

Research Assignment

George Orwell's *1984*

"Now I will tell you the answer to my question. It is this. The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power, pure power. What pure power means you will understand presently. We are different from the oligarchies of the past in that we know what we are doing. All the others, even those who resembled ourselves, were cowards and hypocrites. The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but they never had the courage to recognize their own motives. They pretended, perhaps they even believed, that they had seized power unwillingly and for a limited time, and that just around the corner there lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal. We are not like that. We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means; it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power. Now you begin to understand me." George Orwell, *1984*, *O'Brien pt 3*, 263.

See my brief lecture on Orwell and the novel, but also spend some time researching Orwell's life and career on your own. Then research your *1984* topic in the library.

"Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose."
Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road*

Read carefully and follow these directions **to the letter**: Study the essay format directions, MLA tips, and the *MLA*.

1. Your research paper is a fully documented, original (never submitted to any other class) critical paper or argumentative study on George Orwell's *1984* (using MLA only, not APA or other style sheets—do not use applications to insert works cited page and citations: they are incorrect. Learn the MLA through my lectures and the research librarians) of some aspect of the novel worthy of attention, exploration, and evaluation: see suggested topics below. Note: titles of novels are underlined or italicized: 1984 or *1984*
2. The essay is **3-4 pages** of multi-paragraph pages with **12-point Arial font**, one-inch margins, and left justification. You must meet the minimum length of **3 full pages**, *excluding* works cited page, or any graphics used; do not pad with wide

margins, extra spacing, long quotes and other efforts to make the paper 'look' longer; but also do not go over 4 pages. Do not cram the paper into 5 paragraphs: that is the model for a standard college essay: this is a research paper—longer and more developing paragraphs. Do not write a plot summary; your audience has read the novel.

3. Use appropriate quotations from the novel, which is your primary source (and which obviously must appear on your works cited page); have the requisite number of **secondary** sources (critics and scholars; **minimum 5** from the library databases and scholarly web sites (no Cliff/Monarch Notes, Masterplots, Sparknotes, dictionaries, lay encyclopedias like Britannica, or any plot summaries) on your Works Cited page and all cited in the paper. [Note: NCLC, TCLC, etc. are reference works that include abstracts of articles; you may use these abstracts, but you only have credit for one source to the reference work itself. You'd be better to read the entire essays in the databases.] In addition to the databases for your research, I have placed several books about Orwell and the novel on reserve in the Kingwood College library for my students. You can also refer to filmed versions in your analysis (the MLA shows how to set up films on the works cited page; you would cite by the director), but you still must have the six sources including the novel. Do not use Wikipedia: anyone can contribute to that on-line encyclopedia, and the entries are not signed; thus, it is not a scholarly source.
4. Delete any sources from the Works Cited page that you decide not to use, but be sure you have the minimum (vigilance about the works cited page is critically important) that you cite in the paper. Including the novel, you will have a total of 6 sources, all of which must be on the works cited page and cited in the paper. Do not overdo the number of sources: you then have to document all of them, and the paper ends up being a catalog of sources.
5. Do not over-use Internet sources, and make sure, if you do use them, they are scholarly, and the authors are credible: they should provide a brief bio or be affiliated with a college/university or professional organization; stay away from most .com URLs; use .edu and .org sites for authenticity. You need a variety of sources from books, scholarly journals (periodicals produced by colleges and professional organizations and available in major collegiate libraries, sometimes electronically -- see the MLA and the LRC databases), anthologies, academic reference works, and, possibly, the Internet. You may use the course text on the works cited page and in the research paper, and any of my lectures (both documented in the paper), but still must have six outside sources in addition to the novel. You may use the Bible or other Holy Book for a pertinent quotation, but it does not count as one of your research sources; the Bible is a primary source, not secondary. Cite the Bible as version, chapter and verse (King James John 3:16). If you use an anthology for cross referencing articles, the *articles* are sources, but the anthology is not. If you use a collection, cite the authors and titles of the essays in the collection.
6. Remember to use *MLA* citations as prescribed in class and all handouts; all entries on the Works Cited page must be quoted or background paraphrased **and cited** in the research paper: be sure you double-check your works cited

page against the internal documentation. You must use direct quotations with quotation marks or **brief** paraphrases with sources after **all** borrowed material, even if that means there are several instances of documentation in every paragraph. If you paraphrase any information in your own words -- biographical, historical, statistical, etc. -- you must cite the source for the information used in the paper directly after the information used and include the source on the works cited page. See the my *MLA Tips*, on-line sample papers for Works Cited entries and documentation format: **follow the *MLA* rigorously** along with the library's *MLA tips* on their web site.

7. Do justice to the author's intent and to your thesis, which is assertive, purposeful and placed toward the end of your introduction; remember to keep your purpose threaded throughout the paper and fully realized in the conclusion. Quote extensively from the novel throughout your paper and at least once from each critic you use in the paper; be sure they are all included on the Works Cited page as well as documented in your essay--with quotation marks and internal documentation. These quotations must support your position and be thoroughly analyzed. Incorporate them into your text—lead in with a sentence (see samples in my research lectures and sample student papers)--unless you use the optional maximum two set-off quotations [more than 4 typed sentences quoted]; but do not "pad" with excessively long quotations such as whole paragraphs, pages, or stanzas); thoroughly analyze a passage that deserves that much attention. Do not either "strand" or "string" quotations. Also don't use them as thesis, topic, or clincher sentences. They support you, so don't let them dominate your paper. You may use only two reference works--not encyclopedias, plot summaries, or dictionaries, but works such as *British Writers*, *World Authors*, or *DLB*, which also include helpful bibliographies. We are using a Norton Critical Edition of the novel: you may use two of the critical sources in the back of the book, but if you have more than the required minimum six secondary sources, you may use more of those essays. They do not count as original journal articles. Set them up as works in an anthology (see the *MLA* and my *MLA Tips*). Consult indexes such as *MLA Bibliography*, *Humanities Index*, and *Essay and General Literature Index*, (which are available in our LRC on CD-ROM database systems) as well as individual journal indexes, author bibliographies, fiche cards, etc. for secondary sources.
8. Write a strong, clear thesis: support it with appropriate evidence and careful thinking. Push yourself to analyze and interpret; don't leave the reader wondering what you mean. Remember that your thesis must be supported by the entire novel: we cannot leave out something in the novel that might contradict our position or opinion, or speculate how the novel 'should' have been written or how characters 'should' behave, but we must think through carefully and even be willing to adjust or change our thinking if it is not supported by what the author has actually written. The thesis must be focused on the novel as written, and the novel must support the thesis. Additionally, don't become involved in effusive praise of the author: these authors are masters at their craft and do not need our praise: the student's job is to analyze the work.

9. **Include the author's theme and purpose in your analysis:** in the thesis, in the discussion, and again in the conclusion; keep your author's point, the universal truth he or she is exploring, in front of you and your reader throughout the essay, at each stage of development, and you should not write a plot summary but should have a strong critical analysis research paper. **Keep the author by name and purpose clear at every major stage of your prewriting and final draft.** As a 'formula' for developing your focus, think of the construction as author's point in the thesis, throughout the body, and again in the closure.
Example: Orwell's purpose in 1984 is to explore the images of obsession, power, and birth as her protagonist attempts to play the role of God in creating life and learns he is, in fact, responsible for great pain and eventual death. This is a sample thesis; I would go on to develop my key points, keeping the author by name and intent clear throughout the essay. Analyze both the author's intent and the text in present tense: art is not "dead." However, you certainly may refer to certain biographical, historical, or textual material already treated (and documented) in your essay in the past tense. Changing the tense in quotations to match your own is optional. Remember that the author has already told the story; don't re-tell it, but analyze the author's purpose in the novel.
10. **PROOFREAD.** Poor manuscript form and mechanics will sabotage your hard work and result in that depressing F (remember that I am trying to help you avoid failure with these pesky admonitions). This is a college research paper that must be polished and professional: submit only your best work. Be sure when you submit the final draft that you check to make sure you have the minimal standards and uploaded the work correctly so it is not late. Review the Essay Format directions.

Planning the Research Paper

First Stage--Topics: Before starting the research project, send me your proposed topics in D2L E-Mail (see the syllabus). You do not need to put the topic in an attachment; simply write me about your topic, with the exact focus (see the two essays on writing critical analyses). Once I have approved the topic, it may not be changed without my permission and never at the last minute.

Second Stage--Prewriting: Spend time brainstorming and drafting for at least a week. Let me see your thesis and brainstorm list for review (thesis at the top, then the listing of key points in the order you believe you will organize).

Third Stage—Rough Draft and Final Draft: Let me see the rough draft for review; make any needed corrections and then submit your final draft of the essay to the assignments drop box in the following order **as one Word document:** essay, works cited page, all of which are paginated per *MLA* format. See the *MLA*, lectures, and sample student papers; note that this is the opposite order of the prewriting; do not use a title page. Do page breaks between the outline and the works cited; don't run one document off the bottom of the other. Be sure you double check for correct length with

1" margins, for minimum number of sources, all of which are documented in the essay; edit for errors in mechanics. Use the research paper check list. Also be sure to **save on at least two flash drives and keep a hard copy for yourself**. Though I will not correct grammar, you are allowed to help one another in Lab and also take your paper to the Writing Lab.

Include your full name first in a clear file name you assign all papers before submitting the essay. Each file name should be different; for example, Jack Sprat Research Pre-Writing and Jack Sprat Research Final Draft.

Possible Topics for a Critical, Argumentative Research Paper on the Novel

The following are *general* suggestions for topics; check with me if you have others in mind. These are deliberately abstract: you will have ideas of your own, as will the critics you'll be exploring. Remember that no matter which topic you choose, your primary focus is on the novel itself. This is a researched critical analysis of some aspect of the novel you are interested in and that will contribute to the reader's understanding of Orwell's purpose in writing it.

Character analysis of **Winston** Smith and his changing perceptions

Comparison of **Julia** and **Winston**

Analysis of **Big Brother**

Analysis of **O'Brien**, **Syme**, or **Charrington**

Depiction and use of **children** by INGSOC especially in the war

Depiction and use of the **proles** in the 1984 world

Analysis of the party INGSOC government and comparison to modern governments

Setting and/or Symbolism as it works with mood and theme--the geographic scope of the novel in addition to landscape details.

Oceania

Style: First person narrative. Analyze the effect of hearing the story through Winston's mind and eyes. Satire and irony

Imagery: this is a dark world; what are some of the most important images, especially having to do with corruption and destruction of order, the rule of law, personal liberty, etc.

Conflict: Various topics might include conflict between the past and the present, the people in power vs. the survivors, especially the proles, Winston's perceptions and anguish because he suspects things used to be different,

Theme: This is a dystopian novel, so what are the warnings Orwell is making, about loss of personal freedom, corruption in government.

Purpose: why do you think Orwell wrote 1984? Is it a warning? How? Make any necessary comparisons, cite sources for any biographical information on Orwell.

Comparison: the world of 1984 and similarities today (the novel is being re-read around the world); was Orwell a prophet.

The use of **technology** to control citizens

Room 101

Secrecy and concealment **versus** openness and truth

Mind control and double think

Other topics you might come up with in your reading (must be approved); see also the lecture notes

As always, though most students are on task and will work hard on the project, caveats like the following are necessary to insure the assignment is carried through to completion without grievous oversights.

I do not accept late Research Papers except for major, physician-documented student illness. Do not let everything hinge on the last few hours or minutes before the paper is due. Make backup copies of all your work on at least two disks as well as on the hard drive of your computer (saving to the Windows Desktop if you're unsure how to create directories for your work). In a computer emergency, take your disk to a friend's computer, your work place, the campus computer lab, a library, Kinko's or other business providing computers and upload the paper to the eClassroom. If none of that is possible, and the computer problem persists, call me (281-312-1625) to leave a message; then fax the paper (281-312-1723) through home, work, Kinkos etc.; or bring it to me personally on time. If I'm not in the office, then leave the paper in my mailbox. Once the computer problem is resolved, even if you have faxed or left the paper in my mailbox, go ahead and upload the paper immediately.

The penalty for any plagiarism at any time in the course is zero on the submitted paper. If there is a second plagiarism offense, the student will fail the course, and the incident will be reported to the Admissions Office.

Carefully review the District Academic Honesty Policy in the Catalog, the Course Syllabus, and the Course Academic Honesty Document.

Note carefully: The research paper is the major assignment in the course. Because of the value of the research paper, a zero for plagiarism on the research paper or for not turning in the research paper could likely fail the student in the course.

Failure to submit the paper on time, failure to carefully proofread and edit, failure to have minimum requirements and / or failure to document quotations and background information used in the paper are the #1 reasons for failure on the research assignment: those fatal errors are non-negotiable because they have been enforced throughout the course. Use the MLA, essay format document, writing lectures and grammar tips, college essay grading standards, and research paper checklist. Finish the paper at least a day before the deadline so you have time to edit and double check everything.