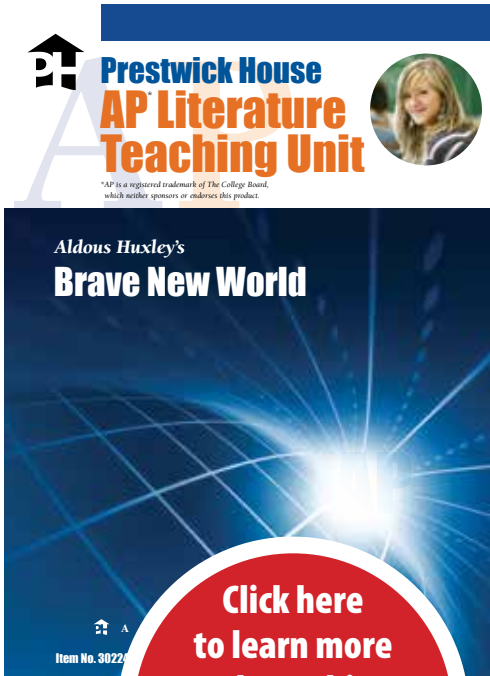




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Teaching Unit

Brave New World

by Aldous Huxley

Written by Patrick O' Bryan



Prestwick House

Item No. 302242

Brave New World

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. discuss the extent to which this novel meets the criteria for a dystopian novel.
2. discuss the use of this novel as commentary on industrialization and science.
3. discuss how the author uses irony to critique and examine society.
4. trace the development of the major themes of this story as it applies to:
 - John the Savage,
 - Bernard Marx,
 - Helmholtz Watson.
5. understand the use and purpose of allusion, especially to Shakespeare, in this novel.
6. understand and analyze the various motifs in the novel.
7. discuss the use of this novel as an allegory and develop an understanding of what each character portrays.
8. discuss the ways in which this novel comments on contemporary society.
9. respond to multiple choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
10. respond to writing prompts similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
11. offer a close reading of *A Brave New World* and support all assertions and interpretations with direct evidence from the text, from authoritative critical knowledge of the genre, or from authoritative criticism of the novel.

Background Information and Historical References

TWO WORLDS COLLIDE

In most of Europe and America, the post-World War I world was vastly different from that which had begun the century. Not only had the carnage and destruction of lives and property shaken the ideas of what civilization was, but the modern world, as it would come to be known, was defined by speed, science, technological advances, and radically new ideas of government and culture.

The fall of the last great empires and the rise of totalitarianism:

World War I saw the last great empires of Russia, Austria, and Britain fall to pieces. Ways of life that had earlier seemed absolutely stable were now left crumbling and in ruins. In countries that had suffered defeat, resentment grew over what they considered to be harsh, unfair treaty agreements. The 1920s and 30s saw the rise of new totalitarian leaders: Joseph Stalin in Russia, Benito Mussolini in Italy, and Adolph Hitler in Germany, charismatic leaders who would rule by fear and force, becoming the heads of quasi-democratic states while asserting absolute control. Stalin's Russia and communist vision, inching ever closer to western Europe, set off a battle of ideas and power that would culminate in World War II a few years later and would create waves that echoed throughout the twentieth century.

Germany:

Initially, however, the rise of many dictators would largely be due to simply being in the right place at the right time. The Weimar Republic, established in Germany after World War I, was more heavily favored by most Germans than the Nazi party of Hitler. In 1925, the Nazis had fewer than 50,000 members; most Germans were more inclined to vote towards the center. Inflation had wiped out most of Germany's middle class in the mid-1920s, increasing agitation towards the new, democratic government. Even though Germany eventually won membership into the League of Nations in 1926, any prosperity felt in those years would vanish by the end of the decade.

Like similar events in other industrialized countries, the crash of the American Stock Exchange in 1929 caused the German economy to collapse. American bank loans, which had until then kept much of German business afloat, dried up. Unemployment rose, and Germany, along with the rest of Europe, plunged into economic and political chaos. The tenuous peace that had been maintained while at least some prosperity existed vanished as local street gangs—sometimes financed and aided by extremist political parties—battled in the streets of the major cities. Berlin became the East/West battleground between the Communists and Nazis, foreshadowing the Cold War. In 1930, upset and disillusioned by the government, the German people voted the Nazis into a near-majority. In 1933, Hitler was named Chancellor and quickly set about restructuring the country. With little to stop him, Hitler took over the military, schools and universities, as well as most media outlets. He disbanded the trade unions, made any other political parties illegal, and began mercilessly persecuting German Jews. Hitler believed that the future of Germany was in the East, and he began planning to invade and occupy most—and eventually all—of Eastern Europe and Russia. His master race of Germans, he believed, would need *Lebensraum*, or living space, if they were to fully succeed.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION #6

Most authors of novels and plays strive to create characters that are deep and well-rounded. Some writers, however, intentionally use flat and relatively simple characters to achieve their purpose. Write a well-organized essay in which you discuss the effectiveness of Huxley's use of such characters. Pay particular attention to what each character stands for in terms of ideas and beliefs. Do not merely summarize the plot.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION #7

Most dystopian or anti-utopian novels are their authors' means of pointing out flaws in their own societies. Write a well-organized essay in which you discuss *Brave New World's* effectiveness in getting Huxley's message across to readers. Be specific in terms of how the novel succeeds and how it fails. Do not merely summarize the plot.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION #8

In most novels, the main character is revealed at the beginning. In *Brave New World*, the most important character, John, is not revealed until the middle of the book. In a well-organized essay, discuss the effect this has on the novel and the reasoning Huxley might have had for doing this. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Brave New World

Chapter 1

1. What are the tone and effect of Huxley’s description of the Fertilizing Room in the first two paragraphs of the book?

2. How does the Fertilizing Room’s description fit the purpose of the novel?

3. What is Bokanovsky’s Process?

4. What effect does the repetition of the phrase “straight from the horse’s mouth” have?

5. According to Henry Foster, what is the ultimate goal of decanting the lower castes?

Chapter 5

1. Why does Lenina feel that Epsilons should provide less phosphorous after their cremation?

2. For what reason does Huxley include the dance club scene?

3. Briefly describe the Solidarity Service.

4. What has the Solidarity Service replaced?

5. Why does Bernard consider his Solidarity Service experience a failure?

Chapter 10

1. Why does the Director believe that the Fertilizing Room is the appropriate place to announce Bernard's transfer to Iceland?

2. According to the Director, why is Bernard's talent all the more reason to let him go?

3. What "reason" does Bernard give for proof of his innocence?

4. How does unorthodoxy threaten the World State?

5. What is the effect of the detail in the first three paragraphs of this chapter?

6. What is most humiliating to the Director?

Chapter 15

1. Why does John compare the group of twins to maggots?

2. How has the phrase “brave new world” changed to John?

3. What does John fail to understand about the Deltas?

4. How is Bernard’s reaction to the mob scene consistent or inconsistent with his character?
