

English 12

2025 Summer Reading and Writing Assignment

All students will read [1984 by George Orwell](#). ISBN: 9780451524935

(Click title ABOVE to purchase novel.)

Overview:

[1984](#) is often considered the most frightening book of all time; not because it is overtly scary, but because it eerily foretells so much about human nature. It is a **dystopian novel** that serves as a warning against totalitarian power and a population being ruled by fear. The government portrayed in the book uses surveillance and propaganda, as well as brainwashing to keep the people under control. This novel allows students to experience great literature while they find connections to contemporary life. As you read, pay close attention to character, setting, and theme development as the story progresses.

Objectives:

Students will develop an appreciation for reading in a text that appeals to the interests of current high school readers: **dystopia, opposition to totalitarian authority, and support for justice**. Furthermore, this assignment will lay the foundation for senior level work in critical thinking to read well beyond the story and find connections to self and surroundings.

Assignment:

1. READ THE BOOK IN ITS ENTIRETY! There will be a comprehensive assignment upon your return to school in the fall. No film version covers all of the details in the book.
2. Annotate as you read. Be prepared to discuss the book as the teacher looks at your copy while asking you questions. (**Annotation instructions are attached to this assignment.**)
3. Choose either “**Doublespeak**” OR “**Big Brother**” as a topic and write a 200-250 word detailing how your choice is present in the modern world of business and politics.
4. Read the following passage THREE times.

*On the **FIRST** reading, identify the key idea or ideas in the passage.*

Write one paragraph in response to this first reading explaining your reasoning.

*The **SECOND** reading should be a closer look at the passage. What is the **moral, lesson, or value** that is the most clear to you? Write one paragraph in response to the second reading that includes a claim, evidence from the text that supports your claim, and a brief analysis.*

*Upon the **THIRD** reading, you should look even closer. **Making connections is the ultimate goal of reading any type of literature.** Determine what the text means to YOU and how it connects to experiences you have had or witnessed in the world around you. Write TWO paragraphs in response to this third reading: One detailing the personal meaning, and one detailing the connection you see.*

“He picked up the children’s history book and looked at the portrait of Big Brother

which formed its frontispiece. The hypnotic eyes gazed into his own. It was as though some huge force were pressing down upon you—something that penetrated inside your skull, battering against your brain, frightening you out of your beliefs, persuading you, almost, to deny the evidence of your senses. In the end the Party would announce that two and two made five, and you would have to believe it. It was inevitable that they should make that claim sooner or later: the logic of their position demanded it. Not merely the validity of experience, but the very existence of external reality, was tacitly denied by their philosophy. The heresy of heresies was common sense. And what was terrifying was not that they would kill you for thinking otherwise, but that they might be right. For, after all, how do we know that two and two make four? Or that the force of gravity works? Or that the past is unchangeable? If both the past and the external world exist only in the mind, and if the mind itself is controllable what then?"

"The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command. His heart sank as he thought of the enormous power arrayed against him, the ease with which any Party intellectual would overthrow him in debate, the subtle arguments which he would not be able to understand, much less answer. And yet he was in the right! They were wrong and he was right. The obvious, the silly, and the true had got to be defended. Truisms are true, hold on to that! The solid world exists, its laws do not change. Stones are hard, water is wet, objects unsupported fall towards the earth's centre. With the feeling that he was speaking to O'Brien, and also that he was setting forth an important axiom, he wrote:

Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows."

Your writing is focused on your perceptions of the book. Remember, however, that there will be a comprehensive assessment (TEST) during the first week of class, so it is essential that you read AND annotate the entire book. No short cuts! Have a great summer!