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ENGLISH IV and AP ENGLISH

Texts: *1984* by George Orwell
Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
“Harrison Bergeron” by Kurt Vonnegut

Brave New World and Brave New World Revisited by Aldous Huxley (AP only)
We by Eugene Zamyatin (AP only)

English IV students must read *1984* and *Brave New World*, as well as the short story “Harrison Bergeron” (which may be found online at

- ◆ <http://instruct.westvalley.edu/lafave/hb.html>
- ◆ <http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/harrison.html> or
- ◆ <http://centre.telemanage.ca/links.nsf/articles/481D5B5D819567AC85256A38000A150F>

It may also be found in Kurt Vonnegut’s *Welcome to the Monkey House*, New York: Doubleday/Bantam, 1988).

AP English students must read the above works, as well as Huxley’s *Brave New World Revisited* and *We* by Eugene Zamyatin.

ENGLISH IV

Notes

Read each of the works carefully; take notes (either in the book or in a journal) to help you remember what is going on, especially if you do some of the reading early in the summer. Keep track of the characters and what you think of them, jot down your thoughts about what is going on, and record any quotations that strike you as important. Spend some time reflecting about the works—how do they make you feel? What troubles you about them? What connections do you see with today’s society? Such reflections will help you in class discussions when the semester begins, with essays that you will be writing about the works, and with a number of exams. Don’t assume that you will remember the details of the books by the time school starts—write them down to make life easier for you. Also, as you read, **be sure to record any vocabulary you encounter for which you do not know the meaning; use a good dictionary to learn the meanings and the pronunciation of the words (printed dictionaries are usually more complete than on-line ones, especially for syllabication, pronunciation, and connotation, but if you search carefully, you should be able to find a good on-line source).**

Note: Anti-utopian (or “dystopian”) novels often have vocabulary of their own. Watch for such vocabulary and be sure to record words as you come across them. Check in the back of the novel for an explanation of each word or try to ascertain from context precisely what the words mean. (For such terms, you will obviously not have to concern yourself with syllabication or pronunciation in order to make the words your own, but you must know what they mean to understand the novels.)

All students should be prepared for an exam on the first day of class on specific details of the works assigned. Some of the vocabulary from the novels will appear on the test, so be sure to look up meanings of words you don’t know.

Reading Questions

To help you in understanding the works—and in participating in class discussions during the first week of class—please answer the following questions. Be sure to spend time thinking about the questions before you answer them; trust your own opinions and avoid using outside sources. **Your** thoughts matter—I don't want to read what someone else has already written. Your answers should be typed and are due on the first day of class.

1. What is the state of U.S. society as described in the first paragraph of “Harrison Bergeron”? How has “equality” been achieved?
2. When the framers of the Declaration of Independence stated that “all men are created equal,” what do you think they meant? What does the statement mean to you?
3. What is the one thing that Winston and Julia tell O'Brien they refuse to do?
4. Why must everyone in *Brave New World* consume?
5. Are there any elements of the society in any of these dystopian works apparent in modern times? Explain.
6. Could the totalitarian control of everyday life occur in real life? Why or why not?

College Application Preparation

One of your assignments during the first quarter will be writing a college essay, and you will be working with Mrs. Anderson to complete your applications to college. As part of your preparation for those activities, one of your summer assignments is to choose **three** colleges to which you might consider applying:

- the first should be your “dream college,” the one you would most like to attend if everything goes your way;
- the second should be a college that you would really like to attend and to which you know you have a very good chance of being accepted;
- the third should be your “back-up” college, one that you would not mind attending and that has a good program for you if you are not able to attend your 1st and 2nd choices.

Spend some time on your research; in the past, students have discovered ideal colleges that they had not previously considered. If you have a particular area of the country in which you would like to attend college, check out all the colleges available in that area; if you are interested in a particular major, check out the colleges that have the best programs. Make this assignment work for you. After all, college will probably take up at least the next four years of your life, so you should try to find a college that best suits you (not necessarily the one you have heard about or have always figured you would attend, for whatever reason).

The assignment:

Part I. For each of your three choices, you must

- ◆ research the college and the program to which you would like to apply
- ◆ print out some basic information on each college and the program that most interests you
- ◆ after you have done your research, for each of your choices write a 1-paragraph to 1-page explanation of why that college and that program is a good match for you (i.e., why is this your dream college? What does this particular program have to offer you, especially in terms of your career expectations?).

Please note: to prevent your waiting until the last minute to complete this assignment (which would defeat the purpose of the assignment) and to avoid having 80 students print out their college

information at school after school starts, you must print out the information for one college in June, one in July, and one in August (the date from the sites you choose should appear, along with the URL, on the information you download. Also, once in June, once in July, and once in August, you must e-mail me at bsteeber@connellyhs.org to let me know which college you have chosen during that month. Please send me only the name of the college and the program in which you are interested; do not send me your downloaded information or your short essays. I will record your choices and match them up with your printed material after school starts. (Obviously, if for some reason, you change your mind about a school, you can update the information by letting me know.)

Part II. To help you write college essays that require you to discuss yourself and your achievements (something that students usually find difficult), you should do preliminary work on your “brag sheet” that Mrs. Anderson gave you as part of your college notebook. That will help you not only complete your college applications and write your college essays, but it will also enable you to assist whomever you ask to write letters of recommendation for you. This is your opportunity to “market” yourself in the best possible way; you can let your recommenders know what you would most like your colleges to know about you. Spend some time reflecting about yourself and your high school career and answer all of the questions on the brag sheet (be sure to take this seriously and spend sufficient time considering what you want others—especially college admissions officers—to know about you). As you fill out the brag sheet, pay particular attention to what kind of student you are and what subjects you most enjoy, how you have challenged yourself in high school, whether there are outside circumstances that have interfered with your academic performance, and what kind of volunteer work you have done or work experience you have had; be sure to spend time on the activities section, discussing, year by year, what you have accomplished in the arts, in music, in athletics, and in other activities. Spend time thinking about what you would like perspective colleges to know about you; is there anything that might not show up in the application or that people in general do not know about you that you think they should?

Complete your brag sheet and bring it to class on the first day we meet.

All work should be typed and neatly presented.

Put all of your college materials in a folder or a binder separate from your other English work (be sure that everything is attached in some way so that nothing gets lost), preferably with dividers to separate each of your three college choices and your “brag sheet” materials. I will collect your college folders on the first day of class.

If you have questions, feel free to e-mail me at bsteeber@connellyhs.org during the summer.

AP ENGLISH

Notes / Journal

Read each of the works carefully; take notes in a journal (not just in your books) that you will keep all year for just this purpose. Jot down some thoughts each time you finish reading—for example, try to anticipate what you think will happen, ask yourself questions about what is happening, make comparisons between the works you are reading or between characters, record significant quotations, ask yourself questions, note significant vocabulary, or record your reactions and reflections. Do whatever works for you to help you remember and to understand the work. Be honest with yourself and the works you are reading—how do they make you feel? What troubles you about them? What connections do you see with today’s society? Such reflections will help you in class discussions when the semester begins, with essays that you will be writing about the works, and with a number of exams. Don’t assume that you will remember the details of the books by the time school starts—write them down to make life easier for you. (Your journal will also help you when it comes time to study for the AP exam.) Also, as you read, **be sure to record any vocabulary you encounter for**

which you do not know the meaning; use a good dictionary to learn the meanings and the pronunciation of the words (printed dictionaries are usually more complete than on-line ones, especially for syllabication, pronunciation, and connotation, but if you search carefully, you should be able to find a good on-line source).

I will ask to see your journals on the first day of class and will record your work into my gradebook.

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1. What are the implications of the opening sentence of “Harrison Bergeron”: “The year was 2081, and everyone was finally equal”? What has happened? What does the elimination of advantages, differences, and competition suggest concerning the nature of changes that have taken place?
2. Is there a hero in *1984*? Does anyone succeed in changing anything in a positive way?
3. How is the society in *We* like the society in *1984*? How is it different?
4. Is the society in *Brave New World* really so bad? Is happiness the worst possible goal for humanity?
5. Who is the hero in *Brave New World*? Explain. Whom or what does he or she change? Who is the main character? How are they different (or are they?)? Explain.
6. In *Brave New World Revisited*, Huxley writes about economic censorship, with the elite of Big Business / Big Government controlling the press. Has such censorship been diluted by the rise of the Internet? On the other hand, in what ways can the Internet pose new threats to our freedom?
7. What elements of human life do authoritarian regimes most have to control? Why?
8. Why are the authorities in the societies depicted in these works never entirely successful in achieving total control? What works against them?
9. Could such extreme totalitarian control of everyday life occur in real life? Why or why not?
10. What is the primary purpose of dystopian (or anti-utopian) literature? How do the authors of such literature achieve their aims?

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