

SOUTHWEST SHAKESPEARE

COMPANY

presents



STUDY GUIDE

Content curated by Breona Conrad

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CHARACTERS SEEN IN BOTH REAL LIFE AND REENACTMENTS:

O'BRIEN	A member of the Inner Party whom Winston believes is also a member of the Brotherhood; plays himself during reenactments
JULIA	Winston's lover, a beautiful girl working in the Fiction Department at Minitrue
PARSONS	An obnoxious and dull Party member who lives near Winston and works at the Minitrue

CHARACTERS SEEN ONLY IN REENACTMENTS (portrayed by fellow Thought Criminals):

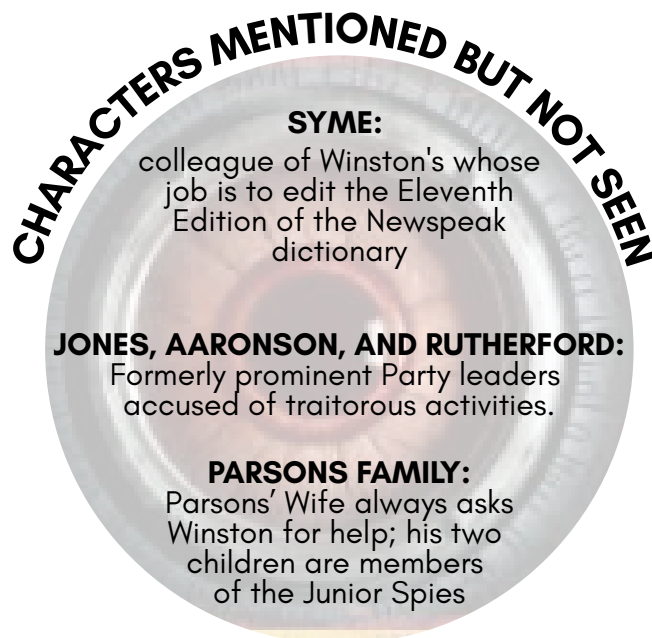
W2	So Winston can see the scenes played out, W2 takes on the role of "Winston"
CHARRINGTON	An old man who runs a secondhand store in the prole district
PROLE WOMAN	A woman who sings while working in the yard next to Mr. Charrington's shop
MARTIN	O'Brien's servant

CHARACTERS SEEN IN THE PRESENT TIME:

WINSTON SMITH	Outer Party member who privately rebels against the Party
GUARD, DOCTOR	Employees at Miniluv
DRUNK WOMAN, ASHLEY, THIN MAN	Thought Criminals
WAITER	Works at the Chestnut Tree Cafe

CASTING NOTE:

With the exception of Winston and O'Brien, the acting company will play multiple characters throughout the story; please look on the previous page for doubling assignments.



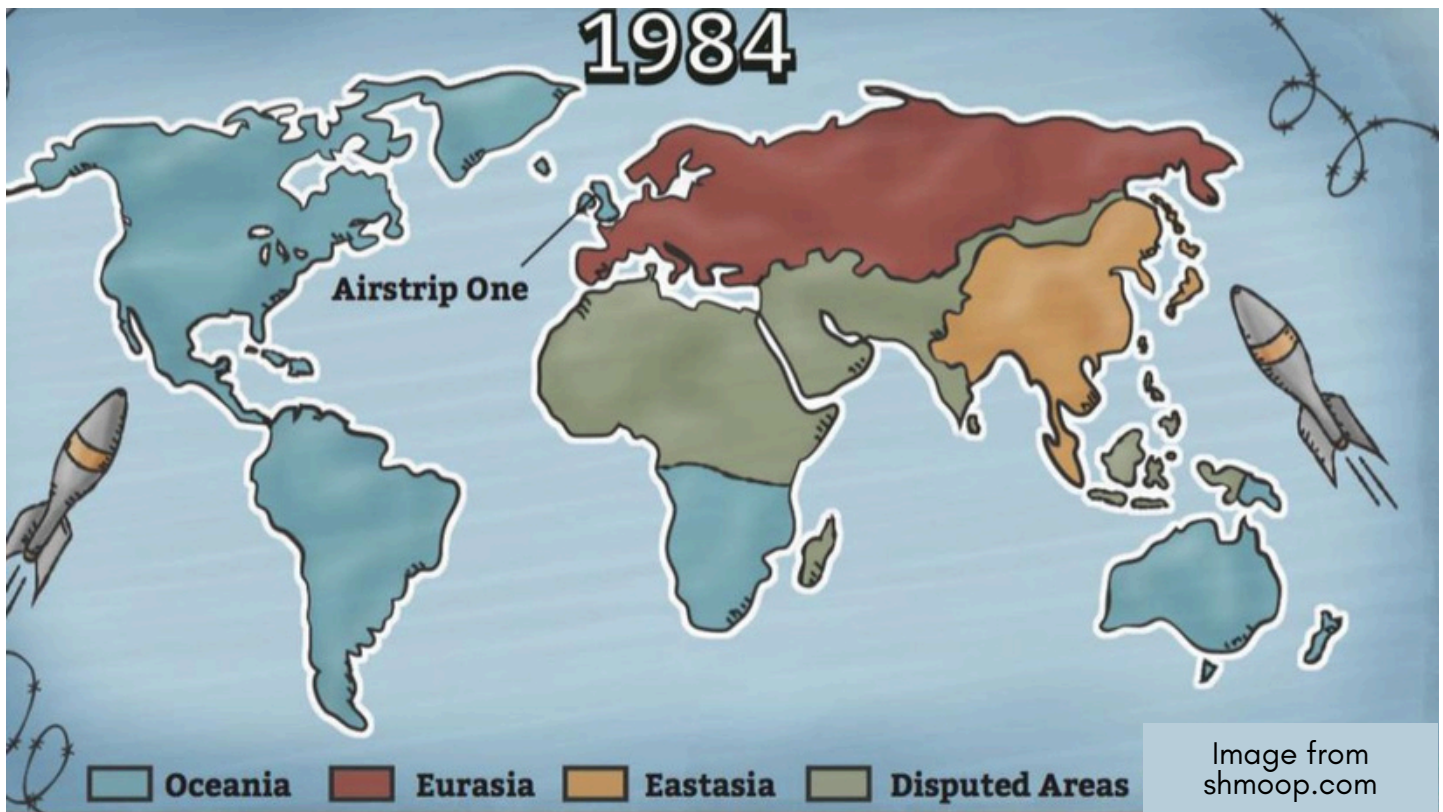
THE SUMMARY FROM THE SCRIPT READS:

"Winston Smith is in prison, found guilty of Thoughtcrimes against Big Brother. As part of his reconstruction, he must re-enact key moments from his past life, with the help of other Thought Criminals, so that everyone can learn from his biggest mistakes."

This 2021 adaptation by Nick Hern pulls almost of its' dialogue from Orwell's 1949 novel, though the storytelling mechanism of re-enacting Winston's life in the form of therapy sessions as part of his re-education at the Ministry of Love is unique to the play.

The therapy sessions condense the narrative of Parts 1 and 2 in the novel (Introduction of the world and Winston's growing hatred of it; Winston and Julia's relationship and rebellion, respectively) and immerses the audience immediately into Part 3 of the novel (Winston's re-education). This non-linear storytelling device allows the audience to feel the intensity of the reconstruction process within the Ministry of Love and the oppression of the Party throughout the entirety of the play.

THE WORLD OF 1984



IDEOLOGY of OCEANIA

Ingsoc

(English Socialism in Oldspeak)
emphasizes power for the sake
of power and all aspects of life
is controlled by The Party, a
totalitarian regime

IDEOLOGY of EURASIA

Neo-Bolshevism

a form of authoritarian socialism
where the State controls all
aspects of life, including thought
and expression through a
centralization of power

IDEOLOGY of EASTASIA

Death-Worship

or Obliteration of the Self, in
which thought is controlled
through conformity and
obedience to the State

SOUND SIMILAR? THEY ARE.

Each superstate's
economy survives under
the guise of perpetual
warfare. While world
conquest is the goal of
each superstate, victory
must never be achieved.

Ignorance is bliss:

To keep the war continuous, each
superstate is not allowed contact with
the others; learning foreign languages is
prohibited; citizens will learn how similar
they are to those in foreign lands rather
than barbaric as they've been taught

The State is "...obliged to
prevent their followers from
starving to death...and remain
at the same low level of
military technique...but once
that minimum is achieved, they
can twist reality into whatever
shape they choose." (p. 176)

THE WORLD OF CEANIA

THE MINISTRIES

MINISTRY OF TRUTH

creates propaganda and rewrites history to ensure The Party is always correct

MINISTRY OF PEACE

oversees the army and naval forces and ensures Oceania is in a perpetual state of conflict

MINISTRY OF LOVE

responsible for maintaining order to ensure love and obedience to Big Brother using fear and torture to "re-habilitate" anyone who opposes The Party

MINISTRY OF PLENTY

responsible for rationing food and supplies to keep the population in a state of poverty



"BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU"



Big Brother represents the omnipresent power and control of Ingsoc. It's unclear if he is an actual person or merely a symbol.



Big Brother is everywhere, especially on telescreens and posters as a reminder that citizens are always under surveillance of the Thought Police no matter where they are.



INNER PARTY and OUTER PARTY

The Inner Party represents the elite ruling class that maintains its power through control and surveillance, while the Outer Party serves as the middle ground, carrying out the Inner Party's policies while still being subjected to its control.

PROLES

Comprised of 85% of the population, the Proles are the Lower Class who live in poverty and do manual labor. The Party keeps the Proles distracted with entertainment, cheap products, and limited education causing them to be apathetic toward politics and Party control.

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

SPY TROOPS

A government program for Children trained to monitor adults for any signs of disloyalty to the Party and report them to the authorities, especially their parents.

Young Party members dedicated to suppressing sexual intercourse and procreation in an effort to completely eliminate emotional bonds. They are identified by wearing a red sash around the waist.

JUNIOR ANTI-SEX LEAGUE

THE PARTY SLOGANS

WAR IS PEACE

A state of perpetual war is the only way to achieve stability; achieved by keeping the population united against a common enemy.

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

Control and conformity are what bring security and, therefore, a life of "slavery" to the Party is what individuals desire.

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

It's better to be unaware of the true nature of the Party's actions and the reality of their lives, as knowledge could lead to dissent and rebellion.

THE BROTHERHOOD

A counter-revolutionary organization led by Emmanuel Goldstein, "The Enemy of the People" of Oceania; he is believed to once have been a member and architect of The Party. The Party uses Goldstein and the Brotherhood as propaganda tools to demonize dissent and control the population.

It's questionable if the Brotherhood actually exists.

THE VOCABULARY

DOUBLETHINK

The ability to hold two contradictory beliefs simultaneously and **accept them both as true**. The Party Slogans are a great example of doublethink.

$$2 + 2 = 5$$

A dominating symbol of doublethink, this blatant lie is used to control reality and manipulate minds. This equation is a core concept of Communism: a focal point for all citizens to achieve economic and societal development, usually in 5-year increments, with the goal of early completion.



Soviet-era propaganda promoting a 5 year plan to be completed in 4 years. The Soviet Union had total of 13 5-year plans

THOUGHTCRIME

Mental deviation from the Party's approved way of thinking, including questioning the Party's version of history, harboring any form of dissent, or even expressing personal desires. Monitored by the Thought Police and constant surveillance.

TELESCREEN

A two-way television that functions as both a source of information and a tool for surveillance. It's omnipresent, found in every private and public space, and cannot be turned off. A perk of the Inner Party is the ability to turn off their telescreens for short periods of time.

MEMORY HOLE

A small chute, often a slit in a wall, that leads directly to an incinerator. They're used to dispose of documents, photographs, and other records that contradict the Party's propaganda or are otherwise considered inconvenient.

TWO MINUTES HATE

A daily ritual of the Party in which members of both the Inner and Outer Party are forced to watch a film depicting Goldstein and the Brotherhood. They are encouraged to shout out slogans and express their hatred for the enemy, often engaging in physical acts of violence against the image on the screen.

HATE WEEK

A week during which the Party uses various propaganda tactics, including waxwork displays, military parades, speeches, and lectures to incite hatred toward the current enemy (Eastasia or Eurasia).

FICTION DEPARTMENT

Ficdep is a part of Minitrue in charge of the creation of various forms of media, including newspapers, films, textbooks, and novels, ensuring that all materials are aligned with the Party's narrative. They also produce mindless entertainment for Proles only to distract them from the workings of the Party. Julia works in **PORNOSEC** which is in charge of creating adult content.

"THE BOOK"

Called so because the title was not on the book cover, "The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism," is a book allegedly written by Goldstein when he was a member of the Inner Party in which the central message is that power is the ultimate goal of the ruling elite, and they will stop at nothing to maintain it. Along with this, it is revealed that the three superstates are nearly identical and offers detailed descriptions about the three Party Slogans. It is now passed throughout the Brotherhood as a reminder and an act of resistance.



ROOM 101 is different for everyone...

NEWSPEAK:

The official language of Oceania designed to eliminate freedom of speech and enforce a specific way of thinking by drastically reducing and simplifying the vocabulary and grammar of the English (Oldspeak) language.

A VOCABULARY:

Words needed for everyday life.

The use of prefixes and suffixes replaced the need for a robust vocabulary, especially opposites.

Common prefixes:
un-, plus-, doubleplus-,

For example:
warm = "uncold"
hot = "plusuncold"
very hot = "doubleplusuncold"

Common suffixes:
adjectives -ful,
adverbs -wise

For example:
rapid = "speedful"
quickly = "speedwise"

Plurals and past tense were also simplified:

All words end in -s or -es:
man/mans; life/lifes

Past tense is reduced to -ed:
think- thought
speak- spoke

B VOCABULARY:

Words used for political purpose. Always compound words without conformity of construction other than ease of speaking the word aloud. Examples include:

The names of the Ministries:

Minitrue: Ministry of Truth

Minipax: Ministry of Peace

Miniluv: Ministry of Love

Miniplenty: Ministry of Plenty

Goodthink: to think in a common and favorable way

thinkpol: Thought Police

facecrime: facial expression other than neutral that may depict a thoughtcrime

bellyfeel: blind acceptance of an idea

duckspeak: Repeating Newspeak phrases without critical thought, mimicking a duck quacking

To be called a "doubleplusgood duckspeaker" was a great compliment.

C VOCABULARY:

Scientific and technical terms.

Distribution of the C vocabulary is limited, because the Party does not want citizens to know more than a select few ways of life or techniques of production. The Oldspeak word "science" has no equivalent term in Newspeak; instead, these words are simply treated as specific technical words for speaking of technical fields.

Examples include:

Ficdep: Fiction Department
Recdep: Records Department

All literature written before 1960 could not be properly translated into Newspeak. Therefore, works such as that of Shakespeare or Dickens, or historical writings such as The Declaration of Independence were simply reduced to the single translation of "crimethink" or anti-party thoughts.

Winston works in Recdep inside Minitrue. His primary job is to re-write historical accounts as needed to ensure the Party was always correct. Articles rewritten for *Times* were entirely in Newspeak. One order Winston received to rewrite stated:

"times 3.12.83 reporting bb dayorder doubleplusungood refs unpersons rewrite fullwise upsub antefiling.

In Oldspeak (or standard English) this might be rendered:

The reporting of Big Brother's Order for the Day in the *Times* of December 3rd 1983 is extremely unsatisfactory and makes references to nonexistent persons. Rewrite it in full and submit your draft to higher authority before filing." (p. 39)



HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS

TEHRAN CONFERENCE:

A meeting of the "Big Three" Allies of World War II between November 28–December 1. Joseph Stalin (Soviet Union), Franklin D. Roosevelt (United States), and Winston Churchill (United Kingdom) met to strategize opening a second front against the Nazis by June of 1944.

a.k.a.

OPERATION: EUREKA

This meeting sparked Orwell's interest and made him begin to wonder about a world that was divided into "Zones of Influence" controlled by three authoritarian regimes and the intellectual implications of totalitarianism

After the end of World War II, Orwell, along with the rest of the world, became acutely aware of the threat and devastation of war and the danger of authoritarian dictators. After the fall of the Nazi regime, the Soviet Union quickly emerged as a world Superpower due to a government system known as Stalinism. Key tenants of Stalinism include:

RAPID INDUSTRIALIZATION

Five-Year Plans completed as quickly as possible

TOTALITARIAN CONTROL

Through the use of constant propaganda, Joseph Stalin was seen as the single, infallible leader of the Communist party

COLLECTIVIZATION OF AGRICULTURE

Centralizing the crops for "even" distribution led to widespread starvation

NKVD

The secret police who used extreme measures to suppress any kind of anti-Soviet rhetoric and held show trials in which party leaders would give false confessions

ANY OF THIS SOUND FAMILIAR? THE COMPARISONS BETWEEN 1984 AND THE SOVIET UNION GO EVEN DEEPER:



JOSEPH STALIN
is
BIG BROTHER

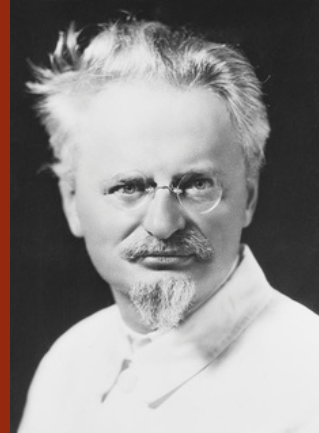
Big Brother is described as "...black-haired, black-mustachio'd, full of power and mysterious calm..." (p.14)

During World War II, the Soviet Union had an ever-changing friend or foe relationship with the Nazi regime

Goldstein is described as "...fuzzy...white hair and a small goatee beard...long thin nose near the end of which a pair of spectacles was perched. It resembled the face of a sheep..." (p.10-11)

Trotsky was a formerly high-ranking party official who was ostracized and then wrote a book criticizing party rule, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936)

He was seen in Soviet propaganda films transforming into a goat similar to Goldstein turning into a sheep.



LEON TROTSKY
is
EMMANUEL GOLDSTEIN



PROFILE:

GEORGE ORWELL

NAME: Eric Arthur Blair

BORN: June 25, 1903,
Motihari, Bengal, India

DIED: January 21, 1950
London, England

PEN NAME: George Orwell

POLITICAL BELIEFS:

He was a democratic socialist who opposed totalitarianism, including both fascist and communist forms. He advocated for social and economic equality while upholding individual freedoms, particularly intellectual freedoms.

WRITING STYLE:

He believed in the importance of clear and precise language and saw it as vital for clear thinking and political discourse. Want to learn more? His essay "Politics and the English Language" (1946) outlines his thoughts on this topic.

"A GOOD ROUND ENGLISH NAME"

Blair chose to use a pen name to separate his personal life from his writing career, particularly to avoid embarrassing his family with his experiences of poverty from which he pulled for his first novel *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933):

GEORGE:

The patron saint of England

ORWELL:

Taken from the River Orwell in Suffolk County that Blair loved to visit.

"A BEASTLY BOOK"

Orwell wrote *1984* between 1946-1949, during which time his health was rapidly declining due to tuberculosis. He was disappointed in his work and called his novel "a beastly book" saying it could have been better if his health wasn't failing.

It was an instant success.

FROM PAGE TO STAGE

In 1949, Broadway producer Sidney Sheldon was in discussion with, and bought the rights, to adapt *1984* into a play. In their correspondence, Orwell stated that his overall goal of writing the novel *"...was trying chiefly to imagine what communism would be like if it were firmly rooted in the English speaking countries..."*

VOCABULARY

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST: the belief that businesses should be public for economic equality and government leaders should be voted into office

TOTALITARIANISM: political system where the state holds absolute control over all aspects of public and private life

FASCISM: political system with a dictatorial leader and a strong regimentation of society and the economy. It rejects democracy, liberalism, and socialism

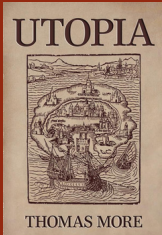
COMMUNISM: a system where all property is publicly owned, and the government controls the economy to create a classless, equal society

FURTHER READING

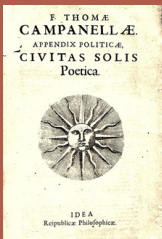
Beginning at the birth of the Renaissance, a genre of writing developed: UTOPIAS. A Utopian novel shines a light on the flaws within a society while also highlighting, while not perfect, society "...had solved most of the human problems... and offers a world that "...corresponds to the deepest longings of man." These "utopias" were in a faraway place, only separated by distance from the "real world". (p.281)

In his Afterword for the novel, Erich Fromm highlights four key examples of Utopian novels:

The narrative started to shift in the aftermath of World War One, and the devastation of World War Two solidified a new world understanding: that the World Powers now have the means to destroy all of humanity, and this shifted the narrative into a world Fromm describes as the "negative utopias" (p. 283). The overarching theme that is explored in this new genre was the question of humanity being able to overcome the horrors and hopelessness of the world without forgetting what it means to be human and if not, what that future could hold. Fromm suggests this trilogy of novels as prime examples of the "negative utopia," or dystopian, novels:



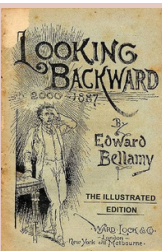
UTOPIA
by
THOMAS MORE
(1516)



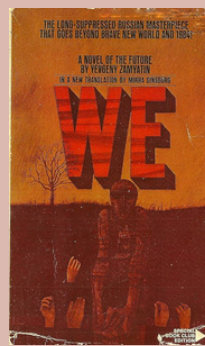
CITY OF THE SUN
by
TOMMASO CAMPANELLA
(1602)



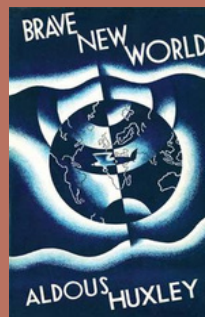
CHRISTIANOPLIS
by
JOHANNES VALENTINUS ANDREAE
(1619)



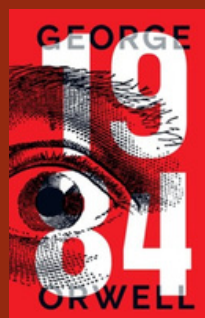
LOOKING BACKWARD
by
EDWARD BELLAMY
(1888)



WE
by
Yevgeny Zamyatin
(1924)



BRAVE NEW WORLD
by
ALDOUS HUXLEY
(1932)



1984
by
GEORGE ORWELL
(1949)
Berkley trade paperback edition, May 2017
*page numbers indicated throughout this Student Guide are quotes from this edition of Orwell's classic.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. “Big Brother is watching you.” With the rise of social media, smart phones, and AI, it’s getting more and more difficult to be truly alone. Our devices listen to our conversations to curate ads that are relevant to our individual needs. CCTV cameras are hiding in plain sight. There is a reality show literally called “Big Brother.” In the world of *1984*, Telescreens are inescapable and used as a constant source of propaganda to uplift Oceania and Big Brother. Do you think our constant access to curated news and content as well as the increase of CCTV cameras have any similarities to the use of Telescreens? Why or why not?

2. “Orwellian” is an adjective which is used to describe a situation, an idea, or a societal condition that is destructive to the welfare of a free and open society. “Big Brother,” “doublethink,” “Thought Police,” and “Newspeak” are all words that are now commonly used in modern discussions. Can you think of any instances in modern history for which one of these words could be properly applied?

3. A broad definition of historical revisionism is the re-examination and reinterpretation of historical records and events. This form of historiography can be applied in both positive and negative ways. Positive Revisionism can lead to a more complete and nuanced examination of a historical event and can correct errors or misrepresentations of historical accounts. Negative Revisionism can be used to minimize the impact, significance, or evidence of a historical event that may cause political discomfort or contradicts the preferred narrative or to promote specific perspectives to justify actions. How does Orwell use historical revisionism in the narrative of *1984*?