

George Orwell, *1984* - Grade 8

Originally published in London: Secker and Warburg, 1949.

Learning Objective: Students often have difficulty envisioning and making sense of a story that is set in a markedly different time or circumstance than their own. This two-day activity introduces students to the dystopian society of *1984* by George Orwell. By analyzing Orwell's carefully chosen words, details, repetitions, and characterizations in these first few pages, students can construct a strong understanding of some of the key features of this society that will give them a solid framework for comprehending the rest of the novel. Doing this kind of close reading work also reinforces to students that authors do not randomly select the details they include in a text; they choose words carefully to create a mood or construct a particular image of a character or place in a reader's mind. The overriding question that students should be able to answer at the end of this exercise is: What can we understand about Winston Smith and the society he lives in based on the descriptive details George Orwell includes in the first few pages of *1984*?

Reading Task: *Students will silently read the passage in question on a given day—first independently and then following along with the text as the teacher and/or skillful students read aloud. Depending on the difficulties of a given text and the teacher's knowledge of the fluency abilities of students, the order of the student silent read and the teacher reading aloud with students following might be reversed. What is important is to allow all students to interact with challenging text on their own as frequently and independently as possible. Students will then re-read specific passages in response to a set of concise, text-dependent questions that compel them to examine the meaning and structure of Orwell's prose. Therefore, re-reading is deliberately built into the instructional unit.*

Vocabulary Task: *Most of the meanings of words in the exemplar text can be discovered by students from careful reading of the context in which they appear. Teachers can use discussions to model and reinforce how to learn vocabulary from contextual clues, and students must be held accountable for engaging in this practice. Where it is judged this is not possible, underlined words are defined briefly for students to the right of the text in a separate column whenever the original text is reproduced. At times, this is all the support these defined words need. At other times, particularly with abstract words, teachers will need to spend more time explaining and discussing them. In addition, in subsequent close readings of passages of the text, high value academic ('Tier Two') words have been **bolded** to draw attention to them. Given how crucial vocabulary knowledge is for academic and career success, it is essential that these high value words be discussed and lingered over during the instructional sequence.*

Sentence Syntax Task: *On occasion, students will encounter particularly difficult sentences to decode. Teachers should engage in a close examination of such sentences to help students discover how they are built and how they convey meaning. While many questions addressing important aspects of the text double as questions about syntax, students should receive regular supported practice in deciphering complex sentences. It is crucial that the help they receive in unpacking text complexity focuses both on the precise meaning*

of what the author is saying and why the author might have constructed the sentence in this particular fashion. That practice will in turn support students' ability to unpack meaning from syntactically complex sentences they encounter in future reading.

Discussion Task: *Students will discuss the exemplar text in depth with their teacher and their classmates, performing activities that result in a close reading of Orwell's prose. The goal is to foster student confidence when encountering complex text and to reinforce the skills they have acquired regarding how to build and extend their understanding of a text. A general principle is to always re-read the passage that provides evidence for the question under discussion. This gives students another encounter with the text, helping them develop fluency and reinforcing their use of text evidence.*

Writing Task: *Students will paraphrase different sentences and paragraphs of Orwell's novel and then write down their understandings of the main character and the society of the story in paragraph form, using at least four details from the text selection to support their point. Teachers might afford students the opportunity to revise their paragraphs after participating in classroom discussion or receiving teacher feedback, allowing them to refashion both their understanding of the text and their expression of that understanding.*

Standards Addressed: The following Common Core State Standards are the focus of this exemplar: RL.8.1, RL.8.3, RL.8.4; W.8.1, W.8.4, W.8.9; SL.8.1; L.8.4, L.8.5.

The Text: Orwell, George. *1984*

Exemplar Text	Vocabulary

<p>It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.</p> <p>The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a <u>metre</u> wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. Winston made for the stairs. It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daytime hours. It was part of the <u>economy</u> drive in preparation for Hate Week. The flat was seven flights up, and Winston, who was thirty-nine and had a <u>varicose ulcer</u> above his right ankle, went slowly, resting several times on the way. On each landing, opposite the lift shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so <u>contrived</u> that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran.</p> <p>Inside the flat a fruity voice was reading out a list of figures which had something to do with the production of <u>pig-iron</u>. The voice came from an <u>oblong</u> metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still distinguishable. The instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely. He moved over to the window: a smallish, frail figure, the meagerness of his body merely emphasized by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the Party. His hair was very fair, his face naturally <u>sanguine</u>, his skin roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades and the cold of the winter that had just ended.</p> <p>Outside, even through the shut window-pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and</p>	<p><i>unit of measure, equal to about 3 feet</i></p> <p><i>limited or careful use of something; swollen vein</i></p> <p><i>obviously planned or calculated</i></p> <p><i>metal used to make steel; oval shape longer in one direction than the other</i></p> <p><i>a reddish color</i></p>
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though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The black-mustachio'd face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston's own. Down at street level another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word INGSOC. In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down beneath the roofs, hovered for an instant like a bluebottle, and darted away again with a curving flight. It was the police patrol, snooping into people's windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the Thought Police mattered.

*moving
in bursts*

*fly which
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noise*

Behind Winston's back the voice from the telescreen was still babbling away about pig-iron and the overfulfillment of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.

*not a real
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together*

Day One: Instructional Exemplar for Orwell's *1984*

Summary of Activities

1. Teacher introduces the day's passage with minimal commentary and students read it independently (5 minutes)
2. Teacher or a skillful reader then reads the passage out loud to the class as students follow along in the text (5 minutes)
 3. Teacher models close-reading strategies to make inferences about the society and the character using the first paragraph of the text by talking through the inferences that he or she made (10 minutes)
 4. Students work in pairs or groups to analyze the second paragraph of the text in the same manner that the teacher modeled and report back to the class (10 minutes)
5. Students work in pairs or groups to go through the remaining paragraphs of the text (20 minutes)

Text Passage under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.

[Read the intervening paragraphs.]

. . . You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.

1. Introduce the passage and students read independently.

Other than giving the brief definitions offered to words students would likely not be able to define from context (underlined in the text), avoid giving any background context or instructional guidance at the outset of the lesson while students are reading the text silently. This close reading approach forces students to rely exclusively on the text instead of privileging background knowledge and levels the playing field for all students as they seek to comprehend Orwell's prose. It is critical to cultivating independence and creating a culture of close reading that students initially grapple with rich texts like Orwell's novel without the aid of prefatory material, extensive notes, or even teacher explanations.

2. Read the passage out loud to the class as students follow along in the text.

Asking students to listen to *1984* exposes them a second time to the rhythms and meaning of Orwell's language before they begin their own close reading of the passage. Speaking clearly and carefully will allow students to follow Orwell's narrative, and reading out loud with students following along improves fluency while offering all students access to this complex text. Accurate and skillful modeling of the reading provides students who may be dysfluent with accurate pronunciations and syntactic patterns of English.

**Text Passage under
Discussion**

Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin **nuzzled** into his breast in an effort to escape the **vile** wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a **swirl** of **gritty** dust from entering along with him.

3. Ask the class to answer a small set of text-dependent guided questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate.

As students move through these questions and re-read Orwell's *1984*, be sure to check for and reinforce their understanding of academic vocabulary in the corresponding text (which will be **boldfaced** the first time it appears in the text). At times, the questions themselves may focus on academic vocabulary.

Teachers share with the class inferences they made regarding the first paragraph.

- "The clocks were striking thirteen": This society is not the world that we live in now, since we do not have clocks that strike thirteen. Perhaps this society is based on the army, since they operate on a 24-hour clock. Furthermore, the choice of the number thirteen is significant. Thirteen is generally considered an unlucky number, which creates a sinister mood from the first sentence of the book.
- "Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind": The first view of the character shows him in a weak pose, trying to resist the force of the wind. This could signal to the reader that he is weak or under attack by his environment.

Text Passage under Discussion

Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students

<p>The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a <u>metre</u> wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. Winston made for the stairs. It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daytime hours. It was part of the <u>economy</u> drive in preparation for Hate Week. The flat was seven flights up, and Winston, who was thirty-nine and had a <u>varicose ulcer</u> above his right ankle, went slowly, resting several times on the way. On each landing, opposite the lift shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so <u>contrived</u> that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran.</p>	<p><i>unit of measure, equal to about 3 feet</i></p> <p><i>limited or careful use of something;</i></p> <p><i>swollen vein</i></p> <p><i>obviously planned or calculated</i></p>	<p>(Q1) What is the connotation of a society that has something called Hate Week?</p> <p>The feeling created here is sinister—students can infer that Hate Week is an official event, given its capitalization, and that the kind of government that would encourage its citizens to have a week devoted to hate is not a positive one.</p> <p>(Q2) What do Winston’s “varicose ulcer” and his need to rest on his way upstairs suggest about his character?</p> <p>These details confirm the reader’s first impression that Winston has certain weaknesses. It seems likely that his physical infirmities also represent a weakness in his personality.</p> <p>Students work in pairs or groups to analyze the second paragraph of the text in the same manner that the teacher modeled and report back to the class.</p> <p>The teacher could choose to divide the paragraph into sentences, giving each group 1-2 sentences to analyze. The teacher then calls the group together to share their inferences, recording them for the entire class to see. During this time, teachers can also pose guiding questions to elicit inferences that students did not initially make. Students should make note of several of the phrases below, and teachers should be sure to cover most of them during the reporting period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “boiled cabbage and old rag mats” • “heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features” • “Even at the best of times it was seldom working” • “Hate Week” • “one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move” • “BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU”
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Text Passage under Discussion

**Directions for Teachers/Guiding
Questions For Students**

Inside the flat a **fruity** voice was reading out a list of figures which had something to do with the production of pig-iron. The voice came from an oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still **distinguishable**. The **instrument** (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely. He moved over to the window: a smallish, frail figure, the **meagerness** of his body merely emphasized by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the Party. His hair was very fair, his face naturally sanguine, his skin roughened by **coarse** soap and **blunt** razor blades and the cold of the winter that had just ended.

Outside, even through the shut window-pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little **eddies** of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The black-mustachio'd face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston's own. Down at street level another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word INGSOC. In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down beneath the roofs, **hovered** for an instant like a bluebottle, and **darted** away again with a curving flight. It was the police patrol, snooping into people's windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the Thought Police mattered.

Behind Winston's back the voice from the **telescreen** was still **babbling** away about pig-iron and the overfulfillment of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. The telescreen received and **transmitted** simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he remained within the **field** of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the **Thought Police** plugged in on any individual wire was **guesswork**. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live—did live, from **habit** that became **instinct**—in the **assumption** that every sound you made was overheard. and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.

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*not a real word
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(Q3) What mood do the posters of Big Brother create? Why are the posters up everywhere?

The posters are supposed to make the people of this society feel under suspicion. Although the reader does not yet know who Big Brother is, students can infer that he is someone important because his poster is up on every landing of the staircase, and that he is apparently watching everyone at all times. The mood created here is grim and tense—a society where the government feels compelled to tell the citizens that they are always under watch suggests that there is no trust between the government and the people. It also suggests that there are strong limits placed on what citizens can do, and that there are penalties for doing the wrong thing. There is creepiness to the feeling of this passage—to which students could easily draw parallels (what if their school had enormous posters of their principal's face everywhere?).

Text Passage under Discussion

**Directions for Teachers/Guiding
Questions For Students**

<p>Inside the flat a fruity voice was reading out a list of figures which had something to do with the production of <u>pig-iron</u>. The voice came from an <u>oblong</u> metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still distinguishable. The instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely. He moved over to the window: a smallish, frail figure, the meagerness of his body merely emphasized by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the Party. His hair was very fair, his face naturally <u>sanguine</u>, his skin roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades and the cold of the winter that had just ended.</p> <p>Outside, even through the shut window-pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The black-mustachio'd face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston's own. Down at street level another poster, torn at one corner, flapped <u>fitfully</u> in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word INGSOC. In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down beneath the roofs, hovered for an instant like a <u>bluebottle</u>, and darted away again with a curving flight. It was the police patrol, snooping into people's windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the Thought Police mattered.</p> <p>Behind Winston's back the voice from the telescreen was still babbling away about pig-iron and the <u>overfulfillment</u> of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.</p>	<p><i>metal used to make steel; oval shape longer in one direction than the other</i></p> <p><i>a reddish color</i></p> <p><i>moving in bursts</i></p> <p><i>fly which makes a loud buzzing noise</i></p> <p><i>not a real word but an idea created by putting two words together</i></p>	<p>Students work in pairs or groups to analyze the remaining paragraphs of the text.</p> <p>Students should first talk with each other about any words or ideas that need clarifying in each section. They should then pick at least one word, phrase, or detail from each paragraph that they believe they can use to make an inference about the society in the story or the main character. The teacher can circulate to make sure students are identifying appropriate phrases and making inferences that are rooted in the text.</p> <p>If students run out of time, they can complete their analysis for homework.</p>
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Day Two: Instructional Exemplar for Orwell's *1984*

Summary of Activities

1. Teacher introduces the day's passage with minimal commentary and students read it independently (5 minutes)
2. Teacher or a skillful reader then reads the passage out loud to the class as students follow along in the text (5 minutes)
3. Students share their insights into the final three paragraphs of the passage (10 minutes)
 4. Students work in pairs or groups to analyze the second paragraph of the text in the same manner that the teacher modeled and report back to the class (10 minutes)
5. Students work in pairs or groups to go through the remaining paragraphs of the text (20 minutes)

Text Passage under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students

Inside the flat a **fruity** voice was reading out a list of figures which had something to do with the production of pig-iron. The voice came from an oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall....

[read the intervening paragraphs]

.... You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.

1. Introduce the passage and students read independently.

Other than giving the brief definitions offered to words students would likely not be able to define from context (underlined in the text), avoid giving any background context or instructional guidance at the outset of the lesson while students are reading the text silently. This close reading approach forces students to rely exclusively on the text instead of privileging background knowledge and levels the playing field for all students as they seek to comprehend Orwell's prose. It is critical to cultivating independence and creating a culture of close reading that students initially grapple with rich texts like Orwell's novel without the aid of prefatory material, extensive notes, or even teacher explanations.

2. Read the passage out loud to the class as students follow along in the text.

Asking students to listen to *1984* exposes them a second time to the rhythms and meaning of Orwell's language before they begin their own close reading of the passage. Speaking clearly and carefully will allow students to follow Orwell's narrative, and reading out loud with students following along improves fluency while offering all students access to this complex text. Accurate and skillful modeling of the reading provides students who may be dysfluent with accurate pronunciations and syntactic patterns of English.

**Text Passage under
Discussion**

Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students

<p>Inside the flat a fruity voice was reading out a list of figures which had something to do with the production of <u>pig-iron</u>. The voice came from an <u>oblong</u> metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still distinguishable. The instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely. He moved over to the window: a smallish, frail figure, the meagerness of his body merely emphasized by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the Party. His hair was very fair, his face naturally <u>sanguine</u>, his skin roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades and the cold of the winter that had just ended.</p>	<p><i>metal used to make steel; oval shape longer in one direction than the other</i></p> <p><i>a reddish color</i></p>	<p>3. Ask the class to answer a small set of text-dependent guided questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate.</p> <p>As students move through these questions and re-read Orwell's <i>1984</i>, be sure to check for and reinforce their understanding of academic vocabulary in the corresponding text (which will be boldfaced the first time it appears in the text). At times, the questions themselves may focus on academic vocabulary.</p> <p>Students review the inferences they made the previous day, sharing what they found with their group members and adding any additional inferences to their findings based on what they hear.</p> <p>(Q4) What is the telescreen?</p> <p>Understanding the purpose of the telescreen is key to understanding the rest of the book. Start with helping students to build a visual image of the telescreen, sketching an oblong shape for them to assist their envisioning. Then, help them to figure out that the government likely controls the telescreen, since Winston cannot turn it off and because it seems to be broadcasting statistics connected to the country's economy.</p> <p>(Q5) What can the reader infer about Winston based on this description?</p> <p>This section reinforces the idea that Winston lacks strength and power. The image of him consumed by the overalls of the Party suggests that he is overwhelmed by the society in which he lives. As in the first paragraph, Winston seems attacked by his environment: his skin has been damaged by his everyday objects, as well by the weather.</p>
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**Text Passage under
Discussion**

Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students

Outside, even through the shut window-pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little **eddies** of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The black-mustachio'd face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston's own. Down at street level another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word INGSOC. In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down beneath the roofs, **hovered** for an instant like a bluebottle, and **darted** away again with a curving flight. It was the police patrol, snooping into people's windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the Thought Police mattered.

*moving
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*fly which
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(Q6) What mood does the descriptive language in this paragraph create?

Students should be able to identify "cold", "commanding", "no colour", "harsh", and "fitfully" as descriptive language, and they should be able to infer that this is an unpleasant, tense, and uncertain world.

(Q7) Why does Orwell repeat "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU"?

The repetition of Orwell's descriptions of the posters and their caption echo the ubiquity of the posters throughout this environment. It reinforces the environment's stifling nature and the reality that the members of this society are watched at all times.

(Q8) What does the simile, "like a bluebottle", imply about the patrols?

Students may be able to identify this as a simile and infer that the police are weak like a bug that is easily swatted away, an idea reinforced by the phrase, "the patrols did not matter".

(Q9) What impression does the final sentence of the paragraph give of the Thought Police?

The Thought Police, based on only the information here, seem to be a special sort of law enforcement that control your thoughts, which we think of as private and sacred. The kind of society that wishes to regulate thought would seem to be a particularly oppressive society. It is also clear that the Thought Police are frightening to Winston.

**Text Passage under
Discussion**

Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students

Behind Winston's back the voice from the **telescreen** was still **babbling** away about pig-iron and the overfulfillment of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. The telescreen received and **transmitted** simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he remained within the **field** of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the **Thought Police** plugged in on any individual wire was **guesswork**. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live—did live, from **habit** that became **instinct**—in the **assumption** that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.

*not a real
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(Q10) What does it mean that the telescreen “received and transmitted simultaneously”?

Clarify the meanings of transmitted and simultaneously if students have not figured them out, since they must understand that the people in this society can be watched through the telescreen, at the same time that people in the society can watch and listen to images and sounds coming from the telescreen.

(Q11) What does Orwell's word choice of “scrutinized” imply about the way the citizens of this society are watched? How would the connotation have changed if Orwell had used “watched”?

The word “scrutinized” suggests that the government is not just idly watching the movements of its citizens, it is actively looking and picking apart everything they do to watch for any sort of infraction. The word “watched” would have had a much less ominous, as well as less active, feeling.

Writing Assignment: Directions for Teachers and Students / Guidance for Teachers

For homework, students write two paragraphs—one explaining why the text supports their characterization of Winston and another about his world—using words and phrases from the text as evidence to support their point.

If time permits, the teacher can ask students to brainstorm a list of words that could be used to describe Winston Smith and a list of words to describe the society in which he lives. Students then could be encouraged to pick the word from each list that they feel best describes Winston and his society. Students should be judged successful if their word choices can be adequately supported by textual evidence; for instance, students could describe Winston as beaten-down, weak, or uncomfortable. Students could describe the society as sinister, paranoid, or frightening. Whatever words they choose, they must be able to cite two pieces of textual evidence and clearly explain the connection between their evidence and their word choice.

Writing Prompt for Students:

- **Choose one word or phrase that you feel best describes the character of Winston Smith. Write a paragraph explaining why you believe this word describes Winston well, using at least two words and phrases from the text as evidence to support your choice.**

