

Grade Level: High School

Topic: Progress and Technology

Essential Questions:

Is the price of progress ever too high?
What are the benefits and consequences of technology?

Resources:

- A. “How Google Works” images <http://ppcblog.com/how-google-works/>
- B. Two-paragraph excerpt from Harrison Bergeron (see below)
- C. An Excerpt from *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau (see below)
- D. A Day Made of Glass https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Cf7IL_eZ38
- E. 21st Century Playground <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZGhpDbKxPg>

Writing Types	Guiding Questions	Prompts	Reminders/Things to Consider (Student-Friendly Rubric Descriptors)
Argument	<p>How might each resource’s perspective on progress be a threat to society?</p> <p>What defines a threat?</p> <p>When is progress good?</p>	<p>Is the price of progress is sometimes too high? Using information from the resources, write a persuasive essay outlining the reasons you believe that technology is either a benefit or a hindrance to society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include details and facts from the readings to clearly state your opinions and support your argument.• Group your ideas in an organizational structure that clarifies your opinion and support.• Use linking phrases such as because, for instance, in addition, to make your reasoning clear.• Apply conventions correctly
Informative / Explanatory	<p>What evidence from the resources supports how technology helps or hinders progress?</p> <p>Based on what has been shared in these resources, how can you imagine technology impacting people in the future?</p>	<p>Mobile devices now allow people to talk to each other around the world. They track locations and sleep cycles, and provide all kinds of information at the touch of a button. Using information from the resources provided, explain how technology has progressed over time, how it has changed people, and predict its impact on the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly state each sides beliefs.• Include facts and details (not your opinion) from both texts.• Create an organizational structure that clarifies your information.• Use linking phrases such as for example, for instance, in addition, to make your reasoning clear.• Apply conventions correctly

<p>Narrative</p>	<p>What details would best show the contrast between life with technology and life without?</p> <p>How does each author or character feel about progress? What might he or she say to</p> <p>Based on the excerpts, what conflicting viewpoints might be represented?</p>	<p>Using information from the resources, create a story about an encounter between Thoreau, Vonnegut, the woman in the video, in which they discuss life with current technology as opposed to life without.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly establish a setting and the characters. • Use dialogue to develop an understanding of each characters beliefs and justifies their actions during the Boston Massacre. • Use main events, details, and descriptions from both passages.
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**An excerpt from “Harrison Bergeron”
by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.**

THE YEAR WAS 2081, and everybody was finally equal. They weren't only equal before God and the law. They were equal every which way. Nobody was smarter than anybody else. Nobody was better looking than anybody else. Nobody was stronger or quicker than anybody else. All this equality was due to the 211th, 212th, and 213th Amendments to the Constitution, and to the unceasing vigilance of agents of the United States Handicapper General.

Some things about living still weren't quite right, though. April for instance, still drove people crazy by not being springtime. And it was in that clammy month that the H-G men took George and Hazel Bergeron's fourteen-year-old son, Harrison, away.

It was tragic, all right, but George and Hazel couldn't think about it very hard. Hazel had a perfectly average intelligence, which meant she couldn't think about anything except in short bursts. And George, while his intelligence was way above normal, had a little mental handicap radio in his ear. He was required by law to wear it at all times. It was tuned to a government transmitter. Every twenty seconds or so, the transmitter would send out some sharp noise to keep people like George from taking unfair advantage of their brains.

George and Hazel were watching television. There were tears on Hazel's cheeks, but she'd forgotten for the moment what they were about.

**An Excerpt from *Walden*
by Henry David Thoreau**

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartanlike as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion.

For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have somewhat hastily concluded that it is the chief end of man here to 'glorify God and enjoy him forever.'

Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!