

Example 5: a perfect world

Written work
Advanced level
MYP year: 5

Criterion	A	B	C	D	E
Level achieved	–	–	8	8	–

Background

After having read *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury, the students were required to choose one essay question from a possible three and write a 300-word literary essay.

They had one hour to prepare in class using the essay-writing preparatory document that the teacher had handed over. Students then had a three-hour class period on a different day to write their rough draft as well as the final copy of their essay. They were allowed to use dictionaries as well as a list of cohesive devices, useful phrases for essay writing, notes on *Fahrenheit 451*, and a list of literary terms from the novel.

The student whose work is represented here chose to answer the following question, “In what ways is the book a utopia and/or a dystopia?”

Note 1: This particular task is quite complex, even for English B advanced students.

Note 2: Students were not penalized if they went over the 300-word limit.

Assessment

Criterion C: writing—message and organization

Maximum 8

Achievement level	Descriptor
7–8	<p>The student communicates complex information; ideas and opinions are relevant, focused and supported by examples and illustrations where appropriate.</p> <p>The student shows a sophisticated, in-depth understanding of the topic.</p> <p>The structure is clear and effective and adds to the message being conveyed; cohesive devices enhance the development of ideas.</p>

This work achieved level 8 because the student:

- communicates complex information; ideas and opinions are always relevant, focused and supported by examples and illustrations
- shows a sophisticated and in-depth understanding, both of the book and of the chosen topic (utopia/dystopia)
- structures the work clearly and effectively
- chooses cohesive devices that enhance the development of ideas.

Criterion D: writing—style and language use

Maximum 8

Achievement level	Descriptor
7–8	<p>The student’s choice of vocabulary is varied, sophisticated and idiomatic. The student uses complex grammar that adds to the style of the text; he/she shows the ability to manipulate the language.</p> <p>Spelling/writing contributes to the quality of the work.</p> <p>There is a clear sense of audience; register and style are effective. The student may be creative with the language, or show humour or irony when appropriate to the task.</p>

This work achieved level 8 because the student:

- uses a vocabulary that is varied, sophisticated and idiomatic
- uses complex grammar that is appropriate to the style of the text and shows the ability to manipulate the language (for example, use of rhetorical questions)
- makes no spelling mistakes
- uses a register and style that are effective in making the reader feel involved.

Student work

A Perfect World?

Utopia. Heaven. Two perfect worlds. Both are places we have all heard of, but none have seen. In modern society, though, they can seem far away, even impossible. But what if everything changed; what if misery disappeared, everyone was happy? Would you believe it? Or would it be too good to be true? Either way, that's the case of the society portrayed in Fahrenheit 451, a science-fiction novel about the future of our society, by Ray Bradbury. Throughout this essay, we will try to answer this question: in what ways is the book a Utopia and/or a dystopia?

First of all, let's focus on the utopian side of Fahrenheit 451. The most important value of the portrayed society seems to be happiness. Authorities have gotten rid of everything that could make a person sad, mad, or depressed. The only thing left is pleasure; if everything is fun, that makes everything ok., right? It's better to

get attached to the television than to a person, because a t.v.

doesn't die! That way, everyone is happy.

Now, let's have a closer look at the dystopian side of the novel.

As mentioned above, the Society from the book disposed of everything that could cause someone to be unhappy, but not without disposing

of most other feelings too. Take this quote, for example:

"-We burnt a thousand books. We burnt a woman. (Montag)

-Well? (His wife, Mildred)" (Part 1, p.50)

As you can see, nobody cares about anyone else anymore because

feelings were killed off. People are so self-centered that they consider

it fun to go run people over on the highway. Another interesting, yet

disturbing, part of the book is that medias feed people useless, empty

information so that they feel like they are thinking, while they are

really just being controlled by them. People can't even think for

themselves anymore.

In conclusion, I would have to say that the society in

Fahrenheit 451 appears to ~~me~~ to be more of a dystopia than a

utopia. Although the idea itself is acceptable, without feelings and

thought, life would be the same as death. Is that where our

society is heading? Only we can decide.

368 words