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Brave New World
Aldous Huxley

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Aldous Huxley



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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Chapter 1

1. The motto of the World State is “COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY.”

Brainstorm a list of words and images you associate with each word in the motto. Based on your lists, write a one-page prediction of what you think day-to-day life may look like in this society and consider especially how it may differ from your own.

2. If you were to create a perfect society, what would its motto be? Choose three words that summarize your ideal vision of society, and write a paragraph explaining why you chose those words.
3. Re-read the vivid description of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre. List the descriptive words that help you see and feel the room. Then, write a paragraph explaining what impression of the society you have after reading this description.

Chapter 7

22. At the Savage Reservation, Bernard and Lenina witness rituals that disgust and disturb them.

Identify a remote place in the world that you would like to visit. Research its social and religious customs. Which are the most unfamiliar or different from your own beliefs or practices? Which would you have the most trouble adjusting to? Why? Write two paragraphs, one describing the location and customs, and one responding personally to what you've learned.

23. At the Savage Reservation, Lenina sees for the first time people who have aged naturally. She is appalled by their appearances – their wrinkled, discolored skin, flabby muscles, gray hair, missing teeth, etc. – because in the World State, they have discovered ways to make even those in their sixties look twenty-something.

Consider our society: Do we value the process of aging? Do we value looking our age? Do you personally see value in looking your age? How or why not? Write a one-page reflection on these questions, providing concrete evidence to support your opinions.

24. Overwhelmed by her unfamiliar surroundings, Lenina finds comfort in the sound of the savages' drums because they remind her of the music played at the Solidarity Services: "Shutting her eyes she abandoned herself to their soft repeated thunder, allowed it to invade her consciousness more and more completely, till at last there was nothing left in the world but that one deep pulse of sound."

Write a paragraph describing the type of music that calms and focuses you when you're anxious or stressed. What aspect of the music has the most calming influence: the rhythm, tune, vocals, instruments, etc.? How does it make you feel?

Chapter 12

41. When Bernard tries to convince the Savage to come to the party, his arguments are completely selfish. Bernard's own reputation is his only concern. Bernard fears the effects of the Savage's refusal to come on Bernard's relationship with the Arch-Community Songster of Canterbury.

What arguments do you think Bernard could have used that would have been more appealing to the Savage personally? Write a note that Bernard could slip under the Savage's door before he returns to the party. In it, try to convince the Savage that going to the party is in his own best interest. Have Bernard develop two or three specific reasons that going to the party would personally benefit the Savage.

42. Although he admits that it is "ingenious," a "masterly piece of work," and even that it is "quite possibly true," the Controller refuses to publish an article entitled "A New Theory of Biology" because of its suggestion that people may have greater purposes in life than staying happy and helping others stay happy. He fears its ideas could lead some of the highest Alphas to begin thinking for themselves and to break free of the already weak grip of conditioning on their minds. He recognizes that this kind of censorship is necessary to maintain control of the masses.

Write a one-page explanation of your feelings about censorship. Consider the following questions: Should the truth always be accessible? Why or why not? If your school or district has a list of censored books, review the titles that have been placed on it. How do you feel about being told what you may or may not read? Who, if anyone, should be able to make those decisions for you? Why?

Response Journal

64. The title of the novel, *Brave New World*, is an allusion to Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*. Read a summary of the play. Then read the context of the quote itself which Miranda speaks in *The Tempest*, Act 5, Scene 1. Write one paragraph for each of the following questions:
- Why do you think Huxley chose this quote as the title for his novel?
 - Do you like the title? Why or why not?
 - If you were given the opportunity to propose a new title for the novel, what would you suggest? Explain why you think your title would be more suitable.
65. Consider the lives and fates of all the characters in the novel. For whom do you feel the most sympathy or pity? Explain your feelings for this person in one paragraph. Then, in a second paragraph, explain who you think was the happiest or had the greatest potential for happiness in the end.
66. It is very difficult to predict what technology will have the greatest affects on society years in the future. In the novel, for example, Huxley fails to predict the invention of and profound affect of computers on so many aspects of our daily lives. Consider the world of the novel. Make a list of processes in the society of the World State which could easily be computerized. Then, choose one, and re-write a scene from the novel to include the presence of computer technology.