*1984 Chapter Summary and Question Bank*

# Part I, Chapter I

On a cold dreary day in April 1984, Winston Smith goes home on his lunch break. Winston works for the “Party,” the people who rule the country of Oceania, but he is pretty unimportant overall. His life is completely under the control of “Big Brother.” There is even a “telescreen” in his room that records all of the things he does while at home. However, there is one part of his apartment that the telescreen cannot see and Winston hides a diary there. Winston knows that keeping a diary is punishable by death. He mostly writes about a girl at work he has some pretty weird thoughts about and a high­ranking party official named O’Brien. Winston secretly hates Big Brother, which is punishable by death. He thinks O’Brien might hate Big Brother too...

1. **What bothers Winston? What is wrong with his society?**
2. **What are the three slogans of the Inner Party? What are the four ministries?**

# Part I, Chapter II

Winston is visited by his next door neighbor Mrs. Parsons, who needs help fixing her plumbing. While Winston tries to help, he is harassed by her children, all of whom are “Junior Spies,” whose job is to watch their parents for any evidence of them being against the Party. Mrs.

Parsons is terrified of her own children. Winston goes home remembers a time when he thought O’Brien spoke to him and asked him to meet him somewhere.

1. **What “job” do the Parsons children have? Why is Mrs. Parsons scared of her children?**
2. **Why does Winston call himself a “dead man” at the end of Chapter 2? What is “thoughtcrime?”**

# Part I, Chapter III

Winston has some weird dreams about both his mother and the girl at work he wrote about in chapter I. He is then forced to exercise by the telescreen. As he exercises, Winston thinks about his childhood, which he can hardly remember. He also thinks about how a lot of the history of the world has been rewritten since the Party came to power and that it’s difficult to know what is even the truth anymore.

1. **What is Winston’s dream about his mother? How does he feel about himself in that dream?**
2. **Explain the Party slogan, "tra."**

# Part I, Chapter IV

Winston goes back to work, where his job is to update documents so that they reflect new developments in Oceania. For example, there is currently a food shortage, and Winston is asked to update the document to tell the people that they have more food than ever. Winston also has to edit out all references to a “Comrade Withers” from an old speech, because he has become an enemy of the Party and been “vaporized.” Winston works at the Ministry of Truth, where they constantly change history to reflect whatever the Party wants people to think at any time.

1. **Describe Winston’s job. How is the past controlled?**
2. **Who is Comrade Ogilvy?**

# Part I, Chapter V

Winston has lunch with a coworker named Syme, whose job it is to write the dictionary of “Newspeak,” the official language of Oceania. The purpose of Newspeak is to make it impossible to express a feeling that could be thought of as independent or rebellious. Winston also speaks to Parsons, the husband of the woman from Chapter II. He wants a contribution from Winston for “Hate Week.” There is an announcement over the loudspeaker that people now get more chocolate than they did before, but Winston thinks that it is actually less than it used to be. No one else seems to notice that. Winston notices the dark­haired girl staring at him and becomes paranoid.

1. What is revealed about Inner Party philosophy in the discussion between Winston and Syme?
 Why does Winston feel that Syme will be vaporized?
2. Parsons brags about his children for doing what?

# Part I, Chapter VI

Winston writes in his diary his memory of his last sexual encounter, with a lower class (“prole”) prostitute. The Party hates sex of all kinds, except for procreation. Winston used to be married to a woman named Katherine but they separated after realizing they would not have children. Winston wants to have an affair, because he sees it as the ultimate act of rebellion. However, writing about the encounter with the prostitute only makes Winston angrier and more depressed.

1. What is the purpose of marriage in the state?
2. What do Winston’s memories about visiting a prostitute reveal about his attitudes towards sex in Oceania?

# Part I, Chapter VII

Winston writes in his diary that the only hope of rebellion against the Party lies with the “proles” and that it cannot be destroyed from within or by the Brotherhood. The proles are 85% of the population and could be strong enough to take the Thought Police down if they worked together. However, the Proles are too ignorant to know that the Party is even oppressing them. Winston thinks about the ways in which the Party lies to the people of Oceania and wonders how much of what they say is actually true. He thinks that if they told people that “2 + 2 = 5”, they would believe it. Winston thinks that when he writes in his diary, he is writing a letter to O’Brien, still believing that O’Brien is against the Party.

1. How does Winston view the proles? How are the proles controlled (prole control)?
2. What lies/half­truths does the Party teach about history? Winston suspects that the Party lies about progress made since the war. What Party claims does he doubt?

# Part I, Chapter VIII

Winston visits the prole district and goes to a pub. He talks to an old man about the past, but the old man’s memory is too poor to remember anything. Winston visits the store where he bought the diary and gets taken upstairs to a private room that has no telescreen in it. On his way home, Winston sees the dark­haired girl and thinks that she is following him. Terrified, Winston rushes home and decides that he must kill himself before the Thought Police finds him. But he calms himself by thinking about O’Brien and the possibility of rebellion.

1. What does Winston think about after his conversation with the old man in the pub?
2. How does one’s own body betray a person?

# Part II, Chapter I

At work one morning, Winston walks toward the men’s room and notices the dark­haired girl with her arm in a sling. She falls, and when Winston helps her up, she passes him a note.

Winston had feared that the dark­haired girl was a political spy, but now he is not sure what her motivation is. At lunch one day, Winston and the dark­haired girl plan a meeting in Victory Square where they will be able to hide from the telescreens among the crowds.They meet in the square, and the girl gives Winston directions to a place in the countryside where they can meet alone.

1. What does Julia’s note say to Winston?
2. What do Winston and the dark­haired do when they meet in the square?

# Part II, Chapter II

Winston and the girl meet in the country. Though he has no idea what to expect, Winston no longer believes that the dark­haired girl is a spy. She tells him that her name is Julia, and takes off her Junior Anti­Sex League sash. Winston and Julia have sex in the woods, and it is a passionate experience. Afterward, Winston asks Julia if she has done this before, and she replies that she has had many affairs with members of the Party. Winston is excited by this news and tells her that he loves her because her affairs mean that many members of the Party are committing crimes.

1. What does Julia bring to their meeting that she obtained on the black market?
2. What familiar sign does Winston find?

# Part II, Chapter III

The next morning, Julia makes the preparations for their return to London, and she and Winston head back to their normal lives. Over the coming weeks, they arrange several meetings in the city. Unlike Winston, Julia is not interested in rebelling against Big Brother. Winston tells Julia about a walk he once took with his ex­wife Katherine, during which he thought about pushing her off of a cliff. He says that it would not have mattered whether he pushed her or not, because it is impossible to win when they live in such an oppressive society.

1. What is Julia’s job? How old is she?
2. How does Julia rebel against Big Brother and the Party?

# Part II, Chapter IV

Winston rents a room above Mr. Charrington’s shop so that he and Julia can meet privately. Outside, a burly, red­armed woman sings a song and hangs up her laundry. Winston and Julia have been busy at work preparing for Hate Week so they have not been able to see each other. Winston wishes that he and Julia could live like an old, married couple. Julia comes into the room with sugar, coffee, and bread—luxuries only members of the Inner Party could normally obtain. Lounging in bed in the evening, Julia sees a rat; Winston, afraid of rats more than anything else, is horrified. Julia looks through the room, and notices the paperweight. Winston tells her that the paperweight is a link to the past. When Julia leaves, Winston sits gazing into the crystal paperweight, imagining living inside it with Julia forever.

1. Why does Winston believe Julia is so beautiful?
2. What does the paperweight represent to Winston?

# Part II, Chapter V

As Winston predicted would happen, Syme vanishes. During the preparations for Hate Week, the city comes alive with the heat of the summer, and even the proles seem rowdy. Winston becomes increasingly obsessed with the room above Mr. Charrington’s shop, thinking about it even when he cannot go there. He fantasizes that Katherine will die, which would allow him to marry Julia; he even dreams of changing his identity to become a prole. Winston and Julia talk about the Brotherhood; he tells her about the strange connection he feels with O’Brien, and she tells him that she believes the Party invented the war and Emmanuel Goldstein. Winston is upset with Julia because she is only a rebel “from the waist down.”

1. What new poster is displayed all over London?
2. Whom does Julia credit with the invention of the airplane?

# Part II, Chapter VI

O’Brien makes contact with Winston, who has been waiting for this moment all his life. During his brief meeting with O’Brien in the hallway at the Ministry of Truth, Winston is anxious and excited. Winston feels that his meeting with O’Brien continues a path in his life begun the day of his first rebellious thought. He thinks gloomily that this path will lead him to the Ministry of Love, where he expects to be killed.

1. Whom does O’Brien mention in his conversation with Winston?
2. Why does O’Brien give Winston his address?

# Part II, Chapter VII

One morning, Winston wakes up crying in the room above Mr. Charrington’s antiques shop. Julia is with him, and asks him what is wrong. He tells her that he has been dreaming of his mother, and that until that moment, he has subconsciously believed that he murdered her. He is suddenly gripped with a sequence of memories that he had repressed. He hates the Party for having eliminated human feelings. He believes that the proles are still human, but that Party members like him and Julia are forced to suppress their own feelings to the point that they become virtually inhuman. Winston and Julia worry because they know that if they are captured, they will be tortured and possibly killed. They vow that they will always love each other, even if they are tortured.

1. What does Winston remember about after his father left?
2. After eating the chocolate, what did Winston find when he went home?

# Part II, Chapter VIII

Winston and Julia travel to O’Brien’s together. O’Brien turns off the telescreen, which shocks Winston. Winston declares that he and Julia are enemies of the Party, and that they wish to join the Brotherhood. O’Brien tells them that the Brotherhood is real, that Emmanuel Goldstein is alive, and that they can become members of the rebellion. Julia leaves, and O’Brien promises to give Winston a copy of Goldstein’s book. As Winston leaves, O’Brien turns on the telescreen and returns to his work.

1. To whom do O’Brien, Winston, and Julia toast?
2. How does O’Brien plan to deliver Goldstein’s book to Winston?

# Part II, Chapter IX\*

After a ninety­hour workweek, Winston is exhausted. In the middle of Hate Week, Oceania has switched enemies and allies in the ongoing war. In the room at Mr. Charrington’s, Winston reads through Goldstein’s *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism,* given to him by O’Brien. As Winston reads, Julia enters the room and Winston reads aloud to her from the book. Winston finally asks Julia if she is awake—she is not—and falls asleep himself.

1. What country is Oceania at war with now?
2. What does Winston receive at the rally?

\*Note: Pages 184­217 are optional. Here is a summary of these pages:

*The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism* summarizes the history and ideology of the Party. Three superstates exist in the world: Oceania, Eastasia, and Eurasia.

They have always been at war with each other, since it was impossible for any one superstate to conquer any other. The three states have their own valuable materials, but above all, they exploit their cheap labor, keeping the poor enslaved unnecessarily. Warfare utilizes new technologies but not for an increase in the standard of living, and the world is in many ways more primitive today than it was fifty years ago. There could be no increase of wealth because it threatened a hierarchical society, which needed to be grounded in poverty and ignorance. War, therefore, is the most effective means of keeping a society at bay, both physically and psychologically. Oceania is dedicated to winning this war, even though there can never be an ultimate victor.

The three superstates are all the same, working with each other to keep their masses in ignorance of the enemy while manipulating them to continue with the war effort. Each state still remains within its own boundaries, no other state ever threatens to invade them, even though it is sometimes very easy to do so. The only explanation is that the states want to continue this ruse of war, since it pacifies their masses into uniting against the war effort. An external war, therefore, gives them internal peace, and this is the root of the Party slogan "War is Peace.”

The different classes in society, which rotate as if in a cycle, but always ensuring that there is a high, middle, and low class. In Oceania, there is no individual property, because the Party owns everything collectively. But there are difficulties in keeping the society stratified, and the Party can fall for four reasons: 1) it is conquered from outside, 2) there is rebellion internally, 3) a strong Middle group is allowed to rise, or 4) it loses confidence in itself. The structure of Oceania is very predictable: Inner Party, Outer Party, and the proles, but admission into each branch is not necessarily hereditary.

The chapter lists the expectations of a good Party member, and why it is necessary to alter the past to keep the present in control. There must be no standards of comparison, so Party members need to be cut off from history. This is an example of "doublethink" where there are two contradictory beliefs that a mind believes in. This is possible because a Party member must know that the new truth is for their own good, while the old truth is something that it is necessary to eradicate, so they must both believe in and reject the idea of two pasts.

# Part II, Chapter X

The next morning, Winston lies in bed and thinks about a future in which the Proles will be able to overthrow the Party. He and Julia realize they are doomed, but there is still hope. Winston and Julia say, “We are the dead,” and a third voice responds, “You are the dead.” They realize there is a telescreen in the room. Suddenly, the sound of boots come from outside. The men break into the room and beat Julia and Winston. Winston hears Mr. Charrington and realizes that he was a member of the Thought Police the whole time.

1. What understanding does Winston gain about the common people?
2. Who betrays Winston?

# Part III, Chapter I

Winston sits in a bright, bare cell in which the lights are always on—he has at last arrived at the place where there is no darkness. Four telescreens monitor him. Winston envisions his captors beating him, and worries that sheer physical pain will force him to betray Julia. Another man in the cell is soon dragged away to the dreaded Room 101, a place of mysterious and unspeakable horror. Winston shares his cell with a variety of fellow prisoners, including Parsons, who was turned in by his own children for committing thoughtcrime. Winston dreams of committing suicide with the help of the Brotherhood, but his hopes are dashed when O’Brien arrives and reveals that he has been working for the Ministry of Love all along. Winston admits to himself that he knew this.

1. What effect to the words "Room 101" have on the skull­faced man?
2. Who truly is O’Brien? What do he and Charrington have in common?

# Part III, Chapter II

Winston is tortured by O’Brien. Through physical pain, O’Brien is able to force Winston to say that his holding up five fingers (when is truly holding up only four). Winston even comes to love O’Brien, because he stops the pain when Winston does as he is told. O'Brien tells Winston that the Party has perfected the system practiced by the Inquisition, the Nazis, and the Soviets—it has learned how to eliminate its enemies without making martyrs of them. It converts them, and then ensures that, in the eyes of the people, they cease to exist. Slowly, Winston begins to accept O'Brien's version of events. Winston asks about Julia and is told that she betrayed him immediately. Winston asks if Big Brother exists in the same way that he himself does, and O'Brien replies that Winston does not exist. Winston asks about the Brotherhood, and O'Brien responds that Winston will never know the answer to that question. Winston asks what waits in Room 101, and O'Brien states that everyone knows what waits in Room 101.

1. What sort of treatment does Winston receive? What is O’Brien attempting to teach Winston?
2. What effect does the (painless) shock treatment have on Winston?

# Part III, Chapter III

After weeks of interrogation and torture, O'Brien tells Winston about the Party's motives. Winston speculates that the Party rules the proles for their own good. O'Brien tortures him for this answer, saying that the Party's only goal is absolute, endless, and limitless power. Winston argues that the Party cannot alter the stars or the universe; O'Brien answers that it could if it needed to because the only reality that matters is in the human mind, which the Party controls. O'Brien forces Winston to look in a mirror; he has completely deteriorated and looks gray and skeletal. O'Brien acknowledges that Winston has held out by not betraying Julia, and Winston feels overwhelmed with love and gratitude toward O'Brien for recognizing his strength. However, O'Brien tells Winston not to worry, as he will soon be cured. O'Brien then notes that it doesn't matter, since, in the end, everyone is shot anyhow.

1. Who wrote Goldstein’s book? Is what the book says true?
2. How does Winston feel about O’Brien? Why?

# Part III, Chapter IV

After some time, Winston is transferred to a more comfortable room and the torture eases. He dreams contentedly of Julia, his mother, and O'Brien in the Golden Country. He gains weight and is allowed to write on a small slate. He comes to the conclusion that he was foolish to oppose the Party alone, and tries to make himself believe in Party slogans. He writes on his slate “FREEDOM IS SLAVERY,” “TWO AND TWO MAKE FIVE,” and “GOD IS POWER.” One

day, in a sudden, passionate fit of misery, Winston screams out Julia's name many times, terrifying himself. Though he knows that crying out in this way will lead O'Brien to torture him, he realizes his deep desire to continue hating the Party. He tries to bottle up his hatred so that even he will not recognize it. Therefore, when the Party kills him, he will die hating Big Brother—a personal victory. But he cannot hide his feelings. When O'Brien arrives with the guards, Winston tells him that he hates Big Brother. O'Brien replies that obeying Big Brother is not sufficient—Winston must learn to love him. O'Brien then instructs the guards to take Winston to Room 101.

1. How has Winston’s environment changed? What does he do with his time? How does he show his obedience to the Inner Party?
2. How does Winston show that he is not entirely true to Big Brother? How does Winston feel about Big Brother?

# Part III, Chapter V

In Room 101, O'Brien straps Winston to a chair, then clamps Winston's head so that he cannot move. He tells Winston that Room 101 contains “the worst thing in the world.” He reminds Winston of his worst nightmare—the dream of being in a dark place with something terrible on the other side of the wall—and informs him that rats are on the other side of the wall. O'Brien picks up a cage full of enormous, squirming rats and places it near Winston. He says that when he presses a lever, the door will slide up and the rats will leap onto Winston's face and eat it.

With the writhing, starving rats just inches away, Winston cracks. He screams that he wants O'Brien to subject Julia to this torture instead of him. O'Brien, satisfied by this betrayal, removes the cage.

1. What happens to Winston in Room 101?
2. How does this “cure” him?

# Part III, Chapter VI

Winston, now free, sits at the Chestnut Tree Café, where dismissed Party members go to drink. He enjoys a glass of Victory Gin and watches the telescreen. He accepts everything the Party says and does. Without acknowledging it to himself, he can still smell the rats. On the table, Winston traces “2 + 2 = 5” in the dust. He remembers seeing Julia on a bitter­cold day that March. They acknowledged that they had betrayed one another, and agreed to meet again, though neither is truly interested in continuing their relationship. Winston remembers a moment of happiness with his mother and sister, but thinks it must be a false memory. He looks up and sees a picture of Big Brother on the telescreen, making him feel happy and safe. As he listens to the war news, he reassures himself of both the great victory he has won over himself and his newfound love for Big Brother.

1. What is the setting? What is Winston’s job? (Look up “sinecure” if you don’t know it)
2. Who does Winston love at the end of the book?