

## 1984: Helpful Questions, Part I

*Note: Some questions ask for you to make predictions; others can only be answered through further reading; still others ask you to reconsider what you have already read.*

### Artifacts and Symbols

- 🌐 **Winston's Diary**
  - ★ *What does he write about at various points? Why does Orwell show Winston writing?*
- 🌐 **The Telescreen**
  - ★ *How does it work? What's its purpose?*
- 🌐 **Winston's Dream**
  - ★ *What's the dream about? What do you think it's really about? (Read on...)*
- 🌐 **The Speakwrite**
  - ★ *Why use one? (Think carefully...)*
- 🌐 **The Memory Hole**
  - ★ *Why design the "memory hole" system? Why not simply shred everything?*
- 🌐 **The Paperweight**
  - ★ *What does it represent? (It's more important in Part Two.)*

### Attitudes, Philosophies, and Concepts

- 🌐 **New/Duck/Oldspeak**
  - ★ *How can "duckspeak" serve as insult and compliment? What's Newspeak's ultimate goal?*
- 🌐 **Doublethink**
  - ★ *What's the difference between doublethink and, say, hypocrisy?*
- 🌐 **Mutability of the Past**
  - ★ *Does "the past" exist?*
- 🌐 **Thoughtcrime**
  - ★ *How can thoughts be punished when no laws exist? Why does the Party fear thoughts?*
- 🌐 **Facecrime**
  - ★ *What are you allowed to express in Oceania? (Think carefully...)*
- 🌐 **"Freedom is..."**
  - ★ *Can you predict how this quote will prove significant by the end of the book?*
- 🌐 **"I understand HOW..."**
  - ★ *Can you answer this question – i.e., understand why the Party does what it does?*

### Characters

- 🌐 **Winston**
  - ★ *Why does Orwell portray him as an unremarkable (and slightly repulsive) person?*
- 🌐 **O'Brien**
  - ★ *Do you believe Winston misinterpreted O'Brien's look?*
- 🌐 **Syme**
  - ★ *What are Syme's greatest strengths and fatal flaws?*
- 🌐 **Parsons + Family**
  - ★ *Which aspects of Oceanian society does each member symbolize?*
- 🌐 **Goldstein**
  - ★ *Is the Party better off with him captured or free?*

- 🌐 **Big Brother**  
★ *Does Big Brother exist? Does he need to?*
- 🌐 **Katharine**  
★ *What separates Katharine from her husband?*
- 🌐 **Withers and Ogilvy**  
★ *Why does Orwell spend a chapter discussing these two?*
- 🌐 **The Old Prole Man**  
★ *What is Orwell arguing about humanity through his portrayal of the Old Prole Man?*
- 🌐 **Charrington**  
★ *What is Charrington really providing Winston with (other than goods)?*
- 🌐 **The Girl (Julia)**  
★ *Do you think Winston's suspicions about her are justified?*
- 🌐 **Jones/Aaronson/Rutherford**  
★ *Why do you think their single appearance in the book matters?*

### **Devil in the Details**

- 🌐 **Two Minutes' Hate**  
★ *Why hold it?*
- 🌐 **The Party's Three Slogans**  
★ *How is each one "true"?*
- 🌐 **The Ministries**  
★ *What's the real purpose of each?*
- 🌐 **The Records Department**  
★ *Why is the Department's work never done?*
- 🌐 **Party Attitudes / Contradictions**  
★ *Are the contradictions intentional?*
- 🌐 **Life Before the Revolution**  
★ *Was life better?*
- 🌐 **The Purges**  
★ *Why does the Party really hold these?*
- 🌐 **The Proof of the Party's Lies**  
★ *Why doesn't Winston keep it?*
- 🌐 **Confessions and Hangings**  
★ *Why extract confessions and hold public hangings when you can make anyone disappear?*
- 🌐 **Vaporization and Unpersons**  
★ *What makes this process so successful?*
- 🌐 **The Availability of Goods**  
★ *Why isn't the Party's ability to provide goods questioned? Where do you go to get things?*
- 🌐 **The Lottery**  
★ *Why won't anyone really win?*
- 🌐 **Winston's Experiences in the Village**  
★ *Which argument does Orwell emphasize through Winston's experiences?*
- 🌐 **What Winston Saw/Heard in the Café**  
★ *The song Winston hears is important enough to memorize. What does it really mean?*

## Groups

- 🌐 **The Party**
  - ★ *How does the Party maintain its power?*
- 🌐 **The Spies**
  - ★ *Can children really be turned into these?*
- 🌐 **The Thought Police**
  - ★ *Why are they so effective?*
- 🌐 **The Brotherhood**
  - ★ *Does the Brotherhood exist? Does it need to?*
- 🌐 **The Outer Party**
  - ★ *Can the Party survive without them?*
- 🌐 **The Inner Party**
  - ★ *What separates them from the Outer Party?*
- 🌐 **The Proles**
  - ★ *How does the Party treat the proles?*
- 🌐 **The Junior Anti-Sex League**
  - ★ *What is its real purpose?*

## Settings

- 🌐 **Winston's Flat**
  - ★ *What's noteworthy about its design?*
- 🌐 **Victory Mansions**
  - ★ *How does their condition compare to their name?*
- 🌐 **Airstrip One**
  - ★ *Why do you think Britain's name has been changed? (What does it symbolize?)*
- 🌐 **Winston's Workplace**
  - ★ *How do people behave towards one another in Winston's workplace?*
- 🌐 **The Prole Village**
  - ★ *How does it compare to the rest of London? How do people there treat one another?*
- 🌐 **The Chestnut Tree Café**
  - ★ *Why shouldn't Winston spend too much time here?*
- 🌐 **Charrington's Shop**
  - ★ *What's so special about the shop?*

## Themes and Motifs

- 🌐 **Hope and Hopelessness**
  - ★ *Why does the Party actively encourage one and discourage the other?*
- 🌐 **Memory and Belief**
  - ★ *Are either as malleable as Orwell suggests?*
- 🌐 **Ideals and Realities**
  - ★ *Do people really trust the Party to live up to its pledges when it routinely fails to do so?*
- 🌐 **Power and Independence**
  - ★ *Why do people allow the Party to steal both from them? Is it a worthwhile deal?*

🌐 **Instinct and Human Nature**

★ *How human are Oceania's citizens? What have they lost?*

🌐 **Sex, Desire, and Chastity**

★ *How does the Party benefit by poisoning sexual desire?*

🌐 **Family, Love, and Sacrifice**

★ *How does the concept of family threaten the Party?*

🌐 **The Past, Present, and Future**

★ *Why does the "Who controls the present..." quote make sense?*

🌐 **Risk and Fear**

★ *Are either beneficial to humanity?*

🌐 **Happiness, Intelligence, and Orthodoxy**

★ *What's the triangular relationship between the three in Oceanian society?*