

Brave New World Essay Prompts

Exile

Palestinian American literary theorist and cultural critic Edward Said has written that “Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted.” Yet Said has also said that exile can become “a potent, even enriching” experience.

Using *Brave New World*, consider how a character experiences such a rift and becomes cut off from “home,” whether that home is the character’s birthplace, family, homeland, or other special place. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the character’s experience with exile is both alienating and enriching, and how this experience illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Freedom

How do each of the following characters—The Savage, Bernard Marx, and Helmholtz Watson—understand freedom?

Write an essay in which you analyze how The Savage, Bernard Marx, and Helmholtz Watson understand freedom. Explain how this experience illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Soma

Write an essay in which you analyze the purpose that soma serves presenting the theme of the novel. Avoid mere plot summary.

Shakespeare and the Bible

The Savage often quotes Shakespeare within the novel. Write an essay in which you analyze how Huxley uses other literature to enhance the conflict in *Brave New World*.

Consumption

Write an essay examining the ways in which the ideas of the happiness in *Brave New World* are associated with consumption and how this society is attempting to create a consumer utopia. What does Huxley say about the interface between happiness and consumption?

Happiness

“Happiness is a hard master—particularly other people’s happiness. A much harder master, if one isn’t conditioned to accept it unquestioningly, than truth.”

Write an essay discussing the meaning of this quote in relation to the novel as well as to the theme offered by Huxley.

Society

In the first line of *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, the reader learns the tri-partite pillars upon which World State is allegedly built: “Community, Identity, Stability.” The processes by which these three qualities are achieved and maintained, however, seem completely paradoxical. Using examples from the text, examine each pillar and how Huxley develops his message or warning about how society should be structured.

Conformity

One of the problematic elements of World State is that each person plays a role in propping up the state’s maladaptive values through their complicity with its rules and systems, and the more people conform, the fewer are likely to rebel. Analyzing specific characters in *Brave New World*, to illustrate precisely how complicity functions in a domino effect. Although almost all of the major characters have some physical or personality trait that makes them unconventional, most of them do not emphasize or exercise their difference in a way that challenges the reigning order.

Write an essay analyzing how the citizens of World State serve to perpetuate the very conditions that cause them distress.