

READING PROJECT

“1984” by George Orwell



from: <http://3.bp.blogspot.com>

What to do:

1. Book Presentation:

Give a presentation about the book 1984 in class. Include a short overview of the plot, the most relevant facts about the author (in relation to the book), and tell your audience whether or not you would recommend this book and why. Everybody in your group choose one task from the book presentation handout. Distribute the work load evenly among the group members and design an interesting, well-rounded group presentation. Copy your contribution for all the group members and for your teacher.

2. Questions and Tasks:

As a group, do the following tasks and questions, and hand in your work in a folder. Distribute the work load evenly among the group members.

Questions and Tasks:

1. Write a short summary of the novel using the summary writing handout.
2. Make a list of the features of each of the three main characters of the story: Winston, Julia, and O'Brien. Write down interesting facts about their behavior, personality, and attitudes.
3. What is the relationship between these three main characters in the beginning and how does it change throughout the story? Why does it change?
4. What countries are there in 1984? What parallels can you see between them and our (real) world?
5. What ministries are there in Oceania? What are their tasks? What ministries in our government resemble the ministries in 1984?
6. Explain how the governmental system of Oceania works. Who has the power? Who makes the decisions? Who has the least power?
7. Inform yourself about Communism in Soviet Russia. Can you find parallels between Communism and the system in Oceania?
8. Explain what the slogans "War is peace", "Freedom is slavery", and "Ignorance is strength" mean.
9. What is doublethink? What is its use?
10. What is Newspeak? What is its purpose? (In the appendix of the book you can find additional information about Newspeak)
11. List all the methods that the government uses to keep the people of Oceania under control.
12. Orwell wrote 1984 as a warning. Explain what you think he wanted to warn people about.²
13. Find out where the book used to be banned. Why do you think was it banned?¹
14. Can you find similarities between the book and our society today? Explain them.
15. Has 1984 changed the way you think about certain things in our society?
16. Imagine Oceania was a real country. Write a letter to a human rights organization describing all the things that are wrong about the way the government treats the people in the book.

The questions with footnotes have been adapted from the following sources:

¹ http://classiclit.about.com/od/nineteeneightyfour/a/aa_1984question.htm

² <http://www.cliffsnotes.com>