

## **Revolutionary Reading Workshop – Patchway group South Gloucestershire**

### **Who was the workshop for?**

This was a 2 hour workshop for 10 year 8 pupils from Patchway Community College who had been selected to take part in a series of workshops at Patchway Library.

### **What happened?**

The aim of the workshop was to use dystopian teen fiction (we focused mainly on *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, *Momentum* by Saci Lloyd, *Divergent* by Veronica Roth and *Mortal Engines* by Philip Reeve) to explore freedom and control. The workshop also set out to inspire the group to create their own dystopias and start thinking about plot and character within that kind of setting.

To start off, I read a bit from the *Hunger Games* to provide everyone with an example of a dystopian setting. We discussed what kind of society this was and how people lived.

I got the group to think about three different ways that decisions are made by using chocolates and a series of fun statements. We ended with a dictatorship where the small groups we were working in had no say over the final decision. Of course, everyone was able to eat the chocolates at the end!

We then looked at the different aspects of dystopian fiction and the central theme of Freedom vs Control. The group did some brainstorming around these concepts. We heard a thought provoking extract from *Momentum* at this point. They started doing some story mind-mapping by jotting down some ideas for their own dystopia. Some scary and brilliant ideas emerging!

We explored further with a game to get some debate around human rights, freedom and control using the books as our basis. This led to heated discussions about our own society and what freedom really means and controls that are put in place for safety reasons etc. There was lots of disagreement about controls, crime and punishment in particular! Also some very interesting and controversial discussions about a range of issues.

After the heated debates, the group added to their story mind-maps. They jotted down more ideas for what freedoms would be restricted, who the main characters will be and how will they fight for freedom etc. We shared what people had done.

After a short break the group did a “Divergent” personality test to find out which faction they would belong to (based on the book). We discussed how you can’t divide people like this and why. The group also had a look at some popular dystopian they could borrow from the library (including the books we were using). *Divergent* by Veronica Roth and *The Declaration* by Gemma Malley generated lots of interest. (Many had already read *The Hunger Games*).

To finish, everyone shared their dystopian story ideas and talked about how their stories might develop. There really were a huge range of ideas and all of them scarily imaginative!

The group then answered evaluation questions about the session by jotting down answers to these questions:

### **One thing you liked**

1. Debating.
2. Finding out about different books and everyone having their own opinion.
3. Discussing views and using them to come up with story plots.
4. Creating stories.
5. The debating
6. Gradually creating a storyline
7. I liked the agree/disagree section because I saw other people's views.
8. The debating (agree/disagree)
9. Very different to usual workshops

### **You thing you didn't like or would change/improve**

1. More chocolate and more debating.
2. There wasn't anything bad only less talking and more doing things.
3. Could have turned our plot ideas into the starts of story and looked at the way to write dystopia.
4. More work at stories, writing, reading.
5. More games and better chocolate
6. Wasn't really any improvements (more chocolate?!).
7. Nothing I didn't like.
8. More creative.
9. More time to write ideas

### **Overall feelings and marks out of ten**

1. Fun and debating was good and the post its and planning. Everything was good.
2. 9/10 because it was interesting and fun but some points got maybe a little boring.
3. It was interesting.
4. Very awesome, helpful, must write a storee! 9.99/10
5. Overall it was really fun and I liked the chocolates.
6. I really enjoyed it 9/10
7. 9/10
8. Very good and inspiring 8/10
9. 8 1/2 out of ten.

**The Librarian who attended also completed evaluation:**

**1. How much do you think the group enjoyed the Pageturners project overall (with 5 being 'very much' and 1 being 'not at all')?**

1      2      3      4      **5**

**2. Which parts of Pageturners do you think they most enjoyed? (tick all that apply)**

Listening to the story

The arts based activities

The games

The style of delivery

Other (Please say what) Writing / creating their own stories

**3. Which parts of the project were less successful or could be improved?**

They maybe could have spent more time doing their own writing but overall it was a successful session.

**4. Overall, do you think the Pageturners Project was successful in engaging the group?**

Yes / maybe / no

Please give an example to say why you think this.

Because the group were involved and wanted to keep working.

**5. Would you recommend this project to other schools/groups?**

(Please say why)

Yes. The theme is very current and a good choice of books used. Clever ideas eg the chocolates used to demonstrate democracy/autocracy etc.

**6. Will you doing anything further as a result of this project (eg incorporating ideas from the sessions, thinking about running it again with a different group etc)? Please say what**

Would maybe do the session with other groups

Please use the space below to give any further comments, feedback or thoughts

Would be interested to keep in touch with what other sessions were available.

