

## Lecture notes for Teacher

As you study the 1950s in US history, you will learn that the 1950s was an Age of Paranoia marked by

- A. Fear of Russia (the iron curtain required demonstrations of American power)
- B. Fear of War (Korean War ended in stalemate)
- C. Fear of Communism (McCarthyism and the communist witch hunt in Wash, DC)
- D. Fear of Liberalism (Rise of the Republican Right)
- E. Fear of the Bomb (After Hiroshima and Nagasaki)

>As people started to think of the possibility of space travel, Science fiction became popular with readers.

>Major authors included Ray Bradbury, who wrote The Martian Chronicles and Isaac Asimov, who penned I, Robot (The more recent Will Smith movie) in this decade.

### The Characteristics and History of Science Fiction:

- >Science fiction is often based on Scientific principles and technology. *& amazing inventions*
- >Science fiction may make predictions about life in the future.
- >Science fiction often deals with aliens or with life on other planets.
- >Science fiction can comment on important issues in society.

### The Themes of the Science Fiction Formula or Recipe (what good sci fi writers include)

>Fear of the Future: America in the 1950s was in the grip of a national emergency—an age of paranoia—a fear of the unknown.

>Vast destruction: "imagination of disaster" on a scale so vast that mankind will have no future, will lost control of his destiny and destroy himself—man is his own worst enemy (listen to Klaatu's speech in The Day the Earth Stood Still) *we will watch this later!*

>The Federal Government is the agent of salvation. An alien invasion starts local then grows; help flows national to local and stable institutions like the Army restore order. (See Klaatu and Bobby visit the Lincoln Memorial).

>Science is good. Writers create a "rule of reason" through science and technology.

>Us vs. Them: people vs. the pods and blobs and big bugs; culture vs. nature; moderates vs. extremists. Writer dehumanizes the enemy. Home is safe while danger is "out there."

The best sci fi deals with mankind's responsibility & reaction to change.



Open up slides on homework page + advance as you go → Lecture notes for Teacher from slides

## Elements of Science Fiction

Remember that all notes, video clips, articles, and stories are all fair game for quizzes and tests! Tune in!

Read slide headings!

### Slide 1: Sci Fi Reflects Cold War Realities

These factors prompted a boom in science fiction during the 1950s:

1. Nuclear proliferation
  2. The space race
  3. Early computer technology
  4. Pervasive fear of the unknown dangers during the Cold War
- Extraterrestrial invaders = communists

### Slide 2: Elements of Science Fiction

1. Realistic & fantastic details.
2. Grounded in real science
3. Usually set in the future
4. Unknown inventions; advanced & amazing technology
5. Makes serious comment about the world
6. Contains a warning for humankind, sometimes causing mass hysteria like the threat of Communism and the threat of the Atomic Bomb

### Slide 3: Elements of Science Fiction:

1. Set in an alternate location; another planet, world, dimension
2. May contain aliens or strange invaders and unexplained events
3. Must have a protagonist (hero) and antagonist (villain) who do battle. The villain often represented Communism.
4. Will have a problem that must be overcome by the hero.

### Slide 4: Ray Bradbury quote - Read aloud!

### Slide 5: Settings:

Another planet, under the oceans, another dimension  
A utopia or dystopia  
May be set in the future or time travel to the past  
May be in the present but in an alternate reality

### Slide 6: Characters

1. protagonist
2. antagonist
3. These characters may be a human or a force
4. Protagonist or antagonist may be a society's laws, disease, technology
5. Creatures, robots, aliens. Man vs. Machine

### Slide 7: Science is Important to the Story

Advanced technology, genetics, disease, exploration  
Special powers or senses as a result of science  
Science can be the savior or the root of the problem



## Slide 8: Variety of contexts:

1. Utopian: the wise use of advanced technology creates a perfect world free from the flaws of modern society. Example=The Matrix
2. Dystopian: shows the dangerous outcomes of the unrestrained use of technology and science. Take place in post-apocalyptic settings.  
Examples=Divergent, Brave New World
3. Alien worlds or encounters: other life forms or artificially intelligent machines are often in control of a competing society, which leads to conflict with humans or the humans' surrender to the superior force.  
Examples= Arrival, Area 51, Avatar, Guardians of the Galaxy
4. Time Travel: explores future worlds that help the protagonist gain enlightenment or may show how traveling back in time can change the present.  
Example= Batman vs. Superman: Dawn of Justice, Back to the future movie

## Slide 9: Message

Most important reason to study science fiction=discuss and understand the concept of Change. Technology is changing faster than we can adjust to it.

Reading and developing an awareness of possible issues like those raised in science fiction and encouraging us to think through as many possibilities as we can for a future issue will better prepare us for the future.

Slides 10-end: Scientific Predictions in Literature that came true in Life! *Read each passage aloud!*

Invention	Predicted in the Year
I pad	1968
Virtual Reality	1956
Scuba Diving	1875
Credit Cards	1888
Earbuds	1950
Escalator	1940
Video Chat	1911
The Internet	1904 by Twain!
Moon Landing	1865
Screen Saver	1961
Flip phones, Bluetooth	1966

From Sci-Fi Movies in the 1950s  
video, list the common elements in the plot  
breakdown of a sci fi movie

1. Scientist hero warns society;  
2. no one listens
3. Unexplained events
4. Battle preparations begin
5. Invaders attack, society turns
6. Mass hysteria ~~to hero~~
7. Society turns to hero
8. Final battle
9. Invaders defeated

Sci Fi It's out there!

Themes: New Worlds, Robots Man vs. Machine,  
Aliens, Spaceships & Battles, Amazing Inventions