

Brave New World Reading Guide

Answer these questions in handwriting on your own paper. Any other manner will not be accepted.

Chapter 1

1. Why is the first sentence strange? What does it set up?
2. What is the meaning of the World State's motto "COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY?"
3. Why does the fertilizing room look so cold, when it is actually hot inside? What goes on there?
4. Why do particulars "make for virtue and happiness," while generalities "are intellectually necessary evils?"
5. How do people know who they are in this society?
6. Why use the Bokanovsky process at all? How is it an instrument "of social stability?"
7. Why don't the Epsilons "need human intelligence?"

Chapter 2

1. What work does the conditioning do? Who gets conditioned? How does hypnopaedia work?
2. Why condition the Deltas to hate nature but love outdoor sports?
3. How does time work in this book? History? Why does Ford say "History is Bunk?"
4. What are the various castes like, and why?
5. How do the students demonstrate their own conditioning?

Chapter 3

1. How do the children play together? What is childhood like?
2. How is our world depicted? How do we get from here to there?
3. Why must games be so complex in this society?
4. Why are strong emotions dangerous? Family relationships? Romance? Religion? Art? Culture?
5. How is sexuality used in this novel? Do you see any problems with it?
6. What does Mustapha Mond do? What is his relationship to history?
7. Is there anything unusual about Lenina Crowne? Bernard Marx? What? Why?
8. How does Huxley use the cinematic technique toward the end of this chapter?
9. What is soma? What are its uses?
10. How do people age in this society?

Chapter 4

1. What is life like for the Epsilon-Minus Semi-Moron who runs the elevator?
2. How do the other Alphas relate to Bernard?
3. What does Lenina do on her date?
4. What does she think of the lower castes?

5. Why is Bernard the way he is? What does he really want?
6. Why is Helmholtz the way he is? What does he want? How is he different from Bernard?

Chapter 5

1. What do Lenina and Henry talk about on their way home? What happens at the crematorium?
2. Why are stars depressing?
3. What are the solidarity services like? What role do they play? How does Bernard fit?

Chapter 6

1. Why is being alone a bad thing?
2. What do Lenina and Bernard do on their first date? Why is the ocean important? The moon?
3. What does Bernard say about freedom? What does he mean?
4. How does the date end?
5. What does it mean to be infantile in this society?
6. How does the director feel about Bernard? Why is he warning him?
7. What does his story mean? What does it show us about him?
8. How does Helmholtz feel about Bernard after he hears the story of the meeting with the director?
9. What do we learn from the Warden? What are the reservations like?
10. What does the word Malpais mean?

Chapter 7

1. How is the mesa like a ship?
2. Why doesn't Lenina like their Indian guide?
3. What is the city itself like? What are the people like? How does Lenina respond? Bernard?
4. What ceremony do the witness? What does it mean? What does it seem like to Lenina?
5. What idols emerge from the ground?
6. How is John Savage different? What does he want? How does he respond to Lenina?
7. What is Linda's story? What has her life been like here? How does Linda react to her?

Chapter 8

1. What was John's upbringing like? His relationship with Linda? His education?
2. Why doesn't Linda want to be called a mother?
3. What social positions do Linda and John hold in Malpais?
4. What does John want in his life?
5. What does Linda tell him about the Other Place?
6. What does he learn from Shakespeare? How does he relate to Hamlet? The Tempest?
7. What does it mean to discover "Time and Death and God?"
8. What do John and Bernard have in common?
9. Why does Bernard want to take John to London?

Chapter 9

1. Why does Mustapha Mond agree to the plan?
2. What happens when John watches Lenina sleep? What does he think or feel?

Chapter 10

1. How and why was the DHC planning to make an example out of Bernard?
2. Why is unorthodoxy worse than murder?
3. How does Linda act in the hatchery? How does the DHC react? The spectators?

Chapter 11

1. Why does John become popular, but not Linda?
2. How does Bernard's life change? How does he react? What does Helmholtz think?
3. How does Linda spend her time?
4. How does Bernard talk in public?
5. What does Mustapha Mond think of Bernard's reports?
6. What does John think of the caste system? Of the clones? How does he use *The Tempest* now?
7. What do we learn about the reservations at Eton? What does John think?
8. How do the children respond to dying? Why?
9. How does Lenina feel about John?
10. What does John think about the feelies? Why?

Chapter 12

1. Why does John decide not to come to Bernard's party? What does this mean for Bernard?
2. How does Lenina feel at the party? Why does she feel this way?
3. How does John feel? Why is he reading *Romeo and Juliet*?
4. What does it mean that Lenina likes looking at the moon now?
5. What role does Mustapha Mond play as a censor? Why does he do it? What does he censor? What does he really want?
6. How does Bernard's position change? How do John and Helmholtz respond to Bernard now?
7. Why is Helmholtz in trouble with the authorities? What has he done that is dangerous, and why is it dangerous? Why did he do it? What does he want?
8. What does Helmholtz think of Shakespeare? *Romeo and Juliet*?
9. What does Helmholtz think is necessary for good writing?

Chapter 13

1. What are the consequences of Lenina's emotion? What is happening?
2. How does she feel for John? What does she do to get what she wants?
3. How does John feel for Lenina? What does he want to do to prove it?
4. How does John react to Lenina's actions? Why does he respond this way? What did he want from her?

Chapter 14

1. What is the hospital for the dying like? What are the dying like?
2. Note the television. Recall TV did not exist as we know it in 1932.
3. Why is Linda dying?
4. What memories flood over John as he stands before his mother? Why these particular memories? What are his memories of the “other place”? What role does memory play in civilization?
5. Why are the Delta children at the hospital? What does John think of this?
6. Why isn't death terrible for those in the civilized world? What does this mean for the individual?

Chapter 15

1. The title phrase recurs here. How is it used differently than before? What does it mean now?
2. Why does John decide to interfere with the soma distribution? Why does he say it is poison?
3. What is John's conception of slavery and freedom? Manhood? Liberty?
4. What does he think of the Deltas to whom he delivers his speech?
5. What roles do Bernard and Helmholtz play here? What does this tell us about their characters?
6. How does the soma riot end? What does it mean to be happy and good?

Chapter 16

1. How would you describe Bernard's behavior in this chapter? Why does he act this way?
2. Why doesn't John like civilization?
3. Why does Mond say old and beautiful things are forbidden?
4. Why can't tragedies be written now? What is necessary for tragedy?
5. What does art mean in the new world? What can't it mean? What is Helmholtz's role?
6. What does Mond say is the role of liberty? Happiness? Stability? Truth and Beauty?
7. How does Mond explain the caste system? Do you agree?
8. What would happen with an entire society of Alphas?
9. Why must science be constrained? Progress? Do you agree?
10. What choice did Mond make as a young physicist? Why? What is his real position?
11. Why does Helmholtz make the choice he makes?

Chapter 17

1. Why does Mond want to talk with John alone? What do they talk about?
2. What is the significance of their discussion of religion? What does John argue religion can give to civilization? Why does Mond argue that it is unnecessary and potentially dangerous?
3. What does Mond believe is the role of God? How is it related to the self?
4. What role does solitude play in spirituality?
5. How does John argue that the civilized man has been degraded? From what and to what?
6. What are your conceptions of the roles of self-denial, chastity, nobility, heroism? What would John or Mond say?
7. What role does Mond say soma plays in this? What is an “opiate of the masses”?
8. What does it mean “to suffer the sling and arrows of outrageous fortune” or oppose them?

9. What does John mean by saying that nothing in civilization costs enough?
10. In saying no to civilization, what does John say yes to? Would you make the same decision?

Chapter 18

1. How does John purify himself?
2. Where does he go, and what does he plan to do there?
3. Does this represent a healthy alternative from society?
4. Why the self-flagellation?
5. What are his thoughts of Lenina?
6. What makes the film so popular back in London?
7. What does Lenina want? What does John think she wants?
8. How does the crowd respond? What happens that evening? What becomes of Lenina?
9. What is John's decision? Why does he make it? Were there alternatives?

Overall

1. How do you know who you are? 2. Is this a utopia or a dystopia? What might this decision entail?
2. What is so special about Ford or Freud?
3. At what price happiness?
4. What should be the goal of any society?
5. Who has power here?
6. How is stability maintained?
7. What role does the individual play in this society? How is that individual defined?
8. Who is the stability good for?
9. From whose point of view are we seeing this society?
10. What point of view does John represent?
11. Isn't this "peace on earth and goodwill towards men"?
12. What would you be willing to give up for world peace, an end to poverty, hunger, etc.?
13. What would you consider to be a utopia?