

*Brave New World: What Should I Know?*

1. What is the theme of *Brave New World*?
2. What is the significance of Huxley's title?
3. What is the significance of Huxley's use of "Ford" as a substitute for "Christ" or God"?
4. In his novels Huxley often uses a spokesman for himself and his ideas. Who is his spokesman in this novel?
5. Why was the society in the World State divided into castes?
6. What is the significance of the World State's motto: "Community, Identity, Stability"?
7. Why does Huxley have John the Savage commit suicide?
8. The two greatest obscenities in the society of *Brave New World* are birth and mother. Why?
9. Toward the end of the book, the Controller Mustapha Mond sums up the benefits of living in the "brave new world" Utopia: "The world's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get." It sounds like perfection, and yet the world Mond describes is deeply, intentionally horrifying. Why? What exactly is so bad about this society of the future? Is there anything good about it, anything we could learn from and try to adapt to our own uses?
10. As dehumanizing and oppressive as the brave new world Utopia is, the alternative in the "savage reserve" is in many ways worse—dirty, violent, unhealthy, cruel, uncomfortable. What point is Huxley making about human nature and the nature of human communities? Is his vision totally negative—or does the book hold out some shred of hope, some alternative mode that fosters both freedom and community?
11. One of the most striking—and comic—aspects of Huxley's utopia is the way our sexual mores and assumptions have been turned on their head: monogamy is bad, passion is deviation, casual, meaningless sex is the socially approved norm. What is Huxley getting at here? Is there any expression of human sexuality that he finds acceptable? Is sex at the heart of the "problem" in his view of human nature?
12. In many ways, the main characters of the book are cartoon figures—Helmholtz Watson the alienated superman, Bernard Marx the cowardly, hypocritical intellectual, Mustapha Mond the cynical all-knowing leader, John the doomed idealist. Discuss the book as an allegory and elaborate on what each character stands for.
13. When John starts reading Shakespeare, he discovers that the words make his emotions "more real"—they even make other people more real. Talk about the power of language in the book and the power of the word to influence thought and behavior. Why did Huxley choose Shakespeare as the medium of John's intellectual awakening?
14. Could anything like *Brave New World* really happen? Has it happened in some form that we don't fully recognize?