

Harrison Bergeron

Short Story by Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

Introducing the Short Story

Literary Analysis: Plot and Conflict

Reading Skill: Draw Conclusions

Vocabulary in Context



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Harrison Bergeron

INTRODUCING THE SHORT STORY

What if everyone were **THE SAME?** ▼

What would the world be like if everyone were the same— ▼

average in intelligence, talents,
appearance, and strength—

and no one was better than
anyone else?



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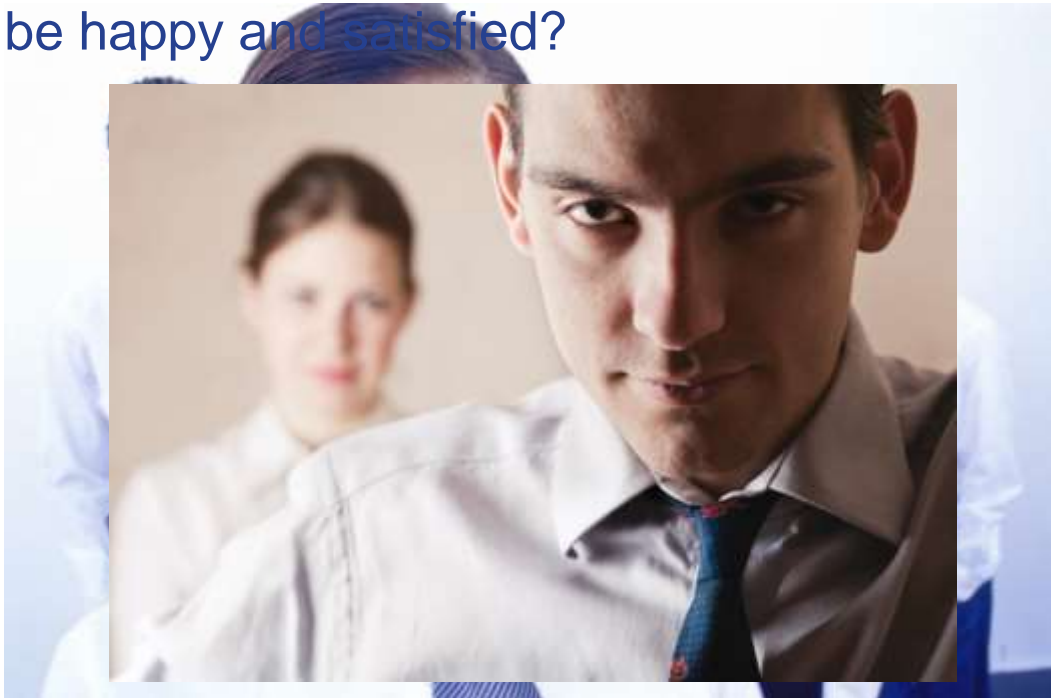
Harrison Bergeron

INTRODUCING THE SHORT STORY

***What if everyone were* THE SAME?**

How do you think people would feel and act toward each other? ▼

Would they be happy and satisfied?



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INTRODUCING THE SHORT STORY

What if everyone were **THE SAME?**

BRAINSTORM

With your class, brainstorm possible advantages and disadvantages of a world where everyone is the same—exactly average. ▼

Try to generate as many ideas as possible.



Advantages	Disadvantages
no more jealousy	nothing to live up to

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Literary Analysis

Plot and Conflict

The plot of a story is driven by a **conflict**, or struggle between opposing forces. ▼



In some stories, the conflict is between the main character and society.



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Harrison Bergeron

Literary Analysis

Plot and Conflict

In “Harrison Bergeron,” for example, the title character struggles with U.S. society in the year 2081. ▼



As you read, notice ways in which Harrison and the government oppose each other. ▼

Follow events to see who prevails.

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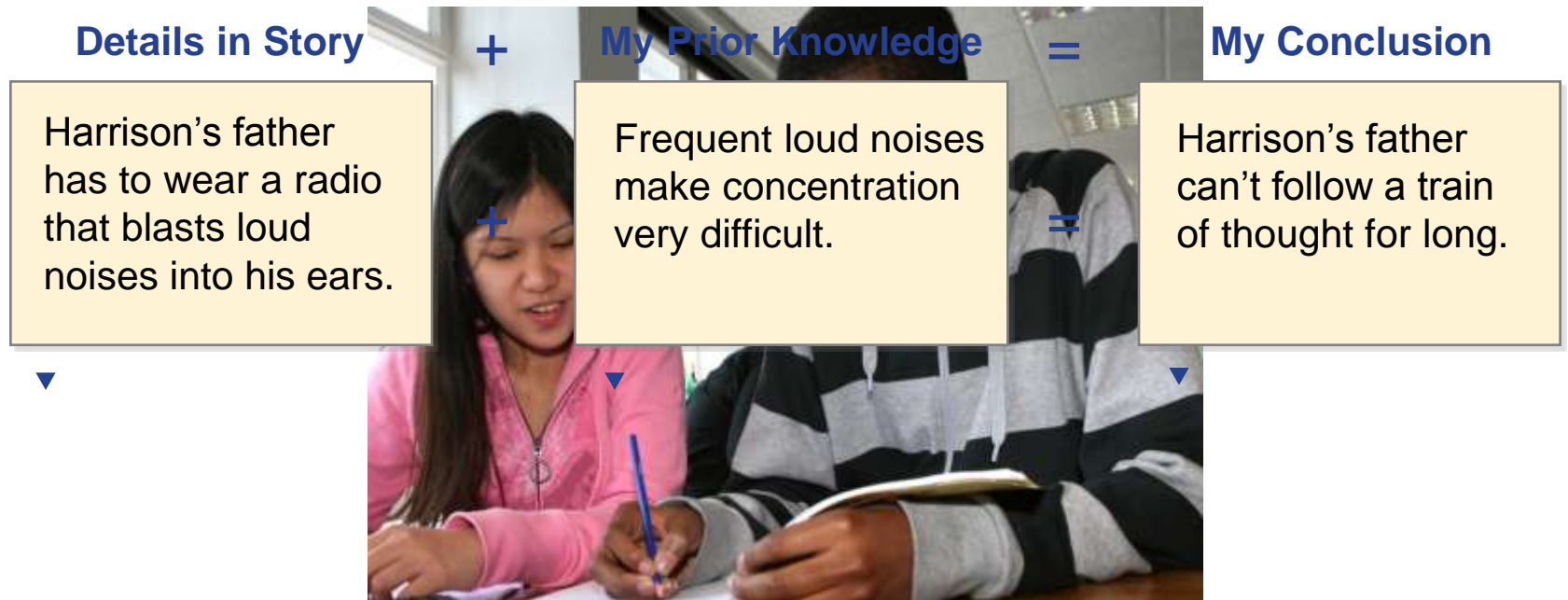
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Reading Skill

Draw Conclusions

When you **draw conclusions**, you make judgments based on story details and your own prior knowledge. ▼



Reading Skill

Draw Conclusions

Use the following strategies to draw conclusions about the society depicted in “Harrison Bergeron”:

- Note what results from the society’s practices and laws. ▼
- Apply your own knowledge to speculate about the motives of its officials.



Reading Skill

Draw Conclusions

As you read “Harrison Bergeron,” use a chart like the one shown to make notes about the society. Also include your own thoughts or reactions about the information. ▼

Details About Society	My Reactions
Constitutional amendments make everyone equal in every way. ▼	It would be hard to enforce equality.
My Overall Conclusions	

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Vocabulary in Context

Vonnegut uses the words to the right in relating his futuristic tale. To see how many words you already know, substitute a different word or phrase for each boldfaced term. Write your answers in your *Reader/Writer Notebook*. Sample answers appear in brackets.

1. **vigilance** with the children crossing the street ▼
[alertness]
2. **wince** in pain after the injection ▼
[cringe]
3. filled with **consternation** at the thought ▼
[alarm]

consternation
cower
neutralize
synchronize
vigilance
wince



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Vocabulary in Context

4. **cower** in the corner ▼
[tremble]
5. **synchronize** our watches ▼
[coordinate]
6. **neutralizing** the impact ▼
[reducing the effect of]

consternation
cower
neutralize
synchronize
vigilance
wince









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Vocabulary in Context

-  **consternation** *n.* confused amazement or fear ▼
-  **cower** *v.* to crouch down in fear ▼
-  **neutralize** *v.* to counteract or cancel out the effect of ▼
-  **synchronize** *v.* to match the timing of ▼
-  **vigilance** *n.* alert attention, watchfulness ▼
-  **wince** *v.* to shrink or flinch involuntarily, especially in pain

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