

Possible questions to consider while watching *The Matrix*:

What does the Matrix represent?

Is Morpheus's truth superior to the Matrix's truth? Why?

Why does Neo fight the Matrix?

Discussion questions for Chapters 14–16 of *Parable of the Sower*:

What do you think of Harry and Zahra? Will they last as companions for Lauren?

What do you think about stealing the peaches and Lauren's defensiveness

Will Harry, Zahra, and Lauren eventually find happiness and safety up north or will something happen before they reach their goal?

How will Keith's experiences outside the neighborhood tie into Lauren's experiences now? Do you think that she will fare better because of her prior exposure to the life of the outside (through Keith's explanations/stories), or do you think that her memory of Keith could somehow hinder her (also do you think that she'll learn more about what exactly Keith was doing)?

If you were in Lauren's position would you run and hide too or try to look for your family?

What did you think about Lauren's decision to travel north with Harry and Zahra? She doesn't know them as well, and had previously planned to travel by herself.

What will Harry, Zahra and Lauren do when they get up north? Will they find more people like them and form a community? Will they get jobs? etc

Does Lauren's rationalization of the attackers possibly having a "burn the rich" ideology make sense?

What do you think about the dynamic between Harry, Zahra, and Lauren? Are they truly loyal to each other?

What is the relationship between high morals (don't steal, don't murder) and the harsh, grim reality?

Do you think Lauren has changed/developed in any way since her neighborhood was attacked and she started traveling outside with Harry and Zahra? In what ways?

How has poverty shaped the world, the way people treat each other?

Who (if anyone) is the weak link in the group? Is it Harry, Zahra, or Lauren? Why?

What is Lauren's attitude towards killing other people?

Do you think they'll succeed in finding a place for themselves, with work, clean water, etc.?

## Project ideas

Historical/cultural essay or project	Fictional & related	Creative—multi media, 3D, art, etc.	Literary essay	Other
Examining elements of Dystopia in America and how they relate to the books we read	“Pimp my utopia” rewrite the books we read and talk about what’s wrong with them	Rap battle	Exploring the effect of drugs and this addiction to “happiness” that people have in BNW	PechaKucha presentation
Urban utopias vs agricultural utopias (in literature and history)	Write about Linda’s perspective of her death or her life in general	Sketches of costumes/clothing of the different classes	Aspects of BNW society that we criticize, but aren’t that different from our society	
Research references to Native American society and the reactions of actual Native Americans to the book	Short dystopian story	Music video	Analysis of the social, economic, and political impacts of genetic engineering	
Research the origins of utopia and early fiction/attempts	Delve into the head of any character: helmholtz, Lenina, John	Movie trailer	Write your own Utopia/Dystopia/Utopia descending into dystopia	

Research old scholarly articles on BNW, get ideas from there		Artwork (ex: a painting) depicting themes, symbolism, characters, etc. from the book	Write about your own opinion about an aspect of BNW in a newspaper editorial style	
		Visual guide to/interpretation of <i>Brave New World</i>	BNW Revisited and how that affects our understanding of the book	
		Build one of the structures from BNW, like the Cabaret or the Center		
		Obstacle Golf/Escalator Squash		
		Kinetic Typography		
		ERB style rap battle video		

Less concise project ideas:

### Concrete Qs:

- Are these behaviors Bernard's true colors? Does his popularity embolden him to act on his impulses that existed before he brought John, or does he just do what he thinks people should do with that amount of popularity?  
✓✓
- Why is John so disgusted by the "real" world?
- What caste is Lenina? ✓
- Why do they let anyone go to Savage Reservations? Why haven't they gotten rid of them entirely? They certainly aren't worried about personal freedom, so why not raze the reservations? ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- What did the ceremony/ritual with the Eagle and the snakes symbolize?
  - Tbh i think it might have been Huxley's amalgamation of native american, pueblo, etc rituals
- Why is father lighter hearted than mother?
- Why does Bernard ditch Helmholtz as soon as he is popular?
- How does the relationship between John and Lenina compare to the relationship between Romeo and Juliet? How are they similar and how are they different? ✓
- How do you think Huxley intended for Lenina to be interpreted? Soft? Strong? Weak! Discuss! ✓✓✓✓✓
  - Feminist?
  - Same for Linda. Is she a strong character despite her faults? ✓
- Why doesn't John want to show up to the event? ✓
- What is so bad about Iceland? ✓✓
- If soma can shorten your life if you take too much, then why is it so accessible and why is everyone encouraged to always take it? ✓✓✓✓✓
- Why was "father" less offensive than "mother", it was more of a joke than an obscenity ✓✓✓
- Why is John uninterested in soma/sex? ✓

- Why does the author continue to put “an obscenity” in parenthesis when talking about things like family even though he has already made it abundantly clear by this point that “civilized” people think families obscene?
  - I think it reflects the hypnopaedic conditioning
- Does Linda’s problem with soma exist elsewhere in the world? Is alcoholism/drug addiction but with soma a problem in society? ✓✓

### “Larger” Qs:

- Are any of the characters “likeable” at this point? Can we at least be sympathetic towards some? ✓✓✓
- To what extent are characters like Helmholtz conditioned by the World State, given that he seems to enjoy the poetry but laughs off *Romeo and Juliet*? ✓
- Would there naturally be more dissent in the lower castes versus what seems like only Bernard in the Alphas?
  - They’re conditioned to be happy where they are. “I’m glad I’m not an Alpha, they work too hard.” But there could be other dissents
- Why does Huxley choose Shakespeare to be the basis/foundation of John’s persona? ✓
- Why don’t they condition people to have less personal preference/mandate plastic surgery? (Lenina definitely has taste in men that causes strife: think Benito Hoover’s body hair, etc) If they liked everyone, it would make promiscuity easier and get rid of the “negative elements of passion” ✓
- Why are bernards different ideas so tolerated with very little blowback? I get that he discovered the savage but this wouldn’t fly under other regimes.
  - They know he doesn’t have power.
- It seems odd they acknowledge differences in intelligence and related differences in moral responsibility? How is his consistent with the society/stability ideas and why do they permit differences in intelligence ✓✓✓✓

- If you were John, would you rather return to the reservation or remain in England?
- Is this a commentary on colonialism? ✓
- Is the world they live in sexist or is it the author being sexist? ✓✓✓✓✓
  - Is the author trying to be woke but is also still sexist

### **Ideas for norms**

Students should be allowed to unionize and should not receive punishment for doing so

Address people by their preferred names

Normal comment: raise hand. Quick urgent comment: raise one finger

You should be able to leave the class without having to ask for permission

Phones put away

Everyone should do the readings and participate in discussions

People should feel free to disagree during class discussions and when disagreeing shouldn't tear down others

Be respectful to the person that is speaking, don't talk while they are, don't go on your phone

Don't be judgmental (when someone speaks, presents, etc.)

Everyone should recite the Jabberwocky before class together

Everyone should follow along when people are reading out loud in class

Yugioh battles at the start of every class

### **“Digested” priorities**

Legislation can be introduced at any time during the semester by a subset of at least 5 students. If legislation receives 66.6% of the class vote then it proceeds to the teacher.

The teacher can approve or veto the legislation. If the teacher vetoes, the class can go for a super-majority of 90% to override the veto.

Leaving the classroom at least once per week for various reasons.

Regular independent reading (+ nap time?) with no technology

More open-ended reading quizzes: e.g. 3-2-1

Reading background stuff/short stories

Going outside

If we do creative projects, have an accompanying shorter paper connecting it to the book

Little work outside of class: fewer essays/readings and more projects

Comfortable in-class environment: snacks and green environments

Discussions are good

Low-stress environment with pass-fail system: freedom to be creative

Classroom aesthetics: plants, fairy lights

Pass fail grading system (A or D)

Going outside for walks and discussion

Having choices during quizzes: 1 part quiz questions, 1 part writing prompt

No written homework

Reading out loud in class and discussions

Reduced emphasis on grades and formulaic assignments

Independent reading

Multimedia projects