



1984, by George Orwell

In A Nutshell

1984 is a famous novel by George Orwell about an ideal or "utopian" society gone bad. In literary terms, you would call this a "dystopian" society. Its primary message is something along the lines of "don't let the government have too much power or they will make your lives completely miserable and possibly torture you for extended periods of time." Orwell is a master satirist and *1984* is a textbook example of his scathing exaggerations. The book is so famous that we hear its language everywhere – all those "Big Brother" jokes? This is where they came from.

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Big Picture Study Questions

- 1 What is a totalitarian regime? How does such a regime attain, maintain, and increase power? What is its main concern? How does it compare with other political structures? Democracy, for example?
- 2 What role does technology play in this book? In what ways does the Party employ technology? In what ways does technology make the overall themes of this book possible?

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- 3 Which is worse: mind control or physical control? In what sense are they one and the same?

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