



DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

WHAT IS A DYSTOPIA?

- **Utopia** = a perfect, idealistic world
- **Dystopia** = a utopia gone wrong
 - a society that tried to establish a utopia but has actually become flawed and dysfunctional
- Dystopias, through an exaggerated worst-case scenario, make a criticism about a current trend, societal norm, or political system
 - This is called **social commentary** - the author is making a comment about our current society through literature

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF A DYSTOPIAN SOCIETY

- Propaganda is used to control the citizens of society.
- Information, independent thought, and freedom are restricted.
- A figurehead or concept is worshipped by the citizens of the society.
- Citizens are perceived to be under constant surveillance.
- Citizens have a fear of the outside world.
- Citizens live in a dehumanized state.
- The natural world is banished and distrusted.
- Citizens conform to uniform expectations. Individuality and dissent are bad.
- The society is an illusion of a perfect utopian world.

TYPES OF DYSTOPIAN CONTROLS

- Most dystopian works present a world in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through one or more of the following types of controls:
 - Corporate control
 - Bureaucratic control (government)
 - Technological control
 - Ideological control (including religion)

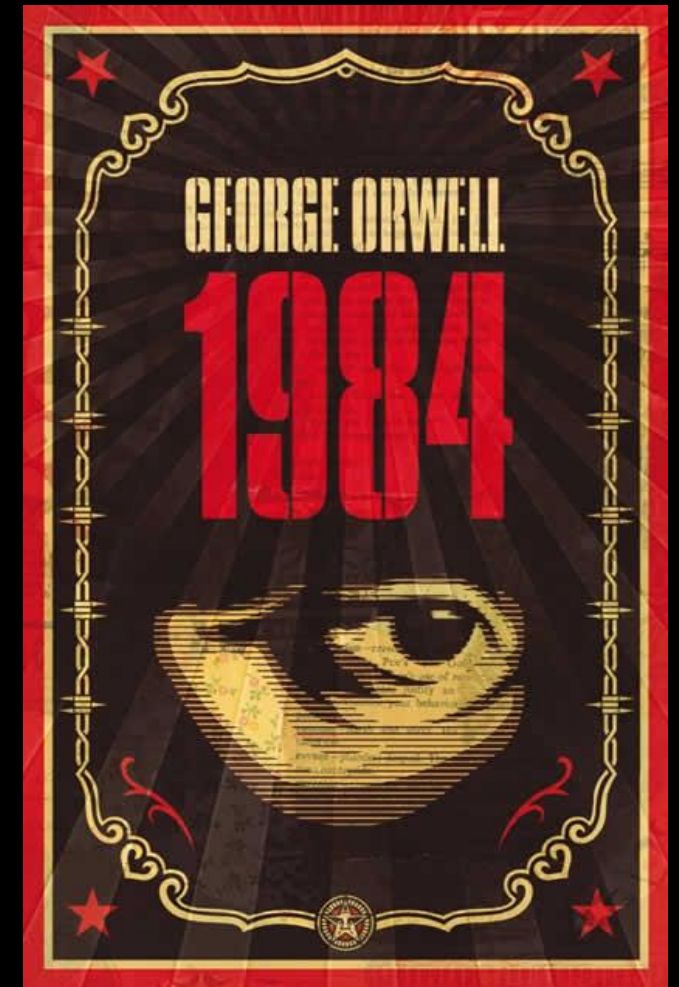
EXAMPLES OF DYSTOPIAN FICTION

- Many teen book series and movies feature dystopian societies!



EXAMPLES OF DYSTOPIAN FICTION

- There are also TONS of adult books and movies. Here are some famous dystopias:





CAN YOU THINK OF ANY
DYSTOPIAS?

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

- Recap:
 - What is a utopia?
 - Design your own perfect world. What would it be like?
 - How can a utopia turn into a dystopia?
- When you read or watch a dystopian book or film, ask yourself these key questions:
 - How did the society attempt to create a utopia?
 - How did the utopia become a dystopia?
 - Describe the dystopian characteristics of the society.
 - What comment is the author making about *our* society?