

# **Year 8**

## **English Revision- End of Year Exams**

### **Section 1: Dystopian Short Stories**

*Examination Day – Henry Slesar*

*A Sound of Thunder – Ray Bradbury*

### **Section 2: Descriptive Writing**



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# Year 8 Exam Revision- Dystopian Short Stories

## SHORT STORY 1 – EXAMINATION DAY – HENRY SLESAR

### Plot Summary:

The protagonist of the story is Richard (Dickie) Jordan and it is set on his twelfth birthday. We learn from Richard's parents that he must sit an examination which the government requires every child to sit at the age of 12.

The atmosphere in Dickie's home is incredibly tense despite it being his birthday. Dickie is inquisitive and asks his father questions about the world, which his father answers in a strangely blunt manner. When Dickie asks how far away the sun is, his father snaps back with an incorrect answer, which is very strange.

Dickie is accompanied by his dad to the government educational building, which is presented as cold and uninviting.

When called into the examination room, Dickie must drink a potion before being sat in front of a large machine. The machine reads questions and Dickie must answer them into a microphone.

We then flashforward to the Jordan's home after Dickie has completed the test. The phone rings and Dickie's parents are told that his 'intelligence quotient' is above government regulation and that Dickie must be killed.

It is at this point we realise why Dickie's parents did not help him learn by answering his questions. In this dystopian society, the government kills people for being too intelligent so that they can keep power and control.

### Big Idea:



Examination Day is about a young boy who is killed for his intelligence. He lives in a world where the government maintains power by preventing people from being intelligent. Slesar does this to teach us how education gives us greater freedom.

### Key Words



**Oppress:** To treat a person or group of people as though they are not important.

**Tyranny:** Cruel and oppressive leadership.

**Tyrant:** A cruel and oppressive leader.

**Totalitarian:** Describing a place in which the government have total control over citizens' actions.

### Key Quotes & Features:



- *'His mother looked at the tablecloth. "It's just a sort of Government intelligence test".* The fact that Dickie's mother cannot look him in the eye suggests she is anxious for the exam and knows what the outcome might be. This helps create suspense.
- *'Why did it have to rain today' he said... 'because it just did, that's all'*  
*'His father snapped, then instantly regretted his abruptness'.*  
Dickie's father won't answer his son's questions. We assume he is an uncaring father and doesn't want to educate his son. We realise why at the end.
- *'The room was as cold and official as a courtroom'*  
The Government buildings are hostile, cold and unwelcoming. This highlights how strict the government are and develops tension.
- *'The voice was clipped: A brisk, official voice'. "You may specify by telephone", the voice droned on, "whether you wish his body interred by the Government, or would you prefer a private burial place?'*  
When Dickie's parents hear the result of the exam, they are told in an uncaring and impersonal way. The government simply does not care about the lives of their people.

# Year 8 Exam Revision- Dystopian Short Stories

## SHORT STORY 2 – A SOUND OF THUNDER – RAY BRADBURY

### Plot Summary:

The story begins in America in 2055 and we follow the protagonist, Eckels, who has booked a day with Time Safari Inc. This business sends people back in time to hunt animals which are now extinct. Eckels is planning to kill a Tyrannosaurus Rex.

At the beginning of the story, Eckels is arrogant and overconfident. He claims to be an experienced hunter and cannot wait to shoot a dinosaur. The hunt leader, Travis explains the rules of the shoot to Eckels. The company has already sent an employee back in time to lay a path across the jungle which Eckels will visit. The employee has also decided which specific animal Eckels will kill. On the day of Eckels' adventure, this specific dinosaur will die anyway.

Travis explains that these procedures stop the company from changing time. If Eckels killed a young and healthy animal, he might stop future generations of that species from existing and therefore significantly affect the future.

When Eckels arrives, he spots the dinosaur – it is terrifying! His arrogance and confidence suddenly disappear as he realises he does not have the strength to kill the T-Rex. In fear, he runs back to the time machine but clumsily steps off the path.

The noise of Eckels panicking alerts the T-Rex and it runs towards the men. They open fire and the beast falls dead in front of them.

Back in the time machine, Eckels looks down at his boots, ashamed of his actions. He notices a small dead butterfly on the bottom of his boot. The others are horrified but Eckels does not understand why this matters.

The men exit the time machine back in 2055. They worry that Eckels will have altered time by killing the butterfly. All seems fine at first, until Eckels questions who won the presidential election ... the result has changed since their journey back in time. In disgust at Eckels' clumsiness and ignorance – Travis reloads his gun and shoots Eckels.

### Big Idea:



A Sound of Thunder is about a trophy hunter who travels in time to shoot a T-Rex. His ignorant, selfish and irresponsible actions have disastrous consequences, as by killing one small animal (a butterfly) the man changes the future. Bradbury wrote the story to encourage us to think of the consequences of our actions and to take care of the world around us.

### Key Words



**Cautionary** – Describing a story which cautions/warns us about the future.

**Responsible** – Making decisions which benefit those around us.

**The Butterfly Effect** – the idea that small actions can have significant impacts

### Key Quotes & Features:



- *I've hunted tiger, wild boar, buffalo, elephant, but now, this is it," said Eckels. "I'm shaking like a kid."*  
Eckels sounds childish and overconfident. He speaks about killing in a very casual manner.
- *'It came on great oiled, resilient, striding legs'*  
*'A great evil god'*  
The dinosaur is presented as terrifying and this contrasts with Eckels, who (in comparison) looks powerless.
- *"It can't be killed," Eckels pronounced this verdict quietly'*  
Bradbury has Eckels act shocked when seeing the T-Rex. His over-confidence and arrogance is clear to the reader.
- *"Get me out of here," said Eckels. "It was never like this before. I was always sure I'd come through alive."*  
Bradbury is mocking the confidence which many people have and how they feel they have control over nature.
- *'Embedded in the mud, glistening green and gold and black, was a butterfly, very beautiful and very dead'.*  
The butterfly Eckels kills links to the Butterfly Effect which is part of the message of the story.
- *Not that fool weakling Keith. We got an iron man now, a man with guts!"*  
Eckel's actions have changed the presidential election results. America is now ruled by a stricter, crueller man.

# Year 8 Exam Revision- Descriptive Writing

**Zoom** in on a fine detail **in the present**; a certain aspect of a character, setting, etc.

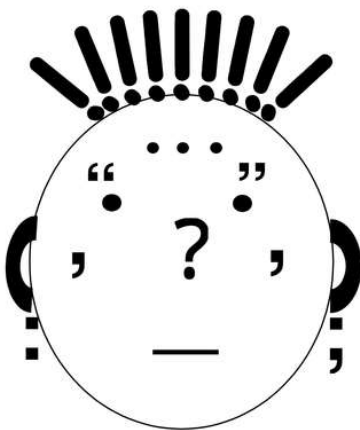
**'Drop'** the reader right into the scene, describe the weather to create a particular atmosphere

**Zoom out/ link** back to your opening, go back to a particular detail **about the weather** and describe how it has changed/stayed the same



**Shift** the focus to a different time using a flashback

## Punctuation Face



### Interesting ways to start your sentences:

1. **Triple noun colon.**
  - a) Fury, anger, dismay: as his worry dissipated damaging emotions inched closer.
2. **Adverb sentence starter.**
  - a) *Courageously*, they ran towards the danger.
3. **Verb starter.**
  - a) *Imagine*, a life where this didn't happen.
4. **3 adjective starter.**
  - a) Bright, ocean blue and piercing, his eyes lit up his face.
5. **Keyword dash.**
  - a) *Guilty* - the jury finally reached their verdict.

### Top Tips:



- Start and end your writing describing the weather.
- Include one-word sentences/ paragraphs.'
- Don't start every sentence with 'the'.
- Remember to show not tell. Be descriptive!