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**Novel Study: A Dystopian Future- The Individual vs. The Society**

**Overview**

*"One choice can transform you. One choice can destroy you. One choice will define you."*

*~ Veronica Roth, Divergent*

People make choices, and these choices can change the way the world around us functions, or the way we function within our own worlds. But who is really in control of making those choices: the individual or the society? This unit guides students through thinking about the roles of the individual and the society, the way in which a society functions, how a society influences the individuals, and how the individuals within a society influence that society.

We will examine these issues through dystopian literature as this genre allows readers to explore multiple “end-game” scenarios from the safety of their seats. As dystopian texts heavily rely on world-building, students will closely examine how an intense understanding of a text’s social, cultural, history, and geographical context will enable them to see and experience the text on a deeper level. Dystopias also fall under the category of speculative and cautionary fiction, teaching us lessons through narrative arcs, asking us to reflect and critique our own society through settings, engaging us in conversations about the possibility of a real dystopian future through real-world themes, and ultimately assist us in developing critical inquiry skills needed for being active citizens in our own world.

Our first dystopian text will be *Anthem*. Students will also tackle larger themes through literature circles, in which they will select a novel of their choice and form small literacy communities. Within these communities, students will facilitate their own learning, expand on their initial ideas through outside research, lead in small group discussion, analyze complex characters, determine how a theme emerges and is shaped by the text, and collaborate on a final presentation of their novel.

*In your own words, summarize what this unit is about:*

*What part about this overview most intrigues, or interests, you?*

**RL.9-10.2**

Determine a **theme** of a text and **analyze** in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an **objective summary** of the text.

*What is meant by “how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details”?*

*What is an “objective summary”?*

**RL.9-10.3**

Analyze how complex **characters** develop over the course of a text, interact with other **characters**, and advance the plot or develop the **theme**.

*How are these two standards connected?*

*What might be a good way to judge or verify how a character changes?*

*Highlight or circle items from this page that you already know and understand.*

*Highlight in another color, or box items from this page that you are most interested in learning.*

*Review at the end of the unit and CHECK off the items you now know.*

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| **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:**   * How can a fictional story reveal truth about society? * How does changing, or conforming, ourselves to the rules or wishes of others help us? ​Harm us? * ​How important is it for people to have choices? |

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| **CORE VOCABULARY:**  objective summary dystopia utopia propaganda analogy  anthem communism socialism capitalism individualism objectivism collectivism egoism  conformity rebellion free will selflessness faction totalitarian censorship persuasive big brother neologism identity setting direct characterization indirect characterization |

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| **FOCUS QUESTIONS:**   * How are stories about different times and places still be about me? * What is like to be a part of a society? * How is our society structured? Is this good or bad? * Why should people care about the society? Why should people care about the individual? * How do authors develop characters over the course of a text? * What factors/situations combine to create dystopia? * What happens to the individual/the group in a dystopia? * What is theme? How does an author develop theme in literature? * How important is individuality in society? |

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| **STUDENT OUTCOMES:** What will students know, understand and be able to do by the end of this unit?  I can…   * use reading strategies to determine a theme * read, identify, understand, and analyze characters and character motivation * make connections between fictional stories and real-life scenarios * make references to passages and events from a text to prove what the text is saying as well as any inferences I draw * write persuasive essays in response to texts |

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| **ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:** What are the big ideas?   * Societal structure has the power to promote or limit freedom, choice, and desire for the individual. * Individuals have a responsibility to both their own happiness, and the happiness of their society/others. * Individuals can have an impact on a society based on their choices. * Even in the bleakest imaginations of earth’s future, humanity still strives to find solutions to their problems and ultimately create pathways for humanity to continue despite their mistakes. |

*\*some aspects of this unit and this overview are based on Katie Davis’s Conceptual Unit, 2009.*