

# CliffsNotes.com® Conversation Starters for 1984

Although O'Brien confirms the existence of Big Brother, he refuses to confirm or deny the existence of the Brotherhood. Discuss the role of the Brotherhood in the dynamics of Oceania's society and in the novel.

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Orwell wrote *1984* as a warning. Explain what he was warning people about. Be sure to examine the influence of political climates in the world during the time when Orwell wrote.

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Explain in what ways Julia differs from Winston. Consider her behavior, her motivation, and her goals.

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*1984* is rife with irony (that is, things being different from what is expected) and doublethink (being able to absolutely believe simultaneously in two opposing ideas). Divide a piece of paper into two columns. On one side, list as many examples of doublethink as you can; on the other, list examples of irony. Discuss what you think Orwell's purpose was in using both.

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How is *1984* similar to Orwell's other novel, *Animal Farm*?

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How does the setting of Part 1: Chapter 1 set the mood for the rest of the novel?

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Explain the significance of the phrase "in a place where there is no darkness."

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What is the significance of Winston uttering "Shakespeare" after his dream in Chapter 3?

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Why do you think Winston can't remember his past?

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What is ironic about the functions of the Ministries of Truth and Peace?

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What does Winston's job tell you about Oceania?

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What is the role of language in *1984*? Can language control our thoughts? Can it control our actions? Or are all three separate entities?

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What exactly is *thoughtcrime*?

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Explain and elaborate on this quote from Part 1: Chapter 6: "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two makes four. If that is granted, all else follows."

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Why does the Party control human emotions, such as love, friendship, and sexuality?

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Why does Winston continue to ask questions regarding the time before the war, even though he knows it means torture or death if he is caught asking?

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What is the true source of Winston's conflict?

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What is the Golden Country? What does it symbolize?

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What is the meaning of the bird Julia and Winston see in Part 2: Chapter 2?

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What does Winston mean when he says "We are the dead" to Julia?

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What is the function of the paperweight in the novel?

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Winston and Julia both hate the Party. But how are they still completely different? How do their wants and needs differ?

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Why does Winston think the proles are the key to overcoming the Party? How does this reflect world history?

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Does Winston beat Big Brother? Do you think he wins the battle against the Party because he was allowed to live?

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