

## **Merit of English Section**

### **Senior Division**

**Name of Winner : Fong Hao Lap**

**Name of School : Keang Peng School**

**Book Title : Nineteen Eighty-Four**

**Author : George Orwell**

**Publisher : Signet Classic**

In the chilling dystopian realm of George Orwell's *1984*, a haunting prophecy unfolds, where Big Brother's omnipresent gaze pierces through the pages, leaving readers with a lingering sense of unease and a burning question: Could this nightmarish vision ever become our reality? *1984* is a dystopian fiction written by English writer and journalist George Orwell, whose real name is Eric Arthur Blair and it was published in 1949. George Orwell's *1984* serves as a

stark warning about the dangers of totalitarianism and the erosion of individual freedom, compelling readers to reflect on the potential consequences of full government control, the manipulation of truth, and the importance of preserving our fundamental rights and autonomy.

The story of *1984* revolves around our protagonist Winston Smith, who resides in the fictional country of Oceania, one of the three superpowers in the dystopian world of 1984 ruled by the totalitarian government—“The Party”. Winston is a low-ranking member of The Party and is secretly harbouring dissenting thoughts and desires to overthrow the party. He later starts a love affair with another party member named Julia, and their relationship meets a tragic fate at the end of the book.

In the book, Orwell illustrates the repressive nature of the Party’s policy from Winston’s perspective. As Winston goes through his daily routine, the readers can inspect the revolting

aspects of the ruling party. In Oceania, the party is organized into ministries. Our protagonist works in one of the four ministries, the Ministry of Truth, which mainly serves as a machine for producing propaganda and rewriting historical pieces of information to fit the Party's explanation. In one of the examples, Winston's job is to erase and edit newspaper articles from the past to fit the party's current narrative. At the beginning of the book, Winston altered a newspaper article to reflect the opposite meaning of the original article. In the unchanged essay, Big Brother predicts the Party's current production levels will exceed their targets, signaling a successful implementation of their policies. In contrast to this, Winston alters the article to reflect the opposite: the production levels will fall short of the targets. By changing the information, Winston is actively participating in the manipulation of historical records and prolonging the Party's control over reality. The Ministry of Truth, which contorts the

truth, reveals to me what the totalitarian government does to blind its citizens.

Throughout the novel, Orwell masterfully demonstrates the different aspects of a totalitarian society using clarifying language. With simple yet powerful words, Orwell depicted the grim and oppressive nature of the fictional society. Here is a quotation from the book: “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.” The quote itself captured the ruthless pursuit of power, making the readers feel the profound weight of the character’s encounter. By employing words without embellishments, Orwell exceptionally illustrates the dystopian world in 1984, showing the effects of totalitarianism and creating an immersive reading experience that resonates deeply with readers long after they’ve finished the novel. Still, there are several parts of the book that I enjoy, particularly the affair between Winston

and Julia. Their love is both mysterious and fragile, as the quote says, “Their embrace had been a battle, the climax a victory. It was a blow struck against the Party. It was a political act.” The affair they were having means more than a personal affair. It serves as a rebellion against the Party’s strict control over personal relationships and emotions. It highlights the characters’ desire for freedom and their willingness to risk everything for a glimpse of happiness.

Unfortunately, 1984 is not a fairy tale with a cheerful and happy ending. Ultimately, the affair between them, as I’ve mentioned previously, doesn’t end well, and they both meet a terrible fate. There is another reason why I like this particular plot of the story——when I ‘witness’ their being caught eventually, it was both heartbreaking and gut-wrenching. This ending was another brilliant way to provoke the readers’ feelings against the ever-watching party’s cruelty. Orwell uses this outcome to emphasize the Party’s power and the

impossibility of escaping its grasp. The world in 1984 is fictional, but it brings me a real horror. I am frightened by just thinking about a world without freedom, without rights and individuality. Things we do in our everyday lives such as posting on social media can be deemed illegal and is even punishable by death. This novel has left me pondering the horrifying possibilities and consequences of a governing regime that is both power hungry and ruthless like The Party.

Another impressive part featured in the book is the concept of 'Big Brother'. The concept of 'Big Brother' plays a significant role in shaping the narrative and themes of 1984. It's the central element of the book, Big Brother is the enigmatic and all-powerful figurehead of the Party. Although Big Brother's physical existence is unclear, 'he' is portrayed as a larger-than-life figure, Big Brother represents the Party's absolute control over every aspect of citizens' lives. The Party uses Big Brother as a tool to instill fear among the population.

The fear can be seen in one of the quote from the book ‘Big Brother is watching you’. Overall, the concept of Big Brother in 1984 symbolizes the oppressive nature of totalitarian regimes, the erosion of individual freedoms, and the dangers of unchecked power. It serves as a representation of a society where the state exerts absolute control over its citizens’ lives, thoughts, and actions.

In conclusion, 1984 by George Orwell is a haunting and emotionally gripping novel that leaves a lasting impact on its readers. Orwell’s masterful storytelling and vivid descriptions immerse us in a world where individuality is crushed, love is forbidden, and the very act of independent thought is a crime. The tragic fate of the protagonist, Winston Smith, and his doomed love affair with Julia, serve as a stark reminder of the relentless power of the Party and the price one pays for daring to defy its control. As a reader, I couldn’t help but feel a deep sense of empathy for Winston and his struggle against the

oppressive regime. I shared his fleeting moments of hope and joy yet shattered by the harsh reality of the Party's relentless pursuit and ultimate betrayal. The emotional rollercoaster of witnessing the characters' dreams and desires being crushed by the totalitarian regime left me with a profound sense of sadness and helplessness. In the end, 1984 is not merely a grim novel—it is a powerful and emotionally charged work of literature that confronts us with uncomfortable truths about the human condition and the potential consequences of unchecked authority. Through its harrowing narrative and thought-provoking themes, just imagine a world where people have nothing but fear in their mind! It leaves an indelible mark on the reader's psyche, urging us to remain vigilant and to cherish our freedoms. It is a book that will continue to resonate with readers for generations to come and will keep on reminding us of the fragility of our liberties and the importance of personal rights and freedom.