

# ‘NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR’

EASY ENGLISH:  
COMPREHENSIVE  
STUDY GUIDE



EVERYTHING YOU  
NEED, NOTHING  
MORE.



# CONTENTS

1

**PLOT SUMMARY**

2

**CHARACTERS**

3

**THEMES**

4

**SETTING**

5

**SYMBOLS**

6

**STRUCTURE**



# PLOT SUMMARY

"1984" by George Orwell is a dystopian novel set in a world of perpetual war, pervasive government surveillance, and incessant public mind control. The story unfolds in Airstrip One (formerly known as Great Britain), a province of the superstate Oceania which is in a constant state of war with the other two superstates, Eastasia and Eurasia.

The book introduces us to Winston Smith, a member of the Outer Party, working at the Ministry of Truth (Minitrue), where his job entails the revision and distortion of history to align with the Party's current version of truth. In this society, the Party, led by the seemingly omnipresent Big Brother, employs the Thought Police to persecute individualism and independent thought—referred to as "thoughtcrimes."

The narrative follows Winston's life, where he struggles with oppressive conformity and his inner rebellion against the Party. He enters into a forbidden relationship with Julia, who shares his disdain for the Party's rigid regulations. Together, they seek some semblance of freedom and truth, which leads them to the Brotherhood, an underground resistance movement. However, their hope is shattered as they are betrayed and captured by the Thought Police.

After their arrest, Winston is taken to the Ministry of Love (Miniluv), where he endures a harrowing process of physical and psychological torture, primarily orchestrated by O'Brien, a friend who turns out to be a loyal servant of the Party. The objective of this grueling torture is not merely to punish Winston but to reform his thoughts until he fully conforms to the Party's ideology.

Eventually, after enduring the ultimate betrayal of his values and his love for Julia, Winston is broken. His love for Big Brother supplants his yearning for rebellion, and he is released back into society, a shell of his former self, completely loyal to the Party and its figurehead, Big Brother.

The novel's themes center on the dangers of totalitarianism, surveillance, and the destruction of truth and individuality. Throughout the story, Orwell presents a chilling world where language is manipulated ("Newspeak"), history is rewritten, and personal loyalties are betrayed for the sake of the Party's unending rule. The haunting legacy of "1984" lies in its prophetic insights into power, control, and the nature of reality itself.



# CHARACTERS

## Winston Smith

Winston Smith is trapped within the oppressive regime of the Party. Introduced as a seemingly ordinary man, Winston works for the Ministry of Truth (Minitrue), where his job entails altering historical records to fit the Party's current narrative. This position places him in a setting that highlights his intellectual dissent and dissatisfaction with the status quo.

Winston's rebellion is conveyed through his private transgressions, such as keeping a journal, which is classed as a thoughtcrime. Even in his cautious **subversion**, there is an undercurrent of fear that permeates his life, knowing he is under constant surveillance by the telescreens and at risk of capture by the Thought Police. His awareness of being trapped in a **totalitarian** society, where even one's own thoughts are not free from the Party's scrutiny, underscores Winston's silent despair.

His interactions with other characters, such as Julia, whom he engages in a **covert** romantic relationship with, reveal his need for personal connections and intimacy—qualities suppressed by the Party. Meanwhile, a figure like O'Brien, whom Winston initially perceives as an ally, later becomes the instrument of his ultimate betrayal and torture.

The depth of Winston's intellectual and emotional resistance is evident when he entertains thoughts of the "Brotherhood," an underground resistance movement. Winston's hope of possible rebellion signifies his desire for agency and change, albeit feeble against the overwhelming might of the Party.

Winston's complex mental state and his grappling with the Party's doctrine come to a head during his imprisonment and torture at the Ministry of Love (Miniluv). After enduring Room 101, the place of ultimate terror where his worst fears are manifested, his resistance crumbles entirely. It is here where the psychological manipulation and physical **coercion** culminate in his acceptance of the Party's reality, encapsulated in the **infamous** betrayal of his love for Julia and his newfound love for Big Brother.

Winston's journey from disillusionment and subtle rebellion to complete **subjugation** illustrates the power of a totalitarian system to crush individual thought and resistance. His transformation from a man seeking truth and freedom to one who accepts—and even loves—the very symbol of his

**Subversion:** Acts aimed at undermining or overthrowing a system or government. In the novel, Winston's diary and affair with Julia are subtle acts of subversion against the Party's control.

**Totalitarian:** A political system where the state recognises no limits to its authority and seeks to regulate every aspect of public and private life. The Party in the novel epitomises a totalitarian regime.

**Covert:** Secret or hidden, not openly practiced or engaged in. Winston and Julia's affair is a covert rebellion against the Party's rules.

**Coercion:** The practice of persuading someone to do something by using force or threats. The Party uses coercion, like the threat of Room 101, to control citizens.

**Infamous:** Well known for some bad quality or deed. Big Brother is infamous for his oppressive control over Oceania.

**Subjugation:** Bringing someone or something under domination or control. The Party's aim is the complete subjugation of its citizens, including their thoughts and beliefs.



oppression, Big Brother, serves as a striking example of the novel's central themes of control, power, and the malleability of truth.

Indeed, after facing the truth about O'Brien and the Party, the narrow scope of Winston's thoughts during his discomfort in the Ministry of Love's cell reflects his preoccupation and the extent of his mental dwindling, "**He had only six thoughts. The pain in his belly; a piece of bread; the blood and the screaming; O'Brien; Julia; the razor blade.**" This encapsulates the dehumanising effects of the Party's oppression on Winston's psyche, leading to the erosion of his will and identity.

## Julia

Julia is introduced by Orwell as a seemingly enthusiastic participant of the Party's campaigns and exercises. However, her true character is revealed as significantly more complex when she engages in a secret relationship with the novel's protagonist, Winston Smith. Julia represents a type of rebellion unlike Winston's; she despises the Party not for its ideology but for how it interferes with her personal desires and pleasures.

Julia's philosophy towards life under the Party is straightforward: "**You wanted a good time; 'they' meaning the Party wanted to stop you having it; you broke the rules as best you could.**" This comment succinctly captures Julia's attitude toward the restrictive society in which she lives—she recognises that the Party aims to **curtail** pleasure and, therefore, approaches rebellion through subverting its **edicts** wherever possible to enjoy life.

Her understanding of the Party's **puritanical** stance on sex is nuanced. Julia perceives that "**sexual privation induced hysteria which was desirable because it could be transformed into war-fever and leader-worship.**" She succinctly puts her realisation into words, saying, "**When you make love, you're using up energy; and afterwards, you feel happy and don't give a damn for anything. They can't bear you to feel like that. They want you to be bursting with energy all the time.**" This acknowledgment emphasises her astuteness and her **pragmatic** approach to rebellion, seeking to maintain inner happiness and agency by engaging in forbidden pleasures.

Despite her rebellious streak, Julia lacks interest in broader political doctrines or the idea of any organised revolt, such as the Brotherhood. Her nonchalance towards the Party's ideology, except where it infringes on her personal life, along with her refusal to believe in the existence of an organised resistance, illustrate her skepticism and focus on practical, individual

**Curtail:** To reduce in extent or quantity; to impose a restriction on. The Party curtails freedom of thought and expression through Newspeak and strict rules.

**Edicts:** Official orders or proclamations issued by a person in authority. The Party issues edicts that control every aspect of life in Oceania.

**Puritanical:** Practising or enforcing strict religious or moral behavior. The Party's attitude towards sex and personal relationships is puritanical, banning any form of pleasure.

**Pragmatic:** Dealing with things sensibly and realistically. Julia's approach to her rebellion against the Party is pragmatic, focusing on small acts of personal freedom.



defiance rather than collective action.

Julia's practicality is also evident in her previous work at Pornosec, which reveals her defiance of the Party's attempts to control and suppress sexual impulses. She describes the work as straightforward and unfulfilling, indicating her indifference towards the Party's propaganda efforts, "**I was only on the kaleidoscopes. I was never in the Rewrite Squad. I'm not literary, dear—not even enough for that**".

Consequently, while Julia's **insurgence** is starkly different from Winston's ideological struggle, her character offers an intriguing representation of resistance. Through Julia, Orwell explores how personal and immediate desires can motivate dissent and how such a drive for individual pleasure can be seen as a form of rebellion in its own right in a repressive regime like that of Big Brother. Julia's story arc portrays her as a character who is realistic, focused on survival, and innovative in finding ways to resist the oppressive controls exerted over her life by the authoritarian Party.

### Don Pedro

O'Brien is one of the most **enigmatic** and manipulative characters in George Orwell's "1984." Ostensibly a member of the Inner Party, he presents himself with a mix of brutality and charm. Physically, he is described as "**a large burly man with a thick neck and a coarse humorous brutal face**," suggesting a strong and perhaps intimidating presence.

Despite his intimidating appearance, O'Brien carries a "**certain charm of manner**" and exhibits behaviors that would be considered cultivated, such as a particular way of resettling his glasses reminiscent of an 18th-century nobleman. This juxtaposition of civility and the capacity for brutality captures the essence of his complex character. Winston is drawn to O'Brien not just because of this contrast, but due to a "**secretly held belief—or perhaps not even a belief, merely a hope—that O'Brien's political orthodoxy was not perfect**".

O'Brien's true **malevolence** is revealed through his role in Winston's torture and brainwashing in the Ministry of Love. He is the architect behind the physical and psychological torments that befall Winston, deciding the timing and intensity of Winston's pain, periods of respite, nourishment, sleep, and even

**Doctrines:** A belief or set of beliefs held and taught by a Church, political party, or other group. The Party's doctrines include the principles of Ingsoc and the infallibility of Big Brother.

**Insurgence:** An act of rising in active revolt. Though not overt, Winston's and Julia's actions represent a form of insurgency against the Party's authority.

**Enigmatic:** Difficult to interpret or understand; mysterious. O'Brien's character is enigmatic; he appears to be an ally to Winston but is actually a loyal Party member.

**Political Orthodoxy:** The acceptance and adherence to traditional or mainstream political beliefs. In Oceania, deviation from political orthodoxy, as defined by the Party, is considered a thoughtcrime.

**Malevolence:** The state or condition of having or showing a wish to do evil to others. The Party's malevolence is evident in its harsh treatment of dissenters.



when drugs should be administered. O'Brien morphs into every role required to break Winston's spirit, being "**the tormentor, he was the protector, he was the inquisitor, he was the friend**".

This duality of O'Brien's character, as both torturer and protector, highlights the Party's method of control, which combines intimidation with a deceitful facade of understanding and care. O'Brien's actions and words play a crucial role in Winston's ultimate submission to the Party; he represents the Party's **duplicity** and its ultimate power over the individual.

O'Brien, in his cruelty, is a **personification** of the Party's subjugation and psychological manipulation tactics, serving as both the face of Big Brother's extended arm and the personal connection to the oppressive regime that Winston mistakenly believes he can trust.

## Big Brother

Big Brother is the embodiment of the Party's authority in George Orwell's "1984." Though no one has ever seen him and there is uncertainty even about his birth, Big Brother is depicted as "**infallible and all-powerful.**" He symbolises the success, achievements, victories, knowledge, and virtues of Oceania, and all good things are attributed to issue directly from his leadership and inspiration.

Big Brother's **omnipresence** is maintained through posters and telescreens, making him a pervasive presence in the lives of Oceania's citizens. This omnipresence assures the populace of his timeless power and control, painting him as an immortal entity: "**Nobody has ever seen Big Brother. He is a face on the hoardings, a voice on the telescreen. We may be reasonably sure that he will never die**".

Orwell crafts Big Brother as more than just a leader; he is the central figure for the citizens' emotions—encouraging love, fear, and reverence, emotions "**which are more easily felt towards an individual than towards an organization**". By personifying the Party as Big Brother, the state creates a figure that can be idolised, feared, and loved, making it easier for people to align their feelings and loyalties in a way that supports the dominance of the Party.

In essence, Big Brother is not just a character but a carefully crafted instrument of control. As the ultimate symbol of the Party, Big Brother is the focal point around which the machinery of the state revolves, creating a figurehead that encapsulates the totalitarian regime's ideologies and exerts influence over the individual and collective psyche of its subjects.

**Duplicity:** Deceitfulness; double-dealing. O'Brien's duplicity is evident in how he pretends to be part of the resistance but is actually loyal to the Party.

**Personification:** The representation of an abstract quality in human form. Big Brother is the personification of the Party's control and surveillance.

**Omnipresence:** The state of being widespread or constantly encountered. Big Brother's omnipresence is symbolised by the constant surveillance and posters stating, "Big Brother is watching you."



## Mr Charrington

Mr. Charrington is initially portrayed as a seemingly gentle and unassuming elderly man in George Orwell's "1984." Winston Smith first meets Mr. Charrington in his secondhand shop where he sells items reminiscent of the past. Charrington comes across as a widower, aged sixty-three, who has run his shop for thirty years, and though he appears to be a harmless old man, he ultimately plays a devious role in the narrative.

In the text, he is described as somewhat of a **nostalgic** figure who enjoys the relics of the past and maintains his small shop with remnants of a bygone era. This portrayal is captured as Mr. Charrington engages Winston in talks about history and traditions, while never seeming to update his business or engage with many customers, leading an almost ghostlike existence. He conveys an image of **benign antiquity** as he wanders, with "**his long nose and thick spectacles,**" among the dusty remnants in his shop, giving the impression of a man out of time, a relic like the items he sells.

However, as the story unfolds, it is revealed that the quaint shopkeeper is indeed a member of the Thought Police and his shop, a trap for unwary dissidents like Winston and his lover Julia. This turn of events shows how Mr. Charrington deceives Winston, luring him into a false sense of safety, which leads to their eventual capture. His previous appearance as an ally to Winston's rebellion against the Party is stripped away, revealing a more cunning and instrumental figure in the Party's vast and inescapable **surveillance apparatus**. Through Mr. Charrington's betrayal, Orwell conveys the idea that in a totalitarian regime, anyone can be an enemy and that those who seem least threatening may in fact be the most dangerous.

## Goldstein

Emmanuel Goldstein is a key figure in George Orwell's "1984," though he never appears directly in the novel. He is the principal enemy of the state, portrayed as a traitor and a **heretic** who was once a leading figure of the Party. Goldstein's character serves as the focal point for the citizens' hatred during the daily "**Two Minutes Hate**" sessions. He is described as the perennial enemy, whose existence fuels the Party's continuous crusade against supposed threats to its purity and power.

Goldstein's image is cast as a **repugnant** and almost mythical figure: "**It was a lean Jewish face with a great fuzzy aureole of white hair and a small goatee beard—a clever face and yet somehow inherently despicable with a kind of senile silliness in**

**Nostalgic:** A sentimental longing for the past. Winston feels nostalgic for a time before the Party's dominance, as seen in his fascination with the glass paperweight.

**Benign Antiquity:** Harmless or kind old age. Mr. Charrington's shop represents benign antiquity, filled with objects from the past, but this is deceptive as it's actually a trap set by the Thought Police.

**Surveillance apparatus:** The organisational structure and technologies used for systematic observation. Telescreens in every home and public place are part of the Party's extensive surveillance apparatus.

**Heretic:** A person believing in or practicing religious heresy. In the context of the Party's ideology, Goldstein is considered a heretic, as he opposes their doctrines.

**Repugnant:** Extremely distasteful; unacceptable. The idea of freedom and individuality is repugnant to the Party.



**the long thin nose**". This characterisation provides a tangible face for Oceania's citizens to despise—an essential function for the Party to maintain the public's emotions of fear and revulsion and divert their attention away from the Party's **machinations**.

As part of the **mythos** surrounding Goldstein, he is reputed to have written "**the book**," which contains heretical ideas and is considered the **manifesto** of the Brotherhood—an underground resistance organisation. Even the text starts with lines that instigate thought about society's structure: "**Throughout recorded time and probably since the end of the Neolithic Age there have been three kinds of people in the world, the High, the Middle, and the Low**".

Orwell uses the figure of Goldstein to demonstrate how totalitarian regimes require a persistent enemy to justify their oppressive and **draconian** measures. Despite the Party's efforts to vilify Goldstein and minimise his influence, the narrative suggests that his ideas continue to infiltrate the minds of the populace: "**The Hate had started. As usual, the face of Emmanuel Goldstein, the Enemy of the People, had flashed on to the screen.**" This compulsory vilification of Goldstein ensures a constant state of alarm within the society, fortifying the Party's hold over the people through anger and fear.

Goldstein thus reflects the necessity of an antagonist in the Party's narrative, a figure that justifies the endless war and suppressive tactics that characterise life in Oceania. His existence—or at least the idea of it—enforces loyalty to the Party and underpins the atmosphere of persecution and suspicion that is fundamental to the Party's control over Oceania.

## Syme

Syme is a character in "1984" who works at the Ministry of Truth alongside Winston Smith. He is an intelligent and enthusiastic supporter of the Party who is notably working on the Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak Dictionary. Syme is described as a specialist in Newspeak and is dedicated to the Party's goal of refining the language to limit the range of thought. He is small, dark, and speaks with a sort of pedantic precision. His fervor for the destruction of words is evident when he says, "**It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words**".

Orwell also highlights Syme's intelligence and his pitiful destiny in a society that does not value free thinkers. Syme possesses an intellectual curiosity, which Winston admires, but at the same time, he recognises it as dangerous because it stands out. Syme is too smart for his own good—intelligent enough to realise some of the Party's mechanisms but too absorbed in his narrow field

**Machinations:** Crafty schemes or plots. The Party's machinations involve manipulating history and reality to maintain control.

**Mythos:** A traditional or recurrent narrative theme or plot structure. The mythos in the novel includes the omnipotent Party and the legendary figure of Big Brother.

**Manifesto:** A public declaration of policy and aims. Goldstein's book, seen as a manifesto of the Brotherhood, challenges the Party's doctrines.

**Neolithic Age:** A period of ancient history when humans started farming and living in settled communities, rather than hunting and gathering. In "Nineteen Eighty-Four," it could symbolise a time before the oppressive regime, a period of relative freedom and development.

**Draconian:** Excessively harsh and severe. This term could be used to describe the Party's rules and methods in Orwell's world, which are excessively strict and oppressive.



of knowledge to question them critically. His keen intellect and understanding of how the Party manipulates language make him a threat to Big Brother's orthodoxy. Winston reflects that Syme's intelligence will likely get him **vaporised**, stating that Syme is "**too intelligent. He sees too clearly and speaks too plainly**".

Syme's disappearance later in the novel comes without surprise, a cautionary example of how the Party's control extends to snuffing out potential subversion, even among those who seem to be loyal members. Orwell uses Syme as an illustration of the **paradoxes** inherent in the Party's regime: even talented and loyal individuals can be erased if their capabilities are seen as a threat. Syme's character thus affirms the idea that in Oceania, loyalty and usefulness to the Party are temporary safeguards at best, and that ultimately, the Party demands complete and utter ideological subjugation without the possibility of any independent thought.

**Vaporised:** In this context, vaporized refers to the practice of erasing all record of a person's existence, both in public records and in personal memories. It is a form of extreme, state-led revisionism.

**Paradoxes:** Statements or propositions that, despite sound reasoning from acceptable premises, lead to a conclusion that seems logically unacceptable or self-contradictory. In the novel, the Party's use of contradictory slogans like "War is Peace" and "Freedom is Slavery" are examples of paradoxes.



# THEMES

## Totalitarianism and individual autonomy

The theme of totalitarianism and its impact on individual autonomy and freedom represents an examination of extreme political ideologies and their capacity to annihilate personal liberties.

The way Orwell uses language to evoke the oppressive atmosphere of the totalitarian regime of Oceania is both harrowing and enlightening. Specifically, Orwell employs stark, direct language to describe the government's aims: "**The two aims of the Party are to conquer the whole surface of the earth and to extinguish once and for all the possibility of independent thought.**" This language, devoid of any sugarcoating or **euphemism**, lays bare the chilling objectives of the Party, leaving readers with no illusions about its nature.

The regime's thoroughness in achieving these aims is further underscored by Orwell's parallel of modern scientists to both **inquisitor** and chemist, grounding abstract political horror into palpable, everyday professions. As the text reveals, "**The scientist of today is either a mixture of psychologist and inquisitor, studying with extraordinary minuteness the meaning of facial expressions, gestures, and tones of voice,**" suggesting a world where the advancement of knowledge serves not the enlightenment, but the entrapment of society..

The eradication of concepts like 'freedom of speech' and 'equality before the law' represents a regression from the values heralded by past political movements, captured in Orwell's declaration: "**But by the fourth decade of the twentieth century, all the main currents of political thought were authoritarian.**" Here, the language utilised is reflective and nostalgic, hinting at a loss that is both societal and personal.

Orwell's diction throughout the novel is measured and ominous, exemplified when he writes: "**Every new political theory, by whatever name it called itself, led back to hierarchy and regimentation.**" This elicits a historical continuity of oppression, bringing forth the cyclical nature of authoritarian regimes, a cycle that the Party in "1984" seeks to break by eternally fixing its power and thus halting the pendulum of political change.

Lastly, the control of totality is illuminated through a parable: "**in Oceania, totalitarianism has spawned an "aristocracy of bureaucrats, scientists, technicians... whose**

**Euphemism:** A mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing. The novel features several euphemisms, such as referring to torture as "reeducation."

An **inquisitor** is an official who is appointed to investigate, question, and judge those accused of religious or political heresy. Here, it refers to figures within the Party who interrogate and torture those suspected of disloyalty or thoughtcrimes



origins lay in the salaried middle class and the upper grades of the working class," manifesting how the regime engulfs every social stratum. The ruling elite is depicted as an amalgamation of expertise turned toward the mechanisation of society—a tool for oppression and control..

## Propaganda and the Manipulation of Truth

The theme of propaganda, reality control, and the manipulation of truth in George Orwell's "1984" is integral to the novel's examination of how totalitarian regimes manipulate truth to maintain absolute power. The precision of Orwell's language in illustrating this theme is instrumental in creating the novel's sense of dread.

In one particularly powerful moment, Orwell narrates the fate of an unperson, illustrating the ease with which events are added and removed from recorded history: **"And presently some master brain in the Inner Party would select this version or that, would re-edit it and set in motion the complex processes of cross-referencing that would be required; and then the chosen lie would pass into the permanent records and become truth".** Orwell's careful choice of words such as **"master brain"** suggests a near-omniscient entity with the power to reshape facts, underscoring a deliberate and calculating revision of what is known to be true. The terms **"chosen lie"** and **"become truth"** highlight manipulation, creating a dichotomy where lies are seamlessly transformed into a new, accepted reality.

Language is not just a vehicle for communication in the novel, but a tool wielded by the Party to confine the scope of thought: **"Even the humblest Party member is expected to be competent, industrious, and even intelligent within narrow limits, but it is also necessary that he should be a credulous and ignorant fanatic whose prevailing moods are fear, hatred, and orgiastic triumph".** Here, Orwell's use of contrasting adjectives ("competent, industrious, and even intelligent" vs. "credulous and ignorant fanatic") illustrates the **cognitive dissonance** required by Party members, a state induced and maintained by the calculated use of propaganda.

Orwell tactically employs dry, factual tones in his descriptions, rendering the fantastic elements of the Party's doctrines into something **mundane** and thereby accepted. This narrative style informs the very essence of the Party's manipulation of truth: **"The citizen of Oceania is not allowed to know anything of the tenets of the other two philosophies, but he is taught to execrate them[4]s outrages upon morality and common sense".** By normalising **abhorrent** ideas, the language enforces the Party's reality as the only permissible truth.

**Cognitive Dissonance:**  
The mental discomfort experienced by a person who holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values. This is prevalent in the novel, where characters are forced to accept contradictory truths by the Party.

**Mundane:** Lacking interest or excitement; dull. In "Nineteen Eighty-Four," Winston's life in Airstrip One is mundane under the Party's oppressive regime, characterised by monotonous and dreary existence.

**Abhorrent:** Inspiring disgust and loathing; repugnant. The Party's methods and doctrines in the novel could be described as abhorrent due to their morally repulsive nature.



Moreover, Orwell illustrates the Party's monopolisation of truth in the explanation of the perpetually warring states: "**It does not matter whether the war is actually happening, and since no decisive victory is possible, it does not matter whether the war is going well or badly. All that is needed is that a state of war should exist**". The repetitive structure ("It does not matter") signifies the Party's intent to instill in its citizenry a persistent sense of urgency and crisis, regardless of the actual state of affairs—thus upholding the Party's narrative.

The manipulation of truth in "1984" is not simply a backdrop for the story; it is an intrusive reality that Orwell constructs with meticulous language, defining every character's experience. Through tight control of information and relentless spread of propaganda, the Party disorients and disempowers, annihilating personal autonomy and rewriting history to secure its dominion. Through Orwell's linguistic choices, this theme resonates as a warning of the power inherent in who controls the narrative and, fundamentally, the truth.

### Language as a tool of power and subjugation

In "1984," George Orwell explores how language can be deployed as a tool of power and subjugation. Through the creation and implementation of Newspeak, the language is not merely a means of expression but a tool for restricting thought, shaping reality, and maintaining the Party's totalitarian control.

Orwell reveals the intent behind the development of Newspeak, explaining its purpose as making "**all other modes of thou[1]le.**" Syme, an expert on Newspeak, proudly declares: "**It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words**". The language's deliberate reduction of vocabulary effectively limits the complexity of thought and restricts the possibility of rebellious thoughts. By diminishing the range of expression, the Party aims to eliminate the ability to conceive of political alternatives, effectively preventing dissent at its source.

The Party's strategy is further illustrated in how they position language as an almost automatic response akin to machine gun fire: "**His training to do this, the language gave him an almost foolproof instrument.**" The harshness and 'certain wilful ugliness' of Newspeak words align with the spirit of Ingsoc, facilitating the indoctrination of Party members and the obliteration of unorthodox viewpoints.

Orwell also skillfully employs the diction of control in his narrative, as when he writes about the reduction of the Newspeak vocabulary. Every year, the vocabulary grows smaller, "**each reduction**" because it reduced "**the temptation to take**



**thought.**" The ultimate objective sketched by Orwell's language –articulate speech issuing "**from the larynx without involving the higher brain centers**"—is a haunting depiction of the negation of free will and critical thinking.

Through Newspeak, negative influence becomes easy. By controlling language, the Party exerts influence over the populace, ensuring that discontent never becomes articula[4]rsive thought cannot prosper. Chillingly, Orwell writes that the "**consciousness of the masses needs only to be influenced in a negative way.**"

Orwell's language choices turn the abstract concept of totalitarian suppression into a **visceral** reality. By showing us how language can be weaponised to constrain thought and enforce social hierarchy, he highlights the vulnerability of human thought to manipulation. Ultimately, Orwell's use of language to discuss language itself becomes a powerful **meta-commentary** on the seductiveness and danger of rhetoric in the hands of those seeking absolute power.

**Visceral:** Relating to deep inward feelings rather than to the intellect. The novel explores visceral human reactions to oppression and the instinctive fear of the Party's authoritarian rule.

**Meta-Commentary:** A form of commentary that is about itself or its subject matter in a self-referential way. In "Nineteen Eighty-Four," Orwell uses the narrative as a meta-commentary on the dangers of totalitarianism and manipulation of truth.

## Fear and paranoia

The theme of psychological manipulation and the impact of fear and paranoia in George Orwell's "1984" is typified by the idea that the characters are in a constant state of uncertainty.

Orwell constructs the psychological landscape of Oceania through the meticulous portrayal of the party's tactics: "**Remember throughout our conversation that I have it in my power to inflict pain on you at any moment and to whatever degree I choose.**" This direct threat presented in a calm and measured tone by O'Brien underscores the cold, calculated nature of the Party's control over the individual, emphasising submission through fear rather than persuasion.

Winston reflects on the invasive reach of the Party: "**For the first time he perceived that if you want to keep a secret [2]o hide it from yourself.**" This encapsulation of internal oppression illustrates how the very instincts of self-preservation are turned against oneself, forcing individuals to suppress their true emotions and thoughts in the perpetual presence of fear.

The emotive power of the text is further enhanced through descriptions of the Party's cruel machinations. Julia's account of the threats posed by the regime demonstrates the extent to which fear breaks humanity: "Sometimes they threaten you with something ... that you can't even think about. And then you say, 'Do it to somebody else, do it to so-and-so.'"



This harrowing confession depicts a breaking of the spirit where self-preservation overrides all moral considerations, mirroring the tension between innate self-interest and the terror of complete subjugation by the state.

Orwell also delves into the consequence of such psychological stress, highlighting the transformation it causes in relationships: "**And after that, you don't feel the same toward the other person any longer.**" The betrayal induced by intense fear is not only a weapon of control but also an agent of forced emotional decay, severing the bonds between individuals and ensuring the Party's dominion over every aspect of life, including the most intimate of human relations.

Throughout "1984," Orwell's use of language in articulating the methods and effects of psychological manipulation serves as a narrative device to convey meaning. The language establishes an omnipresent state of paranoia, in tandem with the perpetually monitored world where even a thought can **indict** one as a traitor. In this, Orwell presents a world where truth and safety are mutable, and the fear and paranoia instilled by the state ensure the subjugation of the will and the abandonment of hope for anything beyond the Party's orthodoxy.

**Indict:** Formally accuse or charge with a serious crime. The novel's protagonist, Winston Smith, faces the threat of being indicted by the Party for his rebellious thoughts and actions.



# SETTING

## Airstrip One

Airstrip One, formerly known as England or Britain, is the main setting of George Orwell's "1984" and a central location in the superstate of Oceania. This area has been reinvented by the Party, exemplifying the new world order under Big Brother's rule.

Airstrip One is depicted as an area where the past has been systematically erased and rewritten to align with the Party's present narrative. The manipulation of history is so complete that even the geographic titles have been altered to obliterate any reminiscence of a pre-Party existence: **"Airstrip One, for instance, had not been so-called in those days: it had been called England or Britain though London he felt fairly certain had always been called London".**

The capital city, London, is a shadow of its former self, characterised by a constant state of war. It is a city where historical landmarks have been destroyed or repurposed, and the architecture is dominated by large, intimidating structures, such as the four Ministries including the enormous pyramid-structured Ministry of Truth. Winston notes the regular occurrence of rocket bombs dropping on the city, highlighting the ongoing state of war and destruction: **"About twenty or thirty of them a week were falling on London at present".**

The environment of Airstrip One plays an intrinsic role in the Party's strategy to maintain power and control. By reshaping the landscape and controlling every aspect of life, from what people speak to what they remember, the Party creates a new reality. This reality is not centralised as traditions would have it, but spread across a superstate without a capital, without a visible leader: **"In no part of Oceania do the inhabitants have the feeling that they are a colonial population ruled from a distant capital. Oceania has no capital and its titular head is a person whose whereabouts nobody knows".**

Thus, Airstrip One epitomises the pervasive power and influence of the Party; it is a place of **ruination** and psychological manipulation, a setting where every brick and pavement has been commandeered to serve the Party's ends. Through the transformation of England into Airstrip One, Orwell conveys the extent of totalitarian reach—not just over people's minds and actions, but also over the very spaces they inhabit.

**Ruination:** The action or fact of ruining someone or something or of being ruined. "Nineteen Eighty-Four" depicts the ruination of individuality and freedom under a totalitarian regime.



## Victory Mansions

Victory Mansions, where Winston Smith resides, epitomises the **dilapidated** state and neglect characteristic of civilian life in Oceania. The building is old and crumbling, a **microcosm** of the broader state of disrepair that reflects the Party's indifference to the living conditions of its citizens. Orwell describes it thusly: **"Victory Mansions were old flats built in 1930 or thereabouts and were falling to pieces".**

These flats, constructed decades before the novel's time, now suffer from a lack of maintenance as the plaster **"flaked constantly from ceilings and walls,"** showing a pervasive decay that matches the desolate spirit hovering over Oceania's society. The building's infrastructure is likewise vulnerable, with **"pipes burst[ing] in every hard frost" and a "roof leaked whenever there was snow."** This tangible sense of deterioration is **compounded** by the intentional scarcity of heat, as **"the heating system was usually running at half steam when it was not closed down altogether from motives of economy".**

The poor state of Victory Mansions is indicative of the Party's overarching policies, where even minor repairs must be **"sanctioned by remote committees"**, a **bureaucratic** process undoubtedly mired in red tape, showing the Party's lack of concern for the individual's comfort or wellbeing. Furthermore, the residents of the flats are demanded to contribute to Party activities, like the **adornment** of the building for Hate Week, with Parsons boasting that **"Victory Mansions doesn't have the biggest outfit of flags in the whole street"**. This highlights the contrast between the external show of Party loyalty and the internal decay of the society's fabric.

Overall, the Victory Mansions is not only Winston's place of residence but also as a symbol of the insidious decay of humanity and civil infrastructure under a regime that outwardly prioritises grandeur and internal unity to the detriment of the actual quality of life of its citizens.

## The Ministry of Love

The Ministry of Love, known as Miniluv in Newspeak, stands as the most intimidating and sinister of the four primary Ministries in George Orwell's "1984." It is described in chilling detail: **"The Ministry of Love was the really frightening one. There were no windows in it at all."** Its windowless construction is an ominous symbol of the total isolation and intense secrecy surrounding the activities within its walls.

**Dilapidated:** (Of a building or object) in a state of disrepair or ruin as a result of age or neglect. The novel often describes the physical environment of Oceania as dilapidated, reflecting the decay of society under the Party's rule.

**Compounded:** Make (something bad) worse; intensify the negative aspects of. In the novel, the Party compounds the misery of its citizens through constant surveillance and control.

**Compounded:** Make (something bad) worse; intensify the negative aspects of. In the novel, the Party compounds the misery of its citizens through constant surveillance and control.

**Adornment:** A thing that adorns or decorates; an ornament. In the novel, the use of adornments, like posters of Big Brother, serve as a means of propaganda and control.



Inaccessible to the public except on official business, Miniluv is designed to be a fortress of law and order, fortified by a complex array of security measures: **"It was a place impossible to enter except on official business and then only by penetrating through a maze of barbed-wire entanglements, steel doors, and hidden machine-gun nests."** The presence of **"gorilla-faced guards in black uniforms armed with jointed truncheons"** patrolling the streets that approach the Ministry further amplify the aura of fear and control that Miniluv exerts over the populace of Oceania.

Unlike the other Ministries, which, despite their daunting appearances, still engage with the city life around them, the Ministry of Love is completely cut off. Its purpose is not to engage with public life but to contain and eradicate any real, perceived, or potential **dissent** against the Party. Winston Smith himself never ventured within half a kilometer of its premises, a common experience for the citizens of Oceania, reflecting the terror it evokes in them.

Orwell uses Miniluv not just as a place where physical control over individuals is exercised, but also as a symbol of the psychological grip the Party holds over the citizens of Oceania. The impossibility of entry, the absence of windows, the intimidating architecture—all contribute to the Ministry's role as the heart of the Party's coercive power, enforcing obedience through fear and brutal **reeducation**.

Miniluv's overwhelming presence alongside the other Ministries forms a skyline defined by the authority and surveillance of Big Brother, **"So completely did they dwarf the surrounding architecture that from the roof of Victory Mansions you could see all [of them] simultaneously"**. This view serves as a constant visual reminder to the people of Oceania of the power and omnipresence of the Party.

**Dissent:** The holding or expression of opinions at variance with those commonly or officially held. In Orwell's world, dissent is dangerous and often leads to punishment or vaporisation.

**Reeducation:** The process of teaching a person or group to accept different beliefs, often in a forceful or oppressive way. The Ministry of Love in the novel is dedicated to the reeducation of those who rebel against the Party.



# SYMBOLS

## The Glass Paperweight

In George Orwell's 1984, symbols such as the glass paperweight and St. Clement's Church are woven deeply into the narrative and serve as powerful vehicles for the author's themes and messages. The glass paperweight, as described in the text, has layers that can be seen as a metaphor for the complexity and depth of the world Winston dreams of, a world different from the oppressive one he inhabits: **"The inexhaustibly interesting thing was not the fragment of coral but the interior of the glass itself. There was such a depth of it and yet it was almost as transparent as air"**. This suggests a multifaceted reality, beautiful yet unreachable, much like the world before the Party took over. The paperweight, with the enclosed piece of coral, symbolises Winston's desire to capture and understand a past that the Party insists on eradicating or rewriting. It represents a snapshot of history, fragile and enclosed within the glass, much like Winston's own fleeting memories and the forbidden truths he seeks to hold on to.

St. Clement's Church, meanwhile, is a symbol of the lost and altered past. In the novel, the church is a bombed ruin, sitting outside the Palace of Justice—a stark representation of the obliteration of history and tradition by the Party: **"It was a church at one time St Clement Danes its name was"**. The church's destruction echoes the broader erasure of the collective memory, suggesting a disconnect from the historical continuity and culture that once defined society. The rhyme associated with St. Clement's, **"Oranges and lemons say the bells of St Clement's,"** not only signifies the loss of childhood and innocence but also foreshadows the menacing "chop off your head," linking childhood memories with the brutal realities of Winston's world. This juxtaposition illustrates how the Party's control extends even into the internalised memories of its citizens, contorting and utilising nostalgia as another means of submission and control.

Orwell is able to contrast the characters' inner desires for truth and beauty with the stark reality of their manipulated existence. Both the glass paperweight and St. Clement's Church allow him to create a nuanced critique of totalitarianism, showing the depths to which it will sink to maintain power, including the annihilation of history and the human longing for connection to the past. The symbols are not just objects or references; they are windows into the losses endured by individuals and society as a whole under the Party's regime, serving as a reminder of what has been sacrificed and what remains at stake.



## The Place Where There Is No Darkness

George Orwell presents "The Place Where There Is No Darkness" as a recurring motif that initially seems to be a symbol of hope and enlightenment in Winston's mind but ultimately reveals a much darker and ironic significance.

In his conversations with O'Brien, Winston mentions the phrase "**In the place where there is no darkness**" somewhat hesitantly, to which O'Brien responds as though he recognises the reference. This seemingly shared understanding creates an almost mystical bond that **transcends** mere political allegiance.

Winston associates this phrase with a sense of positive expectation, suggesting a realm of truth and clarity, contrary to the murkiness of his current reality under the Party. O'Brien's acknowledgment of this phrase deepens the perceived connection between the two men: "He could not now remember whether it was before or after having the dream that he had seen O'Brien for the first time... But at any rate the identification existed. It was O'Brien who had spoken to him out of the dark". This line implies a dual relationship of obscurity and enlightenment—Winston cannot discern friend from foe, but he feels a compelling bond with O'Brien.

However, the chilling revelation comes when Winston discovers the true meaning of "The Place Where There Is No Darkness." Rather than symbolising an escape into light and truth, the place is revealed to be the Ministry of Love, where the lights are never turned off: "**In this place he knew instinctively the lights would never be turned out. It was the place with no darkness...** **In the Ministry of Love there were no windows**". The perpetual light represents not **enlightenment**, but relentless surveillance and torture. The hoped-for place of understanding becomes a site of ultimate betrayal and oppression, as O'Brien's recognition of the phrase foreshadows his role as Winston's tormentor.

This bitter realisation about "The Place Where There Is No Darkness" speaks to the core of Orwell's narrative—under totalitarian rule, hope and truth are subverted, becoming tools of manipulation and control.

Orwell eloquently captures this cruel irony as Winston's search for illumination leads him to a place of immutable darkness, where psychological manipulation and physical suffering aim to extinguish the human spirit. It is an emblematic Orwellian twist where words and expectations are **inverted**, showing the devastating power of the Party to corrupt and invert even the most profound human longings for connection and liberation.

**Transcends:** Goes beyond the limits of something. In "Nineteen Eighty-Four," the concept of transcendence is explored in Winston's initial belief in "The Place Where There Is No Darkness," which he hoped transcended the oppressive reality of the Party, only to find it emblematic of betrayal and oppression.

**Enlightenment:** The state of gaining insight or understanding. In the novel, enlightenment is sought after but often leads to a bitter realisation of the Party's control, as seen in the revelation about "The Place Where There Is No Darkness".

**Inverted:** Turned upside down or reversed in position. In "Nineteen Eighty-Four," concepts and expectations are often inverted, showing how the Party corrupts even the most natural human longings for connection and liberation.



## The Telescreens

The telescreens are one of the novel's most recognisable symbols, exemplifying the extent of the Party's surveillance state and the **ubiquity** of its propaganda. Placed in the homes and public areas of Oceania, the telescreens are described as "**an oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror**" which constantly transmits Party **propaganda** and also serves as a surveillance device. These instruments can be dimmed but are designed to be inescapable: "**The instrument (the telescreen it was called) could be dimmed but there was no way of shutting it off completely**". This omnipresence underscores the inescapable control that the Party exerts over its subjects, invading their privacy to the extent that they have no **sanctuary** from the state's watchful eye.

The telescreens are not just tools for the dissemination of the Party's messages; they are also two-way devices that ensnare citizens in a trap of perpetual observation. They transmit not only images and sounds to citizens but also relay back the sights and sounds of citizens' everyday lives to the Thought Police. This function of the telescreen highlights the theme of the destruction of private life and reinforces the idea that 'Big Brother' watches on constantly.

They are reminders to the citizens of Oceania that they are never alone and never unobserved, stripping away any sense of independence or privacy: "**You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized**". Thus, the telescreens symbolise the paradox of visibility and invisibility that Orwell explores: while the Party is ever-visible to the people, the people themselves can never be sure when they are visible to the Party, creating an environment of perpetual uncertainty and fear.

This constant state of being watched forces characters like Winston to live dual lives, outwardly conforming to Party expectations while inwardly dreaming of rebellion and freedom. The telescreens thus also embody the theme of psychological control. With no need for chains or barriers, the citizens police themselves, as they have internalised the Party's surveillance—illustrating the power of the psychological chains of fear over the physical.

By incorporating the telescreens' omnipresence throughout the novel, Orwell establishes an atmosphere of oppression and control, turning the device into a powerful symbol of totalitarianism, and a stark warning of the dangers inherent in a

**Ubiquity:** The state of being everywhere at once. The telescreens in the novel are a symbol of the ubiquity of the Party's propaganda and surveillance, constantly present in public and private spaces.

**Propaganda:** Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view. The novel extensively explores how the Party uses propaganda to control reality and maintain power.

**Sanctuary:** A place of refuge or safety. In "Nineteen Eighty-Four," the concept of sanctuary is subverted as there is no escape from the Party's surveillance; even private life is invaded, leaving no true sanctuary for the citizens of Oceania.



society where privacy is eradicated and the truth is whatever the state decides it to be.



# STRUCTURE

The structure of George Orwell's "1984" is critical to its narrative, as it highlights the development of themes and characters throughout the novel. To analyse the structure and its impact, let's consider quotes from various parts of the text, showing how the narrative evolves.

From the depiction of societal structure, there is an explanation of the **social strata**, "**Below that come the dumb masses whom we habitually refer to as 'the proles' numbering perhaps 85 per cent of the population**". This structure is a backbone for the **dystopian** society, as it established the hierarchy within the narrative and set up a class system that is rigid and inescapable, framing the characters' development.

The theme of industrial consumption and warfare links the society's economic structure to its political machinations: "**Ever since the end of the nineteenth century the problem of what to do with the surplus of consumption goods has been latent in industrial society**". This represents the Party's effort to keep society in a state of constant warfare and consumption, which is also a critical reflection of Winston's recognition of the futility and constructed nature of his society's perpetual conflict.

The portrayal of the Party's control over life and death further reinforces the theme of power and helplessness, conveying the capriciousness of the regime: "**The one certain thing was that death never came at an expected moment**". The narrative structuring around Winston's understanding of his likely fate weaves a sense of **foreboding** throughout the book, culminating in Winston's resignation to his lack of agency.

Language and its manipulation are integral to the structural development of themes related to thought control. The construction of Newspeak is a central theme: "**great numbers of words which at first sight appeared to be mere abbreviations and which derived their ideological color not from their meaning but from their structure**". This manipulation of language is seen in Winston's work at the Ministry of Truth and reflects on his increasing awareness of how the structure of language shapes reality within the novel.

The narrative also illustrates the temporary nature of alliances and the constant state of distrust promoted by the Party: "**Even the official ally of the moment is always regarded**" with an implicit suspicion. This reflects how the characters, including Winston, never feel safe or secure, further exploring the theme of paranoia and the omnipresence of the Party's surveillance.

**Social Strata:** Different levels or classes in society. The novel depicts a society with clearly defined social strata, with the Party elite at the top and the "proles" at the bottom, establishing a rigid class system within the dystopian setting.

**Dystopian:** Relating to an imagined state or society where there is great suffering or injustice. "Nineteen Eighty-Four" is a classic example of a dystopian novel, depicting a totalitarian regime that controls every aspect of life.

**Foreboding:** A feeling that something bad will happen. Throughout the novel, a sense of foreboding is woven into the narrative, culminating in Winston's understanding of his fate and the oppressive control of the Party.