

Teacher Guide

Grades 9–12

1984

George Orwell

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1984

by
George Orwell

Teacher Guide

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Note

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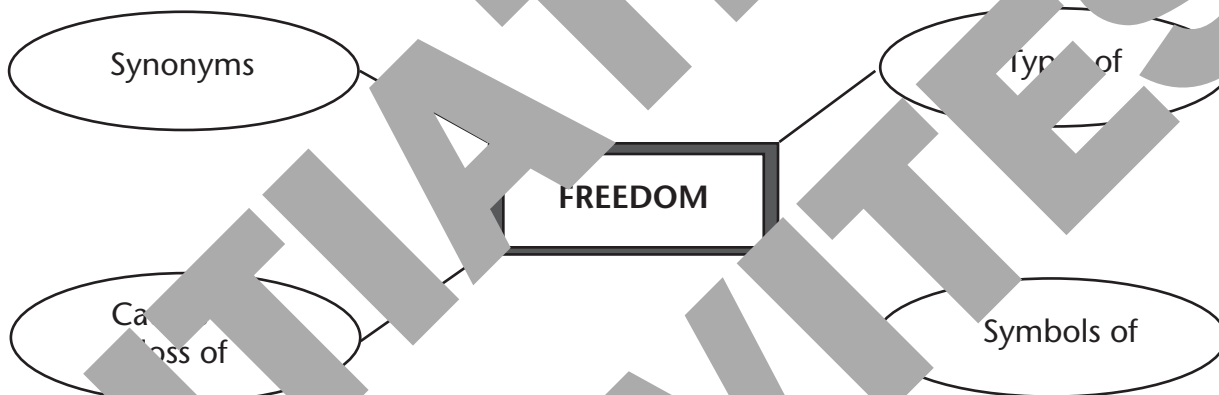
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Initiating Activities

1. Write the following statements on the board. These are the slogans of the Party. Discuss with the students if there is any way these statements could be true.

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH.
WAR IS PEACE.
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY.

2. Brainstorm the word "freedom." Have a student scribe jot down students' ideas around the word. You might use a framework like the one below to get a discussion started.



3. Students discuss/debate the results. "Which of the following would be worse?"
 - to lose individual freedom for a while and then have it taken away
 - to never know what it is like to have individual freedom

Pre-reading Writing Assignment: Your parents are able to see and hear everything you do and say 24 hours a day. How do you alter your behavior? How do you feel?

5. **Research and Oral Presentation:** Arrange students in small groups or pairs to complete one of the research projects outlined on the following page. Make sure appropriate materials are available at your school media center and/or public library. Oral presentations should include board notes or handouts of the important information.

Chapter One

Sections I–II
Pages 5–27 and Appendix

Vocabulary

vile 5	sanguine 6	sordid 7	ramifications 7
truncheons 8	nebulous 12	defiler 14	despicable 14
venomous 11	specious 14	comperium 15	inexorably 16
disseminate 17	scintillate 18	prize 20	sanctioned 21
superfluous 246	archaic 246	ambiguities 247	eulogy 249
amalgam 250	euphemism 252	inimical 255	panegyric 256

Vocabulary Activities

Have the students take a positive, neutral, or negative connotation card for each vocabulary word and decide if it has a positive, negative, or neutral connotation as it is used in the novel. Most of the words have negative connotations. Point out to the students that Orwell has set a very gloomy mood by using so many negative words.

Questions for Discussion

1. Describe Winston's apartment. Why is the name important? (Winston's home, *is a smelly, run-down place with no electricity in the daytime and an inoperable elevator. It is certainly no mansion.*)
2. Describe Winston Smith. (*frail, blonde, 39, blue overalls, nervous, depressed*)
3. What kind of life is it like to live in Oceania? (*no private life, the police patrol swooping down in helicopters to peer in people's windows, the constant fear of being targeted as an enemy by the Thought Police, the posters of Big Brother with reminders that "Big Brother is Watching You"*)
4. What are the three slogans of the Party? (*War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength*)
5. What are the four ministries and their purposes? (*The Ministry of Truth oversees news, entertainment, education, and the arts. The Ministry of Peace is in charge of war. The Ministry of Plenty is concerned with economic affairs, and the Ministry of Love enforces laws.*)

6. Why was it such a terrible thing for Winston to write in a diary? (*It indicated that he was expressing thoughts not planted in his head by the Party.*) What does the account in his diary tell you about this society? (*They are completely oblivious to human rights.*)

7. What hope does Winston have about O'Brien? (*that he is intelligent and politically unorthodox; that he knows something about the Brotherhood*)

8. Who is Emmanuel Goldstein? (*the Enemy of the People and the focus of the Two Minutes Hate*) What purpose do these hate movements serve? (*It teaches the people a "truth" to nihilism in the face of the Party's lies.*) How do Winston and the other people sometimes feel toward Goldstein? (*His heart went out to him.*) In what other ways was Winston's hate channeled? (*toward the girl with the dark hair, who was pretty and sexless and seemed very orthodox*)

9. What happened to the "old" Winston in 1984? (*He got "downed" by the "Big Brother" over an old woman's diary. What happens to those arrested by the Thought Police? (They are vaporized and their existence is forgotten.)*)

10. What amusements do the Parsons children enjoy? (*They play "thought police;" they go to hangings, dances, and drills with their youth group, the Spies.*)

11. What hope does Winston have after seven years in the "Ministry of Love"? (*Christie whispered to him, "We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness."*) What do you think this could mean?

12. In Oceania's society, what is the only thing that can be counted as one's own? (*"a few cubic centimeters inside your skull"*—p. 26) To what does this refer? (*thoughts*)

13. What does Winston consider himself a "dead man"? (*because he is guilty of thoughtcrime, and he knows he will be "rotted out" eventually*)

Vocabulary, Questions, Writing Ideas, Activities

Appendix

1. What is the purpose of Newspeak? (*To provide a medium of expression appropriate to the proper mental attitude of the Party and of essential necessities. All words are to be purged.*)
2. Into what three distinct classes are the vocabularies divided, and what are the purposes of each? (*A vocabulary, for everyday life; B vocabulary, compound words such as goodthink, crimethought, used for political purposes; C vocabulary, scientific and technical terms.*)
3. What happened to books written before 1960? (*Most were destroyed, but some were rewritten.*)

Activity: Word Map

Have students develop a word map for "Utopia." Have them begin by looking the word up in dictionaries, thesauri, and encyclopedias. Relay the information on page 4 regarding other writers who wrote Utopian or Anti-Utopian novels.

Synonyms

Antonyms

Utopia

Elements required for:

Writing Ideas,

Bulletin Board Idea

Have students design posters of their idea of Big Brother. Each poster should have the caption "Big Brother is Watching You." Place the pictures submitted not only on the bulletin board, but all around the room and especially in places like next to the pencil sharpener, under the clock, with the restroom paper, on the classroom door, and so forth. After the students have been "brought" to Big Brother's door, have them show how they feel about the pictures.

Activities