Brave New World is a science fiction novel written by Aldous Huxley in 1932. In this novel, Huxley paints a dystopian – the opposite of utopian – picture of the future: he describes a world where people are entertained but not informed and therefore do not know what is good for them. The "New World" is also an expression that has been used about America, ever since colonial times.

**AREAS OF FOCUS**

- Historical background of the present-day USA
- Values: individualism, identity, dreams, equality, culture clash, democracy
- Social conditions in the US: immigration, multiculturalism, politics
- Indigenous people and literature
- The Media
- Composing new texts based on art and literature
- Literature from different literary periods – from American Transcendentalism to Modern
- Learning English: progress and assessment
The dream of a brave new world

The Idea of America

Langston Hughes (1902–1967) was one of the most important poets of the Harlem Renaissance; a group of writers during the early 1900s who wrote about the black experience in the U.S. Hughes' literature influenced many other American authors, especially young black authors. His poetry was also heavily influenced by jazz music with which he often performed his poems.

We have all heard about the American Dream, and we often imagine that it is all about becoming very successful and wealthy. It is, however, important to remember that the American Dream is not only a question of going from “rags to riches” or from “migrant worker to brain surgeon”; it is also the dream of a better life, a home, a good education and a good future. In short, it is about “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”.

CHECKPOINTS
1. Why does Hughes say we need dreams?
2. Can you find the metaphors in this poem? What are they and what do they represent?

A metaphor is a word or a phrase that is used to describe something else. For example, in “your summer will never fade,” summer is a metaphor for youth. Shakespeare could have said, “You will be young forever,” but it would not have been as poetic or made the reader think of more than just “youth”; the word “summer” evokes many more feelings and images.

STARTING POINT
Describe a dream you can remember.
How important are dreams? Can we live without them? Why/why not?
What do you dream of?

VOCABULARY
barren – ufrukūbar

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

The Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776

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VOCAbULARy
barren – ufrukūbar

Three Flags, Jasper Johns, 1954

Dreams
by Langston Hughes 1926

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.
Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

THE IDEA OF AMERICA
In the old days Hortons Bay was a lumbering town. No one who lived in it was out of sound of the big saws in the mill by the lake. Then one year there were no more logs to make lumber. The lumber schooners came into the bay and were loaded with the cut of the mill that stood stacked against the revolving, circular saws and all the great saws, the travelling carriage that hurled the load of lumber. Its open hold covered with canvas and lashed tight, the sails of the schooner filled and it moved out into the open lake, carrying with it everything that had made the mill a mill and it stood deserted in the acres of sawdust that itself stood deserted in the company store, the mill offices, and the big mill building had all its machinery except the broken white limestone of its foundations showing through the swampy second growth as Nick and Marjorie rowed along the shore. They were trolling along the edge of the channel-bank where the bottom dropped off suddenly from sandy shallows to twelve feet of dark water. They were trolling on their way to set night lines for rainbow trout.

“There’s our old ruin, Nick,” Marjorie said. Nick, rowing, looked at the white stone in the green trees. “There it is,” he said. “Can you remember when it was a mill?” Marjorie asked. “I can just remember,” Nick said. “It seems more like a castle,” Marjorie said. Nick said nothing. They rowed on out of sight of the mill, following the shore line. Then Nick cut across the bay. “They aren’t striking,” he said.

They pulled the boat up the beach and Nick lifted out a pail of live perch. The perch swam in the water pail. Nick caught three of them with his hands and cut their heads off and skinned them while Marjorie chased with her hands in the bucket, finally caught a perch, cut its head off and skinned it. He hooked each of the skinned perch through the ventral fin in. “You don’t want to take the ventral fin out,” he said. “It’ll be all right for bait but it’s better with the ventral fin in.”

He hooked each of the skinned perch through the tail. There were two hooks attached to a leader on each rod. Then Marjorie rowed the boat out over the channel-bank, holding the line in her teeth, and looking toward Nick, who stood on the shore holding the rod and letting the line run out from the reel. “That’s about right,” he called. “Should I let it drop?” Marjorie called back, holding the line in her hand. “Sure. Let it go.” Marjorie dropped the line overboard and watched the baits go down through the water.

She came in with the boat and ran the second line out the same way. Each time Nick set a heavy slab of driftwood across the butt of the rod to hold it solid and propped it up at an angle with a small slab. He reeled in the slack line so the line ran taut out to where the bait rested on the sandy floor of the channel and set the click on the reel. When a trout, feeding on the bottom, took the bait it would run with it, taking line out of the reel in a rush and making the reel sing with the click on. Marjorie rowed up the point a little way so she would not disturb the line. She pulled hard on the oars and the boat went up the beach. Little waves would not disturb the line. She pulled hard on the oars and the boat went up the beach. Little waves came in with it. Marjorie stepped out of the boat and Nick pulled the boat high up the beach.

“What’s the matter, Nick?” Marjorie asked. “I don’t know,” Nick said, getting wood for a fire. They made a fire with driftwood. Marjorie went to the boat and brought a blanket. The evening breeze blew the smoke toward the point, so Marjorie spread the blanket out between the fire and the lake.

Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961) was born in Illinois. He started his writing career working on a newspaper. During WWI he served with the Italian army and was wounded. After the war he continued to work as a journalist in Europe for American papers. While living in Europe he started writing novels. Many consider his novel The Old Man and the Sea (1952) to be his greatest work. In 1953 he won the Nobel Prize for literature. The Nobel Prize for literature. Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961) was born in Illinois. He started his writing career working on a newspaper. During WWI he served with the Italian army and was wounded. After the war he continued to work as a journalist in Europe for American papers. While living in Europe he started writing novels. Many consider his novel The Old Man and the Sea (1952) to be his greatest work. In 1953 he won the Nobel Prize for literature. The Nobel Prize for literature.
Marjorie sat on the blanket with her back to the fire and waited for Nick. He came over and sat down beside her on the blanket. In back of them was the close second-growth timber of the point and in front was the bay with the mouth of Hortons Creek. It was not quite dark. The fire-light went as far as the water. They could both see the two steel rods at an angle over the dark water. The fire glinted on the reels.

Marjorie unpacked the basket of supper. "I don't feel like eating," said Nick. "Come on and eat, Nick." "All right." They ate without talking, and watched the two rods and the fire-light in the water. "There's going to be a moon tonight," said Nick. He looked across the bay to the hills that were beginning to sharpen against the sky. Beyond the hills he knew the moon was coming up. "I know it," Marjorie said happily.

"You know everything," Nick said. "Oh, Nick, please cut it out! Please, please don't be sad." Nick looked at her back. "It isn't fun any more. Not any more." He was afraid to look at Marjorie. Then he looked on at the moon, coming up over the hills. "It isn't fun any more." He was afraid to look at Marjorie. Then he looked at her. She sat there with her back toward him. He looked at her back. "It isn't fun any more. Not any of it."


"Isn't love any fun?" Marjorie said. "No," Nick said. Marjorie stood up. Nick sat there, his head in his hands. "I'm going to take the boat," Marjorie called to him. "You can walk back around the point." "All right," Nick said. "I'll push the boat off for you." "Oh, go away, Bill! Go away for a while." Bill selected a sandwich from the lunch basket and walked over to have a look at the rods.

"I can't help it," Nick said. "You do. You know every-thing that's the trouble. You know you do." Marjorie did not say anything. "I've taught you everything. You know you do. What don't you know, anyway?" "Oh, shut up," Marjorie said. "There comes the moon." They sat on the blanket without touching each other and watched the moon rise. "You don't have to talk silly," Marjorie said. "What's really the matter?" "I don't know." "Of course you know." "No, I don't." "Go on and say it." Nick looked on at the moon, coming up over the hills. "It isn't fun any more." He was afraid to look at Marjorie. Then he looked at her. She sat there with her back toward him. He looked at her back. "It isn't fun any more. Not any of it." She didn't say anything. He went on. "I feel as though everything has gone to hell inside of me. I don't know, Marge. I don't know what to say." He looked on at her back. "Isn't love any fun?" Marjorie said. "No," Nick said. Marjorie stood up. Nick sat there, his head in his hands. "I'm going to take the boat," Marjorie called to him. "You can walk back around the point." "All right," Nick said. "I'll push the boat off for you." "You don't need to," she said. She was afloat in the boat on the water with the moonlight on it. Nick went back and lay down with his face in the blanket by the fire. He could hear Marjorie rowing in the water. He lay there for a long time. He lay there while he heard Bill come into the clearing walking around through the woods. He felt Bill coming up to the fire. Bill didn't touch him, either. "Did she go all right?" Bill said. "Yes," Nick said, lying, his face on the blanket. "Have a scene!" "No, there wasn't any scene."

"How do you feel?"

"Oh, go away, Bill! Go away for a while." Bill selected a sandwich from the lunch basket and walked over to have a look at the rods.

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Test Yourself: US Geography

1 How many states are there in the US?
   a 48 b 50 c 52

2 What is meant by “the lower 48”?
   a All the states below 48 degrees latitude
   b The first 48 presidents
   c The 48 continental states

3 Where is New England?
   a On the east coast between Virginia and Florida
   b On the east coast between Maine and Massachusetts
   c On the east coast between Massachusetts and Pennsylvania

4 Which states are considered “the Deep South”?
   a Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina
   b Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Louisiana
   c Florida, North and South Carolina and Georgia

5 Which river is the longest in the US?
   a Mississippi
   b Missouri
   c Rio Grande

6 Which of the following is not a national park?
   a Yellowstone
   b Grand Canyon
   c Superior

7 Four “states” call themselves Commonwealths and not states.
   Which ones are they?
   a Texas, California, New York and Pennsylvania
   b New York, Rhode Island, Vermont and New Hampshire

8 Which region is considered the “bread basket”?
   a The Northeast
   b The Midwest
   c The West

9 Which area of the US is considered the “sun belt”?
   a The Deep South and Florida
   b The southern states from Florida to California
   c The states from Texas to New Mexico

10 Which state was once an independent nation?
    a New York
    b New Hampshire
    c Texas

11 Which one of these states does not have a Native American name?
    a New Mexico
    b Utah
    c Massachusetts
    d Montana

12 The US is divided into several regions.
    a South, East, North, West
    b South, Middle Atlantic, New England, Midwest, West, Southwest
    c Northeast, Southwest, Northwest, Midwest, Southeast

13 Which state is not part of the Midwest?
    a Missouri
    b Minnesota
    c Tennessee

14 Which state is the smallest in size?
    a Rhode Island
    b Connecticut
    c Delaware

15 What is Puerto Rico’s relationship with the US?
    a Junior State
    b State
    c Territory

16 How many states start with “New”?
    a 4 b 5 c 7

17 Which state is not on the west coast?
    a California
    b Montana
    c Washington

18 Which state is not on the east coast?
    a Connecticut
    b Michigan
    c South Carolina

19 Which four states meet at the same spot called the “four corners”?
    a Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois
    b New York, Iowa, Delaware and Pennsylvania
    c Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona

20 Which state is the 50th state?
    a Hawaii
    b Alaska
    c Puerto Rico

21 What is Alaska’s state sport?
    a Panning for gold
    b Bear hunting
    c Dog mushing

The American Frontier

Since the time of the first settlements, there has always been a Frontier in the minds of Americans. The Frontier is that unsettled space beyond civilization where everything is still pristine and promising. In the early days of the US, it was the area beyond the Appalachians, then beyond the Mississippi, and everything westward. In 1893, historian Fredrick Jackson Turner presented a paper about the Frontier – the Turner Thesis. In it he describes how the Frontier shaped American civilization, democracy, and Americans themselves. Westward expansion was important for the individual and the nation. As the US expanded in the 1800s, the term Manifest Destiny was coined. Manifest Destiny was the idea that the North American continent, “from sea to shining sea” had been given to the United States by God for Americans to populate, civilize, and democratize. Later it would come to mean the unique position of the US in the world. Even though Manifest Destiny was fulfilled in the 1890s, when the West was settled and the Frontier was officially closed, both Manifest Destiny and the Frontier continue to exist in American minds. The US still feels she has been uniquely blessed and has a destiny to fulfill internationally, while the last frontier is the one JFK mentioned – space.

“We stand today on the edge of a new frontier – the frontier of the 1960s, a frontier of unknown opportunities and perils – a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats.”


RESEARCH AND DISCOVER

1 Find out more about the concept of Manifest Destiny.
   How was it possible to buy or conquer so much land at such a rapid pace? Give an audiovisual presentation where you point to factors that made this ambitious aim possible.

2 Great amounts of territory that are now part of the continental USA used to belong to other nations. Pick one of these areas and give a presentation where you tell your classmates about what happened when the Americans acquired it.

creative stunt!

Act out a meeting between a Native American chief and a spokesman for the ideology of Manifest Destiny.