

## Essay Assignment: Universal Themes in Science Fiction

You will develop an essay of 800-1,000 words about one of the universal themes addressed in the science fiction literature we have read, comparing works that express a universal theme and drawing evidence from these works to support your analysis and interpretation.

### Topic Choices:

1) Ray Bradbury cites as a basic theme of his writing that “Science ran too far ahead of us too quickly, and the people got lost in a mechanical wilderness” (McDougal Littell 68-69).

Consider the following questions as you develop your response:

1. What does Bradbury mean by this, particularly the phrase “mechanical wilderness”?
2. In at least two works of fiction, how do the authors illustrate this theme?
3. How does the article show the same theme’s relevance to real life issues?

2) Many of the works “depict a future government that controls its people by eliminating mental stimulation . . . [and] warn of controlling trends in society” (McDougal Littell 69).

Consider the following questions as you develop your response:

1. What does the critic mean by the passage above?
2. In at least two works of fiction, how do the authors illustrate this theme?
3. How does the article show the same theme’s relevance to real life issues?

Here are all of the works of literature from our unit. Remember, you must write about two works of fiction and one work of non-fiction.

- “Harrison Bergeron” (short story, Kurt Vonnegut)
- “The Pedestrian” (short story, Ray Bradbury)
- “By the Waters of Babylon” (short story, Stephen Vincent Benét)
- “A Sound of Thunder” (short story, Ray Bradbury)
- “There Will Come Soft Rains” (short story, Ray Bradbury)
- “Last Child in the Woods” (article, Richard Louv)
- “The Man Who Created the World Wide Web Has Some Regrets” (article, Katrina Booker)
- “All Can Be Lost” (article, Nicholas Carr)
- “Artificial Intelligence: Friendly or Frightening?” (article, Tanya Lewis)
- “Does Facebook Know Too Much?” (article, Joe Bubar)