


Harrison Bergeron





FICTION SELECTION
Unit 1, Part 1, Grade 10

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Preparing to Read
Connect to Your Life

Can you think of a time when you've had to hide your skills for someone else's sake?

- Maybe you gave a wrong answer in class, just to avoid looking too smart in front of friends.
- Perhaps you let a friend beat you at a video game.




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Preparing to Read
Connect to Your Life

What are the advantages and disadvantages of covering up your strengths to pretend as though you are "equal" to someone else?

- What are some examples to support your ideas?




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Preparing to Read
Build Background

If you've played golf or run a footrace, you might know the term "handicap."

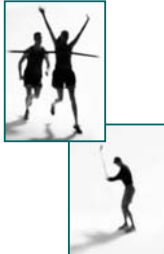
- It's a way to even up the game so that good, average, and poor players can compete as equals.



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Preparing to Read
Build Background


- In a footrace, for example, faster runners might handicap themselves by giving slower runners a head start.
- In golf, where players win by completing the course with the fewest number of strokes, better golfers sometimes start the game with a handicap of extra strokes.



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Preparing to Read
Build Background

In "Harrison Bergeron," people are given handicaps in daily life, so that no one will be any stronger, smarter, or better looking than anyone else.



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Preparing to Read
Words to Know

- calibrated
- consternation
- cower
- hindrance
- luminous
- symmetry
- synchronizing
- vague
- vigilance
- wince

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Preparing to Read
Focus Your Reading

- Stories often have a central idea or message, also known as the **theme**.
 - The theme gives meaning to the story by providing some insight into life or human nature.
- The first lines of “Harrison Bergeron” give you a clue to the story’s theme:
 - *The year was 2081, and everybody was finally equal. They weren’t only equal before God and the law. They were equal every which way.*

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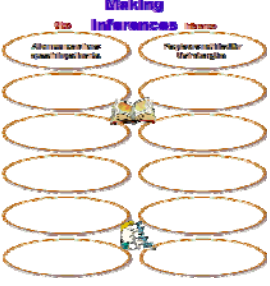
Preparing to Read
Focus Your Reading

- **Inferences** are logical guesses based on clues in the text and on common sense.
 - *It wasn’t clear at first as to what the bulletin was about, since the announcer, like all announcers, had a serious speech impediment.*
- In that society, all news announcer have speech impediments, which would make them unfit for the job by today’s standards.
 - From this clue, you can infer that people in that society are not hired according to their strengths.

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Preparing to Read
Focus Your Reading

As you read, jot down at least five inferences you can make about the main characters and the society.




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Reading and Analyzing
Literary Analysis

Theme

- Think about what happens to the central characters as the story progresses.
 - » Have the characters changed?
 - » Have they learned anything?
 - » What is the conflict of the story?




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Reading and Analyzing
Active Reading

Making Inferences

- Making inferences helps you anticipate the events of the plot.
 - » The clues in the text will help you to make inferences about them.




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Reading and Analyzing
Reading Skills and Strategies

Questioning

- Monitor your reading strategies and make modifications when your understanding breaks down.
- Question what happens and what is said as you read.
 - » What does the author mean when he says, "In the race of life, Harrison carried three hundred pounds"?




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Reading and Analyzing
Literary Analysis

Elements of Science Fiction

- The setting of a science fiction story often helps to explain the events of the plot.
- Describe the setting of the story and how it contributes to the plot.




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Reading and Analyzing
Reading Skills and Strategies

Predict

- How will the H-G respond to Harrison's defiant behavior?



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Reading and Analyzing
Literary Analysis

Theme

- What are your thoughts about the theme, or Vonnegut's message?
- After you finish the story, decide if you would change your mind about the theme or message.



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Reading and Analyzing
Active Reading

Making Inferences

- Look back through the story for details about the ballerina who danced with Harrison.
 - » Make inferences about her character.
 - » Support your inferences with text evidence.

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Reading and Analyzing
Literary Analysis

Science Fiction

- Why is this selection considered science fiction?



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