



Prestwick House
Teaching Unit™

Sample

Prestwick House
Literature
Teaching Unit
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



1984

by George Orwell

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



Click here
to learn more
about this
Teaching Unit!



Click here
to find more
Classroom Resources
for this title!



 **Prestwick House**

More from Prestwick House

Literature

Literary Touchstone Classics
Literature Teaching Units

Grammar and Writing

College and Career Readiness: Writing
Grammar for Writing

Vocabulary

Vocabulary Power Plus
Vocabulary from Latin and Greek Roots

Reading

Reading Informational Texts
Reading Literature

Literature Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



1984

by George Orwell

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms

 **Prestwick House**

P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938
www.prestwickhouse.com
800.932.4593

ISBN: 978-1-58049-070-2

Copyright ©2017 by Prestwick House Inc.

All rights reserved. No portion may be reproduced without permission in writing from the publisher.

Item No: 300006

1984

Objectives

By the end of this unit, the student will be able to:

1. discuss the historical context in which George Orwell wrote *1984*, particularly in regard to:
 - A. the consolidation of military, economic, and political power;
 - B. trends in language, society, and technology that were beginning or had already occurred in 1949 and that had great negative potential.
2. define the terms “utopia” and “dystopia” and relate the terms to this novel.
3. compare and contrast *1984* with other science fiction novels.
4. write an essay presenting what Orwell saw as the future, and comment on where Orwell’s vision of the future appears to have been right or wrong.
5. define the terms “irony” and “satire,” and point out examples in this novel.
6. discuss Orwell’s thesis that if a dictator can control the language, society’s rules under that dictator can and will limit and/or direct how individuals think.
7. prove, by referring to comments and incidents in the text, that the following themes are developed in the novel:
 - A. the systematic dehumanization of people;
 - B. the evils of totalitarianism;
 - C. the corruption of language;
 - D. the failure of love;
 - E. the weakness of the individual when confronted with the power of the State.
8. discuss the thesis, by referring to the text, that a repressive society relies on isolation and alienation as a means to control its citizens.
9. comment on Orwell’s view of the class structure in *1984*’s society and the relationship of that society to the year 1949.

1984

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. If we termed this novel a “cautionary piece,” we would be saying that one of Orwell’s purposes in writing this book is to caution people about what can happen to society in the future. Assuming that this is a “cautionary piece,” of what dangers is Orwell warning us?
2. In times of war or great civil unrest and danger, people are willing to give up some freedom in order to secure more protection. For example, it is conceivable that some people would be willing to give the police greater and wider powers to conduct searches in order to combat drugs. What is your opinion about freedom and security?
3. Politically, socially, and militarily, what did the world look like in 1949?
4. Discuss the terms “utopia” and “dystopia” and relate those terms to this novel. In your opinion, what would a utopian society of the future be like?
5. Consider any of the science fiction novels or movies that you have read or seen, which are set some time in the future. How did the society in that work compare or contrast to the society in *1984*? How were the heroes similar or different?
6. Orwell seemed to predict some developments correctly, but he seemed to miss the mark on other developments in history and science. What did he foresee correctly? What did he see incorrectly?
7. Define the term “irony” and point out at least five examples of it in this novel. Satire, which uses irony as one of its main weapons, makes fun of something in order to correct it. What, if anything, did you find humorous in the five examples you cited?
8. Define the term “paradox” and, using one or two examples, discuss its function and presence in this novel.
9. Discuss Orwell’s view of the relationship between language and thought. Use examples from your own experience to illustrate the points you make.
10. O’ Brien’s view of the nature of reality, while it may seem new and strange to you, has been thought about in a modified form since the eighteenth century. According to O’Brien, what is real?

1984

The Principles of Newspeak

Newspeak – is the official language of this government and is designed to limit the way people think by removing abstract concepts from the language and/or by changing the definition of those concepts. There are three levels of vocabulary to Newspeak.

1. The “A” vocabulary includes words for everyday activities such as eating, drinking, and working. It contains simple nouns and verbs, like “tree” and “hit,” and the shades of meaning have been eliminated. In addition, words are designed so that the one word can be used as a verb, noun, adjective, or adverb. By adding prefixes and suffixes, users can change a word’s meaning. *Uncold* is warm; *doubleplus cold* means extremely cold. Instead of describing something as “evil,” it is described as “ungood.”
2. The “B” vocabulary includes words deliberately constructed for political purposes. These words are designed to promote correct thought. Words such as “justice,” “democracy,” and “religion” have been abolished or reduced to either “crimethink” or “oldthink.” Names of government organizations, like “Thinkpol” (Thought Police), fall into this group. Because phrases like “Communist International” evoke thoughts of human brotherhood and revolution, the word “Comintern” is used to suggest a tightly-knit organization with a precise doctrine. The purpose of Newspeak is to make speech as nearly automatic and thoughtless as possible.
3. The “C” vocabulary includes scientific and technical terms, which have been purged of any ideological meaning. The aim is to keep knowledge specialized and compartmentalized so no one knows too much.

1984

ONE

I

Vocabulary

decisive – final, conclusive
faltered – stumbled, hesitated
interminable – neverending, ceaseless
meagerness – thinness
nebulous – vague, unclear
orthodoxy – those who follow the traditional or usual way of doing something
sanguine – ruddy, reddish
simultaneously – at the same time
tableaux – a series of staged scenes

1. What atmosphere or mood is established in the descriptions given in the first two paragraphs?

2. In the second paragraph, what important items of information do we learn about the society in which Winston Smith lives? What do we learn of Winston's physical discomfort?

3. Once Winston is inside his flat, what item is identified, and what is its significance?

18. The “hate session” images fade from that of the despised Goldstein, to the beloved and fatherly image of Big Brother. As the Party’s slogans are superimposed, the viewers rhythmically chant “B-B.”

A. What is Winston’s reaction?

B. How do you suppose a Party member might explain the three paradoxical Party slogans?

19. What passes between O’Brien and Smith, and what does this suggest to Winston?

20. Winston realizes that in writing “DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER” in his diary, he has committed a thoughtcrime that will be severely punished when, not if, it is discovered. What is his conclusion, though, as he goes to answer the knock on his door?

III

Vocabulary

annihilate – destroy completely
furtive – sneaky, sly
genially – kindly
inscrutable – mysterious
reproach – disapproval
repudiate – refuse to acknowledge or accept
statuesque – tall and shapely
tube – subway

1. What do we learn of Winston's memory of his mother?

2. Toward the end of this chapter, Winston describes "doublethink." How does the Party use doublethink?

3. What chilling occurrence happens during the morning exercises?

VIII

Vocabulary

altercation – a fight or argument
amulets – charms worn to protect the wearer from evil
benevolent – kind
conspicuous – noticeable
cumbersome – awkward and hard to handle
groveling – cowering
incongruous – inconsistent with the surroundings
innumerable – incapable of being counted; limitless
intricate – complex
lackey – servant
nostalgia – a warm emotional feeling for a time that has passed
palpable – able to be touched; tangible
pugnaciously – in a combative manner
reconnoitering – spying on
relevant – appropriate; dealing with the subject at hand
shirking – avoiding work
tentatively – hesitantly; without much confidence

1. Why is the old man Winston talks to in the bar unable to tell him whether the old days had been better than times are now?

2. Why does Winston think of renting Mr. Charrington's room?

3. What is Winston's first reaction when he sees the dark-haired girl on the street? What action does he consider?

VI

Vocabulary

obsolete – no longer useful

prelude – introduction

1. For what reason does Winston believe that O'Brien has talked with him? What are his feelings about this as the chapter ends?
