"As Huxley remarked in *Brave New World*, the civil libertarians and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny 'failed to take into account man's almost infinite appetite for distractions.'"

**Introduction**: In the following passage, the contemporary social critic Neil Postman contrasts George Orwell's vision of the future, as expressed in the novel *1984* (written in 1949), with that of Aldous Huxley in the novel *Brave New World* (written in 1932).

**Task**: Read the passage on the next page and consider Postman's assertion that Huxley's vision is more relevant today than Orwell's. Then, using your own critical understanding of contemporary society as evidence, write a carefully argued essay that agrees or disagrees with Postman's assertion.

**NOTE** - This essay does **not** ask you to compare and contrast *Brave New World* and *1984*. You are to analyze our own society, connecting your thoughts to both of the novels and articles you find during your research.
We were keeping our eye on 1984. When the year came and the prophecy didn't, thoughtful Americans sang softly in praise of themselves. The roots of liberal democracy had held. Wherever else the terror had happened, we, at least, had not been visited by Orwellian nightmares.

But we had forgotten that alongside Orwell's dark vision, there was another - slightly older, slightly less well known, equally chilling: Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Contrary to common belief even among the educated, Huxley and Orwell did not prophesize the same thing. Orwell warns that we will be overcome by an externally imposed oppression. But in Huxley's vision, no Big Brother is required to deprive people of their autonomy, maturity and history. As he saw it, people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think.

What Orwell feared were those who would ban books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one.

Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism.

Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance.

Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumblepuppy.

As Huxley remarked in *Brave New World Revisited*, the civil libertarians and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny "failed to take into account man's almost infinite appetite for distractions."

In 1984, Huxley added, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In *Brave New World*, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure.

In short, Orwell feared that what we hate will ruin us. Huxley feared that what we love will ruin us.
Brave New World/1984 Dystopian Society Analysis Essay Requirements

Prompt: Decide which dystopic vision (Huxley’s or Orwell’s) is most relevant to our society. Your task is to analyze contemporary society to determine if we are more at risk of a "dystopia by pleasure" or a "dystopia by control."

Length: 1,000 to 1,250 words (approximately four to five double-spaced pages)

Format: The essay will be typed in Google Docs and saved in the Dystopia Essay folder

Content:

_____ A thesis statement articulating your stance. You must decide which of the two dystopias we are most at risk of, and develop an argument that states why.

_____ A minimum of three citations from the dystopian novel you believe best depicts where our society is, or is headed. Be sure to analyze the citations and compare/contrast them to our society.

_____ A minimum of three specific examples from our society that you pair with your novel citations to explain how your textual references relate to contemporary society.

_____ A minimum of three citations from three supplementary articles (one for each article) used to support your thesis.

_____ At least one citation from the novel you did not choose. You can use this citation to argue why the alternate dystopia is not a realistic choice, or you could use it to illustrate one of the second novel’s dystopic elements in our society.

_____ A specific example from our society that pairs with the textual reference from your secondary novel.

_____ A thoughtful conclusion that wraps up your arguments and leaves the reader with a clear understanding of your stance on which dystopia our society is most like, your specific reasons for it, and the implications for the future of civilization.

Vocabulary: Incorporate at least 15 of the Language of Literary Terms.

Style: Essay should be written in MLA format and correctly use MLA citation style.

Works cited page: Cite both novels and all articles used on a separate works cited page at the end of your essay in MLA format. Remember that links are not considered MLA citations. Use Citation Machine, Easy Bib, Cite This For Me Web Citer, or some other online tool to help you with citations.
Plagiarism: Essays with any instances of plagiarism – which is considered a form of cheating – will result in a grade of zero with no opportunity to redo. Remember to cite any ideas that aren’t your own. Ignorance is not a defense for plagiarism. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Scoring: The essay will be scored according to the high school’s writing rubric. You will earn effort points for having different aspects of the draft completed by various deadlines. The final draft of the essay will count as a 30-point writing grade for Fourth Quarter. It will also count as half of your Final Exam grade, so it’s important to put forth your best effort on this essay.

Due dates: A separate assignment schedule with a detailed timeline will be distributed

Notes and ideas: