

# Brave New World

Developed by John Edlund

## MODULE: STUDENT VERSION

### Reading Selections for This Module

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. 1932. New York: HarperCollins, 1998. Print.

#### Works Cited

Postman, Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. New York: Penguin Books, 1986. Print.

## Reading Rhetorically

### Prereading (Chapters 1-6)

#### Activity 1

#### Getting Ready to Read

In the foreword to his 1985 book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, author Neil Postman notes that the year 1984 had come and gone without a fulfillment of George Orwell's dark, dystopian vision and that Americans felt satisfied that the "roots of liberal democracy had held." Big Brother was not watching, and Americans retained their autonomy, freedom, and history. The nightmare world of Big Brother was just that: a nightmare.

However, he reminds us that alongside Orwell's dark vision there was another—"slightly less well known, equally chilling: Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*." In Huxley's vision, no force would be required to deprive people of their freedom. Instead, as Huxley saw it, "people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think." Postman follows these observations with a series of further oppositions comparing the two visions:

What Orwell feared were those who would ban books.  
What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason  
to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted  
to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive  
us of information. Huxley feared those who would

give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumblepuppy. As Huxley remarked in *Brave New World Revisited*, the civil libertarians and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny “failed to take into account man’s almost infinite appetite for distractions.” In *1984*, Huxley added, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In *Brave New World*, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. In short, Orwell feared that what we hate will ruin us. Huxley feared that what we love will ruin us. (xix-xx)

Postman makes it clear that he thinks Huxley’s vision is coming true. Postman, however, blames television for most of the problem. Today, almost thirty years later, the Internet has more influence than television, and Postman’s arguments appear a bit dated. Have we avoided Huxley’s vision too? Or has the Internet made Huxley’s, and Postman’s, vision even more likely? This question will be one of the central issues in this module.

**Quickwrite:** Take one of the oppositions that Postman describes in the paragraph quoted above. In your *Brave New World* notebook, write down the sentence or sentences that describe this opposition. Then think about connections with our own world. What is your gut feeling about it? Is Orwell’s vision or Huxley’s vision more accurate? What kind of evidence would you need to convince someone one way or the other? How would you investigate it?

## Activity 2

### Exploring Key Concepts

Both *1984* and *Brave New World* are works of science fiction. Science fiction asks “What if?” questions and explores possible results. Consider the following questions:

1. In feudal societies, people were born into different social classes with specific roles: nobles who governed, scholars who studied, warriors who fought, tradesmen who made things, and peasants who farmed. Do we have similar classes in our society? What if the government decided what your role in society would be?
2. What if science and psychological conditioning could be used by the government to create different classes of people with different abilities and interests as needed? For example, what if it was possible to grow a plumber, a computer programmer, a manager, or a physicist?

3. What if babies were grown in test tubes and were raised without parents? What would childhood be like? How would adults raised this way be different from adults in our society?
4. What if sex was strictly for recreation and not for reproduction because all babies were produced artificially? Would there still be love? Commitment?
5. What if the government gave everyone drugs to keep them happy so they wouldn't rebel? Would people actually be happy? Would it keep society stable? Would there be negative consequences?

### Activity 3

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#### Surveying the Text

Examine your copy of the book, and make note or discuss the following:

- What, if anything, is on the cover?
- What does the cover art mean?
- Are there any blurbs from reviewers or critics on the back or the front? Are there pictures?
- Is there a summary of the novel on the flyleaf (if present)?
- Is there a short biography of the author or other explanatory materials?
- Is there a Foreword or an Afterword? Who wrote them? Do you think you should read them? If so, when?
- How is the book divided? Are there chapters?

### Activity 4

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#### Reading the First Page

In the absence of chapter titles, one way to preview the book is to read the first two paragraphs of the novel. What details do you notice that seem odd? What predictions can you make about the world of the novel from these details?

### Activity 5

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#### Flipping Through the Book

Flipping through the pages of a book can reveal some important elements in the contents. Flip through the book looking for unusual typography, illustrations, or other features that stand out. If you don't find anything else, try reading the first sentences of a couple of chapters in different parts of the book. What do these features mean? How do you think they fit into the story? Write down some of your observations in your *Brave New World* notebook.

## Activity 6

### Making Predictions

Based on your interpretation of the details on the first page and the details you noticed from flipping through the book, write a paragraph describing what you think the world of the book will be like and what the story might be about.

## Activity 7

### Understanding Key Vocabulary

The words in the list below are all related to human reproduction. You may remember some of them from your biology class. Look over these words to see which ones you know and which you don't. As you read the first parts of the novel, pay attention to what parts of the process for creating new human beings in the World State are a normal part of human biology and what parts were imagined by Huxley.

fertilize—a sperm combines with an ova

incubator—a machine to control temperature and other conditions for the development of life

ova— female gametes or eggs

ovary—a female organ that produces eggs

gametes—cells that combine for reproduction

sterilize—make infertile

salinity—saltiness

viscosity—thickness of a liquid

liquor—a liquid containing dissolved components

spermatozoa—male gametes

peritoneum—the lining of the abdominal cavity

morula—a mass of cells that will become an embryo

embryo—an early stage in the development of a fetus

placentin—an insulin-like protein

thyroxin—a hormone of the thyroid gland

*corpus luteum*—a female organ that secretes hormones

blood-surrogate—blood substitute

freemartin—infertile female with some masculine characteristics

## Reading (Chapters 1-6)

### Activity 8

#### Reading for Understanding

First, read the questions below just to get an idea of some of the items you will be looking for. Then read Chapters 1-6, keeping these questions in mind along with the predictions you made in Activity 6. As you are reading, put checks in the margins when you find a passage that may be relevant to these questions or your predictions (or use sticky notes if you can't write in your book). Don't worry if you don't find something for every question. You will be able to go back later.

#### Chapter 1

1. What is the purpose of the Hatchery and Conditioning Center?
2. What does the Director mean when he says that "particulars, as everyone knows, make for virtue and happiness; generalities are intellectually necessary evils"?
3. What is Bokanovsky's Process? What is the purpose?
4. What is "social predestination"?
5. Why does the hatchery purposely keep some embryos from developing high intelligence?

#### Chapter 2

6. What is the purpose of conditioning the Delta babies to be afraid of books and roses?
7. Why is it necessary for the masses to consume transport and other products? Does efficiency of production lead to oversupply?
8. Why is Henry Ford, who invented assembly line manufacturing along with the first Ford automobiles, treated almost as a deity in the World State?
9. Why did early attempts at sleep teaching fail? How did they improve it?
10. What is taught in "Elementary Class Consciousness"? Do we have a similar course in our educational system? Would it be a good idea?

#### Chapter 3

11. What is "Centrifugal Bumble Puppy"? Why is it important for games to require a complicated apparatus?
12. In the World State, children are encouraged to engage in erotic play. In our society, they are discouraged. Why is the World State society different?

13. Mustapha Mond quotes Henry Ford saying, "History is bunk." Henry Ford really did say that. What do you think he meant?
14. What are the "feelies"? Do you think you would like to go?
15. Why is it smutty to talk about mothers and fathers?
16. Is Mond's description of family life and its problems accurate? Do you think that the World State is a good solution?
17. What is a "Pregnancy Substitute"? Why would someone take one?
18. Why does Mond sometimes call "Our Ford" "Our Freud"?
19. Why does Fanny think that it is bad that Lenina has been going out with no one but Henry Foster for four months?
20. Mustapha Mond says that stability of society is the primal and ultimate need. Do you agree?
21. Why is Bernard Marx considered to be strange

#### **Chapter 4**

22. What is *soma*?
23. What do Alphas in the World State use for personal transportation?
24. What is Obstacle Golf?
25. Why does Lenina hate the color khaki? Why is she glad she is not a Gamma
26. Why is Bernard Marx insecure?
27. Helmholtz Watson is smart and popular with girls. Why is he dissatisfied?

#### **Chapter 5**

28. What happens to citizens of the World State when they die?
29. In what way are all the citizens of the World State equal?
30. Henry and Lenina dance to a song called "There ain't no Bottle in all the world like that dear little Bottle of mine." What is this song about?
31. What is "Orgy Porgy"? Is it a religious ritual? Is it a wild party?

#### **Chapter 6**

32. What does Bernard like to do with his leisure time? What does Lenina like to do? Are they well matched?

33. When Lenina says, “Never put off until tomorrow the fun you can have today,” Bernard says, “Two hundred repetitions, twice a week from fourteen to sixteen and a half.” What does he mean?
34. What does Bernard mean when he says, “it might be possible to be adult all the time”? Why doesn’t Lenina understand?
35. When Bernard goes to his boss to get a permit to go to the reservation, what story does the Director tell him?

#### Activity 9

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### Revisiting Predictions

Look at the paragraph you wrote in your notebook about your predictions regarding the world of the novel. Which ones were confirmed? Which ones were wrong? Which ones are still undecided? Write another paragraph updating your first one.

#### Activity 10

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### Sharing Answers

Discuss the questions assigned to your group from the above list. In answering them, refer to specific page numbers and passages in your copy of the novel. Share your answers with the class. Write down the answers to the other questions that other groups came up with if they are different from your own.

#### Activity 11

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### Considering the Structure

Much of the first part of the novel describes a tour of the Hatchery and Conditioning Center by a group of students led by the Director himself. What are the advantages for the author of setting up the novel in this way?

#### Activity 12

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### Noticing Language

Reading a novel means encountering many unknown words and words of which you have only a vague understanding. The situation and the surrounding text will provide some contextual clues about the meanings of unknown words. Knowledge of Latin and Greek roots can also help. It is possible for a reader to read and understand a novel without knowing all the words. However, reading novels can significantly increase your vocabulary.

After you have read Chapters 1-6, for each chapter, choose one or more words either that are unknown to you or that you are uncertain about. Choose words that seem to be important or interesting because of their context, frequency, or level of interest. Keep choosing until you have 10 words, which means you will have more than one for some chapters. For each word you choose, do the following:

- Copy the sentence in which you found it in your *Brave New World* notebook.
- Underline or highlight the word.
- Describe what part of speech it is in its sentence.
- Write down what it might mean and why you think so. Don't be afraid to be wrong. You are just making an educated guess.
- In your group, take turns sharing the words and sentences you chose. Ask group members to help you define your words more accurately. Some will probably know your words better than you do. You will probably know more about other words that they have chosen.
- Look up your words in a good dictionary or online. How close were you and the group to the dictionary meaning?
- Write your own sentences using the words.

## Activity 13

### Analyzing Stylistic Choices

In your group, discuss the assigned question.

1. "What man has joined, nature is powerless to put asunder." What does this mean? What does it parody? *Brave New World* has numerous phrases and references like this that echo language from our own world. What is the effect on the reader?
2. What is the stylistic effect of the series of sentences with the subject omitted in the description of Henry Foster's explanation of the operation of the Decanting Room that begins "Told them of the growing embryo on its bed of peritoneum . . .?"
3. Chapter 3 begins with a scene of children playing in the sunshine. It says, "The air was drowsy with the murmur of bees and helicopters." Is this sentence beautiful, funny, ironic, or strange? What effect does it have on the reader?
4. The first part of Chapter 3 moves back and forth from Mustapha Mond's lecture to the students to the Henry Foster viewpoint. The last part of Chapter 3 is mostly a series of disconnected thoughts and phrases from the different conversations. What is the effect on the reader of this stream of disconnected consciousness? Is it confusing? Or is it a very efficient way of giving the reader a sense of the whole society?
5. The characters in *Brave New World* have names like Benito Hoover and Bernard Marx that echo famous political and historical figures. Why does Huxley do this? What is the significance?



6. Lenina is full of aphorisms and sayings, often about soma, such as “A gramme in time saves nine,” and “One cubic centimeter cures ten gloomy sentiments.” Where does she get these sayings? What is the effect on the reader? Find as many of them as you can. Discuss what they mean and how they are similar to sayings we are familiar with.

## Postreading (Chapters 1-6)

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### Activity 14

#### Summarizing and Responding

Imagine that a friend who has not read *Brave New World* finds out that you are reading it. At this point you have only read the first six chapters. Your friend asks what it is about. Write a paragraph in which you describe the World State and some of the people in it. What is it like to live in the World State? How is it different from our own society? Would you like to live there?

### Activity 15

#### Group Discussion Topics

Your teacher will give your directions for dealing with the following topics.

1. Fanny and Lenina appear to believe that promiscuity is a kind of social duty of which they sometimes tire. They are conditioned not to have strong feelings about anyone. Mustapha Mond explains that love is like water under pressure in a pipe. If the pipe is pierced once, a strong jet is the result, but if it is pierced many times, each jet is just a small leak. Mond argues that strong feelings lead to instability:

No wonder these poor pre-moderns were mad and wicked and miserable. Their world didn't allow them to take things easily, didn't allow them to be sane, virtuous, happy. What with mothers and lovers, what with the prohibitions they were not conditioned to obey, what with the temptations and the lonely remorse, what with all the diseases and the endless isolating pain, what with the uncertainties and the poverty—they were forced to feel strongly. And feeling strongly (and strongly, what was more, in solitude, in hopelessly individual isolation), how could they be stable? (41)

Are we the “pre-moderns” to which Mond refers? Is he right that we are emotionally unstable? Is his description of our situation accurate? Do love, marriage, and strong attachments create the problems in our society? Is the avoidance of love, marriage, and strong attachments to children and other individuals a good solution to the problems of our society?

2. In Chapter 4, Lenina rides up to the roof in an elevator operated by a monkey-like “Epsilon Minus Semi-Moron,” who lives in a “dark annihilating stupor” (59). In the World State, humans are bred to fit into castes ranging from Alpha Plus to Epsilon Minus. Each individual is bred to have the appropriate amount of intelligence for the job to which he or she will be assigned and then is conditioned to be happy doing that job. Although Alpha Plus Bernard Marx seems to be a little too bright to be completely satisfied with his job, the elevator operator appears to be happy with his existence. Is this caste system with its careful breeding and conditioning superior to the somewhat random way that people are educated and employed in our society?

## Prereading (Chapters 7-9)

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### Activity 16

#### Making Predictions

At the end of Chapter 6, the Warden tells Bernard and Lenina that in the Reservation there are

... about sixty thousand Indians and half-breeds ... absolute savages ... our inspectors occasionally visit ... otherwise, no communication whatever with the civilized world ... still preserve their repulsive habits and customs ... marriage, if you know what that is, my dear young lady; families ... no conditioning ... monstrous superstitions ... Christianity and totemism and ancestor worship ... extinct language, such as Zuñi, and Spanish and Athapascan ... pumas, porcupines, and other ferocious animals ... infectious diseases ... priests ... venomous lizards ... (103)

Lenina responds by saying “You don’t say so?” but that is because she has just taken half a gramme of soma. From what you know of Bernard and Lenina and the world that they live in, how do you think they will react when they actually get to the Indian Reservation? Write a paragraph in your notebook about your predictions.

### Activity 17

#### Reading for Understanding

As you did for the first part of the book, read the questions below just to get an idea of what you will be looking for. Then read Chapters 7-9, keeping these questions in mind along with the predictions you made in Activity 6. As you are reading, put checks in the margins when you find a passage that may be relevant to these questions or your predictions (or use sticky notes if you can’t write in the book). Don’t worry if you don’t find something for every question. You will be able to go back later.

## Chapter 7

1. Why is Lenina so startled by the old man and the women nursing babies?
2. Why doesn't Lenina want to imagine being a mother?
3. Why does Lenina like the drums even though she doesn't like anything else?
4. What can you tell about Indian society from the ritual that Bernard and Lenina observe? What does John say is the purpose of the ritual?
5. Who is John? Why is he attracted to Lenina?
6. Who is Linda? Why is Lenina disgusted by her?
7. Why do the Indian women hate Linda? Are they justified?

## Chapter 8

8. What kind of childhood did John have?
9. What two books has John read?
10. Why does John try to kill Popé? What is Popé's reaction?
11. Who is Mitsima? What does he teach John?
12. Why can't John go into the Antelope Kiva?
13. Why is John happy that Bernard is not married to Lenina?

## Chapter 9

14. What is a "soma holiday"? Why does Lenina go on one?
15. When Bernard leaves, he asks the pilot if Lenina will be safe. The pilot responds "Safe as helicopters." What does he mean by that?
16. Why does Bernard go back to the World State? Why does he call Mustapha Mond?
17. John visits the house where Bernard and Lenina are staying. What does he do?

## Activity 18

### Analyzing Stylistic Choices

For each question below, write a paragraph in your notebook.

1. Chapter 7 begins with a striking simile: "The mesa was like a ship becalmed in a strait of lion-coloured dust." The ship metaphor continues for several paragraphs. It has a "prow," a "gunwale," and a "deck," and it is situated in the middle of a "strait." Bernard and Lenina are used to traveling in helicopters and may

never have even seen a ship. Why does Huxley begin the visit to the Reservation with the image of a stone ship?

- At the end of Chapter 7, Linda tells her story. At the beginning of Chapter 8, John tells his story. This is all what fiction writers call “exposition.” The reader needs all of this information in order to understand the later behavior of the characters, so the writer has to figure out how to include the information in a somewhat natural way. Does it seem natural for Linda and John to tell their histories to Bernard and Lenina when they first meet? What other ways might Huxley have chosen to help us understand these characters? Would it have worked if Linda had kept a journal that Bernard reads to Lenina? Or if the Indian guide explained what had happened to Linda? Can you think of another way?

### Activity 19

#### Summarizing and Responding

In your notebook write a paragraph comparing life in the World State with life on the Reservation. Where would you prefer to live? Why?

## Prereading (Chapters 10-18)

### Activity 20

#### Making Predictions and Asking Questions

Do you think that Linda will be happy to return to the World State? How do you think she will be received? Why? What about John, who has never lived in the World State? Will he know how to behave? Will he be accepted? Will he be happy? Write a paragraph in your notebook about how you think Linda and John will do in the World State.

## Reading (Chapters 10-18)

### Activity 21

#### Reading for Understanding

This part of the novel contains several scenes that dramatize and explore the major themes of the novel. In your notebook, answer the questions for each scene.

#### Chapter 10

- The Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning has decided to get rid of Bernard Marx by sending him to Iceland. He says,

“The greater a man’s talents, the greater his power to lead astray. It is better that one should suffer than that many should be corrupted. Consider the matter dispassionately, Mr. Foster, and you will see that no offence is so heinous as unorthodoxy of behavior. Murder kills only one individual—and after all, what is

an individual?" With a sweeping gesture he indicated the rows of microscopes, the test tubes, the incubators. "We can make a new one with the greatest of ease—as many as we like. Unorthodoxy threatens more than the life of a mere individual; it strikes at Society itself." (148)

The Director accuses Bernard of being an "enemy of Society" because of "his heretical views on sport and *soma*, by the scandalous unorthodoxy of his sexlife, and by his refusal to obey the teachings of Our Ford." Are these accusations true? What does the Director mean by "unorthodoxy of behavior"? Is Bernard an enemy of the World State? Do you agree with the Director that the society is more important than the individual?

2. It turns out that the Director has also made a visit to the Reservation and that his companion was Linda, whom he was "having" at the time. While they were at the Reservation, Linda had an accident, and he left her behind, where she bore his son John. What is his reaction when he and Linda are reunited? Does he deserve what happens to him? Why or why not?

### Chapter 11

3. Lenina takes John, who is now known as "the Savage," to a feelie called "Three Weeks in a Helicopter."

"I don't think you ought to see things like that," he said, making haste to transfer from Lenina herself to the surrounding circumstances the blame for any past or possible future lapse from perfection.

Lenina doesn't understand. John calls the film horrible, but she thinks it was lovely. Lenina expects John to come into her apartment, but John says goodnight and leaves. What is going on here? Why are they so confusing to each other? Who is right?

### Chapter 12

4. Bernard organizes a party with many important people who all come to see the Savage, but John refuses to come out of his room, cursing at Bernard in Zuñi. Bernard is humiliated, and his guests leave early, including the Arch-Community-Songster, who leaves with Lenina. Why does John refuse to come out? Is he justified?
5. Why does Helmholtz call Shakespeare a "marvelous propaganda technician"? What does he think is the source of Shakespeare's power? Do you agree?

### Chapter 13

6. John proposes marriage to Lenina and declares his love. How does Lenina respond? What is John's reaction? Why is it hard for them to understand each other?

**Chapter 14**

7. Linda is dying in the hospital for the dying. Why is there a group of eight-year-olds touring the hospital? Why does John have so much trouble dealing with the children and the Head Nurse?

**Chapter 15**

8. What causes the disturbance in the hospital? How do Bernard and Helmholtz get involved?

**Chapter 16**

9. The core of this chapter is the debate between John, the Savage, and Mustapha Mond, the World Controller. John is delighted that Mond has read Shakespeare. He asks why old things are banned even when they are beautiful. Mond says, "Beauty's attractive, and we don't want people to be attracted by old things. We want them to like the new ones." John presses the point. He says the feelies are not as good as Othello. Mond agrees, but says,

You can't make tragedies without social instability. The world's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and the never want what they can't get. They're well off; they're safe; they're never ill; they're not afraid of death; they're blissfully ignorant of passion and old age; they're plagued with no mothers or fathers; they've got no wives, or children, or lovers to feel strongly about; they're so conditioned that they practically can't help behaving as they ought to behave. And if anything should go wrong, there's *soma*. (220)

Mond says that sacrificing real feelings and emotional attachments is the price the society has to pay for stability. Do you agree with him that this price is worth paying?

10. John asks Mond why they have to have whole groups of identical Deltas. Why not make everyone an Alpha Plus like Bernard and Helmholtz? Are you satisfied with Mond's answer?
11. What does it mean to be sent to an island? Why was Mustapha Mond almost sent to one?

**Chapter 17**

12. Mustapha Mond says, "God isn't compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness." John makes a number of arguments about why religion is necessary, but Mond defeats each one. Or does he? What do you think?

**Chapter 18**

13. Why won't Mustapha Mond allow John to go with Bernard and Helmholtz to the island? What does John decide to do instead?

## Postreading (Chapters 10-18)

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### Activity 22

#### Summarizing and Responding

Look back at the paragraph you wrote for Activity 14. Now that you have finished reading the novel, add another paragraph that summarizes the rest of the story. Then write down some of the big ideas and questions the novel is about.

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### Activity 23

#### Thinking Critically

John attempts to live by himself away from the World State. He begins to return to an Indian lifestyle, but he is tormented by news reporters and tourists from the World State. Even Lenina can't help; in fact, she makes him worse. Finally, he is too tormented to live. What are the reasons that drive him to take his own life? What, if anything, could have been done to help him? Write a paragraph in your notebook.

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### Activity 24

#### Reflecting on Your Reading Process

In your notebook, answer the following questions:

- What have you learned from reading and discussing *Brave New World*? Did it meet your expectations? What surprised you about the novel?
- What reading strategies did you use or learn in this module? Which strategies will you use in reading other texts? How will these strategies apply in other classes?
- In what ways has your ability to read and discuss complex novels like this one improved? Will this experience change the way you read?

## Connecting Reading to Writing

### Discovering What You Think

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### Activity 25

#### Considering the Writing Task

Read the writing task assigned by your instructor. As you think about what it asks you to do, flip through your notebook looking for possible connections to the topic.

#### Writing Task 1: Entertainment as a Form of Control

Core Question: Have we become a trivial culture preoccupied with entertainment? For this writing topic, we return to where we started



with the quotations from Neil Postman's book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. Here is how this module began:

In the foreword to his 1985 book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, author Neil Postman notes that the year 1984 had come and gone without a fulfillment of George Orwell's dark, dystopian vision and that Americans felt satisfied that the "roots of liberal democracy had held." Big Brother was not watching, and Americans retained their autonomy, freedom, and history. The nightmare world of Big Brother was just that: a nightmare.

However, he reminds us that alongside Orwell's dark vision there was another—"slightly less well known, equally chilling: Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*." In Huxley's vision, no force would be required to deprive people of their freedom. Instead, as Huxley saw it, "people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think." Postman follows these observations with a series of further oppositions comparing the two visions.

What Orwell feared were those who would ban books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumblepuppy. As Huxley remarked in *Brave New World Revisited*, the civil libertarians and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny "failed to take into account man's almost infinite appetite for distractions." In 1984, Huxley added, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In *Brave New World*, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. In short, Orwell feared that what we hate will ruin us. Huxley feared that what we love will ruin us. (xix-xx)

Postman makes it clear that he thinks Huxley's vision is coming true. Postman, however, blames television for most of the problem. Today, almost thirty years later, the Internet has more influence than television, and Postman's arguments appear a bit dated. Have we avoided Huxley's vision too? Or has the Internet made Huxley's, and Postman's, vision even more likely?

After reading *Brave New World*, do you think that Postman was right? Is a constant barrage of entertainment making us passive and self-centered? Are we being controlled and conditioned by pleasure as effectively as we would be by a secret police armed with guns and nightsticks? In other words, how similar is our world to the World



State depicted in *Brave New World*? And what is the trend? Are we becoming, as Postman suggests, more like *Brave New World* or less?

In answering these questions, identify some important aspects of each society that you want to compare. Then, using your notes from your reading to support your arguments, discuss the differences and similarities between *Brave New World* and our own society on each of the aspects you have chosen. You may want to also draw some conclusions about what steps we should take to avoid problems in the future.

### **Writing Task 2: “Community, Identity, Stability”**

Core Question: Is social stability worth the price?

The motto of the World State depicted on the “Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre” is “Community, Identity, Stability.” This is a statement of values. Mustapha Mond says that sacrificing real feelings and emotional attachments is the price the society has to pay for stability. Mond himself has made sacrifices for the sake of social stability and uses his power to place limits and controls on science and the arts if instability might result. Individuals who threaten this stability are sent away to live on an island. What is the significance of “community” and “identity” in this motto? And how are these related to the stability of the individual? Of society?

Do you think that the sacrifices that the World State requires of its citizens are a price worth paying to maintain social stability? To answer this question, go through your reading notebook to find as much evidence as you can that the World State insures that individuals are happy, productive, and compliant. Analyze the positive and negative aspects of each of these practices. Then write an essay arguing whether or not such social stability is worth the price the World State is paying. Support your arguments with details from the book and examples from our own world.

### **Writing Task 3: Gender Equality**

Core Question: Are men and women equal in *Brave New World*?

There are no housewives in *Brave New World*. None of the traditional roles of women are represented. Marriage has been abolished. Child rearing is done by professionals conditioned for the job. Cooking is never mentioned. In fact, food is rarely mentioned, and no one is described eating a meal. Food preparation does not seem to be an issue. Cleaning house is not either. When John offers to sweep the floor for Lenina, she says, “But there *are* vacuum cleaners . . . and Epsilon Semi-Morons to work them.”

Because housewives do not exist in the *Brave New World* society and because the society is founded on rational scientific principles, there would seem to be no reason men and women could not finally be equal. But are they? If the traditional roles of men and women have been abolished in the World State, what evidence do we have

that leads us to think there may or may not be equality? What is the essential difference of men and women in the World State, and do these differences reinforce gender roles as we know them?

In responding to this question, look through your reading notes for examples of the role of women in the society of *Brave New World*. Then write an essay discussing what the gender roles are in *Brave New World* and whether or not they make sense in the context of that society.

#### **Writing Task 4: Reading and Education**

Core Question: What should an educated person read?

In *Brave New World*, the citizens of the World State can read, at least the Alphas and Betas, but they read very little. Most of their education is delivered through hypnopædia, or sleep teaching. Deltas and below are conditioned to dislike books. Linda, who is a Beta Minus, brings one book to the Reservation, *The Chemical and Bacteriological Conditioning of the Embryo: Practical Instructions for Beta Embryo-Store Workers*, which is a job manual. She gives it to John and teaches him to read. Later Popé brings him *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, which he found in an old chest in the Antelope Kiva. John's education consists of those two books plus whatever Mitsima taught him about making pots, bows, and other crafts.

There are thus three types of education represented in *Brave New World*: sleep teaching, in which very little reading is done; book learning, in which a few books are read very thoroughly; and the hands-on teaching of crafts without any reading at all.

Sleep teaching clearly has advantages. It is less work for the student, and it doesn't waste time. It also doesn't require teachers. However, the crafts and skills that John got from Mitsima's ancient form of hands-on teaching were clearly useful to him, and the complex concepts and principles that he got from reading Shakespeare certainly helped him understand the society of the World State, even though Shakespeare was forbidden there. Judging from *Brave New World*, what role should reading have in education? Should it be replaced by some other technology? Should a few very rich and complex books like *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* be taught? Or could books be eliminated and replaced by hands-on learning? Finally, are the examples explored in the novel relevant to our own society and educational system? In answering these questions, discuss examples of the effects of these three forms of learning on the characters in the novel and the implications for our own society.

**Taking a Stance—Trying on Words, Perspectives, and Ideas**

The core questions in the writing prompt follow:

- Writing Task 1: Entertainment as a Form of Control  
Core Question: Have we become a trivial culture preoccupied with entertainment?
- Writing Task 2: “Community, Identity, Stability”  
Core Question: Is social stability worth the price?
- Writing Task 3: Gender Equality  
Core Question: Are men and women equal in *Brave New World*?
- Writing Task 4: Reading and Education  
Core Question: What should an educated person read?

In your group, discuss the core question of the assigned writing prompt. Each member of the group should then take on the persona of either a character in the novel or another person you know. What would that person say or argue about the core question? For example,

- What would Mustapha Mond say?
- What would Lenina Crowne say?
- What would Fanny Crowne say?
- What would Bernard Marx say?
- What would Helmholtz Watson say?
- What would the Director of Hatcheries say?
- What would your teacher say?
- What would the football coach say?
- What would your favorite movie character say?
- What would \_\_\_\_\_ say?
- Then, at the end of the discussion, “What do YOU say?”

## Activity 27

### Gathering Evidence to Support Your Claims

- What is your position on the issue of the writing prompt? Can you state it in one sentence?
- Why do you think this? What evidence do you have for this position? Go through your notes, annotations, and other materials for *Brave New World*. What can you use to support your argument? Do you need to go beyond the novel itself? Do you need to do some research?
- What would people who disagree with you say? What evidence supports their position? How can you argue against them?
- Is the issue too complex to be stated as a black-and-white, right-or-wrong, yes-or-no position? Are there degrees of probability or certainty? For example, no one can know for certain that our society is becoming like the World State or even that such a development would be bad. Is there enough evidence to suggest that the *possibility* is strong enough that we should take some action to prevent it? How will you handle a nuanced argument like this?

## Activity 28

### Getting Ready to Write

Do exercise 1 or 2 below.

#### 1. Rhetorical Quickwrite

Who is your audience for this writing? What is your plan? What do you want to tell them? What are your most important points? What are you passionate about on this issue? How will you convey these ideas and this passion? How do you want your writing to affect the reader? Write a quick paragraph in response to these questions.

#### 2. Scratch Outline

With the novel and all of your notes and annotations arranged around you, make a scratch outline of your writing plan. What is your main idea? What comes first? How will you support it? What comes next? After that? How will you conclude?

# Writing Rhetorically

## Entering the Conversation

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### Activity 29

#### Composing a Draft

With your audience and purpose in mind, but focusing mainly on getting your ideas on paper, begin writing a first draft of your paper on *Brave New World*.

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### Activity 30

#### Considering Structure

As you pause midway in your writing, think about what you have done so far and where you are going.

If you made a scratch outline before you started writing, you may find that your plan is working, but it is also possible that the writing is taking you in a different direction. You may find that as you write about them, the arguments connect together in a different way than you imagined or that you have thought of completely new arguments while you are writing. As you make adjustments in your organizational structure, keep the audience in mind. Will your reader be able to follow along with your reasoning?

In your *Brave New World* notebook, write a note about your writing plan and changes you have made to it so far.

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### Activity 31

#### Using the Words of Others (and Avoiding Plagiarism)

As you use the material from your notes, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you have page numbers for quotations and paraphrases?
- Do you have a good balance between quotations and paraphrases? Did you quote only when you have a good reason to (i.e., that the language itself is important)?
- Have you “framed” quotations, especially block quotations, by introducing them first and then responding to them afterwards? For example,

Mustapha Mond, the World Controller argues that society has to give up old books like Shakespeare to achieve social stability. He says,

You’ve got to choose between happiness and what people used to call high art. We’ve sacrificed the high art. We have the feelies and scent organ instead. (220)

However, what Mond doesn’t say is that when he says “you” have got to choose, the individual doesn’t actually choose. Mond chooses for him.

## Activity 32

### Negotiating Voices

In the example above, it is clear that the block quote is in Mond's voice and the surrounding material is in the essay writer's voice. However, when there are multiple sources, sometimes the different voices get confused. As you read through your paper, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is it clear who says and believes what?
- Is my own voice consistent in tone? What kind of ethos have I created? Who do I sound like?

## Revising and Editing

## Activity 33

### Revising Rhetorically

Now it is time to think more about the reader and begin moving toward a reader-based draft that is ready to submit to your instructor for feedback. Think about the following questions:

- Have I provided the reader with what he or she needs to understand my ideas?
- Do I have enough support for each point?
- Do my arguments work together?
- Do I have transitions between different parts of my arguments?
- Does my conclusion follow from the rest of the paper? Is it more than just a restatement of the introduction?
- Have I accomplished my rhetorical purpose? Have I engaged the reader's interest? Have I changed the reader's mind? Have I allowed the reader to see the book more clearly?

After thinking about these questions, create a short revision plan for your paper. Write it down in your *Brave New World* notebook.

## Activity 34

### Considering Stylistic Choices

You should also think about the language and sentence structure you used before you turn the draft in to your instructor. Read your draft with the following questions in mind, and mark areas where you think you might have a question or a problem. Then ask for advice from your teacher or one of your fellow students.

- Are any sentences too long or confusing?
- Are there any long quotations that could be paraphrased?
- Are there any words you are unsure about?
- Are any words too informal for an academic paper?

### Activity 35

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#### Editing the Draft

You should also proofread your paper to make sure there are no grammatical errors or usage problems. Try the following strategies:

- Think about problems your teacher has identified in past papers. Try to see if you have made the same mistakes again.
- Read your paper from the **last** sentence to the **first** sentence, sentence by sentence. This breaks the flow of the reading and enables you to be more aware of the construction of an individual sentence. This is an especially good way to catch sentence fragments. (Reading it aloud in this way may be even more effective than reading it silently.)

### Activity 36

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#### Responding to Feedback

When you receive the paper back from your instructor, look carefully at the marks and comments. Try to understand what the feedback means and why the reader responded the way he or she did. The biggest mistake that many writers make is just to delete sentences that have problems. That will not make the essay more effective. As you make a plan for revision, think about the following questions:

- Do I need to reorganize parts of my essay?
- Do I need to add material to support my arguments? Where will I get it?
- Do I need to reconsider some of my arguments?
- Do I need to rewrite some sentences to make them clearer?
- Do I need to reword some parts?
- Do I need to correct some errors? Do I know how? How will I find out?

## Activity 37

### Reflecting on Your Writing Process

After you have turned in your revised draft of your *Brave New World* paper, answer the following questions in your notebooks.

- What have you learned about your writing process?
- What were some of the most important decisions you made as you wrote this text?
- In what ways have you become a better writer?
- How will the experience of writing this paper change the way you work on your next paper?