**“Harrison Bergeron” Reading Comprehension Questions**

1. In 2081, there have been 213 Amendments added to the U.S. Constitution. What does this tell the reader about government in the story?
2. The Constitution is greatly respected
3. Politicians have very little power to change the Constitution.
4. The government now restricts many of the freedoms citizens once enjoyed under the Constitution
5. The Constitution has been strengthened to protect the rights of U.S citizens
6. In paragraph 6, what does the sentence, “His thoughts fled in panic, like bandits from a burglar alarm” allow the reader to infer about society’s attitude towards free and independent thought?
7. Freedom of thought is encouraged
8. Independent thinking is viewed as bad, even criminal, in this society
9. People in this society are not able to think independently
10. Free thought leads to panic
11. In this story, equality is highly valued and extreme steps are taken to ensure that no one has an advantage over anyone else. Which of the following is an example of a way that a person who has an “unfair advantage” might be handicapped by the government?
12. Beautiful women are forced to wear masks
13. Intelligent people are forced to have their thoughts interrupted by loud, ear-piercing noises
14. Athletes are weighed down and slowed by having to carry heavy bags of metal birdshot
15. Why does George refuse to remove some of the balls from his handicap bag when Hazel suggest he take a break?
16. It would mean a year in jail and a huge fine
17. He is afraid that if he got away with removing his handicaps, other people would too and society would fail
18. He likes building up his strength by carrying the extra weight
19. The handicaps do not bother him unless he is tired
20. What is Harrison’s motive for going to the studio and rebelling against the Handicapper General?
21. To show the citizens of America the beauty and power of the people’s individual differences and talents in hopes that they will overthrow the government
22. To make himself the Emperor of America
23. To make the Handicapper General look weak because he could not be contained
24. To remind his parents that he is alive
25. Harrison and the ballerina listen to music “as though synchronizing their heartbeats with it.” A;; of the following are synonyms for the word **synchronizing** *except?*
26. Harmonizing
27. Coinciding
28. Contrasting
29. Coordinating
30. When describing Harrison and the ballerina’s dance, the author says, “They leaped like deer on the moon.” This is an example of which kind of literary device?
31. Onomatopoeia
32. Simile
33. Hyperbole
34. Metaphor
35. Why aren’t Harrison’s parents more emotionally impacted by the death of their son?
36. They no longer care about their son
37. They feel disconnected from their son because they have accepted the government’s equality propaganda and cannot think for themselves for very long
38. They are afraid that they will be killed too if they react in anger
39. They try to forget about sad things because their society values happiness over family
40. The major conflict in “Harrison Bergeron” is?
41. Internal, between George and himself
42. Internal, between George’s intelligence and his wife’s stupidity
43. External, between Harrison Bergeron and society
44. External, between Dianna Moon Gampers and society
45. What was the author’s purpose for Hazel repeating the line, “Gee-I could tell that was a doozy,” at the end of the story?
46. To emphasize how strong the thought blocking signal was
47. To further characterize Hazel as a simpleton
48. To emphasize how much Hazel loves her husband
49. To emphasize how willing the characters are to do what they are told

Discussion Questions:

1. Give three concrete examples from the text showing that, despite the government’s extreme efforts, people still aren’t equal.
2. After the announcer fumbles the bulletin and has to be replaced, Hazel says that he should still be given a raise because “he tried. That’s the big thing. He tried to do his best he could with what God gave him.” Is Hazel right? Should people be given credit at their workplaces or in school simply for trying, regardless of the result? Is effort more important than achievement? Give a real-life example from your life, studies, or observations to support your stance.
3. Harrison Bergeron, a genius and stellar athlete, must carry three hundred pounds in “the race of life.” In today’s world, is there a burden that exceptional people must carry? Think about classmates and famous people as you examine this issue and explain your answer.
4. What did Harrison Bergeron symbolize? What message did the Handicapper General send by killing him?
5. Do George and Hazel Bergeron agree with the government’s handicapping policies? Provide textual evidence to support why or why not. If not, why won’t they do anything to change their society? IN what way are some Americans today similar to George and Hazel Bergeron?
6. The setting and action of the story are centered around the television. What was the author trying to warn the reader about the power of technology?