1984 Discussion Questions

Topic #1

Who is Emmanuel Goldstein and how is he represented to the people of Oceana? What is the significance of the Jewish name?

Topic #2

Language and Communication – What is Newspeak? What is its purpose? Why is it necessary for the Party to rid the language of synonyms and antonyms?

Topic #3

Philosophical Viewpoints – Winston contemplates the meaning of life, of existence, of history, of power and each one’s relation to the other. What is existence? What is reality? Is reality dependent on the observer?

Topic #4

Power – Totalitarianism – The Party uses a number of techniques to control its citizens. They carefully monitor every aspect of life in the citizens of Oceania. What are the ways in which the Party uses its power to control its citizens?

Topic #5

War – Why is it necessary for Oceania to be engaged in perpetual war? Why does it have to be perpetual war with a constantly shifting enemy?

Topic #6

Torture and Violence – How does the Party use physical torture to control its citizens? How does the party use psychological torture to control its citizens? Why is it necessary for the party to use torture to maintain control in it totalitarian state?

Topic#7

Technology – How does technology facilitate evil in the novel *1984*? Is privacy possible in Oceania? How and why does the Party use technology to control its citizens?

Topic#8

Manipulation – Why is it necessary for the Party to control the past, present, and future? How is this manipulation made possible?

Topic#9

Loyalty – What loyalties are “allowed” in *1984*? Are private loyalties possible?

Topic #10

Rebellion – In what ways does Winston display his rebellions? What acts of rebellion does Julia engage? How are Winston’s and Julia’s acts of rebellion different and similar?

Topic #11

Big Brother – What does Big Brother represent? How is he used in the Party’s totalitarian state in Oceania?

Topic #12

Glass paperweight and St. Clemens Church – What is the significance of these symbols for Winston? What do they represent?

Topic #13

The red armed Prole woman – What is the significance of the Prole woman and what does she represent in Winston’s mind?