

**1984**

## **DISCUSSIONS** Part 1: Chapter I

1. Why does Winston suspect that O'Brien might be an ally? How might Winston discover the truth about O'Brien's views without raising suspicion?
2. What is the purpose of the telescreen? Can you make any connections to our lives today?
3. Describe the view of London in 1984. Make sure to include the Ministry of Truth Building.
4. What is the Two Minutes Hate? Can you infer and explain the purpose behind it?

5. Can you guess at the meaning behind the Party slogan “IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH”?
6. The woman in the Fiction Department maintains the “novel-writing machines.” Would you care if you learned that a book you loved was written by AI (artificial intelligence)?
7. Why do some people feel compelled to keep diaries? Why do you think Winston Smith decides to start a diary in spite of the risks?
8. Chapter 1 makes clear that Winston Smith has a problem with women. To what can we attribute his misogyny (hatred of women)?

**EXCERPT ANALYSIS:** What makes the excerpt important or interesting? You might analyze imagery, theme, symbol, word choice, characterization, plot / conflict, or point of view.

**A.** ... For the first time the magnitude of what he had undertaken came home to him. How could you communicate with the future? It was of its nature impossible. Either the future would resemble the present, in which case it would not listen to him: or it would be different from it, and his predicament would be meaningless. (7)

Think about it: How does the character Winston Smith writing a message to “the unborn” in the story relate to George Orwell in 1949 writing for future readers (us)?

**B.** ... Goldstein was the renegade and backslider who once, long ago (how long ago, nobody quite remembered), had been one of the leading figures of the Party, almost on a level with Big Brother himself, and then had engaged in counter-revolutionary activities, had been condemned to death, and had mysteriously escaped and disappeared. The program of the Two Minutes Hate varied from day to day, but there was none in which Goldstein was not the principal figure. He was the primal traitor, the earliest defiler of the Party's purity. All subsequent crimes against the Party, all treacheries, acts of sabotage, heresies, deviations, sprang directly out of his teaching. Somewhere or other he was still alive and hatching his conspiracies... (11-12)