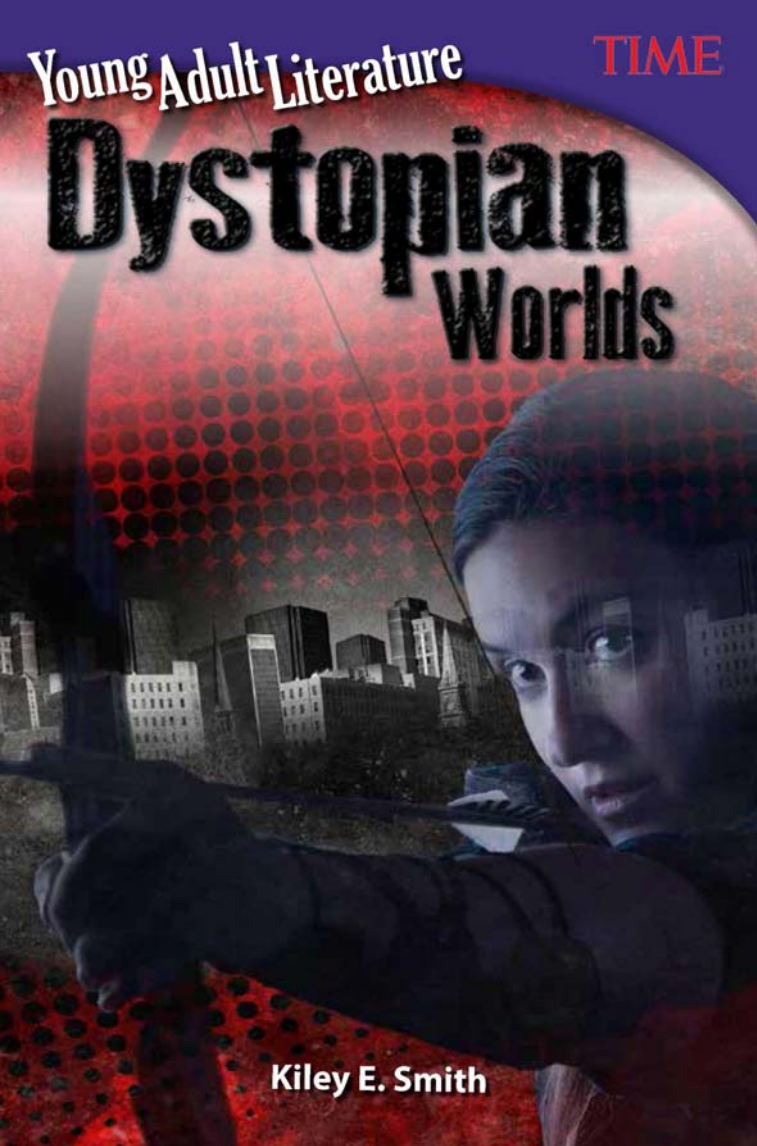


Young Adult Literature

TIME

Dystopian Worlds



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Dystopia, Utopia, Huh-Topia!?

What is a **dystopia**? It is a perfectly horrid society. Civilization's problems have taken over. **Discord** and unhappiness are common. Governments try to create perfect worlds, but something goes wrong. They end up with deeply troubled societies. To paraphrase the great author Leo Tolstoy, each dystopian world is unique. Yet the people are similarly unhappy.

On the other side of the coin are **utopias**. These are perfect societies. The governments are strong and fair. People are treated equally. They are well cared for. Utopian societies produce happy, loving, caring people.

Authors seem to have it backwards! Utopian societies include perfection, peace, and **prosperity**. These are ideal conditions. So why aren't authors writing more utopian books? Wouldn't it be more interesting to read about perfect worlds?

Not really. Utopia by definition has no conflict. Without conflict, there is no story. Dystopian novels focus on one of the most engaging types of conflict. More often than not, they tell of a single person against forces in the outside world. Teenagers are noted for feeling that they face the world alone. Maybe that's why dystopian books are among the most popular novels for young adults.

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