

## B Slow descent into dystopia<sup>1</sup>

I walk in the middle of the road. The buses tend to hug the curb, so it's safer here. Sometimes, on the streets near my house, I can see places where the yellow lines used to be. We have no use for them now that there are so few cars. We don't need spotlights, either, but in some places they dangle precariously over the road like they might crash down any minute.

5 Renovation comes slowly through the city, which is a patchwork of new, clean buildings and old, crumbling ones. Most of the new buildings are next to the marsh, which used to be a lake a long time ago. [...]

The city is ruled by a council of fifty people composed entirely of representatives from Abnegation, because our faction is regarded as incorruptible, due to our commitment to selflessness. Our leaders are selected by their peers for their impeccable character, moral fortitude, and leadership skills. [...]

15 It has been this way since the beginning of the great peace, when the factions were formed. I think the system persists because we're afraid of what might happen if it

20 didn't: war.

Veronica Roth, *Divergent*, 2012.

1. ≠ utopia = imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad, typically a totalitarian or environmentally degraded one.

### Read, look and speak

1. Pick out the elements in the text which show this is a fictional world.
2. What world is described here?
3. Comment on the dominant colours.
4. What do you make of the burning symbol?

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### Listen and speak

5. How safe is it to walk in this city?
6. Pick out references to the past. What happened?
7. How is this society organized?

