

Summer Reading for students entering AP English Literature & Composition

Background

George Orwell's *1984* is an example of *dystopian* literature, a genre with which you likely have some familiarity. If you have read *Fahrenheit 451* or *The Giver*, or watched *The Matrix* or *V for Vendetta*, you already know a bit about this enduring and immensely popular type of storytelling.

At its most basic level, the author of a dystopian novel is presenting readers with a nightmarish, and often absurd, image of the future, one that aligns poorly with their own values and beliefs about how societal and political institutions should function. In that sense, it can be considered an offshoot of *utopian* literature, which dates as far back as the 16th century. Utopian writers, as you've probably inferred, instead present readers with an ideal world. Whether or not they believe that world is actually attainable remains a subject of debate.

Assignment

Sometime during the second half of the summer, obtain and read a copy of Orwell's *1984*. The book is widely available in bookstores, libraries, and online. In fact, it topped Amazon's bestseller list in January of this year, nearly 68 years after it was first published. As you read, keep a journal in which you make observations about the story's characters, the conflicts they face, and the world in which they live. You might also include noteworthy quotations, allusions to history and literature you recognize, and symbols that recur throughout the novel's three parts .

Next, plan and compose a thesis-based essay in which you explain the importance of any one of the following topics in both the world Orwell has created and our own: truth, language, history, technology, or individuality. Use the textual observations in your diary as support for your thesis.

The Fine Print

This assignment will provide me with a sample of your writing, which is an important tool in helping me identify your personal strengths as a reader, thinker, and writer. With that in mind, your essay should examine its topic clearly, directly, and fully. Approach the text analytically and illustrate your ideas with numerous textual references, including clearly identified literary techniques and direct quotations from the novel. Use a mature style of writing which exhibits full command of organization, syntax and diction. Make your points thoroughly, without summarizing plot, and demonstrate your understanding of the text on both literal and figurative levels. Move

beyond the obvious, developing in the reader an understanding at which they would not have arrived simply by reading the book.

The maximum length for this essay is four typed pages, double-spaced. Be sure to include a title that reflects the focus of your essay's thesis. Cite quotations and other supporting information using the latest MLA guidelines, which can be found at [Purdue University's Online Writing Lab](#).

To receive credit for this required assignment, it must be submitted to me via Google Classroom by the time our first class meets. You will receive a Google Classroom invite over the summer. If you have any questions, you may contact me at dosora@hvrhs.org.

I hope that you enjoy your reading, and look forward to meeting each of you in August.

Mr. Osora