

UNIT 6 Journeys / Visions of the Future
Independent Reading

A STEM school
FROEBEL
BILINGUAL SCHOOL
Home of the Space Generation

A futuristic, sleek blue sports car is shown driving on a road. The car has glowing blue accents on its headlights and wheels. The background is a bright, hazy sky over a road that stretches into the distance.

THE TEST

WITH
JIM SOTO

SPEAK YOUR MIND

The freedom to make choices in our lives is a basic human right. We like the feeling of being in the proverbial “driver’s seat”. What if all of a sudden you found out you’re not, instead you’re really being controlled?

Are individuals truly free in any society?

Do institutions, governments, and media exercise more control over individuals than they realize?

Take a minute to answer in the notebook.



Theodore Lockard Thomas was a Nebula Award nominated author, chemical engineer and patent attorney who wrote more than 50 science fiction short stories, published between the early 1950s to the late 1970s.

YOU ARE NOT IN CONTROL

The Test first appeared in *Fantasy and Science Fiction* magazine, April 1962. This short story deals with the power dynamics between individuals and systems. The power being that to control other's ideas, opinions and self identity, through fear of divergence and government control.



As you read, consider the following themes:

- **Loss of individual agency:** Robert's initial sense of independence as he is forced into a simulation and then subjugated by men in lab coats.
- **The controlling state:** The society in which the story takes place appears to be dystopian, where citizens are subject to unjust overreach by state powers.
- **Simulation versus reality:** "Test" juxtaposes the vivid but artificial world of the driving simulation with Robert's grim reality, highlighting a disconnect between reality and perception.



ASSESSMENT

After reading the short story, complete these activities:

1. In your own words, describe Robert Proctor's accident.
2. Why were all potential drivers being hypnotized as part of the test for a driver's license?
3. "*It was not the fear in the man's face that reached Robert Proctor. It was the trust in the face of the sleeping girl*". Explain these statements.
4. Should Robert Proctor be given a chance to "*...try again later*"?
5. What indication can you find in the story to suggest that other potential drivers met a fate similar to Proctor's?



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