

Nineteen-Eighty-Four

Literary Response Journal Prompts

Each response should be thoughtful and well-developed. 2-3 pages in your LRJ per response is the proper range. Remember: Your LRJ will be collected and the day of the semester exam – for completeness, thoughtfulness, neatness (legibility!), and overall effort.

1. Hypnopaedia & Other Propaganda Techniques

(This LRJ assignment references *Brave New World* as well as 1984.) Hypnopaedia is one of the many methods of propaganda used by the one-world government in *Brave New World*. "Propaganda is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. If the means achieves the end then the means is good.....the new Ministry has no other aim than to unite the nation behind the ideal of the national revolution." – *Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Minister of Propaganda*. Interestingly enough, in 1984, Winston Smith works for the Ministry of Truth, which in actual truth is a kind of "Ministry of Propaganda," since "truth" is merely a manufactured item.

What is the purpose of propaganda? What are some moral objections to the use of propaganda? How did the Nazis use propaganda? What were they trying to achieve? How did the Soviet Communists use propaganda? And, what were they trying to achieve? Then, identify and explain one significant use of propaganda in our country today. Consider advertising, political sloganeering, mass media, etc. Be specific. Give details.

2. Government Surveillance, Freedom, and National Security

Choose one of the statements below and write a 2-3 page response that either challenges or defends the belief. Be sure to support your response with examples from history and current events.

1. Those who would exchange freedom for security deserve neither.
2. To assure our country's freedom, the government should be able to spy on its citizens.
3. Patriotism means supporting your government during times of war.
4. Torture of a person who is a threat to our country's freedom is acceptable as long the person does not die.
5. People who are a serious threat to the government should be able to be held in prison without being charged.
6. The government has a right to know what people are reading so they may determine who might be a threat.
7. Society would be safer if we had security cameras in public places to catch potential criminals.
8. For an idea to exist, we must have words to express it.
9. Reporters should submit their work to government officials so they may determine if it's a threat to the country.
10. The only way to prepare for peace is to be prepared for war.

3. Control the Language, Control the Masses

Read Pieter Vree's article, "Control the Language, Control the Masses." Vree quotes Saul Alinsky as saying, "He who controls the language controls the masses." Explain what Alinsky means by this and how Vree relates this to both 1984 and contemporary issues regarding the political correctness of language. Do you agree with Vree's thesis? Explain why or why not.

4. JFK, Thought Control, and Thought Crimes

Read Dr. Donald Miller's article "JFK, Thought Control, and Thought Crimes." Miller states that "Unfortunately, we now live in a country where to say that [Lee Harvey] Oswald is innocent is tantamount to committing a 'thoughtcrime.' Americans increasingly practice what Orwell terms 'crimestop,' the faculty of stopping short at the threshold of any dangerous thought. But given the facts of the matter, believing the Oswald-did-it-alone official truth is like saying $2 + 2 = 5$." After reading the article, do you agree with Miller's assessment? And why?