



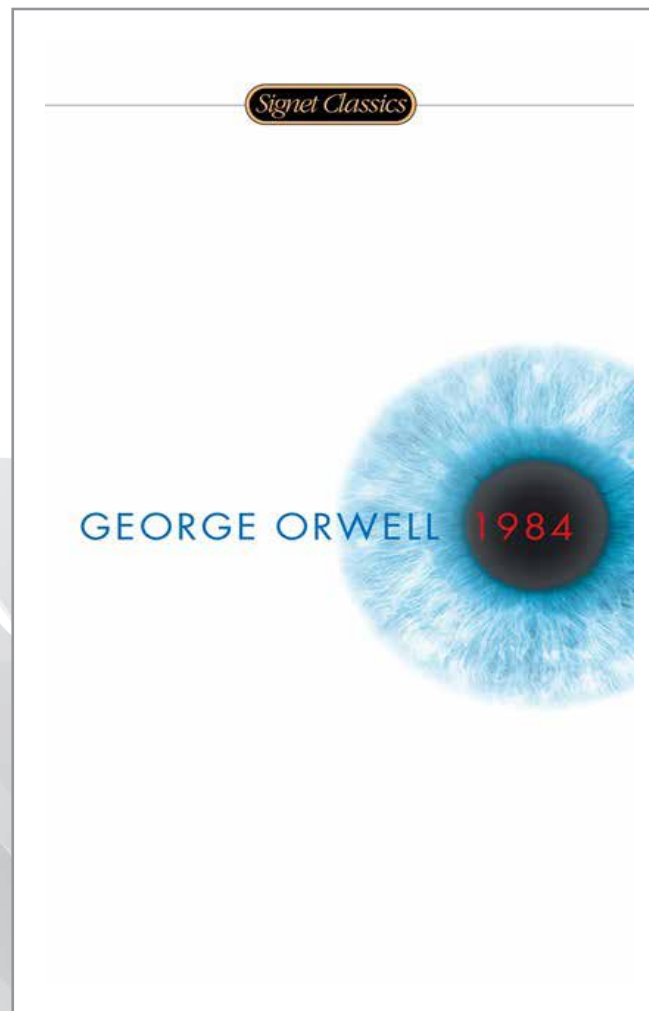
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

1984

George Orwell



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

1984

George Orwell

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

ISBN 978-1-50203-553-0

Copyright infringement is a violation of Federal Law.

© 2020 by Novel Units, Inc., St. Louis, MO. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without prior written permission from Novel Units, Inc.

Reproduction of any part of this publication for an entire school or for a school system, by for-profit institutions and tutoring centers, or for commercial sale is strictly prohibited.

Novel Units is a registered trademark of Conn Education.

Printed in the United States of America.

To order, contact your
local school supply store, or:

Toll-Free Fax: 877.716.7272

Phone: 888.650.4224

3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

sales@novelunits.com

novelunits.com

Table of Contents

About the Author	3
Background Information: Russian Communism	5
Summary	6
Initiating Activities	8
Research Projects	9
Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, Writing Ideas, Activities	
Chapter One	
Sections I, II	10
Sections III, IV, V	13
Sections VI, VII, VIII.....	16
Chapter Two	
Sections I, II, III	18
Sections IV, V, VI, VII.....	20
Sections VIII, IX, X	23
Chapter Three	
Sections I, II, III	26
Sections IV, V, VI.....	29
Post-reading Activities	31
Summarizing Questions for Discussion and Writing, Other Readings, Drama and Music, Art, Creative Writing, Research and Report Topics, Love	
Rubric for Essay-Writing	34
Assessment	35

About the Author

Although George Orwell requested that no biography be written about him, most of his work is autobiographical and grew out of his experiences. From his writings and the reminiscences of his friends, enough information has been gathered to help the reader understand Orwell and therefore his writings.

He was born Eric Hugh Blair in India in 1903, the middle child of a minor government official. At eight, he was sent to an expensive prep school in England, but he was accepted at a reduced tuition rate, and this caused him to be treated as a sort of “charity case” by his snobbish peers. This marked his life with a constant sense of failure, and a conviction that the rich and strong made the world’s rules. These feelings caused him to identify with the underdog and sympathize with victims of poverty. He won a scholarship at Eton, and did well there, but rather than attending a university after graduation he joined the Indian Imperial Police. He soon found he doubted the merits of imperialism, and this realization made his job in Burma unpleasant. He resigned after five years and went to Paris to write. During this time (1927-1932), he wrote *Burmese Days*, *The Clergyman’s Daughter*, *Keep the Aspidochelone Flying*, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, and *The Road to Wigan Pier*.

In 1936, Orwell went to Spain to write newspaper articles about the Spanish Civil War, but instead he joined the anti-Franco militia, backed by Trotsky-ite Communists. He was wounded severely, and was discharged from the hospital just in time to escape from the country. The Communists had outlawed the militia in which Orwell had served. Disillusioned with Communism, Orwell concluded that all revolutions fail because those who attain power are corrupted by it, a theme that permeates his writing.

When he returned to England, Orwell and his wife lived in a small village where they kept chickens, geese, and goats, and grew vegetables and fruits. His friends recall that he had a great sense of responsibility for the well-being of animals, and was especially fond of horses. It may be that Orwell saw in nature the only truly “Utopian state” possible, and that he felt 20th-century man’s move away from the land was a mistake.

Orwell's health prevented him from serving in the second world war, but he joined the Home Guard and worked for the BBC. During this time the British Ministry of Information sent out a directive to BBC news broadcasters to play up the virtues of Bolshevism. (Russia was an Allied power during the war.)

His classic novel, *Animal Farm*, was written during the closing years of the war, and was finally published in 1945. It had been rejected by four publishers because of its theme. Publication of the book was timely, because it was just at this point that the true aims and methods of the Russian Communists were beginning to come to light. Orwell's health continued to fail. He produced his final masterpiece, *1984*, and then died in 1950.

It is generally agreed that Orwell's purpose in writing *1984* was to warn the world about the dangers of totalitarianism. The particular danger in the country of Oceania, the setting for the novel, is that the oppressive government seeks to control not only the actions of its citizens, but their innermost thoughts and feelings as well. Depressingly, the government succeeds.

Orwell was strongly influenced by Jonathan Swift, who used his Houyhnhms and Yahoos as political symbols in *Gulliver's Travels*, and by Charles Dickens, who had the optimistic hope that things would turn out all right if people could just learn to treat one another decently.

Plato's *Republic* presented a plan for an ideal society, as did Thomas More's *Utopia*, written in 1516. *Utopia* was the first novel to describe a land where people live by reason and all poverty and injustice have been abolished. Other novels concerned with the Utopian theme include Campanella's *Civitas Solis* (1656), Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), Harrington's *Oceana* (1656), Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872), Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), William Morris' *News from Nowhere* (1891).

Both *Animal Farm* and *1984* can be considered Anti-Utopian novels, in the same vein as Aldous Huxley's satire, *Brave New World* (1932), and his frightening sequel, *Brave New World Revisited* (1958). Huxley points out in the latter novel how many of his predictions made in 1932 had come true in a quarter-century. Orwell died the year after he wrote *1984*, so it is up to readers of the novel to make the comparisons Orwell might have made if he had been able to write a sequel.

Sections VI–VIII Pages 55-87

Vocabulary

debauchery 57
truism 69
proprietor 79

aquiline 58
anodyne 73
groveling 87

flogged 61
pugnaciously 75

sinecure 65
benevolent 79

Vocabulary Activity

Students can write a paragraph using at least five of the vocabulary words on the list for this lesson. Then they should “translate” their paragraphs into Newspeak. If you have access to a desktop publishing program, you might print the collected Newspeak paragraphs, distribute them, and then have students transcribe another student’s paragraph back into conventional English.

Questions for Discussion

1. Who is Katharine? (*Winston’s wife, no longer with him*) What is the only purpose of sexual relations in the Party’s estimation? (*propagation*)
2. With whom does Winston believe hope for the future lies? (*the proles*) Why? (*They make up 85% of the population, and since they are illiterate slaves of the Party they are not considered important. They have, however, retained a certain amount of humanity, which requires no intelligence.*)
3. What small scrap of truth about the past had Winston once held in his hands? (*Winston had seen a newspaper photograph showing the counter-revolutionaries Jones, Aronson, and Rutherford in Eurasia on the same date that it was later reported they were confessing to their activities in Oceania. This was hard evidence of distortion, that the confessions were lies, but Winston threw the newspaper photo into the memory hole, too terrified to keep it.*)
4. What does Winston not understand about the Party’s destruction of the past? (*He understands HOW; he does not understand WHY.*)
5. What did Winston mean by writing, “Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows”? (*that the solid world exists and its laws do not change*)

6. Who do you think dropped the rocket bomb? (*Answers will vary, but some may believe it is not the Eurasians but the government of Oceania itself, to keep the proles in a constant state of fear and hatred for the "enemy."*) Does Winston's reaction to the human hand lying on the pavement seem in accord with what you know so far about his character?
7. How is the lottery in 1984 similar to lotteries today? (*Millions of people participate, yet the winners are few. It gives false hope to many people. In our society, there are also those who make a living by "predicting" numbers for people.*)
8. What item does Winston discover at the antique shop? (*a piece of coral inside a hemisphere of glass*) Why does it appeal to him? (*It seems to belong to a past age.*)
9. What is so appealing about the room above the shop? (*There is no telescreen, an old 12-hour clock, a big bed, and the room seems somehow a safe haven from the intruding eyes of Big Brother.*)
10. Why is Winston fascinated with the proprietor's rhyme about the church bells? (*There are no longer any church bells, yet the rhyme recalls their sound for Winston. The rhyme, too, is from a past age.*)

Activities

- Have the students list activities in which they regularly engage that would be considered "ownlife" (see page 70 to review).
- Have the students create T-charts comparing proles with Party members or Winston's room with the room above the antique shop.

Party members	proles

Chapter One Review: Writing Assignments

- What crimes has Winston committed in Chapter One? (He writes subversive things in his diary, thinks about sex, engages in "ownlife," asks questions about the past, and patronizes a free-trade shop. His greatest "crime" is "thoughtcrime.")
- Discuss at least three methods used by the Party to control its citizens.