**Definitions**, as taken from the NPS Literary Analysis Terminology handout:

1. *Details* are the facts revealed by the author or speaker that support the attitude or tone in a piece of poetry or prose.
2. *Diction* is word choice intended to convey a certain effect.
3. *Hyperbole* is a deliberate exaggeration in literature.
4. *Irony* is the difference between what is expected and what is.

* *Verbal Irony* is the difference between what the speaker intends and what is expressed.
* *Situational Irony* is the difference between the expected outcome and actual outcome.
* *Dramatic Irony* is the difference between what the audience or reader understands and the characters understand.

1. *Satire* is a form of writing that ridicules abuses for the sake of remedying them.
2. *Science fiction* is a form of literature set either in the future or on some imaginary world in which settings, plots, characters*,* and themes are the result of scientific or technological speculation.
3. *Theme* is a central message of a literary work. It is not the same as a subject, which can be expressed in a word or two: courage survival, war, pride, etc. The theme is the idea or ideas the author wishes to convey about that subject. It is expressed as a sentence or general statement about life or human nature. The reader must think about all the elements of the work and use them to make inference, or reasonable guesses, as to which themes seem to be implied. An example of a theme on the subject of pride might be that pride often precedes a fall.
4. *Tone* is the writer's or speaker's attitude toward a subject, character, or audience, and it is conveyed through the author's choice of words and detail. Tone can be serious, humorous, sarcastic, indignant, objective, etc.

Please use the definitions above to help you in answering the questions below as they relate to “Harrison Bergeron,” a short story by Kurt Vonnegut that begins on page 99 in your textbook.

Questions:

1. Currently there are only 27 amendments to the Constitution, and in the last two centuries there have only been 15 amendments ratified. “Harrison Bergeron” is set in 2081, and there are now (at least) 213. How does a detail like this indicate that the work may be a satire? How does it reflect also science fiction?
2. What does the first paragraph imply about individuality in this society?
3. What does diction such as “burdened” and “masked” with regard to the “handicapping” of the ballerinas suggest about the narrator’s opinion of the process?
4. Why did George hear a noise similar to “‘somebody hitting a milk bottle with a ball-peen hammer’”? What does this imply about the two ballerinas who also “winced” at the sound?
5. Who is Diana Moon Glampers?
6. If George were to tamper with the weighted bag around his neck, where could he be sent?
7. “‘The minute people start cheating on laws, what do you think happens to society?’”: This statement from George implies that following the laws serves the greater good of society. What do you think the narrator would say to this with regard to the laws in this particular society?
8. What do the mediocre and mistake-laden performances/occurrences in this story suggest about what the government in this story considers normal and acceptable?
9. Why do you think Bergeron uses so much hyperbole in describing how Harrison and the ballerina dance without their “handicaps”? (How does Harrison contrast with the government’s idea of normalcy and equality?)
10. What ends Harrison’s brief reign as “Emperor”?
11. What does George and Hazel’s awareness of what took place on TV (or lack thereof) suggest about the effect of “equality” in this society? (What about government control?)
12. What kind of tone do you think the writer/narrator takes overall? Why? How is this related to satire?
13. What are some themes emerging from this piece based on that tone?
14. Do you think Vonnegut believes we can ever truly be equal?
15. How is there irony in the use of the word equality in this piece?