

BARTON

LIBRARY

Dare to know

Dystopian Fiction

Fiction set in an uncertain future, in a society ruled by an ineffectual, corrupt, or oppressive regime or by aliens, robots, etc.

A sub-genre in which the world has become the opposite of a utopia and the protagonist must liberate himself or herself or an entire community. Dystopian fiction reflect events and situations that exist in society and deepen their effect or power. Stories often include horrid societies, deep social control, and exploration of what we fear will happen in the future of humanity. Among the most influential examples of dystopian fiction is A. E. Van Vogt's *The Weapon Makers of Isher* (1946), George Orwell's *1984* (1949), Cyril M. Kornbluth's *The Marching Morons* (1951), Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), and Douglas R. Mason's *Eight Against Utopia* (1967).

Common Elements

Oppressive societies
Tyrannical governments
Government control
Police states
Mass surveillance
Overwhelming poverty

Lack of personal freedom
Secret rebellions
Ruined cities
Ostracized minorities
Propaganda

Benefits of Reading

Provides readers with relatable characters who face challenges reflecting real-world events and still make a difference
Permits readers to examine real fears in society

Allows readers to consider the possibility of the end of the familiar world
Challenges readers to see beyond the present and predict potential futures

Modern Literary Examples

<i>Black Rain</i> (2016) by Matthew J. Delaney
<i>The Book of Joan</i> (2017) by Lidia Yuknavitch
<i>The Children of Men</i> (1992) by P. D. James
<i>Cloudbound</i> (2016) by Fran Wilde
<i>Divergent</i> (2011) by Veronica Roth
<i>The Drought</i> (2012) by J. G. Ballard
<i>The End of Man</i> (2021) by Christina Sweeney-Baird
<i>The Feed</i> (2018) by Nick Clark Windo
<i>Future Home of the Living God</i> (2017) by Louise Erdrich
<i>Gather the Daughters</i> (2017) by Jennie Melamed
<i>The Giver</i> (1993) by Lois Lowry
<i>The Ghoul King</i> (2016) by Guy Haley
<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (1985) by Margaret Atwood

<i>The Hunger Games</i> (2008) by Suzanne Collins
<i>Kingdom of Needle and Bone</i> (2018) by Mira Grant
<i>Little Eyes</i> (2020) by Samantha Schweblin
<i>Night of the Animals</i> (2016) by Bill Broun
<i>Oryx and Crake</i> (2003) by Margaret Atwood
<i>The Race</i> (2016) by Nina Allan
<i>Red Rising</i> (2014) by Pierce Brown
<i>Sons of War</i> (2020) by Nicholas Sansbury Smith
<i>Tender is the Flesh</i> (2020) by Augustina Bazterrica
<i>Tropic of Kansas</i> (2017) by Christopher Brown
<i>Walkaway</i> (2017) by Cory Doctorow
<i>Wool</i> (2013) by Hugh Howey