning for not allowing the paper titled "A New Theory of Biology" to be published?

Although Mond praises the paper for its ingeniousness, he ultimately decides to reject it because he believes it to be heretical—too far from the accepted norm—and potentially subversive.

3. How is Mustapha Mond different?

We are beginning to understand more of Mond's character. He is different, not only because he knows much more than anyone else, but also because he seems to understand what real intelligence is.

4. How has Lenina's character changed?

Lenina is beginning to have real feeling towards John the Savage. She has a greater desire to be around him and is genuinely disappointed when he doesn't show up at Bernard's party because she wanted to be near him.

5. What does Helmholtz Watson find absurd about John's reading of *Romeo and Juliet*?

*Despite being somewhat enlightened, Helmholtz Watson is unable to overcome his conditioned response to the plot and characters of *Romeo and Juliet*. He simply cannot understand why characters would act as they do in the play, and he cannot believe that the words "mother" and "father" are anything other than obscene.*

Chapter 13

1. What advice does Fanny give to Lenina?

Fanny tells Lenina to get over John and be with as many men as possible until she forgets about him.

2. What reasoning does John give for not having approached Lenina?

John does not feel worthy of Lenina; he feels that he must first do something to prove he is worthy of her. He also feels that their relationship would be stronger if he had to struggle to make it happen.

3. How do Lenina and John's differing value systems make their relationship impossible?

In Lenina's world, pleasure is physical only, and it is also instantaneous. She is unable to comprehend the pleasure John is seeking in self-denial. Similarly, John believes that instant gratification is fleeting and will ultimately lead to more disappointment than anything else.

Chapter 14

1. What does it mean to say that the patients in the hospital are in their "second infancy"?

By "second infancy," it is meant that the patients are mostly senile and are completely dependent on others for their care.

2. Why is John's reaction to his mother's death seen as unusual?

Most people don't have biological mothers, so they would have a hard time understanding any sadness based on a familial relationship. Secondly, they have all been conditioned to accept death as a normal part of life. The goal of the conditioning done in the World State is to make sure that people do not become too upset or passionate about anything.

3. For what reason are the children brought into Linda's room?

The State wants to condition the children to accept death as a normal, non-frightening event.

Chapter 15

1. Why does John compare the group of twins to maggots?

The twins “swarm” into the room and disrespectfully crawl all over the room. John is unaware that the twins are being conditioned to think of death as mere play.

2. How has the phrase “brave new world” changed to John?

John had earlier hoped this brave new world would be a fantastic place where he would be allowed to be civil and fit in. He is beginning to understand that this world is as unpleasant to him as the reservation was.

3. What does John fail to understand about the Deltas?

John attempts to “free” the Deltas from soma by throwing it out the window. He fails to understand how deeply ingrained the conditioning is in them. He cannot believe that they—or anyone else—do not want something more out of life.

4. How is Bernard’s reaction to the mob scene consistent or inconsistent with his character?

Bernard’s reaction to the mob scene is to run and hide. This is consistent with his character, which is usually cowardly and indecisive.

Chapter 16

1. Why does the Controller, Mustapha Mond, address his comments primarily to John?

The Controller realizes that most of his comments will be lost on Bernard and Helmholtz Watson because their conditioning makes it impossible for them to understand some things.

2. What is the Controller’s reasoning for banning great works?

The Controller believes that great works of art should be banned because they are beautiful. He does not want people to think anything old is beautiful, only what is new and unoriginal. He believes that anything that stirs up passion or nostalgia has the potential to create unhappiness and unrest. He also tells John that people wouldn’t understand Shakespeare anyway.

3. What does the Controller say would be the result of making everyone an Alpha Double Plus?

The Controller says that a society of Alpha Double Pluses would mean a society of unhappy people. Someone has to do the menial work, and the Alpha Double Pluses would not be happy doing it. It is impossible, the Controller says, to expect that many people to make that much of a sacrifice.

4. Briefly explain the Cyprus experiment.

In the Cyprus experiment, the island of Cyprus was cleared of all its inhabitants and 22,000 Alphas were sent there. They were left to manage themselves. Within six years, a civil war broke out, there was no food or industry, and most died. It proved that a society of only higher caste individuals would not be a happy one.

5. What does the Controller and John's conversation reveal about the author's feeling towards modern society?

As Brave New World is a social commentary, the novel seems to be saying that, left unchecked, science does not ultimately lead to great things. The controller realizes that the World State is not perfect, but by hailing it as perfect, he can give the illusion that it is. Huxley is warning modern society to question its own "good" and prevent ourselves to be persuaded into believing everything we hear.

6. What does Mustapha Mond mean by saying that "we can't allow science to undo its own good work"?

Science, according to Mond, can be useful only within certain limits. If we accept some things as truths, then we can be happy, but if we question those truths too much, we will lose any hope of stability and happiness. Therefore, we can't allow any new science to usurp the science we already have, which would undermine our confidence in the present state of things.

Chapter 17

1. What are the Controller's feelings about religion and God?

Mond believes that there most likely is a God, but that he "manifests himself differently to different men." He also believes that God "isn't compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness." The argument that the Controller puts forth is that belief in a God is necessary only when you can't be happy and have what you want immediately. They have no need for God because they no longer feel a void in their lives; it has been filled by youth, pleasure, and science.

2. What argument does Mond give against self-denial?

Self-denial would only increase the passions of the people, which would lead to desire and jealousy and too many other disruptive emotions, which could lead to instability.

3. How do John and the Controller represent the dichotomy of body and spirit?

Huxley uses the character of the Controller to make the argument that science, left unquestioned, can solve all of our physical needs. John is used as the opposite of that argument—that we can only be truly fulfilled if we are spiritually rich. Both arguments are treated by Huxley as mutually exclusive to prove a point: real satisfaction comes only from personal introspection and finding a balancing point between the body and the spirit.

Chapter 18

1. What does John mean when he says that he “ate civilization”?

John’s saying that he “ate civilization” means that he has done something irreversible. He has ingested modern life, and it is now a part of him; he cannot go back to his old life.

2. What is John’s plan, knowing that he will not be allowed to leave with Bernard and Helmholtz Watson?

John plans to live a solitary existence as far away from modern life as possible.

3. Why does John deliberately punish himself?

John believes that he must suffer to get the most out of life. When he does something pleasurable, he believes it is a sign of weakness on his part.

4. What have the crowds of people come to see?

The crowds have come to see the savage whipping himself.

5. What is the significance of John’s suicide?

John’s suicide seems to be the author’s warning of the loss of a middle way. John represents values at the opposite end of the spectrum from the World State. If the two worlds cannot somehow be reconciled, mankind is doomed.

Brave New World

Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Teaching Unit

Study Guide Student Copy

Chapter 1

1. What are the tone and effect of Huxley's description of the Fertilizing Room in the first two paragraphs of the book?
2. How does the Fertilizing Room's description fit the purpose of the novel?
3. What is Bokanovsky's Process?
4. What effect does the repetition of the phrase "straight from the horse's mouth" have?
5. According to Henry Foster, what is the ultimate goal of decanting the lower castes?

Chapter 2

1. What reason does the Director give for conditioning the babies to hate flowers and books?
2. Briefly explain what hypnopaedia is.
3. In what ways is the World State's use of hypnopaedia different from its original use?
4. What does this chapter reveal about Huxley's feelings towards moral and scientific education?

Chapter 3

1. What is the attitude toward sexuality in the World State?
2. What word has replaced the use of God or Lord? What effect does this create?
3. What is Mustapha Mond's attitude toward the past?
4. What is it about Bernard Marx's actions and thoughts that set him apart from everyone else?
5. What do people suspect happened to Marx that makes him different, both physically and intellectually?
6. Why is Lenina's relationship with Henry Foster frowned on by Fanny?
7. What effect is created by Huxley's juxtaposition of several episodes at once?

Chapter 4

1. Why is Bernard embarrassed by his conversation with Lenina in the elevator?
2. How does Lenina judge the men she has been with?
3. How does Bernard's physical appearance match his personality?
4. Why is Helmholtz Watson considered "different"?
5. What do Bernard and Helmholtz think sets them apart from others?
6. Why does Helmholtz feel his writing is inadequate?

Chapter 5

1. Why does Lenina feel that Epsilons should provide less phosphorous after their cremation?
2. For what reason does Huxley include the dance club scene?
3. Briefly describe the Solidarity Service.
4. What has the Solidarity Service replaced?
5. Why does Bernard consider his Solidarity Service experience a failure?

Chapter 6

1. Why does Henry Foster compare Bernard to a rhinoceros?
2. What reasons does Lenina give for thinking Bernard so odd?
3. Why is Lenina so disturbed by the sight of the ocean?
4. What does Lenina suggest Bernard do to cure his unhappiness?
5. Despite all of Bernard's talk of being unhappy with the present conditions of society, what does Lenina ultimately think is Bernard's reason for not wanting to go to bed with her?
6. Why does Bernard regret going to bed with Lenina?
7. Briefly describe the Director's experience at the New Mexican Reservation.

8. What is inappropriate about the Director's reflecting on his visit to the reservation?
9. What does the Director mean by Bernard's lack of "infantile decorum"?
10. How does Bernard alter his report of his confrontation with the Director when telling it to Helmholtz?
11. What does Bernard warn Lenina will not be available during their stay at the reservation?
12. In what ways is the reservation different from the World State?
13. How does Bernard react to the news that he is going to be sent to Iceland?
14. What does the helicopter say to reassure Lenina and Bernard that they will be safe during their stay at the reservation?
15. How is suspense created in this chapter?

Chapter 7

1. What specifically does Lenina dislike about the Malpais's home?
2. What does Bernard say that is particularly offensive to Lenina?
3. What is the one thing about Lenina's visit that reminds her of home?
4. Briefly describe the ritual that Lenina and Bernard witness?
5. What does Lenina find most disturbing about the whipping scene?

6. What is Lenina's reaction to Linda?
7. Why does Bernard become excited by John's story of how he and his mother came to be at the reservation?
8. What are Linda's feelings towards her son John?
9. In what ways are the World State and the reservation similar?
10. What are Huxley's views towards life on the reservation?

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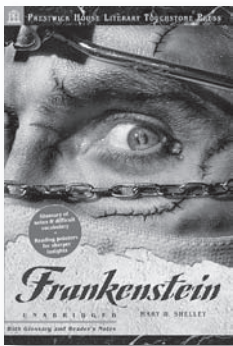
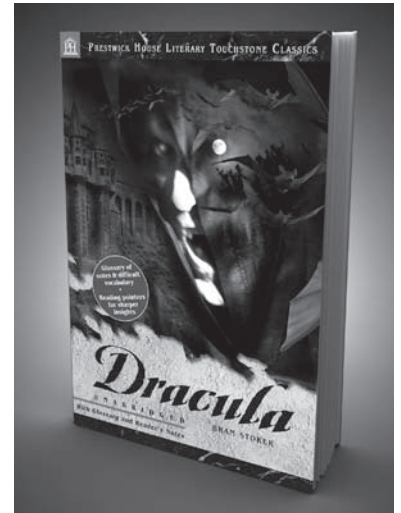
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