

WHS Book Rationale

Title: *1984*

Author: George Orwell

- **Intended Audience**

Honors English 10-Required; English 10-Outside Reading Book Choice

- **Brief summary and educational significance**

1984 is a famous novel by [George Orwell](#) about an ideal or "utopian" society gone bad. In literary terms, you would call this a "dystopian" society. Orwell is a master satirist and *1984* is a textbook example of his scathing exaggerations. *1984*, written in 1948 and published in 1949, was intended as a warning against totalitarian tendencies rather than as a prophetic work. Orwell's (now considered) classic dystopia explores a future of [totalitarian](#) regime control. Even thought is monitored, for thought crime is a punishable offense. In this new society, the rich have all the advantages, and the poor must suffer through a monotonous existence punctuated by the disappearance and "reprogramming" of their friends, family, and co-workers. A culture of snitching is encouraged, as to rat out someone else may keep you safe for another day. "Big Brother is always watching."

- **Purpose of teaching the work and how it will be used**

- Teaching satire
- Teaching science fiction
- Teaching how propaganda is used
- Relationship to contemporary society
- The role of the individual in society

- **Potential problems with the work**

- Sexual scenes
- Perception of pro-communism
- Torture
- Alcohol use

- **Addressing potential problems**

George Orwell's *1984* offers a thought-provoking learning experience for high school students. It provides challenging reading, stimulating themes of dehumanization, isolation, repression, loneliness, social class disparity, and abuse of power, and a basis upon which students can form their own opinions about today's society.