

Pumzi (dir. Wanhuri Kahui, 2009)

Lesson by Jenni Heeks, Woodford County High School

English, Geography, Religious Education, History or PSHE,
Key Stages 3 to 5

Students watch the film *Pumzi* before discussing the issue of the future and considering moral dilemma linked to the key sci-fi issue of the creation of utopian or dystopian futures. They then have the opportunity to design their own post-apocalyptic 'perfect world', consider how the world might end, and what new worlds might be created as a result, before watching one vision of this in Kahui's *Pumzi*. Students discuss this, before creating their own dystopian/utopian futures and debating whether or not these futures would work. They enhance their understanding of genre, which could be linked to a particular novel or piece of literature. They also engage with various concepts and problems linked to the future, and possibilities for the end of the world, and use their creative and problem-solving skills to design their own vision for a post-apocalyptic future.

Lesson Objectives

- To understand the concepts of utopia and dystopia.
- To consider and design our own concept of a utopian future.

You will need...

Access to *Pumzi* via BFI
player
A3 paper

Curriculum Links

- English – Linked to a sci-fi genre study.
- Could be used as a lesson within the study of several curriculum novels: *The Hunger Games*, *1984*, *A Clockwork Orange*.
- Geography – Linked to any study of a modern world issue (e.g. the energy crisis – particularly if the lesson is taken from a 'What Would You Do' angle).
- R.S/PSHE – linked to a particular ethical dilemma; can be used as part of a discussion of e.g. the possible impact of war.
- History – this lesson could be taught as part of a modern world unit, or in a



lesson that requires student understanding of political decisions – e.g. in a GCSE lesson that discusses the new Weimar Constitution, the lesson ‘what would you do’ might be posed.

Activities

TRAILER: What happens at the end of the world?

Write the question: ‘**How will the world end?**’ on the board. Give students 5 minutes, working in groups, to write a list on a piece of paper of as many *believable* ways the world might end as possible. Take feedback and write these different ways on the board.

Explain that in today’s lesson you are going to be looking at what happens when the world’s environment changes irreparably, and designing possible strategies for coping with such an event. Then watch *Pumzi*.

Take 5 minutes at the end of the film, if you wish, to discuss it (what actually happened? Was it good? Was it believable?)

MAIN ATTRACTION: Dystopia and Utopia

Ask students if they know what the words ‘*utopia*’ and ‘*dystopia*’ mean. You might want to write the words down so that students can see how they are spelt.

If they do not work it out, or even if they do, explain that ‘*utopia*’ is a vision of a perfect future world, and a ‘*dystopia*’ is the opposite: a place where everything is bad, the world has degraded. Explain that *dystopias* often arise from visions of *utopia*.

Ask students to think back to *Pumzi*. In pairs, get them to think about and write down in what ways *Pumzi* showed a utopian vision of the future, and in what ways it shows a dystopian vision of the future (they could do this in a table). Take feedback.

END CREDITS: Our own visions

Tell students that they are going to imagine that they are one of the 1000 survivors of World War Three (in the same idea as *Pumzi*), and they have been assigned the job of creating the new society.

They need to do it perfectly, i.e. create a utopia. Give students around 20-25 minutes to do this. They must consider:

- Travel
- Shelter
- Money
- Family
- Jobs
- Healthcare
- Education
- Liberty, and anything else they deem appropriate.

Once they have done this, they should share their utopia with their table.

Explain that it is now their table's job to pick their best utopia, and to do this they have to find problems with each other's worlds. They should do this by thinking about how it may become a *dystopia* – what might be the flaws in the system?

Once they have picked their best utopia, each table should present their vision of utopia to the rest of the class, before conducting a vote before the class's 'utopia' is selected.

Extras

Other Ideas

This lesson could be adapted to several different subjects – see ‘curriculum links’ section.

- **Link to creative writing** – this lesson could be used as a starter lesson, leading into a piece of creative writing about either a utopian or a dystopian future.
- **Display** – the futures created in this lesson can either be done ‘roughly’, whereby the paper given is merely a sounding board for ideas, or you could get the students to draw up their ideas neatly and create a ‘utopian/dystopian worlds’ display.

Read

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins (2008)

Never Let me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro (2005)

The House of the Scorpion by Nancy Farmer (2002)

How I Live Now by Meg Rosoff (2004)

1984 by George Orwell (1949)

A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess (1962)

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? By Philip K Dick (1968)

Utopia by Thomas Moore (1516)

Watch

The Day The Earth Caught Fire (Val Guest, 1961)

Silent Running (Douglas Trumbull, 1972)

Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, 1982)

The Terminator (James Cameron, 1984)

The 10th Victim (Elio Petri, 1965)

Never Let Me Go (Mark Romanek, 2010)