

## "Harrison Bergeron"

**Note:** When working on this assignment, keep in mind that the word *handicapped* should mean only a disadvantage. Try to keep any negative connotation about the word out of your work. Be sure that all material is school appropriate. If you are not sure, be sure to ask. Any work that is deemed inappropriate will result in a zero for the assignment.

### **Step 1:**

Think about yourself and come up with a list of your best qualities, personality traits, and skills. Are you a great artist? Athlete? Are you particularly intelligent? Do you dress well? Do you have excellent taste in music? Video games? Do you have great hair or skin tone? Can you keep a secret (really keep a secret)? Are you an excellent friend? An exceptional reader or writer? Are you a talented musician or singer? An exquisite cook? Consider those qualities that make you an individual and that would set you apart in Harrison's world?

**Requirement:** You will need to decide which five of those traits/talents you have that need to be handicapped for equality purposes. Only two of them can be physical attributes.

### **Step 2:**

Come up with ways in which Harrison's government might "handicap" those attributes listed from step one. Do NOT repeat the ways used in the story; rather, come up with some of your own. Be creative (but be respectful of others) For example, if you are a great dancer, maybe they would have you wear large shoes as opposed to the weights the ballerinas wore in the story.

**Requirement:** Create a chart that lists the handicapping methods next to the qualities written in Step 1.

### **Step 3:**

Design a portrait of yourself with the added handicaps and include a key that explains the purpose for the handicaps.

**Requirement:** Create a visual of yourself with your new handicaps including a legend of the explanations. Be sure to trace if you aren't an artist. This should be unique, creative, and colorful.

**Step 4:**

Pick a well-known figure that is at the top of his or her game. Choose someone whose accomplishments could never be described as being equal or average.

**Requirement:**

1. Describe five traits of this person that has allowed them to rise to the top.
2. Find five specific examples how we as society have tried to handicap them.
3. Create a visual of your figure with this person's handicaps.

**Step 5:**

The third part of this assignment is a reflection of you. Think about an ordinary day in your life.

**Requirement:**

1. Find at least two examples of you handicapping someone around you, either directly or indirectly.
2. Organize these examples into a written form and include a reflection of what you have learned doing this project.

Sample of Creative Writing Assignment for "Harrison Bergeron"

Step 1:

Trait	Handicap
Intelligent	Headphones to prevent thought
Able to fix things	Mittens to cover hands
Able to speak well	Stitches over mouth to disrupt speech
Able to read quickly	Patterned glasses to slow down
Adventurous	Establish boundary and add a shock collar

Step 2:

Trait	Handicap
Above average Height	Weighted disk to stoop
Rhythmic	Weighted shoes to prevent dancing
Fashion Sense	Mismatched, ugly clothes
Artistic/Creative	Restrained dominant arm
Excellent painter	Must wear 3D glasses at all times

Step 3:



Step 4:



## Step 5:

It is natural for people to judge others, but in my case, judging others is one of the handicaps I give to strangers as I meet them. I normally give someone that I am just meeting about two minutes before I begin to judge because I haven't given either of us time to get to know one another. I could be missing out on a wonderful relationship simply because I fail to go beyond the first impressions.

Probably the most embarrassing handicap that I have is when I am cheerleading practice or cheerleading at a sporting event. When it comes to sport, I am very outspoken, opinionated, and a seemingly "know-it-all" type of captain. I feel like I always know what is best for our squad and it is very hard to make me believe that other people's ideas are better than mine or are actually worth considering.

As for this activity, I have learned that it is much easier for me to find my own weaknesses than my strengths. I have also realized that a society whose goal is to make all of its citizens equal only succeeds in discriminating everyone. According to Amy Sun who holds a Masters in Women's Studies, "Treating everyone exactly the same is actually not fair. What equal treatment does is erase our differences. Equality aims to promote fairness, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help. Equity appears unfair, but it actively moves everyone closer to success by 'leveling the playing field'." If more people in our society understood this, we could embrace our uniqueness and celebrate those differences.

