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1984

BY GEORGE ORWELL



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Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Setting and History

Objective: Researching life in England during Orwell's time

Activity

George Orwell lived and wrote in Great Britain during the first half of the twentieth century. A thorough understanding of life in England during Orwell's lifetime provides insight into the subject matter of *1984* and enables readers to view and evaluate Orwell's ideas and vision within the context of the political, cultural, and social landscape of his time.

Using the library, the Internet, or both, research the history and find information to fill in the next chart, which deals with Great Britain between 1900 and 1955.

Use your research to complete the chart on the following page. We have supplied areas for you to investigate.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part One: Chapter III**Word Choice and Vocabulary**

Objective: Understanding how word choices contribute to atmosphere and meaning

Activity

An author uses specific adjectives, nouns, and verbs in order to evoke a visual image of the world to the readers. Recognizing and analyzing words and their associated meanings enables readers to gain insight into the meaning of the text.

As Winston recalls his dream about his mother and his little sister, he reminisces about his life as a little boy at the age of ten or eleven.

Study the adjectives, nouns, and verbs Winston uses to describe life in the past, his mother and sister. Then, examine the same chapter again and find adjectives, nouns, and verbs Winston uses in order to refer to the present time. How do the word choices enable the reader to compare and/or contrast Winston's childhood and the present time? What differences are there between his childhood and his present?

Use the attached chart to list your findings.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part One: Chapters III – VIII**Symbolism**

Objective: Inferring the thematic significance of symbols throughout the text

Activity

Winston's memories of the past and his visions and hopes for a better future are mirrored in a number of symbols that occur again and again throughout the text. Three of the important symbols that influence Winston's state of mind, his sense of the past, as well as his outlook on life are:

- The Paper weight/Glass Globe
- The Mythical Vision of the Golden Country
- The Nursery Rhymes

Complete the following chart, describing the three symbols and defining and explaining their respective meanings. We have supplied one answer for you as an example.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part Two: Chapter III**Characterization and Inference****Objective:** Evaluating characters based on descriptions and inferences**Activity**

Factual information about a certain character enables readers to develop a general idea of that character's personality. However, within the context of the story, readers must learn to evaluate any piece of factual information with a critical attitude. That way, readers will learn to draw their own conclusions about a character's personality and behavior based not only on factual information presented in the text, but also on inferences developed through a process of critical analysis.

During his first few encounters with Julia, Winston learns a great deal about Julia's character, her history, and her actions. With the help of Winston's commentary, evaluate all information you can find on Julia and record your findings.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part Two: Chapter V

Style

Objective: Understanding the concepts of style and recognizing the elements that characterize it

Activity

In general, the two elements that constitute a writer's style are diction (word choice) and the structure and length of sentences. This outline provides a general overview which will help you to recognize, understand, and interpret a writer's particular style.

THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE

I. Diction

- A. Type of language used – tone
 - 1. Standard English – formal
 - 2. Standard English – informal
 - 3. Dialect
- B. Vocabulary – level of difficulty
 - 1. Concrete words – words that have specific meanings; words that refer to things that are usually familiar and easily recognizable. The more concrete words a writer uses, the easier the writing will be for the reader to understand.
 - 2. Abstract words – words that evoke sensory impressions or refer to concepts. A large number of abstract words usually results in a higher level of difficulty, unfamiliarity, and originality.
- C. Imagery
 - 1. Use of descriptive nouns and words
 - 2. Evocation of connotations and associated meanings
 - 3. Figurative language, such as metaphor, simile, personification, etc.
- D. Tone – the writer's attitude toward characters, themes, and the reader.

II. Sentences

- A. Length (number of words in one sentence)
- B. Types of sentences
 - 1. Simple
 - 2. Complex
 - 3. Compound
 - 4. Compound-complex
- C. Form
 - 1. Dialogue
 - 2. Narrative
- D. Rhetorical Devices
 - 1. Literary devices, such as metaphor, simile, oxymoron, irony, hyperbole, etc. make the writing more complex and more poetic.
 - 2. Rhetorical questions

Name: _____

Date: _____

Parts One – Two**Ambiguity, Contradiction, and Meaning**

Objective: Understanding ambiguity, contradictions, and the construction and meaning of language

Activity

“By 2050—earlier, probably—all real knowledge of Oldspeak will have disappeared. The whole literature of the past will have been destroyed. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron—they’ll exist only in Newspeak versions, not merely changed into something different, but actually changed into something contradictory of what they used to be.”

The official language of Oceania is Newspeak. It was created to meet the ideological needs of INGSOC. In the year 1984, most people in Oceania still use Standard English, but more and more Party members incorporate Newspeak into their everyday language. Party members hope that Newspeak will eradicate and replace Oldspeak (Standard English) by the year 2050.

Review all chapters of the text and find as many Newspeak terms as possible. Fill in the following chart, explain what the terms you find mean in Standard English, and come up with a term of your own.

Be sure to take note of the page numbers for the passages containing the Newspeak words and their meanings. We have completed one for you.