

Study Guide: 1984

Getting the most out of the Study Guide for *1984*:

Our study guides are designed with you and your classroom in mind, with information and activities that can be implemented in your curriculum. National Players has a strong belief in the relationship between the actor and the audience because, without either one, there is no theatre. We hope this study guide will help bring a better understanding of the plot, themes and characters in the play so that you can more fully enjoy the theatrical experience.

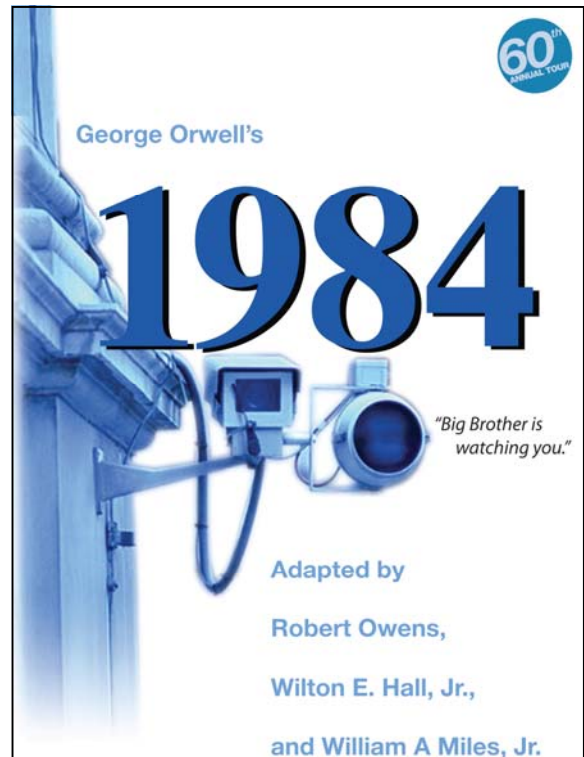
Feel free to copy the study guide for other teachers and for students. You may wish to cover some content before your workshops and the performance; some content is more appropriate for discussion afterwards. Of course, some activities and questions will be more useful for your class, and some less. Feel free to implement any article, activity, or post-show discussion question as you see fit.

Before the Performance:

Using the articles in the study guide, students will be more engaged in the performance. Our articles give information about history, setting, themes, and the original author of *1984*, George Orwell. All of this information, combined with our in-classroom workshops, will keep the students attentive and make the performance an active learning experience.

After the Performance:

With the play as a reference point, our questions, and activities can be incorporated into your classroom discussions and can enable students to develop their higher level thinking skills. Our materials address Maryland Core Learning Goals, which are listed on the last page of this study guide.



Your feedback is important to us!

In order to improve our programming, we appreciate any feedback you and your students can provide. Please use the evaluations found at the end of this study guide. These forms can be mailed to the address at the bottom of the page or emailed to nationalplayers@olneytheatre.org. Please call 301.924.4485 x116 if you have any questions.

National Players
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Your Role as the Audience

The audience plays an integral role in every live performance, and especially in National Players shows. The audience is, in fact, a key element in making live theatre such a special medium and so different from television and film. During a live performance, please keep in mind that the actors onstage can both see and hear the audience. While actors enjoy listening to the audience react, talking and making loud comments only serve to distract not only the actors, but fellow audience members as well.

So watch the show, let the story move you in whatever way is true to you. Laugh if you want to laugh, be afraid, intrigued, shocked, confused or horrified. The actors want you to be involved in the story they are telling. But please be respectful of the actors working hard to bring you a live performance and to the audience around you trying to enjoy the play. And remember, you will have the opportunity to ask any question about the play or the actors after the show during our Question-and-Answer session.

A Note from the Director

Can a novel from 1948 about an imagined 1984, which is for us long past, sustain the power to shock and awe in 2008? In the book, George Orwell describes a grim London, which is part of the country Oceania, a totalitarian society led by Big Brother. Independent thought is unpatriotic; privacy of any stripe is invaded by Inner Party telescreens; truth is fabricated; and a perpetual state of war and its resulting hysteria feeds the economy and Big Brother's absolute rule. At the heart of the story is Winston Smith, a lowly party grunt who risks his life to join the fabled Brotherhood, a supposed group of underground rebels intent on overthrowing the government. Winston's ultimate capitulation leaves us with a shot in the arm that is both timeless and timely: Orwell's warning against the lethal temptation to trade our freedom for security, a bargain that invariably ends with the surrender of both.

No longer set in London, we've reimagined the world of Big Brother through Winston's eyes—a creepy and unrecognizable prison-like environment that might exist anytime, anyplace, anywhere. Like the worker-bees of Oceania, the actors manipulate an ever-shifting set of steel scaffolds under the watchful, iconic eye of Big Brother. The costumes are rooted in the uniform-like silhouette of the 1940s but have been twisted into a chilling, monochromatic fashion of the near future. The action of the play races ahead with a decidedly contemporary pulse toward a conclusion that is as heartbreaking as it is horrific.

Today, when terror and doubt is pervasive and our enemy is not always clear, *1984* is more vibrant, relevant and necessary than ever. In bringing *1984* to the stage, our desire from early design meetings through rehearsals has been to create a wildly theatrical experience that is immediate, fresh, and every bit as thought-provoking as the book. While *1984* helps us realize that the drive to power, corruption and cruelty is latent in all human beings, so too is the instinct for freedom and kindness. This battle takes place within ourselves as well as in the world we live, and this play asks us to wake up before we lose ourselves completely.

Jeffrey Stanton, Director, *1984*

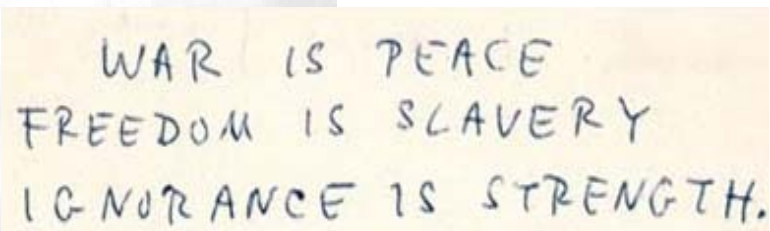
Synopsis

In the Ministry of Truth, a government agency that alters records of the past to reflect the Party's version of events, Syme, a meek and dedicated worker, listens to the morning's news by himself. Listening to the bulletin is mandatory for every citizen of Oceania, and every morning it is broadcast into every room in the country via telescreen. As the bulletin draws to a close, Parsons, another employee of MiniTrue, rushes into the office. She is tardy and flustered, but listens attentively—as all good citizens of Oceania should. Winston then enters, the last and latest employee to arrive. Seizing an opportunity to pass the blame, Parsons threatens to report Winston's tardiness to the Thought Police. Fortunately the Messenger arrives, doling out each comrade's work, conspicuously ignoring a fourth empty desk. Bob Withers, its former occupant, has disappeared.

As the three comrades settle in to their work, Comrade O'Brien, a member of the elite Inner Party, interrupts. After asking the others to leave, O'Brien introduces Winston to Julia—Withers's replacement. Winston's assignment is to teach her how to write and read Newspeak, the official language of Oceania.

Although it is an honor to receive instructions directly from an Inner Party member, Winston does not trust Julia. Once O'Brien leaves, Winston reveals that he has seen Julia before—in Minitrue, but also outside of his apartment. He suspects her of being a member of the Thought Police, sent to spy on him. Julia contends she is a simple loyal party-member. Their discussion is interrupted by the Two Minutes Hate. On this day, the Two Minutes Hate projects the voice of Emmanuel Goldstein, known rebel, and the greatest enemy to Oceania. Goldstein's speech advocates peace and freedom, but is barely audible over the moaning, booing, and hissing of the comrades. Julia becomes so enraged with Goldstein that she throws her Newspeak dictionary at the telescreen, cutting short the Two Minutes Hate.

As the comrades return to work, Winston asks Syme for help in teaching Julia Newspeak. Syme explains that Newspeak is not about inventing new words, but rather destroying old words and nuanced connotations so that the government can control the expressiveness of thought. When Syme leaves, Julia discloses her confusion to Winston. Still believing Julia to be a member of the Thought Police, Winston accuses her of trying to entrap him in thoughtcrime. She is so shaken by his accusations that she admits to being in love with him, and breaks down into tears. Just then, O'Brien reenters with his guards, throwing Julia's life into danger. Winston quickly tells O'Brien that she is crying because she is incompetent, thereby saving her life. As O'Brien leaves, the two acknowledge their attraction to one another, and begin a relationship.



WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH.

Original Manuscript of the Party Slogans from *Nineteen Eighty-Four*:
The Facsimile of the Extant Manuscript, edited by Peter Davison
(London: Secker & Warburg, 1984)

spy daughter, bursts into the room, followed closely by Parsons herself. Julia dashes out of the apartment, but Winston is caught. Thinking quickly, he tells his neighbor that Julia is a member of the Thought Police, there to interrogate Winston about Parsons. This upsets her greatly, but Winston calms her by assuring her that he convinced Julia of Parsons's innocence. Parsons leaves without incident, vowing to never breathe a word about the encounter.



National Players production of 1984. Tour 45.

A few months later, Winston is going about his daily routine when Julia arrives. She has risked death by coming to his room because she cannot wait to share her good news. O'Brien has found a church where the two can be married. Winston is shocked at O'Brien's willingness to defy Big Brother's doctrines against love, marriage, and religion, but Julia explains that O'Brien is an old friend, and is responsible for bringing them together. Winston then shares his own good news: he has secured a safe place for them to be together—a rented room in the Proletariat district. As they are beginning to celebrate their fortune, Gladys, Parsons's

Synopsis (con't)



One week later, Winston carries his new wife over the threshold of their rented room in the Prole district. The room is bare and simple, but beautiful—particularly because it has no telescreen. Winston tells Julia that he's been invited to O'Brien's apartment, and they become convinced that he must belong to the Resistance. At that moment, their Landlady drops in to hang a pair of curtains. At their urging, she tells them about her past—about life before the revolution. Her stories, memories, and feelings inspire Winston to fight to gain his own humanity back. He and Julia agree that being human means remembering your feelings and never betraying them.

Weeks pass before Winston and Julia visit O'Brien's apartment. His home is luxurious and filled with contraband objects such as silver cigarette boxes and crystal wine glasses. His true privilege shows when O'Brien calmly crosses to his telescreen and turns it off. Frightened, but believing they are safe from the ears of Big Brother, the couple announces their intention to join the conspiracy against Oceania. O'Brien welcomes them to the Resistance with a glass of wine and a toast, but immediately informs them of the grim reality of their work. As part of the Brotherhood, they will surrender their identities, commit atrocious crimes, and most certainly die. Once Winston and Julia accept these terms, O'Brien arranges for Winston to receive a copy of Goldstein's book—the treatise and manual of the Brotherhood.

Weeks after their induction, Winston finally receives the Book. Eager to read it, he rushes to the rented room in the Prole district where Julia waits for him. She, in fact, has several surprises of her own—coffee, real sugar, and a dress—all purchased illegally from the Black Market. They settle into an evening resembling one that a married couple might have enjoyed before Big Brother, reading and drinking coffee. Winston barely reads a page from the Book when a loudspeaker voice suddenly pierces the room. The painting above Winston and Julia's bed crashes to the ground, revealing a telescreen. They have been caught. Just as they begin to say their goodbyes, several guards enter to arrest them.

The guards take Winston to the Ministry of Love, where he is placed in a cell with Syme and Parsons. His former co-workers have been accused of Thought-Crime, and now face punishment. A guard comes for Syme and announces that he is to report to the mysterious Room 101. Neither Parsons nor Winston knows what waits in Room 101, but they do know that it means the worst of all fates. Their conversation is interrupted when O'Brien enters. To Winston's horror, the Inner-Party member reveals that he was never a member of the Brotherhood, and orders Winston to Room 101.

Several months pass and Winston is still a prisoner in Miniluv. He has been tortured, starved, and deprived of sleep, but he still refuses to believe the principles of the Party. In spite of the constant torment, Winston perseveres, insisting that he is superior and hopeful because he has not betrayed Julia. O'Brien is persistent, though, and once he has driven Winston to the brink of madness, he unleashes the true terror of Room 101. For each prisoner, the terror is different, because it is each individual's worst fear. For Winston Smith, the final and most potent weapon is rats. When his tormentor threatens to release twelve hungry rats into Winston's cell, the prisoner succumbs to his phobia and cries out, "Do it to Julia!" By betraying his wife, Winston relinquishes his final shred of humanity and loses his battle with Big Brother.

Winston survives his time in Miniluv. One year later he sits in the Chestnut Tree Café, a loyal, brainwashed member of the Party. He is markedly changed, sipping his victory coffee and concernedly listening to the telescreen bulletin. When the newscast finishes, Syme shuffles into the café and joins Winston. As they begin their weekly game of chess, Winston realizes that Julia has entered the café. Excusing himself, he calmly approaches her. They have not spoken since before their arrest. Both have aged and lost the sparkle of hope. Instead of feeling regret or loss, both Julia and Winston are indifferent to each other. They say goodbye, half-heartedly promising to see one another. As Julia leaves the café, Winston refocuses his attention on the telescreen, expressing his admiration for Big Brother.

1984 Point of Interest

Orwell ironically named Room 101 after the first floor conference room in the BBC headquarters in London. Orwell reportedly spent several torturous hours in the room, attending long meetings when he worked as a reporter for the network during World War II.

Ministries of Oceania

Oceania's four ministries are housed in huge pyramidal structures, each roughly 300 meters high and visible throughout London, displaying the three slogans of the party on their facades.

The Ministry of Peace

Newspeak: *Minipax*.

Concerns itself with conducting Oceania's perpetual wars.

The Ministry of Plenty

Newspeak: *Miniplenty*.

Responsible for rationing and controlling food and goods.

The Ministry of Truth

Newspeak: *Minitrue*.

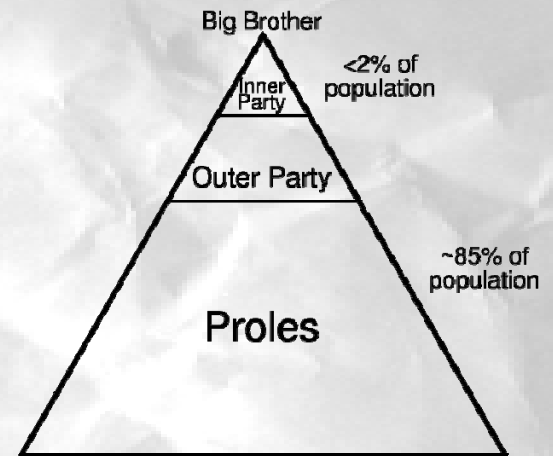
The propaganda arm of Oceania's regime. Minitrue controls information: political literature, the Party organization, and the telescreens. Winston Smith works for the Records Department (RecDep) of Minitrue, "rectifying" historical records and newspaper articles to make them conform to Big Brother's most recent pronouncements, thus making everything that the Party says true.

The Ministry of Love

Newspeak: *Miniluv*.

The agency responsible for the identification, monitoring, arrest, and torture of dissidents, real or imagined. Based on Winston's experience there at the hands of O'Brien, the basic procedure is to pair the subject with his or her worst fear for an extended period, eventually breaking down the person's mental faculties and ending with a sincere embrace of the Party by the brainwashed subject. The Ministry of Love differs from the other ministry buildings in that it has no windows in it at all.

The ministries' names are ironic — the Ministry of Peace concerns itself with war, the Ministry of Plenty: starvation, the Ministry of Truth: lies, and the Ministry of Love: torture. However, from the perspectives of the Oceanians who accept the propaganda, these names are accurate.



A pyramid diagram of Oceania's social classes; Big Brother atop, The Party in middle, the Proles

Who's Who?

Loudspeaker Voice: The voice issued from the Telescreens that gives the latest news of Oceania.

Winston Smith: A citizen of Oceania and employee of the Ministry of Truth who harbors a secret hatred for his government. When he illegally marries his young co-worker Julia, he officially joins the ranks of the underground resistance to Big Brother.

Julia : A young woman who replaces one of Winston's co-workers, and eventually becomes his wife.

O'Brien : The powerful inner-party member who arranges Julia and Winston's marriage and initiates them into The Brotherhood, but ultimately betrays them both.

Syme: Winston Smith's mild-mannered co-worker in the Ministry of Truth, and expert on Newspeak.



Who's Who? (con't)



Parsons: A deeply patriotic Ministry of Truth employee who regularly threatens to turn Winston into the Thought Police, but ends up being arrested herself.

Gladys: Parsons's spy daughter.

Messenger: Employee of the Ministry of Truth who disseminates daily work assignments and messages to each worker.

First & Second Guards

Landlady: The elder member of the Proletariat class who rents a room to Winston and Julia.

Waiter: A server at the Chestnut Tree Café.

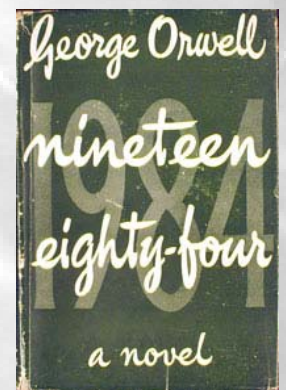
About the Author: George Orwell



George Orwell was born Eric Arthur Blair in 1903 in the Indian village of Motihari. At that time India was a colony of the British Empire, and Blair's father held a post in the Opium Department of the Indian Civil Service. Blair's mother Ida, however, believed India was an unsuitable location to raise a family, and when he was one year old, Eric Blair, his mother, and his older sister relocated to England.

Blair attended school there, securing scholarships at St. Cyprian's Preparatory School, Wellington College, and the prestigious Eton College. He exhibited great intellectual flair, and was successful academically until he arrived at Eton. Once there, his work ethic declined dramatically, and in 1921, at the age of 18, Blair left Eton. Neither his school marks nor his family's financial standing were good enough for Blair to attend university, thus ending his formal education.

In 1922, he left England to become an officer in the Indian Imperial Police. While there, Blair became intimately acquainted with the lowest classes of society. He grew to admire and respect the poor, and despise the imperial government that suppressed them. After five years of service, Blair resigned. He could no longer enforce laws he did not agree with. The experience infused him with distrust for the institutions of society, and upon returning to England, he strove to live outside of them. Blair abandoned the lifestyle of the middle class, and in its place adopted a life of destitution. He lived in the poorest areas of London and Paris, all the while writing. After five years, he was forced to return to England in 1928 due to his extreme poverty and ailing health. He described his experience among the poor in his first published book *Down and Out in Paris and London*. It was for the publication of this book—released in 1932—that he adopted the pen name George Orwell.



Cover of the first edition of 1984, 1949.

About the Author: George Orwell (con't)

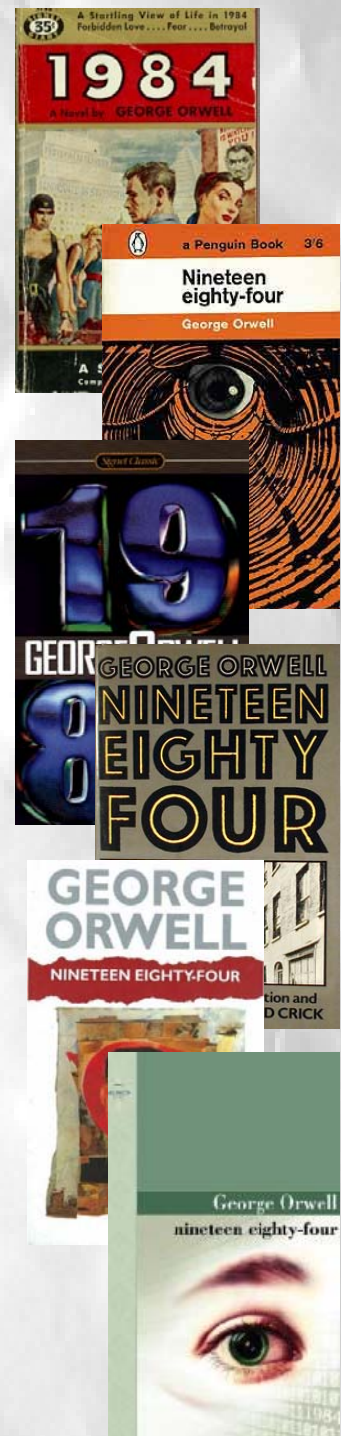
Once back on his home soil, Blair's family forced the young writer to take up steady employment. He continued to write, though, and during this period, he began to gain some notoriety as a minor novelist and journalist. He wrote *Burmese Days*, *A Clergyman's Daughter* and *Keep the Aspidochelone Flying* during this time. In 1936 at the age of 33, Blair took a job as a bookseller's assistant outside of London, and married his first wife, Eileen O'Shaughnessy. That was also the year he traveled to Spain—a trip that changed his life.

Blair journeyed to Barcelona with the intention of reporting the events of the Spanish Civil War, but became enraptured with what he perceived to be a true haven for Socialism. Every man and woman appeared equal, and class boundaries seemed to evaporate. Deeply inspired, he immediately enlisted in the militia of the United Workers Marxist Party, joining the forces opposing Franco. For close to three months he lived and fought in northern Spain until a sniper shot him through the neck. Blair fully recovered from his injury, but was dismissed from duty. After a long healing process, he returned to Barcelona, but found a significantly changed city: violence and rigid class divisions once again consumed the city he had once adored. This change sparked two opposing ideas, which he documented in his next book *Homage to Catalonia*: that socialism and human equality were possible to achieve, and that it was human nature to oppress and be oppressed. These ideas would inform his political ideas and activism for the rest of his life.

From the time Blair left Spain, through the rest of his life, he struggled with poor health. A bout with tuberculosis in 1938 forced him to Morocco to recover, and when World War I broke out in 1939, in spite of his desire to join ranks, he was declared unfit to fight because of his deteriorating health. Unable to fight physically, Blair redoubled his political efforts through his writing. He joined the BBC, writing pro-British propaganda to counter Japanese and German propaganda spread throughout India. Many scholars believe Blair's time with the BBC most strongly influenced his opinions on the government's practice of historical revision. He became closely acquainted with the power of language and how it could manipulate people.

In 1943, he left the BBC and began pursuing a personal project: a new novel entitled *Animal Farm*. Published in 1945, the book married Blair's political ideas with his great creative writing ability. The thinly-veiled critique of Stalinism and communist Russia catapulted him into fame. Success piled upon success when the Blairs adopted a son, Richard, in 1944. But the joy of their new son and the success of *Animal Farm* were countered by a great personal loss—in 1945, Eileen Blair died unexpectedly while undergoing a routine operation.

His fragile health greatly weakened, Blair and his son moved to Jura—a remote island located off the coast of Scotland—in hopes of expediting his recovery. Between stays in the hospital, Blair began writing his seminal work: *1984*. His political and literary careers were not the only things weighing on his mind, though. Aware that he was dying, Blair was anxious to find a suitable mother to care for Richard. He proposed unsuccessfully to four women in one year. 1949 finally brought some relief to the author. The first printing of *1984* was hugely successful, and Blair also took a new wife—a magazine editor from London named Sonia Bronwell. Four months later, at the age of 47, Blair lost his battle with tuberculosis.



Covers of the novel *1984* over the years (top to bottom): 1955, 1963, 1976, 1984, 1992, 2007

Background: The Rise of Totalitarianism in the 20th Century

1984 remains one of the most powerful warnings ever issued against the dangers of a totalitarian society. Having witnessed firsthand the horrific lengths to which totalitarian governments in Spain and Russia would go in order to sustain and increase their power, Orwell designed *1984* to sound the alarm in Western nations still unsure about how to approach the rise of communism. In 1949, at the dawn of the nuclear age and before the television had become a fixture in the family home, Orwell's vision of a post-atomic dictatorship in which every individual would be monitored ceaselessly by means of the telescreen seemed terrifyingly possible. That Orwell postulated such a society a mere thirty-five years into the future compounded this fear.



The Cold War: A map of countries who declared themselves to be socialist states under the Marxist-Leninist or Maoist definition (in other words, "Communist states") during the 20th century. The map uses present-day borders.

With the fall of the great European monarchies throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (especially after World War I,) and the degradation of the traditional socio-economic and class structures, economic philosophers and politicians sought innovative ways to re-structure society so that more people benefited from the result of their labor.

One system of thought that developed could be generally described as **Collectivism**--a term used to describe any moral, political, or social outlook that stresses human interdependence and the importance of a collective, rather than the importance of separate individuals. Specifically, a society as a whole can be seen as having more meaning or value than the separate individuals that make up that society. Theoretically, in a Collectivist society, all members are treated equally, have equal voice in government, and share equally in the rewards of production.

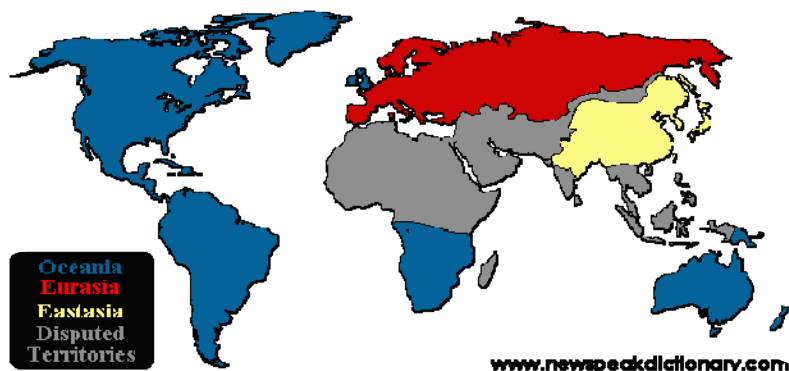
But in the 20th century, collectivism found varying degrees of expression in such movements as socialism, communism, and facism. Indeed, critics of collectivism believe that all authoritarian and totalitarian societies are collectivist in nature. The novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand argued that "collectivism means the subjugation of the individual to a group," and that "throughout history, no tyrant ever rose to power except on the claim of representing *the common good*." George Orwell, an advocate of democratic socialism, believed that collectivism resulted in the empowerment of a minority of individuals and oppression: "It cannot be said too often - at any rate, it is not being said nearly often enough - that collectivism is not inherently democratic, but, on the contrary, gives to a tyrannical minority such powers as the Spanish Inquisitors never dreamt of."



Today: This map shows the states which today are officially run by a Communist party only: People's Republic of China, North Korea, Laos, Vietnam, and Cuba.

Totalitarianism (or totalitarian rule) is a concept used to describe political systems where a state regulates nearly every aspect of public and private life. The term is usually applied to Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany or communist states, such as Stalinist Russia, Democratic Kampuchea, Vietnam, China, Cuba and North Korea. Totalitarian regimes or movements maintain themselves in political power by means of an official all-embracing ideology and propaganda disseminated through the state-controlled mass media, a single party that controls the state, personality cults, central state-controlled economy, regulation and restriction of free discussion and criticism, the use of mass surveillance, and widespread use of terror tactics. In *1984*, Orwell describes a world where the uses and abuses of a totalitarian system are taken to their extreme.

Background: The Rise of Totalitarianism in the 20th Century (con't)



A map of the world of 1984. from www.newspeakdictionary.com.

At the end of World War II, before the Cold War had not yet escalated, many American intellectuals supported communism, and the state of diplomacy between democratic and communist nations was highly ambiguous. In the American press, the Soviet Union, which corrupted collectivist principles, was often portrayed as a great moral experiment. Orwell, however, was deeply disturbed by the widespread cruelties and oppressions he observed in communist countries, and seems to have been particularly concerned by the role of technology in enabling oppressive governments to monitor and control their citizens.

Of course, the world that Orwell envisioned in 1984 did not materialize. Rather than being overwhelmed by totalitarianism, democracy ultimately won out in the Cold War, as seen in the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Yet 1984 remains an important novel, in part for the alarm it sounds against the abusive nature of authoritarian governments, but even more so for its penetrating analysis of the psychology of power and the ways that manipulations of language and history can be used as mechanisms of control.

1984 Point of Interest

Orwell divides the fictional superstates in the book according to the division that can be found in our history's own Cold War. Oceania stands for the United States of America & Great Britain, Eurasia for Russia and Eastasia for China. The fact that the two socialistic countries Eastasia and Eurasia (in our case Russia and China) are at war with each other, corresponds to our history.

Themes: Psychological Manipulation

The Party barrages its subjects with psychological stimuli designed to overwhelm the mind's capacity for independent thought. The giant telescreen in every citizen's room blasts a constant stream of propaganda designed to make the failures and shortcomings of the Party appear to be triumphant successes. The telescreens also monitor behavior—everywhere they go, citizens are continuously reminded, especially by means of the omnipresent signs reading "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU," that the authorities are scrutinizing them. The Party undermines family structure by inducting children into an organization called the Junior Spies, which brainwashes and encourages them to spy on their parents and report any instance of disloyalty to the Party. The Party also forces individuals to suppress their sexual desires, treating sex as merely a procreative duty whose end is the creation of new Party members. The Party then channels people's pent-up frustration and emotion into intense, ferocious displays of hatred against the Party's political enemies. Many of these enemies have been invented by the Party expressly for this purpose.

What is Doublethink?

Central to the Party's psychological manipulation tactics is its use of Doublethink. This manipulation is mainly done by the Minitrue (Ministry of Truth), where Winston Smith works. Simply put, doublethink is the ability to hold two contradictory ideas in one's mind at the same



Themes: Psychological Manipulation (con't)



Joseph Stalin

time. As the Party's mind-control techniques break down an individual's capacity for independent thought, it becomes possible for that individual to believe anything that the Party tells them, even while possessing information that runs counter to what they are being told. At the Hate Week rally, for instance, the Party shifts its diplomatic allegiance, so the nation it has been at war with suddenly becomes its ally, and its former ally becomes its new enemy. When the Party speaker suddenly changes the nation he refers to as an enemy in the middle of his speech, the crowd accepts his words immediately, and is ashamed to find that it has made the wrong signs for the event. By conditioning the minds of their citizens through psychological manipulation and physical torture, the Party is able to control reality, convincing its subjects that $2 + 2 = 5$.

Who is BIG BROTHER?

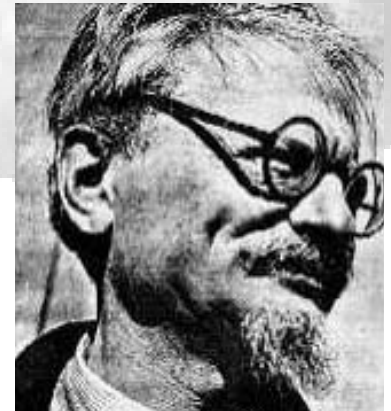
Big Brother symbolizes the Party in its public manifestation. For some people he is an inspiration and reassurance (the warmth of his name suggests his ability to protect), but he is also an open threat (one cannot escape his gaze). All-present, all-powerful and forever watching, Big Brother is seen only through telescreens, but Winston can never determine whether or not he actually exists. For Inner Party members, Big Brother is a leader, a figurehead they can use to frighten people and justify actions. For the unthinking proles, Big Brother is a distant authority figure. Big Brother excites and energizes Winston, who hates him. He is also fascinated by Big Brother and drawn to him in some of the same ways that he is drawn to O'Brien, developing a love-hate response to both of them that leads to his downfall.

Orwell had several historical figures in mind when he created Big Brother. He was certainly thinking of Russian leader Joseph Stalin; the original illustrations of Big Brother even look like him. He was also thinking of Nazi leader Adolph Hitler and Spanish dictator Francisco Franco—but Big Brother stands for all dictators everywhere. Orwell may have been thinking about deities in certain religious faiths since Big Brother is virtually worshipped by his followers as a mysterious, Godlike figure who sees and knows everything—but never appears in person.

Who is Emmanuel Goldstein?

In the novel, Emmanuel Goldstein is rumored to be a former top member of the ruling Party who broke away early in the movement and started an organization known as "The Brotherhood", dedicated to the fall of The Party. As an enemy of the state, Goldstein is always the subject of the "Two Minutes Hate," a daily, 2-minute period beginning at 11:00 AM at which some image of Goldstein is shown on the telescreen. As with Big Brother himself, the novel raises but leaves unanswered the question of whether Goldstein and the "Brotherhood," even really exist. Indeed the implication is that Goldstein, the Brotherhood and *The Book* are just inventions of the Party, baits to make potential rebels (like Winston) come forward and reveal themselves.

There are similarities between this fictional character and the real-life Russian Revolutionary, Leon Trotsky. Trotsky was one of the original founders of the Soviet Union. But when he dared to disagree with the Joseph Stalin, he was exiled from the country. In his absence, Trotsky was tried for treason and all of his followers were purged from the party.



Leon Trotsky

Goldstein's Book

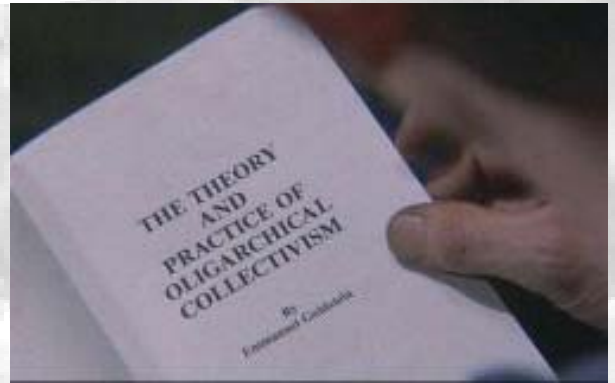
Early in the novel, Orwell introduces the concept of the book supposedly written by Goldstein: "There were...whispered stories of a terrible book, a compendium of all the heresies, of which Goldstein was the author and which circulated clandestinely here and there." The Book, whose full title is *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism* is required reading for all members of The Brotherhood. Here Orwell sets out the back story of the entire novel. "Goldstein" explains how the totalitarian state of Oceania, as well as its rival superstates Eurasia and Eastasia, came into being. This bridges the present of the original readers of the novel (the late forties) with the dystopian future world of 1984.

Themes: Psychological Manipulation (con't)

O'Brien, posing as a member of the conspiracy, gives Winston a copy of the illegal tome, which exposes the true nature of the totalitarian society created by the Party. In the novel, Winston reads two long excerpts from chapters 1 and 3 of *The Book*. These two chapters are named after Party slogans, *Ignorance is Strength* and *War is Peace*. Chapter 2, which we never get to read, would presumably be named after the Party slogan *Freedom is Slavery*.

More importantly, "Goldstein" explains the political philosophy on which the totalitarian superstates are based. Since it is described as growing out of the authoritarian tendencies that manifested in the first part of the twentieth century, this part of the novel is actually Orwell's attempt at showing where the world of his present could be heading, if totalitarianism were allowed to continue developing towards its logical endpoint.

Winston never gets the chance to read through the entire book before he is arrested by the Thought Police. But he believes the proletarians or "proles" will one day rise up and overturn the world: "If there was hope, it lay in the proles! Without having read to the end of *The Book*, he knew that that must be Goldstein's final message."



The Book in the 1984 film *1984*.

1984 Point of Interest

"Goldstein's book" is about 10,700 words long. This means that this "book within a book" comprises approximately 10% of the entire novel! Given this fact, it almost appears that one of the primary motives for Orwell to write "1984" was provide himself with a vehicle to publish some of his more "far out" beliefs on the structure of society under the guise of the fictional character, Emmanuel Goldstein.

Themes: Language as Mind Control

One of Orwell's most important messages in *1984* is that language is of central importance to human thought because it structures and limits the ideas that individuals are capable of formulating and expressing. If control of language were centralized in a political agency, Orwell proposes, such an agency could possibly alter the very structure of language to make it impossible to even conceive of disobedient or rebellious thoughts, because there would be no words with which to think them. This idea manifests itself in the language of Newspeak, which the Party has introduced to replace English. The Party is constantly refining and perfecting Newspeak, with the ultimate goal that no one will be capable of conceptualizing anything that might question the Party's absolute power.

Newspeak is the official language of Oceania, devised to meet ideological needs of Ingsoc, or English Socialism. In the year 1984, there is nobody who really uses Newspeak in speech or writing. Only the leading articles are written in this "language." But it is generally assumed that in the year 2050 Newspeak would supersede Oldspeak, or common English. The purpose of Newspeak is not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other methods of thought impossible. Another reason for developing Newspeak is to make old books (those written before the era of the Party) unreadable. With Newspeak, Doublethink would be even easier. Its vocabulary is so constructed as to give exact and often very subtle expression to every meaning that a Party member could properly wish to express, while excluding all other meanings and also the possibility of arriving at them by indirect methods. This is done partly by the invention of new words, but chiefly by eliminating undesirable words or by stripping such words that remain of unorthodox meanings whatever.

Themes: Language as Mind Control (con't)

In our world, the English language is continually evolving. We are always creating words to describe new things, concepts and attitudes, or updating definitions of old words. Sometimes old words fall out of fashion and are hardly ever used. In the past few decades, we have begun to substitute new language (sometimes called “politically-correct” language or euphemistic language,) for old language that hurts feelings or alarms people. Although not as reductive as Newspeak in 1984, our politically-correct language does change meaning, the directness, and the connotation of the original words. Here are some examples; perhaps you can think of others:

Old Words	Acceptable Words
Stupid	Learning-disabled
Indian	Native American
Crippled or handicapped	Disabled
Bombs	Weapons of mass destruction
Crazy	Emotionally disturbed or behaviorally challenged
Midget	Little Person

Newspeak has removed the overall number of words in general to limit the range of ideas that otherwise would be unnecessarily expressed. Below is a glossary of words that you will hear in our production.

Crimestop: One of the central pillars of Ingsoc. Crimestop refers to the ability to stop short of any thought that might be heretical or unorthodox before it is even thought, as if by instinct. It is the ability to misunderstand analogies, fail to perceive logical errors, and be repelled or bored by any train of thought or conversation that might be inimical to Ingsoc. Crimestop is not stupidity. It is the ability to deliberately retard one’s own intelligence and, of course, to forget the process of doing it by doublethink.

Crimethink: To express or even think about dissent towards Ingsoc. Crimethink does not entail death, it is death.

Doubleplus: A prefix used to create the superlative form of an adjective or adverb. Also used for emphasis to stress an idea/emotion. It is superior to the prefix “plus.” Doubleplusgood is equivalent to fantastic, wonderful, amazing; Plusgood is great, fine, better, etc.

Doublethink: The most important pillar of Ingsoc. Doublethink is the ability to hold two contradictory opinions at the same time without noticing the contradiction. It also refers to the mind trick to accept the changes to history made by the Party, and in accepting them, forgetting that the mind trick was ever performed, and then forgetting the forgetting, etc.

Facecrime: The crime of exhibiting an improper facial expression. For example, to look incredulous when a state victory is announced.

Goodthink: A set of thoughts and beliefs that is in accordance with those established by the Party. In the rules of Newspeak the noun stem (which also serves as a verb) can become the adjective *goodthinkful*, the adverb *goodthinkwise*, the past participle *goodthinked*, and the gerund *goodthinking*. The opposite of certain aspects of goodthink is crimethink. However, according to the common rules of Newspeak words do not have opposites, and one must add the prefix un- to the word.

Ingsoc: English Socialism.

Proles: Proletarians. Approximately 85% of Oceania's population is in this class. They are not as rigidly observed as members of the Party, and very few (if any) have telescreens in their home. They are permitted to indulge in acts considered *thoughtcrime*, simply because it is impossible to observe all of them as rigidly as the Party observes its own members.

Vaporized: The act of being executed by the state, and having all records of one’s existence erased. Becoming an *unperson*.

Theme: Technology and Information Control

Control of Information and History

The Party controls every source of information, managing and rewriting the content of all newspapers and histories for its own ends. The Party does not allow individuals to keep records of their past, such as photographs or documents. As a result, memories become fuzzy and unreliable, and citizens become perfectly willing to believe whatever the Party tells them. By controlling the present, the Party is able to manipulate the past. And in controlling the past, the Party can justify all of its actions in the present.

There is also an extensive and institutional use of propaganda; again, this was found in the totalitarian regimes of Hitler and Stalin. Orwell may have drawn inspiration from the Nazis; compare the following quotes to how propaganda is used in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*:

In Hitler's Nazi Germany	In Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four
"The broad mass of the nation ... will more easily fall victim to a big lie than to a small one." — Adolf Hitler, in his 1925 book <i>Mein Kampf</i> .	"And if all others accepted the lie which the party imposed—if all records told the same tale—then the lie passed into history and became the truth." (Part 1 - Chapter 3)
"If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it." — Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels.	"To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just so long as it is needed..." (Part 2 - Chapter 9)
"Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country." — Nazi Reich Marshal Hermann Göring during the Nuremberg Trials.	"The rocket bombs which fell daily on London were probably fired by the government of Oceania itself, 'just to keep the people frightened'." (Part 2 - Chapter 5)

Technology Abuse

By means of telescreens and hidden microphones across the city, the Party is able to monitor its members almost all of the time. Additionally, the Party employs complicated mechanisms (*1984* was written in the era before computers) to exert large-scale control on economic production and sources of information, and fearsome machinery to inflict torture upon those it deems enemies. *1984* reveals that technology, which is generally perceived as working toward moral good, can also facilitate the most diabolical evil.

The omnipresent telescreens are the book's most visible symbol of the Party's constant monitoring of its subjects. In their dual capability to blare constant propaganda and observe citizens, the telescreens also symbolize how totalitarian government abuses technology for its own ends instead of exploiting its knowledge to improve civilization.



The Hate Rally from the 2008 opera adaptation at Milan's Teatro alla Scala.

Theme: Technology and Information Control (con't)

Technology Today

Orwell's vision of a society utterly reliant on technology for its information, communication, and convenience was prophetic. Today, individuals and institutions are almost continually connected by the internet and the world wide web. We benefit every hour from up-to-the-minute information brought to us by cell phones, text- and instant messaging, websites of all kinds, round-the-clock news programs, emails, blogs, and services like FaceBook. Our lives are made more convenient by things like on-line shopping and efficient ways to do research and communicate with others. When used correctly and with discretion, technology helps to make our lives more exciting and fully-lived.

But when abused or used recklessly, technology begins to control our lives, just as Orwell predicted in *1984*. Unscrupulous individuals and institutions abuse the internet and the instances of identity fraud, viruses that corrupt information and other breaches of financial or medical confidentiality are on the rise. Every time we shop, converse or enter information into the internet we take a small risk that someone else could use this personal data for unscrupulous ends. Some critics fear that the internet, with its relentless pop-up advertising and spam, has the potential to become a huge propaganda machine, not unlike that of the Party in *1984*. So, in order to use this fountain of public, free-flowing information, we must take more and more responsibility for how it's used—and who uses it.

1984 Point of Interest

This phrase *Big Brother* has found its way into everyday speech, and can be found in the Merriam-Webster dictionary:

big brother, noun, Date: 1863

1 : an older brother

2 : a man who befriends a delinquent or friendless boy

3 : capitalized both Bs [*Big Brother*, personification of the power of the state in *1984* (1949) by George Orwell] a : the leader of an authoritarian state or movement b : an all-powerful government or organization monitoring and directing people's actions [data banks that tell *Big Brother* all about us —Herbert Brucker]



Costume Designer Diana Khoury's costume renderings for (from left) Julia and Winston.

The USA PATRIOT Act was passed by the United States Congress in 2001 as a response to the September 11, 2001 attacks. It has ten titles, each containing numerous sections. **Title II: Enhanced Surveillance Procedures** granted increased powers of surveillance to various government agencies and bodies. Supporters of the Patriot Act claim that these provisions are necessary in fighting the War on Terrorism and protecting the United States from another catastrophic attack. But its detractors argue that many of the sections of Title II infringe upon Constitutionally protected individual and civil rights. In particular, opponents of the law have criticized its authorization of indefinite detentions of immigrants; searches through which law enforcement officers search a home or business without the owner's or the occupant's permission or knowledge; the expanded use of National Security Letters, which allows the FBI to search telephone, email and financial records without a court order; and the expanded access of law enforcement agencies to business records, including library and financial records. Since its passage, several legal challenges have been brought against the act, and Federal courts have ruled that a number of provisions are unconstitutional.

Theme: Physical Control



John Hurt as Winston Smith in the film *1984*.

In addition to manipulating their minds, the Party also controls the bodies of its subjects. The Party constantly watches for any sign of disloyalty, to the point that, as Winston observes, even a tiny facial twitch could lead to an arrest. A person's own nervous system becomes his greatest enemy. The Party forces its members to undergo mass morning-exercises called the Physical Jerks, and then to work long, grueling days at government agencies, keeping people in a general state of exhaustion. Anyone who does manage to defy the Party is punished and "reeducated" through systematic and brutal torture. After being subjected to weeks of this intense treatment, Winston himself comes to the conclusion that nothing is more powerful than physical pain—no emotional loyalty or moral conviction can overcome it.

Throughout history, **torture** has often been used as a method of effecting political re-education. Torture, according to the United Nations Convention Against Torture, is "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity."

In the 21st century, torture is widely considered to be a violation of human rights, and is declared to be unacceptable by Article 5 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Conventions. Torture has been criticized not only on humanitarian and moral grounds, but on the grounds that evidence extracted by torture can be unreliable and that the use of torture corrupts institutions which tolerate it.

Even so, many countries find it expedient from time to time to use torturous techniques; at the same time few wish to be described as doing so, either to their own citizens or international bodies. A variety of devices bridge this gap, including state denial, "secret police", "need to know", denial that given treatments are torturous in nature, claim of "overriding need", and so on. Many states throughout history, and many states today, view torture as a tool (unofficially and when expedient and desired). As a result, and despite worldwide condemnation and the existence of treaty provisions that forbid it, torture still occurs in two-thirds of the world's nations.

Certain practices of the United States military, civilian agencies such as the CIA, and private contractors have been condemned both domestically and internationally as torture. In a 2002 article in the *Washington Post*, CIA sources confirmed that the CIA routinely uses "stress and duress" methods in the U.S.'s War on Terrorism, including beating uncooperative suspects, confining them in cramped quarters, duct-taping them to stretchers, and using other restraints which maintain the subject in an awkward and painful position for long periods of time. According to the organization Human Rights First, at least as many as 46 detainees have been tortured to death in U.S. custody in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Water boarding," a technique in which interrogators pour water into the victim's throat so as to simulate drowning, is a practice that has come under intense scrutiny, but is not considered torture by criteria now used by the United States Department of Justice. When conducted under the directive of the President of the United States, torture is narrowly defined as those actions which "must be equivalent in intensity to the pain accompanying serious physical injury, such as organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death", and argued that actions that inflict any lesser pain, including moderate or fleeting pain, do not necessarily constitute torture.

1984 Point of Interest

Orwell based many aspects of Oceania society on the Stalin-era Soviet Union. The "Two Minutes' Hate", for instance was based on Stalinism's habitual demonization of its enemies and rivals, and the description of Big Brother himself bears a physical resemblance to Stalin. The Party's proclaimed great enemy, Emmanuel Goldstein, resembles Leon Trotsky, in part because both are Jewish, (Orwell describes Goldstein as having a "lean, Jewish face,") and both form a resistance to the Party.

Dystopias in Literature and Film

Like Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), *1984* is one of the most famous novels of the negative utopian, or dystopian, genre. Unlike a utopian novel, in which the writer aims to portray the perfect human society, a novel of negative utopia does the exact opposite: it shows the worst human society imaginable, in an effort to convince readers to avoid any path that might lead toward such societal degradation. In many dystopian fiction and films, the story is set in a terrifying, alienating, futuristic alternate-universe. In popular culture, these works are often thought of as science fiction.

1984 Point of Interest

A **dystopia** (from the Greek *δυσ-* and *τόπος*, alternatively, *cacotopia*, *kakotopia*, *cackotopia*, or *anti-utopia*) is the vision of a society that is the opposite of utopia. A dystopian society is a state in which the conditions of life are extremely bad, characterized by human misery, poverty, oppression,

Nineteen Eighty-Four has been made into two theatrically released films. The first *1984* film, made in Great Britain, was released in 1956. The second *1984* film, released in 1984, is a reasonably faithful adaptation of the novel, and was critically acclaimed. The novel has also been adapted into an opera, composed by Lorin Maazel, with a libretto by J.D. McClatchy and Thomas Meehan. It is rumored that another film adaptation is set to be released in 2009, directed by Tim Robbins. This will be a version of a stage adaptation written by San Francisco Mime Troupe head writer Michael Gene Sullivan, which was directed by Robbins, at the Actor's Gang in Los Angeles.

If you like *1984*, you might want to check out these other novels and movies:

Fahrenheit 451, is a dystopian soft science fiction novel by Ray Bradbury. The novel presents a future American society in which the masses are hedonistic, and critical thought through reading is outlawed. A movie version was released in 1966.

A Clockwork Orange is a 1962 novel by Anthony Burgess, later a 1971 film adaptation of the same name by Stanley Kubrick. Set in a dystopian near future, the novel opens with the introduction 15-year-old Alex, who, with his gang members (known as "droogs.") , roam the streets at night, committing violent crimes ("ultraviolence") for fun. In contrast to Alex's love for violence and cruelty, he also has a major love for classical music, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony being his most favorite piece of all.

Logan's Run is a novel by William F. Nolan and George Clayton Johnson. Published in 1967, it depicts a dystopian future society in which population and the consumption of resources is managed and maintained in equilibrium by the simple expedient of demanding the death of everyone upon reaching a particular age, thus avoiding the issue of overpopulation. The novel was adapted in 1976 as a film.

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? is a science fiction novel by Philip K. Dick, written in 1966 and published in 1968. It tells of the moral crisis of a bounty hunter who stalks androids in a fallout-clouded, partially-deserted future San Francisco. This novel was adapted into the 1982 film *Blade Runner*, directed by Ridley Scott and starring Harrison Ford .

1985 is a novel by English writer Anthony Burgess. Originally published in 1978, it was inspired by, and was intended as a tribute to, George Orwell's novel. In the hypothetical 1985, trade unions have become so powerful that they exert full control over society.



National Players production of *1984*. Tour 45.

Escape from New York is a 1981 science fiction/action film directed and scored by John Carpenter. The film is set in the near future of a United States so crime-ridden that the Island of Manhattan in New York City has become a maximum security prison. Ex-soldier and legendary fugitive "Snake" Plissken (Kurt Russell) is given 24 hours to find the President of the United States, who has been captured by inmates after Air Force One crashed on the island.

Dystopias in Literature and Film

Neuromancer is a 1984 novel by William Gibson. The novel tells the story of a washed-up computer hacker hired by a mysterious employer to work on the ultimate hack. Gibson explores artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and genetic engineering, long before these ideas entered popular culture. The concept of *cyberspace* makes its first appearance, with Gibson inventing the word to describe "a consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions."

Riddley Walker is a novel by Russell Hoban, first published in 1980. *Riddley Walker* is set at an unspecified time, at least two thousand years after the late 1900s, when a nuclear war has devastated world civilizations. The main action of the story begins when the young narrator, Riddley, stumbles upon efforts to recreate a weapon of the ancient world.

The Handmaid's Tale is a dystopian novel by Margaret Atwood, first published in 1985. The novel explores themes of women in subjugation, and the various means by which they gain agency, against the backdrop of a totalitarian evangelical-Christian theocracy which has overthrown the United States government in the near future. The novel was adapted into a film in 1990.

The Children of Men is a dystopian novel by P. D. James that was published in 1992. Set in England in 2021, it centers on the results of mass infertility. James describes a United Kingdom that is steadily depopulating and focuses on a small group of resisters who do not share the disillusionment of the masses. A loose film adaptation, directed by Alfonso Cuarón and starring Julianne Moore and Clive Owen, was released in 2006.

Gattaca is a 1997 science fiction drama film, starring Ethan Hawke, Uma Thurman and Jude Law. The film presents a biopunk vision of a society driven by new eugenics. Children of the middle and upper classes are selected through preimplantation genetic diagnosis to ensure they possess the best hereditary traits of their parents.

The Giver is a novel written by Lois Lowry and published in 1993. The novel follows a boy named Jonas through the twelfth year of his life. The society has eliminated pain and strife by converting to "Sameness", a plan which has also eradicated emotional depth from their lives.

Idiocracy is a 2006 American dark comedy directed by Mike Judge, and starring Luke Wilson and Maya Rudolph. The two main characters sign up for a military hibernation experiment that goes awry, and they awaken 500 years in the future. They discover that the world has devolved into a dystopia where marketing, commercialism, and cultural anti-intellectualism run rampant and dysgenic pressure has resulted in a uniformly stupid human society.

I Am Legend is a 1954 science fiction novel by Richard Matheson about the last man alive in a future Los Angeles, California. The novel was a success and was adapted to film as *The Last Man on Earth* in 1964, as *The Omega Man* in 1971, and again in 2007 as *I Am Legend*.

WALL-E is a 2008 computer-animated science fiction film produced by Pixar Animation Studios. It follows the story of a robot named WALL-E who is designed to clean up a polluted Earth. He eventually falls in love with another robot named EVE, and follows her into outer space on an adventure.



1984 Point of Interest

1984 is the American television commercial which introduced the Macintosh personal computer for the first time. It is now considered a "watershed event" and a "masterpiece." It was directed by Ridley Scott. Its only daytime televised broadcast was on 22 January 1984 during the third quarter of Super Bowl XVIII. Above is Anya Major as the unnamed heroine, running from the security guards in the Apple commercial.

Pre-Show Discussion Questions and Activities

1. On the day before you see *1984*, inform your students as they walk into class that a new set of classroom rules will be followed from today forward. Make the rules unnecessarily stringent and inflexible and enforce them for 15-20 minutes. When the exercise is over, ask students to respond, discussing their feelings and thoughts about the activity.
2. Ask students whether they keep or have ever kept a diary, and then discuss the purpose of a personal diary. Explain that in the novel of *1984*, the main character, Winston Smith, starts to keep a diary, which in itself is a political act of rebellion, and aids in his process of self-awakening. Have students keep a diary a week where they can record everyday happenings, thoughts, feelings, and dreams. After a week, ask students: what are some of the advantages to keeping a diary? What does it mean to keep your thoughts and feelings private? How would it feel to have your diary lost, stolen or read by someone else?
3. Ask students to think about the word *government*. Have students work in small groups to answer the following questions: Who or what is government? What does—or what must—government do? What different kinds of governments are in the world today? How does government affect you personally? Are there ways in which government or the private sector intrudes upon the privacy of U.S. citizens? What are some of these ways? Do laws protect your freedom or inhibit it? Ask students as a class to share the information gathered in their groups. If time permits, students could debate this thesis: Laws protect freedom.
4. Examine the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights to find freedoms granted to you as an American citizen. Are some of these freedoms denied to citizens of other countries? Which ones? List the freedoms you enjoy both in your home and in your community. List the freedoms you are denied. What is the reason for the denials? Do you accept the reasons?
5. In *1984*, the Party controls its citizens through use of fear. What is your fear? Discuss or write an essay describing your worst fear and why it is that you fear that thing.
6. Winston says that “Your worst enemy...was your own nervous system.” Have you ever experienced a time when you felt this way? Have you ever felt helpless or not in control of your own life? Discuss or write a short essay explaining the situation and how you dealt with it.
7. What does it mean to trust someone—a friend, a family member, an authority figure? Whom do you trust and why? Why do human beings yearn to trust? What would it mean to be betrayed by a person you trust? Have you ever been betrayed? Have you ever betrayed someone who has placed their trust in you? What does it mean to trust sources of information—news agencies (print media, television,) the internet, etc? Do you believe everything you read? What if what you read turned out to be false in order to manipulate you?
8. What is power? What makes a person powerful? What are the qualities and characteristics of a good leader? What makes a person a bad leader? If you were a ruler, would you rather have people love, fear or respect you? Why?
9. What is the role of technology in your life? How does it enhance your life? In what ways does it harm your life? How does technology control people?

1984 Point of Interest

The adjective "Orwellian" denotes many things. It can refer to totalitarian action or organization as well as governmental attempts to control or misuse information for the purposes of controlling, pacifying or even subjugating the population. Orwellian can also refer to governmental propagandizing by the misnaming of things. Since the novel's publication "Orwellian" has in fact become somewhat of a catch-all for any kind of governmental overreach or dishonesty and therefore has multiple meanings and applications. The phrase: *Big Brother is Watching You* specifically connotes pervasive, invasive surveillance but can also refer to attempts to over regulate or legislate societal behavior.

Post-Show Discussion Questions and Activities

1. After seeing the play, discuss how the play is different from the novel. Was it easier to understand or more difficult? Were scenes left out or changed, and if so, how did those omissions or changes affect the way you interpret the book? (You might also compare the play and the novel to a film version.)
2. What is Newspeak? What is its purpose? Using *1984* values and Newspeak, translate the following sentences:

Chocolate rations halved to five grams.
Eurasia attacks London with rocket bombs; 25 dead.
Private Ogilvy destroys 7 tanks in saving 10 comrades.
Donald and Ivana Trump to remarry.
Goldstein is caught and torn apart by angry mob.
3. Prepare a speech written in Newspeak, or rewrite a newspaper article in Newspeak. Present it to the class. Discuss how language is important to freedom.
4. The world within which Winston lives is replete with contradictions. Discuss each of the Party mottos: “War is Peace;” “Ignorance is Strength;” “Freedom is Slavery.” What role do these contradictions serve on a grand scale? Discuss other contradictions inherent in the Party's philosophy. What role does contradiction serve within the framework of Doublethink? How does Doublethink satisfy the needs of The Party? How is Doublethink used in Winston's brainwashing?
5. What is Two Minutes Hate? Whom do the citizens scream at? Why do they hate him? What principles does he espouse? What might everyone get very angry during two minutes hate? As a government, why would you want this exercise? What other examples of Two Minutes hate exist in history? (or present day)?
6. Discuss this quote; “Who controls the past--controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.” What does this mean? How is it true in this society? What is the converse of this? What is an example of this principle from history? Why is it important that newspapers and schoolbook history be changed? Where would you go for the truth, if the news sources and books aren't right?
7. Discuss the Party's slogan, “War is Peace.” In Oceania, what is the purpose of war? How can war actually bring Peace? Where is this war fought? Who fights in it? Who is dropping rocket bombs on London? Why does the government want this war to continue? How is this policy true today?
8. From her first appearance through to the end of the play, Julia is a key figure in *1984*. Trace the path of Julia in relation to Winston's life; in what ways does she influence him? Did you trust her, initially? Overall, do you feel she had a positive or negative impact upon him? In what ways are Julia and Winston alike? In what ways are they different? In what ways are their attitudes toward the Party similar or different? In what ways are their acts of rebellion similar or different?
9. Discuss the role of love, sex and intimacy in *1984*. What specific function does the Party's sanction against intimacy serve? How could Winston and Julia's relationship constitute a political act?
10. Describe the role that O'Brien plays in Winston's life. Why do you think that initially, Winston is drawn to O'Brien? Why does he implicitly trust him, despite the enormous dangers involved?
11. Goldstein's book says that “The invention of print...made it easier to manipulate public opinion.” How has your opinion been changed through the use of media, internet, print, television? In advertising, political campaigns, etc? Do you seek sources with different points-of-view to develop your own informed opinion? Why or why not? You might also explore the history of using print and propaganda to influence opinion.

Post-Show Discussion Questions and Activities (con't)

12. Discuss the idea of Room 101, the place where everyone meets his or her worst fear. Keeping in mind that for most of Winston's time at the Ministry of Love, he does not know what he will find in Room 101, what role does that uncertainty play in making Room 101 frightening? Does the cage of rats break Winston's spirit, or does it merely play a symbolic role? What would be in your Room 101?
13. Discuss the quote: "We are the dead." What does Winston mean by that? If he is dead, whom does he think is "alive?" Early on in the novel, we learn of Winston's belief in the proles as a liberating force. What accounts for Winston's almost blind faith in the proles? What are some of the characteristics of the proles that, in Winston's eyes, make them the ultimate means for overthrowing Big Brother?
14. Following his capture, Winston undergoes a process of "philosophical cleansing" and re-education against which he valiantly, but unsuccessfully fights. Discuss Winston's "capitulation" at the hands of O'Brien. How is Winston brought to "love Big Brother?" Julia tells Winston that even though the Party can torture a person and make him say anything, they cannot make him believe it. How do you feel about this statement? How easy is it to brainwash a person? Do you think governments actually use brainwashing? In sacrificing Julia, how has Winston, in essence, signaled his own end?
15. During his final encounter with O'Brien, Winston argues that, if all else fails, the inherent nature of the individual-the "spirit of man"-is strong enough to undermine a society such as that created by The Party. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Is Winston's belief applicable to the world we live in today? Can you cite examples in our own recent history that support or dismiss Winston's belief in the resiliency and righteousness of the human spirit?
16. Discuss Winston as a heroic figure. What qualities does he possess that could define him as one? Imagine yourself as Winston Smith at the beginning of 1984. What would you do to undermine The Party? Knowing what you know now, how would you extricate yourself from the fate that awaits you?
17. Who is Big Brother? Does he exist? Does Goldstein? Is their actual existence important?
18. In the final analysis, how accurate was Orwell in his vision of the future? Which of Orwell's predictions have become a part of history, not only in communist countries but in the free world? In what ways does our contemporary society compare to his idea of society in 1984? Are there examples in which he was correct? What is most opposite? Do you see a potential for aspects of Orwell's "vision" to come true?
19. We know that Winston keeps a diary, and perhaps others in this world keep private dairies as well. Choose a character (Julia, Parson, O'Brien, Syme, Gladys, The Landlady) and write a diary from his or her perspective.
20. Hold a debate between Party members and members of the Brotherhood, or between Inner and outer Party members.
21. Create a type of *Spoon River Anthology* resurrecting ten of Oceania's dead to relate their experiences. What really happened to them?
22. Write a science fiction dystopia short-story casting yourself as the hero. Use guided imagery to get started thinking about the future and what it could be like, then create a short story around a problem you foresee occurring in the future. Casting yourself as the hero will enable you to solve the problem.



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Curriculum Connections

The study guide and pre- and post-show discussion questions address specific Maryland Core Learning Goals in English and Essential Learning Outcomes in Theatre, including:

Maryland High School Core Learning Goals: English

Goal 1 Reading, Reviewing and Responding to Texts

1.1.4 The student will apply reading strategies when comparing, making connections, and drawing conclusions about non-print text.

1.2.1 The student will consider the contributions of plot, character, setting, conflict, and point of view when constructing the meaning of a text.

1.2.2 The student will determine how the speaker, organization, sentence structure, word choice, tone, rhythm, and imagery reveal an author's purpose.

1.2.3 The student will explain the effectiveness of stylistic elements in a text that communicate an author's purpose.

1.2.5 The student will extend or further develop meaning by explaining the implications of the text for the reader or contemporary society.

1.3.4 The student will explain how devices such as staging, lighting, blocking, special effects, graphics, language, and other techniques unique to a non-print medium are used to create meaning and evoke response.

1.3.5 The student will explain how common and universal experiences serve as the source of literary themes that cross time and cultures.

Goal 2 Composing in a Variety of Modes

2.1.2 The student will compose to describe, using prose and/or poetic forms.

2.1.3 The student will compose to express personal ideas, using prose and/or poetic forms.

Goal 4 Evaluating the Content, Organization, and Language Use of Texts

4.1.1 The student will state and explain a personal response to a given text.

4.2.2 The student will explain how the specific language and expression used by the writer or speaker affects reader or listener response.

4.3.1 The student will alter the tone of a text by revising its diction.

4.3.3 The student will alter a text to present the same content to a different audience via the same or different media.

Maryland Essential Learning Outcomes for Fine Arts: Theatre Developed by the Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance

Outcome 1: Perceiving, Performing and Responding—Aesthetic Education I.A.1. Identify a wide variety of characters presented in dramatic literature and describe ways they reflect a range of human feelings and experiences

Outcome II: Historical, Cultural, and Social Context

II.A.2. Demonstrate knowledge of appropriate audience behavior in relationship to cultural traditions

II.A.4. Select and discuss the work of a variety of playwrights, critics, theatre commentators, and theorists that represent various cultures and historical periods

II.C.1. Demonstrate familiarity with a variety of dramatic texts and genres

II.C.2. Compare the treatment of similar themes in drama from various cultures and historical periods

Outcome III: Creative Expression and Production

III.A.2. Construct imaginative scripts and collaborate with actors to refine scripts so the stories and their meaning are conveyed to an audience

III.A.3. Develop multiple interpretations for scripts and visual and oral production ideas for presentations

III.A.6. Create and project subtleties of character motivation and behavior using speech, sound, and movement

III.B.6. Study dramatic texts and, using improvisational skills, create extensions appropriate for identified characters and situations

Outcome IV: Aesthetic Criticism

IV.A.1. Use prescribed and self-constructed criteria to evaluate and describe verbally the characteristics of successful ensemble performances and productions

IV.B.1. Analyze dramatic texts and other literature of theatre to identify and describe the presence of theatrical conventions that influence performance

IV.C.1. Identify and describe verbally the primary scenic, auditory, and other physical characteristics of selected theatrical performances

IV.C.2. Write critical reviews of selected theatre performances using established criteria and appropriate language for the art form

CURRICULUM

Did this experience apply to your curriculum?

Yes

No

If yes, how? _____

Was classroom time spent discussing the performance after your students attended the play? Yes No

The program was a valuable addition to classroom teaching. Very much Somewhat A little Not at all

The program enhanced aesthetic appreciation. Very much Somewhat A little Not at all

The program enhanced higher thinking skills. Very much Somewhat A little Not at all

Comments: _____

STUDY GUIDE

The study guide was useful in general. Very much Somewhat A little Not at all

It provided what was necessary to prepare the students. Very much Somewhat A little Not at all

How appropriate was the volume of information provided in the Study Guide? Very Somewhat A little Not at all

Which sections of the Study Guide did you find most useful? _____

In which sections did the students show the greatest interest? _____

The study guide could be improved by: _____

SERVICE

The registration forms and brochures were clear and easy to use.

Very much Somewhat A little Not at all

The scheduling and confirmation of reservations was: Excellent Good Adequate Poor

The seating arrangements were: Excellent Good Adequate Poor

Parking and bus unloading and reloading were: Excellent Good Adequate Poor

We welcome your comments! Please return this form, along with student evaluations, to: Diana Fooksman, General Manager, National Players, 2001 Olney-Sandy Spring Road, Olney, MD 20832 or email nationalplayers@olneytheatre.org

