

- explain her opinion of Offred and her feelings about Gilead

OR

Write a letter home from one of the Japanese tourists who ask to photograph Offred. Consider:

- their perceptions of Offred and how they may be shaped by their interpreter
- how they might describe what they see in Gilead
- their opinion of the regime

Extension: The cultural theorist Laura Mulvey has written about the importance of the male gaze in Western art, and how this has perpetuated the unequal treatment of women:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*.

- Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975)

- a) What do you understand by Mulvey's discussion of the male gaze?
- b) How might this relate to the theme of sight in *The Handmaid's Tale*?

Glossary

- **Surveillance** – close observation, especially of a suspected spy or criminal.
- **Totalitarianism** – a system of government that is centralized and dictatorial, requiring complete subservience to the state.
- **Individuated** – distinguish from others of the same kind; single out.
- **Internalise** – make attitudes or behaviour part of one's nature by learning or unconscious assimilation.
- **Ideology** – a system of ideas and ideals.
- **Dissidence** – protest against an official policy.