

THE NOBEL PRIZE

In-depth: Utopias and Dystopias

Your Future

What do you want the future to look like? Make use of these exercises to envision and create a picture of the future you want to see.



1. Be a future researcher

In the field of future research, two different methods are used to understand and create strategies for identifying a better future: forecasting and backcasting.

Try it yourself!

Method 1: Be a trend spotter: predict!

- 1) Select a few positive trends in our culture and extrapolate their consequences into the future. Predict what the future might be like if we continue to ... etc. You choose! (For example, if we develop renewable energy, stop flying on aeroplanes or make smarter shopping choices.)
- 2) What does this future look like? What has happened and what has changed?

Method 2: Identify the goal and track backward from there!

- 1) Decide on something you think is particularly important for our future – a goal, an ideal, something utopian. (For example, that people and animals live in different conditions than today, that poverty is eradicated or that everyone has enough water.)
- 2) Describe your ideal vision of the future.
- 3) Track your way back to now: what changes do we have to make in order to get there?

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2. Build a utopia together

A: Discussion exercise

- 1) Suddenly you find yourself in an unfamiliar place somewhere in the future. How did you get there? Discuss and decide together.
- 2) What is the name of this land of the future you've come to?
- 3) Where is it?
- 4) Start exploring the land of the future together. It's a fantastical place! Tell us what makes this future land so great.

B: Writing exercise

Use the steps in 2A (individually or together in a group) and tell us about your utopian world of the future. You choose how much to write.

3. Change perspectives

It's not certain that the future can best be described from a human perspective. Try changing perspectives and tell us what the world looks like from the point of view of another creature, as in this quotation from Mats Söderlund's book, not yet available in English, "The Threat":

She was sent out by her government to save the forest's inhabitants. She gathered everyone around her for a public meeting. Starting now they were all to help each other. The Prince of Shadows could not get to them if they stuck together.

(Trans. John Krause)

4. How can stories inspire the future?

Discuss in pairs. Try to agree upon a book, film, song lyric or game. It doesn't need to be a story about the future; it can be any story that feels inspiring in some way.

These assignments were developed by Camilla Brudin Borg, PhD in literary criticism at the University of Gothenburg.