

# PinkMonkey Literature Notes on . . .

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## Sample MonkeyNotes

**Note: this sample contains only excerpts and does not represent the full contents of the booknote. This will give you an idea of the format and content.**

# 1984

by

**George Orwell**

1949



**MonkeyNotes Study Guide Edited by Diane Sauder**

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## KEY LITERARY ELEMENTS

### SETTING

The novel is set in Oceania, a superstate that includes the continent of America and the British Isles. Most of the action takes place in London. The other setting is the village of Paddington, which is not very far from London. In addition, there are two other superstates with which Oceania is constantly at war. These states are Eurasia.....

### CHARACTERS

#### Major Characters

**Winston Smith** - the protagonist and main character of the novel. He is an intellectual middle aged man of 39 and a member of the Outer Party. He is also an honest man who questions and rebels against the lonely and insecure life, stripped of all human feelings, in the state of Oceania. He falls in love with Julia and is punished for the relationship with her.

**Julia** - a beautiful young girl of 26. Although a worker for the Party, she rebels against its ban on love and sex. She falls in love with Winston and looks towards him for emotional and physical companionship.

**O'Brien** - a shrewd, intelligent man who.....

#### Minor Characters

**Tom Parsons** - a co-worker and neighbor to Winston. He is a stupid but loyal member of the Party. He is extremely proud of his children who spy on others and report them to the Police.

**Syme** - Winston's friend who is working on the eleventh edition of the Newspeak dictionary at the Ministry of Truth. The Party puts him to death due to his blunt and frank nature.

**Mr. Charrington** - the owner of a small shop selling odds and ends and secondhand articles. He lets Winston and Julia use the top.....

### CONFLICT

**Protagonist:** The protagonist, Winston Smith, is a Party member who, due to his sensitive nature and honesty, is unable to come to terms with the society created by Big Brother's ruling Party. Winston rebels against the controls imposed.....

**Antagonist:** The antagonist, Big Brother, is symbolized.....

**Climax:** The climax of the story occurs when ....., Winston is eventually killed.

**Outcome:** The novel ends in total tragedy for .....

### SHORT PLOT / CHAPTER SUMMARY (Synopsis)

The novel *1984* is a story about Winston Smith, a member of the Party that is ruling over the state of Oceania. The Party rules under the dictatorship of Big Brother.

Winston is shown to be leading a lonely life in what used to be known as London before the Party came to power following a revolution. Moreover, the society created by the Party is based upon hatred, suspicion, and fear; it lacks all the finer emotions like love, trust, and friendship.

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There are strict rules laid down for Party members, and members of the opposite sex cannot meet freely. All movements and activities of the members are under constant surveillance through telescreens. Neighbors and children.....

## **THEMES**

### **Major Theme**

The major theme is the horror of .....

### **Minor Theme**

The minor theme is that love overcomes the feelings of alienation and loneliness. Both Winston and Julia are at first depicted as lonely, isolated, and miserable, a state of existence that Big Brother encourages. When Julia and .....

## **MOOD**

The novel, since it paints a horrifying picture of the future, is extremely depressing. In fact, the depressing mood persists throughout the story.....

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION - BIOGRAPHY**

### **GEORGE ORWELL**

George Orwell was the pen name of an English writer, Eric Blair. He was born in Motihari, Bengal in India in 1903, the second child of an Anglo-Indian family. At the age of eight, he was sent to boarding school in England. After winning a scholarship, Orwell went to Eton, where he studied from 1917 to 1921 and was exposed to liberal and socialist ideas. From 1922 until 1927, he served in the Indian Imperial Police in Burma; he resigned because the climate affected his health and because he believed that the British rule in Burma was unjust. He returned to Europe to pursue a writing career and first lived in Paris and then London. At first he could not find a publisher for his works. As a result, he led a life of poverty, doing odd jobs to make ends meet. His first book, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, was published under his pseudonym in 1933; largely autobiographical in nature, it told about living among the poor. Since the book was.....

## **LITERARY/HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

In writing *1984*, George Orwell admits that he was influenced by the novel *We*, written by Russian author Eugene Zamiatin. Though Zamiatin's work appeared much earlier, there are striking similarities between the two books. Both Orwell and Zamiatin belonged to the anti-Utopian School of Thought, which opposed the traditional Utopian philosophy that painted a near-perfect picture of the world.

*1984* is not just a depiction of society under a dictatorial government; it is also a product of the author's own disillusionment with the .....

## **CHAPTER SUMMARIES WITH NOTES**

### **PART I**

#### **CHAPTERS 1 & 2**

##### **Summary**

The first two chapters of the novel give a vivid description of the state of Oceania under an authoritarian, single-party rule. The main character, Winston Smith, is living in what used to be called London before the Revolution. It is clear to the reader that he is not supportive of the totalitarian government of Oceania.

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In Chapters 1 and 2, Winston Smith is shown struggling to write a diary away from the prying eyes of the telescreen installed in his flat. He reminisces about the incident that has occurred in the Ministry of Truth, where Winston works in the records department. That morning, during the 2-minute hate session, Winston sees O'Brien, one of the top officials of the Inner Party. While everyone during the hate session was shouting and screaming at Goldstein, the enemy and traitor to Oceania, Winston pauses for a moment and turns. For perhaps a second or two, his eyes meet with O'Brien's. Something in O'Brien's eyes makes Winston think that, like him, O'Brien is not a loyal party member.

While writing his diary, Winston is suddenly interrupted by his neighbor, Mrs. Parsons, who asks him to help her fix a pipe in her kitchen. Relieved that it was not the police, Winston goes over to the Parsons' flat, which is dirty and smelly. While leaving their flat, Winston is struck with a catapult by the Parsons' youngest son; he also accuses Winston of being a traitor. This makes Winston rather uneasy and he wonders if he is really safe from the thought police.

### Notes

The novel opens with a description of the futuristic society of Oceania. It is a highly mechanized, unemotional state that is ruled by the iron hand of a single party dictatorship. Life in Oceania is not pleasant. The physical deprivation and the bomb attacks on the city where Winston lives bring to mind images of Soviet society and war-torn Britain. There are shortages of essential items, such as food, clothing, and razor blades, all of which have to be rationed, just as in Soviet society and war-torn Britain.

Winston Smith represents the loneliness and alienation of the individual in a monstrous society ruled by machines and telescreens, which govern every single aspect of life. It is a society that denies friendship, companionship, love, trust, and family ties. It is also a society where no one is allowed to think against or question.....

## OVERALL ANALYSES CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### *Winston Smith*

The protagonist of the novel has been given a very interesting name by the author. The first name reminds one of the famous British statesman, Winston Churchill, and the surname Smith is a very common English name. The combination of Winston and Smith, therefore, gives the impression that the main character is like any common English man, and yet uncommon in many ways. It is Winston's uncommon character that unfolds and develops as the novel progresses; it is also his uncommonness that sets him apart and above all the other characters in the novel. Through Winston's eyes and thoughts, the reader gains an idea of the new society, which has no place for freedom, truth, or human emotions.

The uncommon Winston makes the reader hate the society in which he is living. In fact, the reader is made to empathize with all .....

### *Julia*

Julia is a young woman who rebels against the Party Ingsoc, but in a more subtle manner than Winston does. She does not care about the political views of the Party; instead, her whole focus is on how the Party restricts her personal

### ***Big Brother***

The character of Big Brother, the head of the Ingsoc, does not exist in reality, but his presence is felt throughout the book. His life-like image appears right until the end of the novel when Winston dies under the caption: BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU. The caption, along with the piercing eyes of Big Brother, serves to.....

### ***O'Brien***

In O'Brien's character, there is a combination of charisma (which attracts Winston towards him) and an almost fanatical urge for power. In fact, .....

### ***Syme***

Syme is an intelligent and witty philologist who likes to spend time with Winston. He is 'vaporised' by the Party because he can see.....

## **PLOT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS**

The novel is divided into three parts with 8 to 10 chapters each. The story of the new society, under a single-Party dictatorship, unfolds in the Part I. In the second part, Julia and Winston are attracted to each other and resist the.....

## **THEMES – THEMES ANALYSIS**

### ***Society and Polity in the Novel***

1984 is a scathing criticism of past, present, and future societies. In particular, it alludes to totalitarianism as found in both right wing.....

### ***Alienation and Love in the Novel***

The new society created in 1984 is a society that is stripped of all human bonds and finer human emotions. Friendship is not tolerated, as evidenced by Winston's reaction to Syme. When he meets Syme in the staff canteen of the.....

### ***1984: How relevant is it today?***

1984 is an anti-Utopian novel in which Orwell depicts a society four decades.....

## **STUDY QUESTIONS**

1. Describe Winston Smith as he appears at the beginning of the novel?
2. How does Winston change after meeting Julia?
3. How is Julia.....