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**Minority Report**

PREVIEW

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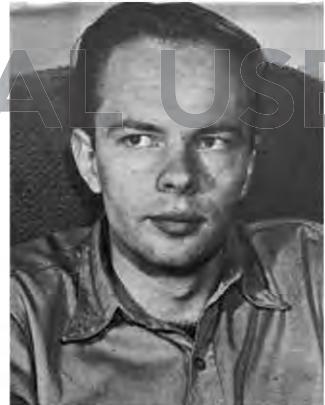
PREVIEW  
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# PREVIEW

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# Philip K. Dick

- Philip Kindred Dick was an American, science fiction author praised for his work which explored philosophical and social themes such as altered consciousness, free will, authoritarian organizations, empathy, perception, human nature, and identity.
- He was born in Chicago in 1928.
- The publication of his first story, “Beyond Lies the Wub,” in 1952 launched his full-time writing career.
- His most popular titles include: “The Man in the High Castle,” “Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?,” and “Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said.”
- Following his death, he became widely regarded as a master of imaginative, “paranoid fiction.”



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**Many of his novels and short stories have been adapted into television shows and films.**

*Examples include:*

- Blade Runner (1982 Film)
- Total Recall (1990 Film)
- Screamers (1995 Film)
- A Scanner Darkly (2006 Film)
- Minority Report (2002 Film)
- The Adjustment Bureau (2011 Film)
- The Man in the High Castle (2015 TV Series)
- Minority Report (2015 TV Series)

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## The Minority Report

• “The Minority Report” originally appeared in the science fiction magazine Fantastic Universe in 1956.

- In this futuristic society, John Anderton is the inventor of a new criminal justice system called Precrime.
- The system harnesses the telepathic powers of three “mutants” who are humans born with a genetic mutation that allow them to see the future. These mutants are called “precogs”—short for precognitive.
- With the ability to see crimes before they occur, precogs allow police to arrest criminals before they even commit the crime.

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## Historical Context

- “The Minority Report” was written in 1956, during the Cold War—a period of great tension and conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union.
- It’s considered a “cold” war because there was no direct fighting between the two; rather, the two superpowers were in a race to develop technological advancements in nuclear weapons and to achieve superior spaceflight capability.
- One of the most common concerns for Americans during this time was the Soviet Union’s intent on spreading communism worldwide.
- Another issue that transpired was America’s aim to develop mind-controlling drugs and technologies. The CIA’s secret MK-Ultra program conducted illegal human experiments in effort to discover techniques that could be used to manipulate foreign leaders through means of mind control.
- Overall, the 1950s was a time of overwhelming suspicion and distrust. As you read “The Minority Report,” consider how the historical context plays a role in the story.

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guilelessly

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

- adverb
- in a way free from guile or deceit; innocently

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punitive

## NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

- adjective
- describe costs that are so high they are difficult to pay and that are often used to punish someone

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## deterr**PREVIEW**ent

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- noun
- a thing that discourages or is intended to discourage someone from doing something

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culpable

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- adjective
- deserving blame for a wrongdoing

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gesticulate

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

- verb
- to use gestures, especially dramatic ones, often while you are describing something that is difficult to express in words

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erratically

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

- adverb
- in a manner that is eccentric and unpredictable

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impassive

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

- adjective
- not feeling or showing emotion

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# PREVIEW NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

**incredulous**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

- adjective
- describes a person's manner when she or he is unwilling or unable to believe something

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psullen  
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- adjective
- describes bad-tempered and sulky

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PREVIEW

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- noun
- valuable goods or money, typically stolen or obtained illegally

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PREVIEW

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- adjective
- describes hasty and therefore not thorough or detailed

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indignation

• noun  
• anger about a situation that is perceived as wrong or unfair

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## unanimity

### NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

- noun
- the state of being unanimous; agreement by all people involved; undivided opinions

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obsolete

• adjective  
• describes something that can no longer be used and is no longer useful

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# PREVIEW NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

## ultimatum

### PREVIEW NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

- noun
- a final offer or demand made by one party to another implying the threat of serious consequences if the terms are not accepted

### PREVIEW NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

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Name:

Date:

**“The Minority Report” by Philip K. Dick**  
**Pre-Reading Discussion Questions**

**Directions: Answer the following questions in a minimum of 3 sentences based on your personal opinions. Explain all of your answers.**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

1. Is it fair to convict someone of a crime they will likely commit, but haven't actually committed yet?

2. What is more important? Liberty or safety?

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

3. What makes someone trustworthy? Can you ever trust someone completely?

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

4. Define “necessary evil.” Do you believe there are necessary evils in the world?

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

5. Is human life predetermined—meaning that all events of history, past, present and future, have been already decided by God, fate, or some other force? Do you believe in free will?

Name:

Date:

“The Minority Report” by Philip K. Dick  
Vocabulary

guilelessly	adverb	
punitive	adjective	
deterrent	noun	
culpable	Adjective	
gesticulate	verb	
erratically	adverb	
impassive	adjective	

incredulous	adjective	<b>PREVIEW</b>
sullen	adjective	<b>NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE</b>
loot	noun	<b>PREVIEW</b>
cursory	adjective	<b>NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE</b>
indignation	noun	
unanimity	noun	<b>PREVIEW</b>
obsolete	adjective	<b>NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE</b>
ultimatum	noun	<b>PREVIEW</b>

Name:

Date:

“The Minority Report” by Philip K. Dick  
Reading Questions

**Section I**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

1. Who is the protagonist of this story? What do you know about him/her?

2. Describe Witwer. Why is Anderton threatened by him?

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

3. How does the system Precrime work? What are the pros and cons? How is it an example of paradox?

4. How is the Precrime system kept in check?

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

5. What internal and external conflicts are introduced in this section?

**Section II**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

1. What explanation does Anderton conjure for why his name appears on a card as a future murderer?

2. How is Anderton feeling in this section? What evidence supports your response?

**PREVIEW**

3. How does Anderton plan to deal with his impending arrest?

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

4. What major detail does Anderton overlook? Who points it out to him? Why is that important?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

### **Section III**

1. Why does Anderton think it may have been a mistake to show Lisa the card?

**PREVIEW**

2. Does Kaplan believe the precognitive data regarding Anderton? How do you know?

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

3. What is one of Anderton's flaws or weaknesses?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

### **Section IV**

1. Where does Fleming come from? Who does he claim to work for?

2. Who does Fleming say is behind this conspiracy? Does Anderton believe him? Explain.

# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

3. How does the setting of the story affect the plot?

# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

**Section V**

1. What is a Minority Report? Why is it called this?

2. What is the significance of the Precrime radio announcement?

# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

**Section VI**

1. Can Anderton “change his mind” now that he is informed?

# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

2. What moral dilemma does Anderton struggle with?

**Section VII**

1. Why does Lisa want her husband to turn himself in? How does she try to “convince” him?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

2. What discovery does Anderton make about Fleming?

**PREVIEW**

**Section VIII**

1. Who is the spy that has been secretly working for Kaplan?

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

2. Why is Kaplan doing all of this? What is he trying to gain?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

3. What does Anderton conclude is the best solution? Why?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

1. Why does Kaplan invite Anderton on stage?

**Section IX**

2. What does Anderton end up doing? Why is it particularly difficult for him?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

3. How does the author build suspense in this section of the story?

**Section X**

**PREVIEW**

1. What happens when there are three separate reports?

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2. What is Anderton's final warning to Witwer?

**PREVIEW**

3. What do the different time paths suggest about free will and fate?

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

4. What is Lisa like? How would you describe the relationship between Anderton and Lisa?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

### After Reading Questions

1. Do you think Anderton made the right decision in the end? Why or why not?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

2. Why do you think this story is titled “The Minority Report”?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

3. Does deterrence work in our current society? What do you believe is the best way to end crime in the long term?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

4. How does the author create a believable conflict?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

6. The Precrime system discards knowledge of other crimes, such as thefts, income tax evasion, assault, and extortion. Why do you think that is? How would this story be different if Precrime arrested *everyone* who was predicted to break the law, no matter how minor?

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**PREVIEW**

7. Is the treatment of the precogs ethical? Explain.

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

**PREVIEW**

8. What similarities do you see in our society today and the society created by Philip K. Dick? What problems exist in both worlds?

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**PREVIEW**

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Name:

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**“The Minority Report” by Philip K. Dick**  
**Theme Analysis**

1) Explain the author's commentary/main message regarding each theme.  
2) Find evidence from the story to support your answer.

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**Fate vs Free Will**  
1)

**Trust and Paranoia**  
1)

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

**Ethics and Humanity**  
1)

**Safety vs Liberty**  
1)

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

2)

2)

**PREVIEW**

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Name:

Date:

**“Minority Report” Analysis**  
Film by Steven Spielberg (2002)

**Part 1: Compare and contrast the film and the original story by filling in the chart below.**  
Using the category in the left-hand column, write details in each box highlighting how the two mediums are alike or different.

	Short Story/Novella (1956)	Movie (2002)
John Anderton		
Witwer		
Precrime		
Anderton's Wife		
Anderton's future victim		
Precogs		

Precognitive Data	<b>PREVIEW</b>	
<b>The minority report</b>	<b>NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE</b>	
Resolution (how did each one end?)	<b>PREVIEW</b>	

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Part 2: Answer the questions below.

1. In the film, how was Anderton being set up?

2. How did the director portray the future society on film? What additional details did Spielberg add to the story?

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3. After watching the movie, do you feel like Precrime is a possibility in our future? Why or why not?

4. Which themes remained the same between both mediums?

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5. Which story did you like better, the novella or the film? Explain.

## **“The Minority Report” by Philip K. Dick – Suggested Lesson Procedure**

### **Day One**

1. Put students in groups of 2-3. Assign the pre-reading discussion questions. Direct students to talk about their opinions before recording their final answers.
2. Review the author’s background, historical context, and academic vocabulary using the Powerpoint presentation. The Powerpoint also briefly prefacing the story “The Minority Report”—you may choose to skip this slide if you prefer not to reveal any plot details to students before reading. Students should record all vocabulary definitions on their graphic organizers.

### **Day Two, Day Three, and Day Four**

3. Begin reading “The Minority Report” by Philip K. Dick. After each section, stop and have students complete the reading questions. You can assign the questions independently, in partners, or you can complete them as a whole class. There are 10 sections to this story. The reading time totals ~90 minutes (not including the time it takes to complete the questions).

### **Day Five**

4. Assign the “After Reading Questions.” I prefer students to complete these in pairs. Facilitate a whole class discussion once they are finished.
5. Assign students to complete the theme analysis chart independently.

### **Day Six, Day Seven, and Day Eight (Optional)**

6. Have your students watch the movie “Minority Report.” It is a film from 2002, directed by Steven Spielberg, rated PG-13. The film stars actors Tom Cruise and Colin Farrell. The film is 145 minutes or 2.42 hours in length. Have students watch the film and fill out the film analysis worksheet. You can rent the movie on Amazon Video or YouTube for \$2.99 (as of June 2022) or you could also start a Prime Video 30 day free trial and cancel when you’re done. If you don’t want to watch the whole movie, your students might enjoy watching the 2 minute trailer just to get an idea of how they adapted the story into a movie. Here’s [a video clip](#) preview of the film.

**Note to teachers:** Due to copyright law, I am unable to offer a full text version of the story. If you enter “Full Text The Minority Report by Philip K. Dick” into any search engine, you will find a copy of the story available for you to print and use in class (or assign digitally).

Here is the link I used: [The Minority Report Full Text](#)

There are also audio copies of the story available on YouTube for free. The links listed below are each ~45 minutes in length.

[Part I Audio](#) (Reads from Section I through half of VI)

[Part II Audio](#) (Reads from the second half of Section VI through the end)

You may email me at [ChompingattheLit@gmail.com](mailto:ChompingattheLit@gmail.com) if you have any questions or concerns.

Name:

Date:

**“The Minority Report” by Philip K. Dick**  
**Pre-Reading Discussion Questions**

**Directions: Answer the following questions in a minimum of 3 sentences based on your personal opinions. Explain all of your answers.**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

1. Is it fair to convict someone of a crime they will likely commit, but haven't actually committed yet?

Answers will vary.

2. What is more important? Liberty or safety?

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

3. What makes someone trustworthy? Can you ever trust someone completely?

Answers will vary.

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

4. Define “necessary evil.” Do you believe there are necessary evils in the world?

Answers will vary.

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

5. Is human life predetermined—meaning that all events of history, past, present and future, have been already decided by God, fate, or some other force? Do you believe in free will?

Answers will vary.

## Answer Key

### “The Minority Report” by Philip K. Dick Vocabulary

guilelessly	adverb	in a way free from guile or deceit; innocently
punitive	adjective	describes costs that are so high they are difficult to pay and that are often used to punish someone
deterrent	noun	a thing that discourages or is intended to discourage someone from doing something
culpable	Adjective	deserving blame for a wrongdoing
gesticulate	verb	To use gestures, especially dramatic ones, often while you are describing something that is difficult to express in words
erratically	adverb	in a manner that is eccentric and unpredictable
impassive	adjective	not feeling or showing emotion
incredulous	adjective	describes a person's manner when she or he is unwilling or unable to believe something
sullen	adjective	describes bad-tempered and sulky

loot	noun	valuable goods or money, typically stolen or obtained illegally
cursory	adjective	describes hasty and therefore not thorough or detailed
indignation	noun	anger about a situation that is perceived as wrong or unfair
unanimity	noun	the state of being unanimous; agreement by all people involved, undivided opinions
obsolete	adjective	describes something that can no longer be used and is no longer useful
ultimatum	noun	a final offer or demand made by one party to another implying the threat of serious consequences if the terms are not accepted

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## Answer Key

### “The Minority Report” by Philip K. Dick Reading Questions

#### Section I

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1. Who is the protagonist of this story? What do you know about him/her?

The protagonist is John Anderton. He is the police Commissioner who is getting older, near retirement. Anderton is the protagonist because he is the lead character that readers root for. He is self-conscious about his weight and baldness. John is guarded, stubborn, anxious, and determined. He states, “I founded Precrime and I can stay on here as long as I want.”

2. Describe Witwer. Why is Anderton threatened by him?

Witwer is eager, agreeable, ambitious, and sincere. He wants to be in charge and make sure Precrime succeeds. Though Anderton perceives him as “the man out for his job,” Anderton is seemingly guileless. “The young man’s eyes were blue, bright — and disturbingly clever. Witwer was nobody’s fool. And obviously he had a great deal of ambition.”

3. How does the system Precrime work? What are the pros and cons? How is it an example of paradox?

The system harnesses the telepathic powers of three mutants who have the ability to see the future and predict crimes before they occur. Police arrest future criminals and send them to “camps” to be detained. The pros include that the system has led to a dramatic decrease in felonies of over 99%, with only one murder taking place in the previous five years. The cons include that people are arrested before they have committed any actual crime suggesting that people do not have free will, or that their freedom of choice is being taken from them. The whole system is a paradox because these alleged criminals are arrested before any crime has been committed. This means that technically they are innocent of the crime they are arrested for.

4. How is the Precrime system kept in check?

A duplicate file of cards are sent to the Army GHQ. The Army can continuously keep their eye on Precrime to make sure they are abiding by the law.

5. What internal and external conflicts are introduced in this section?

An external conflict is established between Witwer and Anderton (person vs. person). Anderton is jealous of Witwer's future, so Anderton is somewhat rude, stern and blunt with Witwer in an attempt to assert his dominance.

Another external conflict which is discussed in this section is the fact that Precrime arrests people before they have committed a crime, so in a way they are arresting innocent people (person vs. society/law).

Another conflict is when Anderton reads the card with his own name on it (this could be identified as person vs. technology which is an external conflict, or person vs. fate/destiny which is an internal conflict). Anderton believes the system has been compromised, but readers won't understand what has occurred until later in the story. An example of internal conflict is how Witwer is disturbed when he sees the precogs for the first time. The precogs "muttered and dozed and existed. Their minds were dull, confused, lost in shadows." Witwer feels shame and moral shock for the way the mutants are being used for the system.

## Section II

1. What explanation does Anderton conjure for why his name appears on a card as a future murderer?

Anderton believes he is being set up by Witwer to get his job. To plant the card in the machines would require an accomplice on the inside, so he starts to suspect that his wife Lisa is helping Witwer.

2. How is Anderton feeling in this section? What evidence supports your response?

Anderton is feeling paranoid, betrayed, and disturbed. Anderton notices Witwer's eyes flicker slightly when he sees Lisa, so Anderton reads this as a sign that they know each other somehow. "Did a covert awareness pass between them? He couldn't tell. God, he was beginning to suspect everybody — not only his wife and Witwer, but a dozen members of his staff."

He also states, "I'm being framed — deliberately and maliciously. This creature is out to get my job. The Senate is getting at me through him." Anderton believes Precrime will no longer be an independent agency because the Senate wants more control. He suspects that they want to absorb control of the Army too.

3. How does Anderton plan to deal with his impending arrest?

Anderton plans to hide out on the Centaurian-colony planets until he can prove his innocence.

4. What major detail does Anderton overlook? Who points it out to him? Why is that important?

The card says that Anderton will kill a man named LEOPOLD KAPLAN, not Ed Witwer like Anderton assumed. Lisa is the one to tell Anderton about Kaplan. The fact that Lisa

points this out to him makes readers wonder if she really is involved in Anderton's conspiracy theory or perhaps Anderton is unreasonably paranoid. Obviously Anderton is rushing to judgement because he never even read the card.

### Section III

## PREVIEW

1. Why does Anderton think it may have been a mistake to show Lisa the card?

Lisa doesn't believe that there is any conspiracy against Anderton. Anderton believes undoubtedly, she would describe the situation in detail to Witwer. Anderton presumes he will never get off Earth or have an opportunity to find out what life on a frontier planet might be like.

2. Does Kaplan believe the precognitive data regarding Anderton? How do you know?

Kaplan states, "It seemed incredible to me that a man of your stature could contemplate the cold-blooded murder of a total stranger." This shows that Kaplan doesn't actually believe Anderton will try to kill him and the fact that he used the word "contemplate" shows Kaplan believes in free will over fate. It also begs the question why would Kaplan confront a man that was trying to kill him? Kaplan is a powerful man (General of the Army of the Federated Westbloc Alliance) and he has guards with him, so if Anderton did try and kill Kaplan, it would be very difficult. Nonetheless, Kaplan claims he believes the precognitive data and thus demands Anderton be taken to the police.

3. What is one of Anderton's flaws or weaknesses?

Anderton doesn't know who he can trust at all. He is acting erratically without considering all the possibilities. He refuses to even consider that he might be a potential killer. Anderton has no concrete evidence justifying his suspicions; his insecurities cause him to jump to conclusions without thinking.

### Section IV

## PREVIEW

1. Where does Fleming come from? Who does he claim to work for?

As Anderton is being taken into the police, Fleming causes an automobile accident in order to set Anderton free. After the crash, he provides Anderton with fake identification and money. Fleming claims he is part of a protective society or "the police who watch the police."

## PREVIEW

2. Who does Fleming say is behind this conspiracy? Does Anderton believe him? Explain.

Fleming says it is Lisa, Anderton's wife, who is behind the set-up. Although Anderton knows nothing about Fleming, Anderton believes him because he already suspected his wife was involved. Anderton appears to believe what Fleming is telling him because it

validates Anderton's own suspicions (and makes him feel less crazy). However, Fleming suspiciously tells Anderton *not* to leave Earth.

### 3. How does the setting of the story affect the plot?

The story takes place in a future society, so mutants have the ability to foresee crime before it occurs and people can travel to other planets. Fleming tells Anderton, "Don't try to leave Earth. They've got all the intersystem transports screened. If you can keep low for the next seven days, you've got it made." The most important aspect of the this future setting, in terms of the plot, is that in this particular society, a person's privacy means nothing.

## Section V

### 1. What is a Minority Report? Why is it called this?

Occasionally, the three precogs see different outcomes. If two precogs predict one future, but the third predicts a different future, the third precog's vision is called the "minority report." The definition of the word "minority" is the smaller number or part, especially a number that is less than half the whole number. The two precogs who see the same future make up the majority report, while the third precog makes up the minority report. The system Precime follows the majority reports as truth.

### 2. What is the significance of the Precime radio announcement?

The announcement reveals that unanimity of all three precogs is a *hoped-for* but seldom achieved phenomenon, meaning there is almost always a minority report. This gives Anderton hope that he can find the minority report to save himself. The radio announcement establishes how Precime works and explains that if only one time-path existed, the future would be predetermined, and the police could not alter it by arresting potential killers. This further suggests that if the police can use their free will to stop murders, then so can anyone else, provided they access the relevant data. This tells readers that free will does exist.

## Section VI

### 1. Can Anderton "change his mind" now that he is informed?

Anderton believes that his mind is changed and that by previewing the murder, he has created a new time-path. "The preview of the murder had cancelled out the murder; prophylaxis had occurred simply in his being informed."

### 2. What moral dilemma does Anderton struggle with?

The fact that Anderton was able to change his mind after previewing the murder implies that there are people in the detention camps who could have been given the chance to change their minds before being locked away and stripped of all their rights/freedoms.

## Section VII

1. Why does Lisa want her husband to turn himself in? How does she try to “convince” him?

Lisa is devoted to Precrime. She wants the system to stay in tact because it prevents many deaths, even if this means sacrificing her own husband and many alleged would-be criminals. Anderton disagrees and believes, “If the system can survive only by imprisoning innocent people, then it deserves to be destroyed.” To try and get him to turn himself in, Lisa threatens John at gunpoint with a pistol.

2. What discovery does Anderton make about Fleming?

Fleming is an Army Major in the Internal Intelligence Department of Military Information. Fleming is working for Kaplan and Kaplan planned the bread truck incident so that Anderton would not be arrested—for whatever reason, Kaplan did not want Anderton locked away. This realization shows that Witwer was an ally the whole time and that Lisa was telling the truth.

## Section VIII

1. Who is the spy that has been secretly working for Kaplan?

Wally Page is the spy.

2. Why is Kaplan doing all of this? What is he trying to gain?

Kaplan has the information that proves the majority report obsolete, which means he can break the Precrime system whether Anderton is arrested or not. Since he can prove Precrime doesn't always work, it suggests he wants the program disbanded. He may be trying to take down Precrime to gain more power for the Army, as suggested in the lines below: “After the Anglo-Chinese War, the Army lost out. It isn't what it was in the good old AFWA days. They ran the complete show, both military and domestic. And they did their own police work.”

2. Why does Anderton say he can sympathize with Kaplan?

“After the war, the Westbloc was demilitarised. Officers like Kaplan were retired and discarded. Nobody likes that.” Anderton has been extremely insecure about retiring and passing the torch to Witwer throughout this story. He knows what it feels like to be forced to give up a career you are devoted to against your will.

3. What does Anderton conclude is the best solution? Why?

Since the public knows about the majority report, Anderton must make it come true by killing Kaplan. Doing so will prove Precrime's methodology is correct and will allow the system to survive. He knows the punishment is life imprisonment, but he's hoping for exile instead. "I could be sent to one of the colony planets, the good old frontier."

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### Section IX

1. Why does Kaplan invite Anderton on stage?

Kaplan is using Anderton as an example of how Precrime is invalid. Kaplan proudly presents "Victim" and "Killer" side by side on stage in civility, but he never suspects Anderton will actually kill him since Anderton is a man of morals. Kaplan says that Anderton's case symbolizes the unjust arrests of countless individuals, who may have chosen a different path if given the opportunity to see their card, just as Anderton did.

2. What does Anderton end up doing? Why is it particularly difficult for him?

Anderton shoots Kaplan in order to make the majority report correct. Anderton had never killed a man. He had never even seen a man killed. "And he had been Police Commissioner for thirty years." He spent his life preventing crimes and now he would commit a felony (a *murder* that you could argue is completely undeserving).

3. How does the author build suspense in this section of the story?

Anderton waits for Kaplan to make his speech before pulling a gun on him. Readers know that Anderton will murder Kaplan, creating dramatic irony. Kaplan brings Anderton on stage in front of a large crowd, creating more suspense, as readers wonder *will Anderton, a policeman, really follow through with this crime?*

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1. What happens when there are three separate reports?

When two reports have similar outcomes, it appears like they are the majority. Two of the reports agreed Anderton would murder Kaplan which "created the illusion of a majority report." In this particular situation, all three were more like "minority reports" because each described three entirely different situations, yet the system classified a majority report anyway.

2. What is Anderton's final warning to Witwer?

It dawned on Anderton that each report that followed the first one was biased by him having knowledge of the prior report. The only way this situation could occur again, is for it to happen to the police commissioner, since the commissioner is able to see the

reports beforehand. Anderton warns Witwer that he better look out since he is now the police commissioner.

3. What do the different time paths suggest about free will and fate?

There is a constant push and pull between the two forces of free will and fate.

Anderton's ability to change his mind repeatedly as the story unfolds implies to readers that free will is ultimately the stronger force and can overcome "fate."

4. What is Lisa like? How would you describe the relationship between Anderton and Lisa?

At times, Lisa seems like the voice of reason to her husband because she is the one to get Anderton to see that if he believes the minority reports are real, then he must believe the majority reports are real too. However, her dedication to Precrime takes priority over her personal relationship and thus clouds her judgement. Lisa threatens to kill Anderton in order to save the face of Precrime. The relationship between Anderton and Lisa is fickle and unstable because he immediately suspects her involvement with Witwer, assuming they were out to get him. Anderton perceived Lisa's attractiveness and friendly interactions with others as a threat. Once Anderton decides he will do what it takes to save Precrime, Lisa and him work together to protect the program. After Anderton's arrest, Lisa flees the planet with him in exile, proving that she does love him and wants to stay together.

#### After Reading Questions

1. Do you think Anderton made the right decision in the end? Why or why not?

Answers will vary. Some people might find Anderton's decision noble because to save Precrime would mean saving thousands of lives who would otherwise be murdered. Additionally, Anderton is preventing Kaplan from seizing total control and power over the government. Some people may find Kaplan's murder to be selfish and unjust because no individual is justified to kill, especially to serve personal interests (Anderton does so to save his life's work). Furthermore, Anderton is misleading the public by allowing them to believe Precrime is working, when in reality, Anderton made the conscience decision to kill Kaplan. Anderton is being deceptive by omitting the flaw in the system.

2. Why do you think this story is titled "The Minority Report"?

It is to emphasize to readers that the majority is not always right. The minority report should not be something that is easily discarded or discredited; a fair society looks at the whole picture and all possibilities.

3. Does deterrence work in our current society? What do you believe is the best way to end crime in the long term?

Answers will vary.

4. How does the author create a believable conflict?

Answers will vary. The biggest conflict is private freedom vs public security, which is a realistic conflict that we see in today's society.

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5. Is a system like Precrime fair? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.

6. The Precrime system discards knowledge of other crimes, such as thefts, income tax evasion, assault, and extortion. Why do you think that is? How would this story be different if Precrime arrested everyone who was predicted to break the law, no matter how minor?

Answers will vary.

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Answers will vary. Below is the description of the precogs for reference:

"In the gloomy half-darkness the three idiots sat babbling. Every incoherent utterance, every random syllable, was analysed, compared, reassembled in the form of visual symbols, transcribed on conventional punchcards, and ejected into various coded slots. All day long the idiots babbled, imprisoned in their special high-backed chairs, held in one rigid position by metal bands, and bundles of wiring, clamps. Their physical needs were taken care of automatically. They had no spiritual needs. Vegetable-like, they muttered and dozed and existed. Their minds were dull, confused, lost in shadows. But not shadows of today. The three gibbering, fumbling creatures with their enlarged head and wasted bodies, were contemplating the future. The analytical machinery was recording prophecies, and as the three precog idiots talked, the machinery carefully listened."

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8. What similarities do you see in our society today and the society created by Philip K. Dick? What problems exist in both worlds?

Answers will vary.

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### Answer Key Theme Analysis

#### "The Minority Report" by Philip K. Dick

- 1) Explain the author's commentary/main message regarding each theme.
- 2) Find evidence from the story to support your answer.

##### Fate vs Free Will

- 1) The author argues that both fate and free will are entities that exist simultaneously. Both influence and have a significant impact on human life. The precogs accurately foresee certain future possibilities and facts, demonstrating the validity of precognition; however, the multiple time-paths are an example of how people can make different choices that yield different outcomes. Overall, the theme is that individuals can change their future because free will is more powerful than fate.
- 2) "Having been informed that he would commit a murder, Anderton would change his mind and not do so. The preview of the murder had cancelled out the murder; prophylaxis had occurred simply in his being informed. Already, a new time-path had been created."

##### Trust and Paranoia

- 1) Anderton becomes paranoid after reading on a precognitive card that he will murder a stranger named Kaplan within a week. He immediately blames Witwer and Lisa because of his own trust issues. Anderton's behavior encourages the reader to be suspicious and investigatory like Anderton. The theme or message is that everyone should question bureaucratic structures with powerful technologies, just as Anderton does when he sets out to solve the conspiracy against him.
- 2) "This creature is out to get my job. The Senate is getting at me through him." "God, he was beginning to suspect everybody—not only his wife and Witwer, but a dozen members of his staff."

**Ethics and Humanity**

1) In regard to ethics, the theme of this story is that both the poor living conditions of the precogs and the imprisonment of potential criminals—who are technically innocent—are necessary actions for the greater good. Although Anderton admits that it is unfair to arrest people that have not yet committed a crime, he finds it better for humanity if Precrime remains in tact. He is willing to take away some people's freedoms in order to keep the public safer as a whole. Anderton is convinced that if Precrime is disbanded, the Senate (or Kaplan) will take complete control over the Army and the police, which will be more harmful to society.

2) "They, on the other hand, eternally claim they're innocent. And, in a sense, they are innocent."

"They're going to demand the Senate disband us, and take away our authority. They're going to claim we've been arresting innocent men — nocturnal police raids, that sort of thing. Rule by terror."

**Safety vs Liberty**

1) The author depicts the consequences of prioritizing safety at the expense of freedom. The story suggests that governments must work to find a careful balance between both values; while the government feels responsible for creating a safer society, it's unethical to take away someone's liberty. In the case of Precrime, the security severely infringes on liberty because Anderton's case proves that if every potential criminal saw the precognitive data, they too would have the chance to change their mind like Anderton could and avoid imprisonment. Only people with privileges to see the precognitive data are able to keep their freedom of choice, creating a greater inequality within this society.

2) "My personal safety is important because I'm a human being."

"Perhaps a lot of the people in the camps are like you."

"If the system can survive only by imprisoning innocent people, then it deserves to be destroyed."

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Name:

Date:

**“Minority Report” Analysis**  
**Film by Steven Spielberg (2002)**

**Part 1: Compare and contrast the film and the original story by filling in the chart below. Using the category in the left-hand column, write details in each box highlighting how the two mediums are alike or different.**

	Short Story/Novella (1956)	Movie (2002)
<b>John Anderton</b>	John Anderton is a 50-year-old balding, out-of-shape police officer who created Precrime. He is insecure and paranoid.	Anderton is in his late 30s, handsome, and athletic, with a full head of hair who joined Precrime after his son's kidnapping. He is depressed, withdrawn, and addicted to neuroin, a fictional hard drug.
<b>Witwer</b>	Ed Witwer is the young second-in-command, successor of Anderton. Anderton has disdain for Witwer. Ed is fascinated by Precrime with no ill-intentions of stealing Anderton's job. Witwer helps Anderton conspire to kill Kaplan in order to save Precrime.	Danny Witwer works for the Department of Justice; he has permission from the attorney general to investigate and audit Precrime. He is skeptical of Precrime's ethics and is determined to expose human error. Burgess kills Witwer and frames Anderton.
<b>Precrime</b>	John Anderton is the creator of Precrime. Precrime has cut down felonies by 99.8% and there has only been one murder in the last five years — which was by the fault of officers who were unable to stop it in time.	In the movie, Lamar Burgess is the creator of Precrime. The film states that felonies have been down 90% and they have gone 6 years without a murder.
<b>Anderton's Wife</b>	Lisa and Anderton have a complicated relationship. Lisa works for Precrime and is strongly devoted to the system. Anderton suspects she helped Witwer frame Anderton.	Lara and Anderton are separated/divorced. Anderton is still very much in love with his ex-wife and is coping with the fact that she left him. Ultimately, Lara helps John solve the case and they get back together.
<b>Anderton's future victim</b>	Anderton's victim is supposedly General of the Army of the Federated Westbloc Alliance—Leopold Kaplan, who wants to discredit Precrime in order to replace this police force with a military authority.	Anderton's supposed victim is Leo Crow, but Anderton later finds out Crow is just part of a set up to prevent Anderton from discovering a different murder.

<b>Precogs</b>	Mike, Donna, and Jerry are deformed and intellectually disabled mutants. The precogs are in high-backed chairs, held in one rigid position by metal bands and bundles of wiring, clamps.	Agatha, Dashiell, and Arthur are held in a photon milk bath. They can only function as a group. They are "deified" by the Precrime officers, and are implied to be intelligent. In the end of the movie, they retire to a rural cottage where they continue their lives in freedom and peace.
<b>Precognitive Data</b>	In the short story, the precogs can see other crimes, not just murder. The crimes are predicted on cards.	The precogs can't see rapes, assaults, or suicides. The murders are predicted on wooden balls instead of cards. Red balls represent crimes of passion while brown balls represent premeditated murders.
<b>The minority report</b>	The story reveals that the minority report was based on Anderton's knowledge of the previous reports.	Anderton learns from Dr. Iris Hineman that one Precog occasionally sees a different future vision from the others, known as a "minority report." In his case, there was no minority report.
<b>Resolution (how did each one end?)</b>	The short story ends with Anderton and Lisa exiled to a space colony after Anderton kills Kaplan.	Burgess is predicted to kill Anderton, but instead commits suicide, invalidating the entire Precrime system. Precrime is abandoned and all prisoners are pardoned and released. The movie finishes with John and Lara reunited and expecting a second child.

## Part 2: Answer the questions below.

1. In the film, how was Anderton being set up?

Anderton lost his son via kidnapping. Burgess knew that if Anderton ever found his assumed killer, Anderton would kill him/her. Leo Crow pretended to be Anderton's son's killer in order to get Anderton to commit murder. Anderton chooses to change the precognitive data by not killing Leo only to discover it was all a set up by Burgess.

The reason for the set-up is as follows: The precog Agatha showed details of a past murder to Anderton which caused him to reopen the case. Anne Lively was the victim, and turns out, she was Agatha's mother who sold her to Precrime while addicted to neuroin. After breaking her addiction, Lively tried to reclaim Agatha, but was drowned by a hooded figure. It turns out that her killer is Lamar Burgess who needed Lively dead in order to keep Agatha and maintain Precrime. Once Anderton reopens the case, Burgess must get rid of Anderton in order to prevent himself from being arrested and exposed.

2. How did the director portray the future society on film? What additional details did Spielberg add to the story?

Some examples include:

- The fictional drug neuroin

- The “spiders” are robots with the technology to scan rooms using heat sensors (recognizing where people are) and additionally they can scan people’s eyes and accurately identify them
- Eye scanners track all citizens by their irises
- Vehicles move vertically and horizontally
- There are targeted ads based on the eye scanners
- Anderton must replace his eyes to stay hidden by getting an illegal surgery
- The precogs sometimes “echo” an old murder, which is how Burgess was able to get away with the murder of Anne Lively for so long

3. After watching the movie, do you feel like Precrime is a possibility in our future? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.

4. Which themes remained the same between both mediums?

Both highlight the philosophical debate of free will versus determinism. Both also highlight the struggle between public safety and liberty.

5. Which story did you like better, the novella or the film? Explain.

Answers will vary.

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