

Honors English III -- 1984 Study Guide

Book I

Chapter 1

1. Describe what the world of 1984 looks like. Describe the Police Patrol, Thought Police, and Big Brother. What do they do, and how do they do it?

Orwell portrays the perfect totalitarian society, the most extreme realization imaginable of a modern-day government with absolute power. This is a state in which government monitors and controls every aspect of human life, to the extent that even having a disloyal thought is against the law (the Thought Police are ever attune to catch people having rebellious thoughts, or thoughtcrime). Big Brother is the face of the party, but Winston can never determine whether he exists or not. The citizens are told that he is the leader of the nation and the head of the Party. There are signs and posters all over London with his face gazing down over the words "Big Brother is watching you." Winston thinks he remembers that Big Brother emerged around 1960, but the Party's official records date his existence back to 1930, before Winston was even born. These are some of the techniques the Party uses to control its citizens.

2. What is the slogan of Winston's workplace, The Ministry of Truth?

War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength (the slogan of the Party)

3. Where does Winston live? Describe the setting

Victory Mansions is a run-down apartment building where the lift never works and the plumbing is bad.

4. What is Newspeak?

The language of the Party 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 able to conceptualize any words or thoughts that might question the Party's absolute power. If control of language is centralized in a political agency, 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.

5. What are the four Ministries of government and what do they do?

The Ministry of Truth, which alters history by telling lies about the past and present; The Ministry of Peace, which wages war; the Ministry of Plenty, which plans economic shortages; and the dreaded Ministry of Love, which tortures people and is the center of the Inner Party's loathsome activities.

6. How does Winston feel about the government? How can you tell?

Though he works for the Ministry of Truth and has been subject to Party control all of his life, he has arrived at a dim idea of rebellion and freedom. He seems to understand that he might be happier if he were free. His diary entry and writing in it illustrates Winston's desire, however slight, to break free of the Party's total control. His hatred of Party oppression has been festering for some time now. In writing in the diary ("Down with Big Brother"), he becomes a thought-criminal, and considers himself doomed from the very start.

7. What is the Two-Minute Hate, and why do they have this ritual? Why is it impossible for Winston not to join in?

It is an assembly during which Party orators whip the populace into a frenzy of hatred against the enemies of Oceania, so that the citizens vent their own pent-up emotions in the process. He must join in and act like he is enjoying it because the telescreens are always watching everyone.

8. What is the Anti-Sex League?

An organization that forces individuals to suppress their sexual desires, treating sex as merely a procreative duty whose end is the creation of new Party members. Julia is a member of this group, though she likes to have sex secretly all the time.

9. Who is Goldstein, and what does he believe about Big Brother? How does Winston describe Goldstein?

Goldstein is the face of the enemies of the Party, with a sheep-like face and the voice of a sheep. He is called the Enemy of the People. He was a backslider who had been one of the leading figures of the Party, almost on a level with Big Brother himself. He had engaged in counterrevolutionary activities,

had been condemned to death, and had mysteriously escaped and disappeared. He was the commander of the Brotherhood, an underground network of conspirators dedicated to the overthrow of the State.

10. 1949 was the year that the novel was published. What was happening in the world during this time that may have inspired Orwell to write this book?

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. The rise to power of dictators such as Adolph Hitler in Germany and Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union inspired Orwell's mounting hatred of totalitarianism and political authority. In Spain (the Spanish Civil War of 1936), Germany, and the Soviet Union, Orwell had witnessed the danger of absolute political authority in an age of advanced technology.

Chapter II

11. Why is Mrs. Parsons afraid of her own children? They are violently minded, fervent children who, being Junior Spies, are constantly looking for evidence of thoughtcrime, disloyalty, and rebellion among adults, including their own parents. They want to go witness a public hanging in the park of some of the Party's political enemies.
12. How will Winston know if someone finds his journal? He puts a small identifiable grain of dust on the corner of the cover of his diary, where it was bound to be shaken off if the book was moved by someone.

Chapter III

13. What does Winston think happened to his parents? That they were vaporized, swallowed up in one of the first great purges of the Fifties.
14. Why doesn't tragedy exist anymore? It belonged to the ancient time, when there were still privacy, love, and friendship, and when the members of a family stood by one another without needing to know the reason. Today there are only fear, hatred, and pain, but no dignity of emotion, or deep and complex sorrows.
15. What is the effect that the absence of written record has on society? Everything from the past fades away from the mind. When there were no external records that you could refer to, even the outline of your own life lost its sharpness. You remembered huge events which had quite probably never happened, you remembered the details of incidents without being able to recapture their atmosphere, and there were long blank periods to which you could assign nothing. For example, he could not definitely remember a time when his country had not been at war, but it was evident that there had been periods of peace during his childhood.
16. What is doublethink? It is the ability to hold two contradictory ideas in one's mind at the same time. As the Party breaks down individual 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. It is all part of the Party's massive campaign of large-scale psychological manipulation.
17. Why does Winston have to control his facial movements so precisely? Because the telescreen is constantly monitoring him for any evidence of rebellious or independent thought on his part – it even screams at him at one point during the Physical Jerks for not working out hard enough.

Chapter IV

18. What does Winston's job at the Ministry of Truth entail? He works in the Records section of the Ministry of Truth, where he destroys obsolete documents that the Party doesn't want the public to read. He updates Big Brother's orders and Party records so that they match new developments, so that whatever Big Brother proclaims is seen as true. In fact, they constantly re-write history to agree with whatever the government is proclaiming at the moment that it wants its citizens to believe.
19. What effect does "fixing the misprints" have on society? It causes the citizens to believe whatever the government is espousing at the moment so that they can stay in control of the citizens. With the belief of the workers, the records become functionally true, and citizens cannot disagree with the government's version of things if there is no record left to prove what has been altered. This oppression takes a toll on

one's own nervous system – the condition of being constantly monitored and having to repress every feeling and instinct forces Winston to maintain self-control at all costs.

Chapter V

20. What is the purpose of eliminating words and creating Newspeak? By limiting the number of words one has to express himself, it aims to narrow the range of individual thought to render thoughtcrime against the government impossible. If there are no words in a language that are capable of expressing independent, rebellious thoughts, no one will ever be able to rebel, or even conceive of rebellion.
21. Why does Winston think Syme will be vaporized one day? Why doesn't Winston tell Syme of this suspicion? He believes that Syme's intelligence will get him vaporized one day. He sees too clearly and speaks too plainly – the Party does not like such people. Syme is not so much a "friend" as a "comrade," and Winston does not particularly care for him. He lacked discretion, aloofness. He would probably turn Winston in for thoughtcrime if he thought Winston was guilty of it.
22. Why does Winston think Parsons will survive? Because Parsons never questions the Party or its motives and is naively enthusiastic about supporting it and participating in all of its activities.
23. What is facecrime? It is to wear an improper expression on your face (to look incredulous when a victory was announced, for example) and is a punishable offense. A nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself, anything that carried with it the suggestion of having something to hide.

Chapter VI

24. What is the sole purpose of marriage? Procreation, to create new members for the Party, not for pleasure or continuing your own genes. The government's goal is to remove pleasure from the sexual act, so that it becomes merely a duty to the Party, not an individual instinct. The government wants to prevent men and women from forming loyalties which it might not be able to control. To have an enjoyable sexual affair, Winston sees as the ultimate act of rebellion.
25. Why did the Party encourage separation of couples who had no children? They did not permit divorce. They did not want men and women to form loyalties which it might not be able to control.
26. What was Katharine like, and why did she and Winston separate? She hated sex and only engaged in it as a duty to create children for the Party, as she was taught. When they realized they would never have children, they separated.

Chapter VII

27. Who are the proles, and why isn't the Party concerned with them? They are the lower class, the poor people who make up 85% of the population of Oceania. However, they lead brutish, ignorant, animalistic lives, and lack both the energy and interest to revolt; most of them do not even understand that the party is oppressing them. They are easily kept in line with chocolate and pornography.
28. Three men who confessed to crimes against the Party and were executed – who were they, and why is their story significant to Winston? Their story is significant because it represents an occasion when he caught the Party in a lie. Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford, original leaders of the Revolution, were arrested in the mid-60s, disappeared, and then turned up again, confessing their treasonous deeds against Big Brother. Winston sees them at the Chestnut Tree Café, a gathering place for out-of-favor Party members. Winston comes across a photograph that proves that these Party members had been in New York at the time that they were allegedly committing treason in Eurasia. Terrified, Winston destroys the photograph, but it remains embedded in his memory as a concrete example of Party dishonesty.

Chapter VIII

29. How was the lottery run? It was managed by the Ministry of Plenty, but the prizes were largely imaginary. Only small sums were actually paid out, the winners of the big prizes being nonexistent persons. But most of the proles live for this event.
30. What happened to thought criminals? They were taken to the Ministry of Truth, where you were tortured before they eventually killed you, and you ceased to exist.
In this chapter Winston speaks to the old man in the pub in the prole district, to see if he remembers how things were before Big Brother took over. He either cannot or refuses to tell Winston anything substantial. His memory is too vague to provide an answer. The past has been left to the proles, who,

Winston thinks, will eventually forget it. Also, Winston goes to the secondhand store in the prole district where he bought the diary, meets the owner Mr. Charrington, and is shown an upstairs private room with no telescreen. On the way home, he sees the dark-haired girl, seemingly following him. Winston imagines hitting her over the head with a cobblestone or with the paperweight in his pocket from the upstairs room.

Book 2

Chapter 1

31. Why does the girl with the dark hair fall in front of Winston? It is a diversion to be able to give Winston a note, which reads, "I love you."
32. How does Winston respond to the "love" note? How has it changed Winston's life? At first he is confused because he thought her to be a political spy monitoring his behavior, but then he reconsiders. Finally, the note makes Winston feel a sudden, powerful desire to live. They meet one another in Victory Square among a large crowd, and she gives him directions to a place where they can meet privately in the countryside. They hold hands briefly.

Chapter II

33. Describe Julia. Winston no longer believes that she is a spy. She is a member of the Junior Anti-Sex League, and tears off her sash from that organization. She claims that she has done this several times – scores of times with numerous men. Winston is thrilled with this and says that the more men she has been with, the more he loves her, since it means that more Party members are committing crimes.
34. What questions come to mind here? Is Julia really in love with Winston, or trying to trick him and betray him to the Party?

Chapter III

35. What is "talking by installments"? A curious, intermittent conversation which flicked on and off like the beams of a lighthouse, suddenly nipped into silence by the approach of a Party uniform or the proximity of a telescreen, then taken up again minutes later in the middle of a sentence, then abruptly cut short, then continued almost without introduction on the following day. This characterizes the type of conversations Winston and Julia have with one another in the streets among crowds.
36. Why does Julia work so much and do so much volunteer work? The Party keeps them both so busy and exhausted so that they will have no time to form attachments with other individuals. She spends an astonishing amount of time attending lectures and demonstrations, distributing literature for the Junior Anti-Sex League, preparing banners for Hate Week, making collections for the savings campaign. It paid because it was camouflage. If you kept the small rules, you could break the big ones, as she likes to do with her affairs.
37. How is Julia similar to and different from Winston? They both revel in being rebellious against the Party through their affair. Unlike Winston, Julia is not interested in widespread rebellion. Unlike Winston, Julia is neither overly speculative about, nor troubled by, the Party. She also lacks Winston's fatalism. She is more optimistic than Winston, and uses her body to remind him that he is alive. She accepts the Party and her life for what it is, and tries to make the best of a situation that cannot be greatly improved.

Chapter IV

38. In what ways is Winston and Julia's relationship doomed? The fact that they have rented out this room in the prole district will eventually be found out. They are both Outer Party members who are forbidden from having a relationship with each other. Winston's fatalistic feeling that he will eventually get caught, tortured, and killed foreshadows his doom.
39. Why is Winston's view of women and relationships so warped? Because of his marriage to Katharine – the way Katharine stiffened when he touched her, the way in which she pushed him from her with all her strength. Also because of the way in which the Party was trying to destroy the sex instinct because it created a world of its own which was outside the Party's control. Sexual privation induced hysteria, which was desirable because it could be transformed into war fever and leader worship.

Chapter V

40. Which of Winston's predictions comes true? Syme, his comrade in the Records Department, disappears. One day he was missing, and the next nobody mentioned him, as if he had never existed.
41. How has Winston changed since he met Julia? He has dropped his habit of drinking gin at all hours; he seems to have lost the need for it. He has grown fatter, his varicose ulcer has subsided, his fits of coughing in the early morning have stopped. The process of life had ceased to be intolerable. He no longer had any impulse to make faces at the telescreen or shout curses at the top of his lungs. What mattered was that the room over the junk shop should even exist for him and Julia. To know that it was there was almost the same as being in it. The room was a world in which extinct animals and artifacts from the past could still thrive.
42. How are Julia and Winston's beliefs and values similar or different from each other? Both of them knew that this affair and state of things could not go on forever. They would sometimes give in to the illusion of safety and permanence. Sometimes they talked of engaging in active rebellion against the Party, and of entering the Brotherhood. In some ways she was far more acute than Winston, and far less susceptible to Party propaganda. She tells Winston that she does not believe in the existence of the war with Eurasia, and that the rocket bombs which fell on London were probably fired by the government of Oceania itself. She only questioned the teachings of the Party when they in some way touched upon her own life. She was often ready to accept the Party mythology, because the difference between truth and falsehood did not seem important to her. She doesn't really care about the lies of the Party, like Winston does, nor seem concerned by the lies of the Records Department in which Winston works. She is not impressed by the evidence Winston had about Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford that proved the Party was lying. In the ramifications of Party doctrine she had not the faintest interest, which seems to bother Winston. She swallows everything from the Party because it's easier that way and does her no harm.

Chapter VI

43. How are Winston's suspicions about O'Brien confirmed? O'Brien makes contact with Winston in the hallway at the Ministry of Truth, alludes to Syme, and tells Winston that he can see a Newspeak dictionary if he will come to O'Brien's house one evening. Though he has been waiting for this moment his entire life, Winston feels that taking this step will ultimately lead him to the Ministry of Love, where he expects to be killed.

Chapter VII

44. What was Winston's childhood like? Very poor, living with his mother and sister with little food. Winston remembers crying out for food from his mother and then running off with (stealing) some chocolate from them. When he returned to the house, his mother and sister were gone, and he never saw them again. He feels that he is responsible for the disappearance/murder of his mother.
45. Why does Winston gain a newfound respect for the proles? The proles were governed by private loyalties which they did not question, and they had remained in this state, while everyone else had changed for the worse. They were not loyal to a party or a country or an idea; they were loyal to each other. The proles had stayed human and had not become hardened inside. They had held on to the primitive emotions which he himself had to relearn by conscious effort.
46. Would Winston rather stay alive or stay human? Why? He would rather remain human than alive, he thinks right now. He thinks the Party can not alter your feelings, that the inner heart remains impregnable. But he will learn differently later.

Chapter VIII

47. How is O'Brien's home different from Winston's? Much nicer, rich and spacious, good food and good tobacco, the rapid lifts sliding up and down, white-jacketed servants running to and fro – everything was intimidating. They can even turn off the telescreen here.
48. What does Winston find out about Goldstein and the Brotherhood? He learns from O'Brien that they are real entities, and are committed to bringing down the Party.
49. What is Winston willing to do and not willing to do? Willing to give his life, to commit murder, to commit acts of sabotage, to betray his country to foreign powers, to cheat, forge, blackmail, corrupt children, distribute drugs, encourage prostitution, disseminate venereal diseases, throw sulphuric acid in

a child's face, lose his identity, commit suicide. Not willing to separate from Julia and never see her again.

50. What happens to people when they disappear? They are silenced and never heard from again.

Chapter IX

51. What does the Book outline? What is the meaning behind War is Peace? Goldstein's *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*. This lengthy book traces a theory of social classes throughout recent history: High Class, Middle Class, and Low Class – the Inner Party, the Outer Party, and the Proles. The three nations of Eurasia, Oceania, and Eastasia keep their respective populaces preoccupied with a perpetual border war in order to preserve power among the High Class. The war never advances significantly, as no two allied nations can defeat the third. The war is simply a fact of life that enables the ruling powers to keep the masses ignorant of life in other places – the real meaning of “War is Peace.”

58. Why does the book say that the alteration/mutability of the past is necessary? So that the Party can retain its power indefinitely. If the High are to keep their places of power, then the prevailing mental condition must be controlled insanity.

Chapter X

59. What does Winston discover about Mr. Charrington? Was his shop a deliberate trap for wayward Party members?

Mr. Charrington is a member of the Thought Police and his voice was the one coming from the telescreen hidden behind the picture of St. Clement's Church. The troops who come in kick Winston and beat Julia. The paperweight is shattered on the floor.

Book 3

Chapter I

60. Why is Parsons arrested? Do you think he is guilty? Also a poet named Ampleforth was arrested for the crime of leaving the word “God” in a Rudyard Kipling translation. Parsons is arrested for thoughtcrime, turned in by his own children. He had said “Down with Big Brother” in his sleep; his daughter heard him and turned him in to the authorities.

61. Why is O'Brien there? What do you think meant when he said, “They got me a long time ago”? He is a chief operative of the Ministry of Love. He was probably rebellious at one point, and was “re-made” by the Party by torture and mind control so that he could serve the Party effectively.

Chapter II

62. What is O'Brien's role in the Ministry of Love? He oversees all of Winston's prolonged torture sessions. O'Brien tells Winston that his crime was refusing to accept the Party's control of history and his memory. He makes Winston believe that he is holding up five fingers when he is actually only holding up four – O'Brien is teaching Winston to believe anything that O'Brien or the Party wants him to believe.

63. How long was O'Brien watching Winston? He's been watching Winston for the last seven years. He meant to trap Winston into believing that O'Brien was part of the Brotherhood when he stared at him that time at the Two Minute Hate.

64. What does O'Brien say is the reason that they bring people to the Ministry of Love? They bring them here to eliminate their enemies without making public martyrs of them, like the Nazis and Soviets mistakenly did with their enemies. They want people to love Big Brother. O'Brien says that Winston's current outlook is insane, but that torture will cure him.

65. What will happen to Winston? He will in all likelihood betray Julia and learn to love Big Brother in the face of the torture of the Party. Julia will do the same, and neither will want to be with each other again.

66. Why don't you think O'Brien answers the question about the Brotherhood? Do you think they really exist? Do you think Big Brother really exists? Probably because none of them really exist – they are only made up constructs to keep the people fearful and under the Party's control.

Chapter III

67. How, according to O'Brien, can people be immortal? All people are destined to die, O'Brien says. But if an individual can escape from his own identity by making complete, utter submission to the Party, if he can merge himself in the Party so that he *is* the Party, then he is all-powerful and immortal. Power, as the Party has it, is power over human beings, over their bodies but especially over their minds. They control matter because they control the mind.

68. What does the future look like, according to O'Brien? The Party is creating a world that is the exact opposite of hedonistic Utopias – a world of fear, treachery, and torment, not one of love and justice, a world that will grow more merciless as it refines itself. There will be no loyalty, no love, no laughter, no art, literature, or science, no curiosity or the enjoyment of life. All competing pleasures will be destroyed. Always there will be the intoxication of power. A picture of the future – a boot stamping on a human face forever.

69. When Winston looks in the mirror, what does he see? Someone whom he doesn't even realize as himself – completely changed and broken down, gray and skeletal. O'Brien says that Winston reduced himself to this state because of his rebellion.

Chapter IV

70. How has Winston changed since his time in the Ministry of Love? He is transferred to a more comfortable room, and the torture eases. He dreams contentedly of Julia, his mother, and O'Brien in the Golden Country. He gains weight and is allowed to write on a small slate. He comes to the conclusion that he was foolish to oppose the Party alone, and tries to make himself believe in Party slogans ("2+2=5"; "God is Power").

71. Why is it decided that Winston must go to Room 101? Winston begins to scream out Julia's name many times, and he realizes his deep desire to continue hating the Party. He tries to bottle up his hatred so that even he will not recognize it; therefore, when the Party kills him, he will die hating Big Brother – a personal victory. But he cannot hide his feelings and tells O'Brien that he hates Big Brother. So O'Brien instructs the guards to take Winston to Room 101 because obeying Big Brother is not enough – Winston must learn to love him.

72. What do you think is in Room 101? The worst thing in the world – the thing that one fears most. We have seen that Winston fears pain and rats above all else – so it must involve one or both of those.

Chapter V

73. What does Winston face in Room 101, and how does he respond? Winston is strapped to a chair, with his head clamped so that he cannot move. O'Brien places a cage next to Winston's face with enormous, squirming rats, and he says that, when he presses a lever, the door will slide up and the rats will leap onto Winston's face and eat it. Winston cannot endure the torture, and screams that he wants Julia to be subjected to this torture instead of him. O'Brien is satisfied with this betrayal.

74. How does he betray Julia? By asking O'Brien to subject Julia to this torture.

Chapter VI

75. What has changed when Winston and Julia see each other again after their arrest and release? How are they different? Why? What do you think happened to Julia?

Julia has thickened and stiffened, and Winston now finds the thought of sex with her repulsive. They acknowledge that they each betrayed the other and agree to meet again, though neither is truly interested in seeing each other again. Julia was in all likelihood tortured like Winston with whatever she feared most, and, not being able to stand against it, betrayed Winston.

76. What will the rest of Winston's life look like? If he is still alive, he will live out his days drinking at the Chestnut Tree Café for disgraced rebels and believe all that the Party has placed in his head, that he has won a great victory over himself and that he has a newfound love for Big Brother – i.e., live in abject and total defeat and submission to this Party.