



1984 by George Orwell

Unit Introduction



Background

- Written in 1948 (post WWII era)
 - Political trends
 - Advances in propaganda
 - Potential of surveillance technology
- Science-fiction:
 - Explores ethical and moral issues created by new tech
 - “What if?” questions about trends and possibilities



Ursula K. LeGuin: “If we create this technology, what will happen? How will it work? How will it change society? How will it change people? Should we do it at all?”



About the Novel

- Country = Oceania; Leader = Big Brother
 - Rewrites history to suit the present
 - Daily public rituals
 - Control of behavior and speech
 - “Thoughtcrime”
- Protagonist = Winston Smith
 - Unhappy with Big Brother
 - Attempts to stand up to totalitarian government



Module Objectives

- Identify major themes of the novel
- Analyze character traits and motivation
- Make predictions about events and characters
- Analyze stylistic choices made by author; effects on reader
- Compare novel's world to our own; judge the social critique
- Write an essay about one of the issues raised in the novel
- Revise rhetorically
- Edit with a focus on improving readability



Exploring Key Concepts

With a small group, discuss the following political concepts. You may need to research further if you are not sure what they are. Record each in your WNB, along with a description and a comment on how each applies to different countries in the world today - including the United States.

Authoritarian	Monarchy	Democracy
Totalitarian	Aristocracy	Utopia
Oligarchy	Tyranny	Dystopia



Things to Consider...

Discuss the following with a partner or group

- Is the U.S. currently at war? If so, with whom (or what)? How do you know?
- Do we fight wars to create peace? Or for other reasons?
- Does having a common enemy unify people? Does this make a society easier to govern?
- What is freedom? Can freedom be limited?
- How successful is advertising at convincing people to do something they wouldn't otherwise do?
- Is it more comfortable to know what the rules are (guided by conformity and tradition)? Is freedom too much work?