

George Orwell

1984



Free Audiobook



George Orwell

1984

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Member of CISQ Federation



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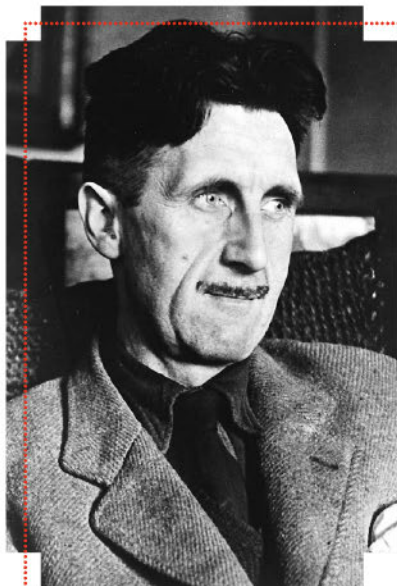
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T: GRADE 6 This icon indicates Trinity-style activities

n. track



THE STORY IS FULLY RECORDED.



George Orwell

George Orwell is one of the most famous British writers of the 20th century. His real name was Eric Arthur Blair, and he was born on June 25th, 1903, in Motihari, India. A year later, he went back to England with his mother and his sister. He grew up and went to school in Henley-on-Thames, near London. He was a clever student, but he didn't like

school much and didn't work very hard. However, he began writing poetry at school and later wrote articles for the school magazine.

After he left school in 1921, Orwell got a job as a policeman with the British government in Burma (now Myanmar). Burma was part of the British Empire¹ then, and for his job, he travelled round the country a lot and learned to speak the local language. His experiences in Burma soon made him dislike the whole idea of the British Empire. In 1928, he came back to Britain, left the government and became a writer. In the next few years, he wrote articles for newspapers and magazines, and he worked on a novel called *Burmese Days*. It was difficult to make money from his writing at first, so he also did jobs such as teaching, working on a farm and washing dishes in a hotel.

Orwell was very interested in political problems, so he decided to write about the lives of poor families in Paris and London. He visited the worst parts of both cities and spent time on the streets with people

1. **Empire** : (here) a group of countries or areas that are controlled by one country.



George Orwell's wife,
Eileen O'Shaughnessy

who had no jobs, no place to live and no hope. In 1933, he published² a book about his experiences in Paris and London, using the name 'George Orwell' for the first time. Later, he travelled across northern England to write a book about workers who did dirty, dangerous jobs in the factories there. During the early 1930s, he also met and married his wife, Eileen, and he wrote two novels. In 1936, many Spanish people and foreign volunteers³ were fighting in the civil war in Spain against dictator⁴ Francisco Franco, so Orwell went to Spain and joined them. During the fighting, he was shot in the throat and nearly died. Later, a group of fanatics⁵ started killing volunteers who were in other political groups, and Orwell left Spain because his life was in danger. In his book about the war, *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), he said that this experience made him dislike all fanatics – in left and right political groups.

-
2. **publish** : print and sell a book.
 3. **volunteer** : this person does something when they aren't paid or told to do it.
 4. **dictator** : a leader who wants to control everyone and everything in a country.
 5. **fanatic** : this person believes something very strongly and may do bad things.
 6. **homage** : show respect for someone or something that you think is very good or important.



George Orwell at the BBC

During the Second World War, Orwell worked as a journalist and on the radio. He also wrote a political novel called *Animal Farm* during this time. *Animal Farm* tells the story of a revolution⁷ on a farm, but the novel is really about the revolution in Russia, and how it went wrong. When *Animal Farm* was published in 1945, it made the name 'George Orwell' famous. His second political novel, *1984*, was published four years later, and it was also a huge success. Sadly, by

7. **revolution** : when a group of people suddenly changes the government, often by fighting.

this time, Orwell was very ill. He died on January 21st, 1950, at the age of 46.

George Orwell’s political novels, *Animal Farm* and *1984*, have become two of the most important English novels of the 20th century. Popular phrases from the novel *1984* in particular, such as *Big Brother* and *the Thought Police*, are often used on TV and the internet, and the adjective *Orwellian* has become a part of the English language. The word *Orwellian* is used to describe the things that people like dictators do when they try to control people’s lives – like the terrible government in *1984*.

Comprehension check

1 Answer the questions.

- 1 Where did George Orwell grow up?
- 2 What job did he do in Burma?
- 3 How did he feel about the British Empire when he left Burma?
- 4 Why did he travel round the north of England?
- 5 Who did Orwell fight against in Spain?
- 6 What did he do during the Second World War?
- 7 Which book first made him famous?
- 8 What do we use the word *Orwellian* for?

2 What happened in these years of George Orwell’s life?

- 1 1903:
- 2 1928:
- 3 1933:
- 4 1936:
- 5 1945:
- 6 1949:



WATCHING YOU



O'Brien

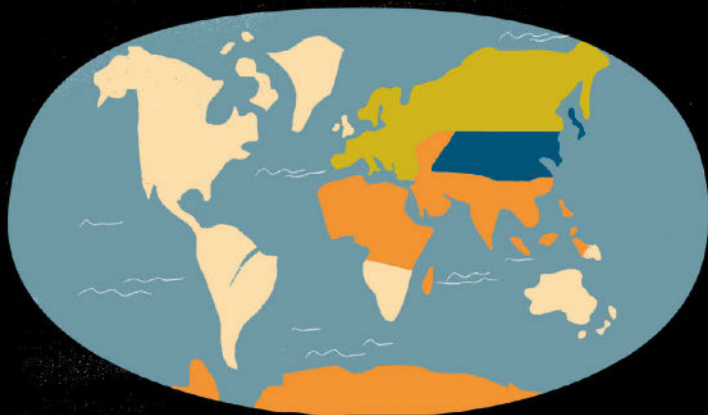
Syme

Winston Smith

Julia

Charrington

1984 WORLD MAP



EURASIA



OCEANIA



EASTASIA



DISPUTED
TERRITORIES

In 1984, George Orwell imagined that three empires controlled the world: **Eurasia**, **Oceania** and **Eastasia**. The three empires were fighting to control the **disputed territories** on the map above. All the characters in the story live in **Oceania**.

Before you read

Vocabulary

1 These words are all used in Chapter 1. Match the words (1-10) to the right definition (a-j).

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> victory | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> prison camp |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> microphone | 7 <input type="checkbox"/> spy |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> political party | 8 <input type="checkbox"/> explode |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> ministry | 9 <input type="checkbox"/> enemy |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> memory | 10 <input type="checkbox"/> prove |

- a the ability to remember information and experiences
- b when something breaks into pieces suddenly and violently
- c this object can hear sounds
- d an important government building
- e success in a war or a game
- f a group with the same political ideas
- g to show that something is definitely true
- h this country is fighting your country
- i prisoners have to stay and sometimes work here
- j this person finds information or watches people

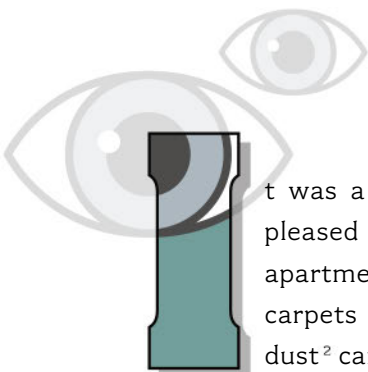
2 What do you think the words and phrases mean?

- 1 In the story, Big Brother is:
 - a ☐ someone's brother.
 - b ☐ the leader of Oceania.
- 2 The Thought Police:
 - a ☐ are very clever police officers.
 - b ☐ arrest people who have dangerous ideas and opinions.
- 3 The Proles are:
 - a ☐ the poorest people.
 - b ☐ the richest people.
- 4 Telescreens are:
 - a ☐ like laptop computers.
 - b ☐ like televisions with cameras that can watch you.



CHAPTER 1

Big Brother is watching you



It was a cold, windy evening, and Winston Smith was pleased to get home to Victory House, the old, grey apartment building where he lived. The smell of old, wet carpets met him when he stepped¹ into the hall, and dust² came in from the street as he closed the dirty glass doors behind him. Winston knew the lift was still broken, so he walked across the hall to the stairs. He hated climbing the stairs because his right ankle hurt a lot these days, and his flat was on the seventh floor!



track 02

At thirty-nine, Winston was quite old for people in Oceania, and he wasn't as fit as he used to be. His blond hair was beginning to turn white, and the grey-blue suit that all Party members wore was

-
1. **step** : move your foot forward into a place.
 2. **dust** : dry earth outside or something dry and dirty in a building.

too big for his shoulders. He went up the stairs slowly, stopping to rest every two floors. Huge posters of Big Brother hung next to the stairs on every floor. They showed a big, strong man with a heavy moustache who looked out of the posters at you. His eyes seemed to follow Winston as he walked past. You could see Big Brother's picture everywhere in Oceania. He was the 'great leader of the people': someone to respect,³ love ... and be afraid of. *BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU*, it said under the face on each poster.

When Winston opened the door of his tiny flat, the first thing that he saw was the telescreen: a huge screen on the opposite wall.

'Our factories have produced more shoes this year than ever before!' the smiling woman on the telescreen said as Winston took off his old, uncomfortable⁴ shoes. 'Life is great in Oceania,' she went on, 'and it's always getting better ... thanks to Big Brother and INGSOC, our wonderful political party!'

You could see the telescreen from everywhere in the flat, and cameras and microphones inside it could see and hear you too — if the Thought Police decided to watch you. All Party members had telescreens in their houses, and it wasn't possible to switch them off, even at night. In most flats there was nowhere to hide from them, but there was a little corner in Winston's flat that the telescreen couldn't see. Perhaps it used to be a place for a cupboard, but now it was empty. Winston often sat at a small desk in this corner, and if he stayed close to the wall, nobody could see him.

Winston walked over to the window and looked out across the city of London. The buildings were all grey except for some colourful posters of Big Brother and INGSOC — the only political party in

-
3. **respect** : feel that someone is better, more experienced or more important than you.
 4. **uncomfortable** : not comfortable.



Oceania. Winston remembered that in his mother's day, London was the capital city of a place called 'Britain'. Now, London was just a big city in the empire of Oceania. Between them, the three great empires of Oceania, Eurasia and Eastasia now controlled the whole world.

About a mile away, Winston could see a very tall, modern building: the Ministry of Love. It was one of the four huge ministry buildings in London, and Winston worked in one of them. But the Ministry of Love wasn't like the others. The Ministry of Love had no windows, and it was where the Thought Police worked. Men in black uniforms stood outside the building day and night, and police vans came and went. Nobody ever talked about what happened inside the Ministry of Love, but many people who went there never left.

Nearer to Winston's flat in Victory House, there were other apartment buildings — older ones for people in the Outer Party like Winston, and nicer, modern ones for members of the Inner Party. Although Winston couldn't see many Prole houses from his window, he knew that they were the worst. Many of them were falling down,⁵ and pieces of wood covered broken windows and holes in their roofs. Most of the people in Oceania were Proles: they were the poorest people, and they did the dirtiest, most dangerous jobs. But in some ways, the Proles were luckier than Party members because the Thought Police didn't watch them all the time.

Winston sat at the desk in the corner and took a small diary out of the desk drawer. The diary was quite old, but its pages were empty and clean, and it was made of beautiful, soft paper. They didn't make paper like that these days. Winston had bought it in a Prole shop a few days earlier. Party members weren't allowed to visit Prole shops, but everyone did because you couldn't find some things anywhere

5. **fall down** : (for a building) become old, with pieces falling from it.

else, like toothbrushes and knives that actually cut things! It was very dangerous for Party members to write down their thoughts in a diary, and for a few days Winston was too scared to touch it. Today, finally, he felt brave enough to write something. He turned to the first page and took a pen from the drawer.

'If they find this, they'll send me to a prison camp,' he thought. But it was too late now: they could even punish him for owning a diary.

Winston wrote *April 4th, 1984* at the top of the page. But was that the real date? How could he know for sure? And what did he want to write in the diary? After looking at the empty page for a while, he decided to write about someone at work: a good-looking young woman with short, dark hair and freckles.⁶

She must be new, he wrote. I only saw her for the first time about ten days ago. I wonder what job she does at the ministry.

Winston wanted to know who the woman was, but he couldn't go and ask her. People didn't talk to each other at work without a reason, and the office telescreens would see him if he tried to chat to her. There were lots of spies in the ministry too, and nobody knew who they were.

She doesn't work in my office, but she often comes there, Winston wrote. I've seen her watching me too. Perhaps she's a member of the Thought Police!

Winston looked up from the diary when a rocket exploded somewhere on the other side of London. The sound reminded him of a terrible night when he was a child. He remembered hiding with his family in a building under the ground: an old station perhaps. Above them, rockets were falling on the city, and soldiers were fighting in the streets. The building was full of people, and

6. **freckle** : a small, natural, brown spot on a person's face.



everyone was very frightened. An old man was sitting near to Winston, crying and talking to himself.

‘Why did we trust them?’ the man said. ‘Why, why, why? I knew we shouldn’t trust them ... and now she’s dead. My poor, lovely girl!’

Winston was too young to understand what the old man was talking about, or know much about the war, but he remembered how hungry and scared he was all the time. Winston’s father disappeared soon after that night. Later, his mother and sister disappeared too, but he still saw them in his dreams. They were always falling ... down and down ... getting further and further away from him. He cried out to them in his sleep, but he couldn’t save them.

There were always wars between Oceania and the other two empires, but nobody knew what they were really about. At the moment, Oceania’s enemy was Eurasia, and the Party now said ‘our enemy has always been Eurasia’. But Winston remembered that only a few years ago, Eurasia didn’t use to be the enemy: it was Eastasia then. Of course, it was impossible to prove that. How could you prove anything when the Party changed the records⁷ all the time? It was easy for them to change the past, but much harder for Winston to change his memory.

When Winston stopped daydreaming, he realised that he was writing something. He looked down at the diary and was surprised to see the words *DOWN WITH⁸ BIG BROTHER!*

‘Did I really write that?’ he thought. ‘If anyone reads it, they’ll probably shoot me!’

Suddenly, someone knocked on the front door. Winston jumped up from his chair.

‘Are they here already?’ he thought.

7. **record** : (here) something which shows what happened in the past.

8. **Down with** : we can say this if we don’t like someone and want to be free of them.

The text and *beyond*

Comprehension check

- 1 Read the sentences and answer (T) True or (F) False. Correct the false sentences.

	T	F
1 Winston doesn't mind walking up the stairs in Victory House.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 The telescreen can see everything in Winston's flat.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 A few days earlier, Winston bought a diary in a Prole shop.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Winston writes about someone from work in the diary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 A rocket explodes near to Victory House.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Winston knows where his family are now.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Vocabulary

- 2 These words are all used in Chapter 1. Match the people or things (1-6) to the right definition (a-f).

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | the Ministry of Love |
| 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | INGSOC |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | the Thought Police |
| 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eurasia |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Big Brother |
| 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> | the Proles |
-
- | | |
|---|---|
| a | a leader who everyone must respect |
| b | the only political party in Oceania |
| c | an organisation that watches people day and night |
| d | the poorest people in Oceania |
| e | a building with no windows that nobody ever talks about |
| f | the empire that is fighting with Oceania |

Discussion

3 Read the questions and discuss the answers with a partner. Share your answers with the class.

- 1 Why do you think there are posters of Big Brother everywhere?
- 2 What do you think life is like for most people in Oceania?
- 3 How is the world in George Orwell's *1984* different to the real world?
- 4 Why do you think Inner and Outer Party members live in different apartment blocks?

Reading

4 B1 PRELIMINARY For each question, choose the correct answer. An example has been done for you.

In the fictional London of George Orwell's *1984*, telescreens watch people (0) the streets, (1) work and in their homes. Telescreens (2) really exist in Orwell's day, but similar machines do exist now. Over the last ten years, millions of computer-controlled cameras have appeared in European cities. These cameras watch city streets, and they (3) local governments to control traffic, manage crowds at big events and get ambulances to accidents quickly. They also watch important buildings (4) museums, for example.

The cameras help to keep our cities safe. However, in many city centres, these cameras now film us all the time, (5) when we're just shopping. The latest cameras can even find people in crowds (6) are acting strangely. Is Orwell's novel becoming real?

- | | | | |
|---------------|----------|---------|-------|
| 0 A in | B on | C at | D who |
| 1 A on | B when | C for | D at |
| 2 A didn't | B aren't | C they | D yet |
| 3 A have | B make | C allow | D can |
| 4 A such | B like | C as | D in |
| 5 A although | B but | C even | D so |
| 6 A when | B they | C if | D who |

Before you read

Vocabulary

- 1 Complete the sentences with the words in the box. Use a dictionary, if necessary.

propaganda community centre predictions
demonstration traitor mess truth hero

- 1 We're organising a because we disagree with the government's plans.
 - 2 Political parties often produce posters to give their opinions about things.
 - 3 A is a person who works against his or her country.
 - 4 Why is your room always so untidy? This place is a !
 - 5 The scientist made some about the future.
 - 6 What she did was really brave. She's a !
 - 7 Local people do activities and meet at the
 - 8 Believe me. I'm telling you the
- 2 These words and phrases are all used in Chapter 2. Match the words and phrases (1-5) to the right definition (a-e). Use a dictionary, if necessary.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> comrade | a spending time alone |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> doublethink | b a person who doesn't like or believe the Party |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> thought criminal | c another member of the Party |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> memory hole | d believing two opposite ideas at the same time |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> own time | e this burns documents and records of the past |

Prediction

- 3 What do you think will happen in this chapter? Choose two possibilities, then discuss them with a partner.
- 1 ☐ The Thought Police will come to Winston's flat.
 - 2 ☐ Winston will help a neighbour.
 - 3 ☐ A person on the telescreen will speak to Winston.
 - 4 ☐ Someone will find Winston's diary.