

Utopia/Dystopia Narrative

Drawing upon your exploration of the dystopia genre, you will conceive, model, and write a utopia/dystopia of your own. Your assignment is simply to produce a **short story** that explores a central theme pertaining to a utopian or dystopian world.

DUE DATE _____

What is a short story?

A short story is a work of fiction that is usually written in prose, often in narrative format. The short story typically follows a main character (the protagonist) who faces and resolves some kind of conflict in a single plotline.

Short Story Requirements

I want to emphasize that this is your story and you can be as creative as you want with it. Use your imagination and draw upon what you know about dystopian literature. The more you know, the more you read, the better your dystopian narrative will be. That being said, you will need to follow these minimum requirements.

1. Length: Your short story should be between 5-10 double-spaced pages in MLA format
2. Genre: Dystopian (or utopian) literature
3. Theme: Your story must serve as a cautionary tale that warns us against pursuing some aspect of contemporary society.
4. Setting: Entirely up to you, except that it must be dystopian or utopian
5. Plot: Your story must have characters who are presented with conflict; that conflict needs to be developed, reach a climax, and then be resolved in some way.
6. Imagery: Be sure to use a variety of imagery to describe your world, your society, the characters, and object in your dystopia.
7. Product: You must a) print out your story and provide me with a copy; a 2) drop-box the story

Story Development – Ten Tips for Writing a Short Story

1. Create a world that's true to real life or fantastical or that mixes the mundane with the magical. But whatever set of rules you create for that world, make sure you follow them.
2. Write a conflict that builds as the story progresses. As you structure the conflict, think in terms of your story having a beginning, a middle, and an end.
3. Write characters that want something (which puts them in conflict with other characters) and try to get what they want at every moment.
4. Make sure that each character has a consequence if he doesn't get what he wants.
5. Create a "ticking clock" that puts the characters under pressure to get what they want right away.
6. Make sure there is a good reason, an "event," for your story. It's not enough for two characters to sit around and talk for a while and then leave. There needs to be some important reason why we're watching them now, at this particular moment.
7. Write dialogue that illuminates your characters and advances the plot at the same time.
8. Make each character speak in a distinctive voice. If you have trouble with that, try imagining a specific actor you know - even if it's someone who will never play the part - in the role.
9. Do *not* have a character tell us something he can show us instead. For example, it's much more effective to hide under the bed than to say "I'm afraid."

10. Give each character a "moment," something that justifies the character's existence in your story and that makes him attractive for an actor to play (if you're writing a play).

Food for Thought

The following provides you with some examples of dystopian literature – apart from *Brave New World* and 1984.

Film

Metropolis (1921) directed by Fritz Lang

The Manchurian Candidate (1962) directed by John Frankenheimer

A Clockwork Orange (1972) directed by Stanley Kubrick

Blade Runner (1982) directed by Ridley Scott

Brazil (1985) directed by Terry Gilliam

The Village (2004) directed by M. Night Shyamalan

In Time (2011) directed by Andrew Niccol

Short fiction

"The Minority Report" by Philip K. Dick

"Harrison Bergeron" by Kurt Vonnegut

"The Ones Who Walked Away from Omelas," by Ursula Leguin

"The Machine Stops" by E.M. Forster

"The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson