

The Paragon Multimedia DVD, VHS Collection

Title: **George Orwell - 1984**



ISBN: 5050070020250

Information

Release Title: **George Orwell 1984**

10th October 1984 (United Kingdom)

Publication: 1949 novel by George Orwell. For the year, see 1984.

Origin: United Kingdom

AKA: Also known as: Neunzehnhundertvierundachtzig

Release date: United States – 14th December 1984, (Limited)

Genres: Drama, Sci-Fi (?)

Disc Nos. – 1

Certification: 15

Duration: 1h 53m

Region Code:

Region:

Product Code:

MPN:

EAN:

UPC:

Languages: English

Filming locations: Battersea Power Station, Battersea, London, England, UK

Sound mix: Mono

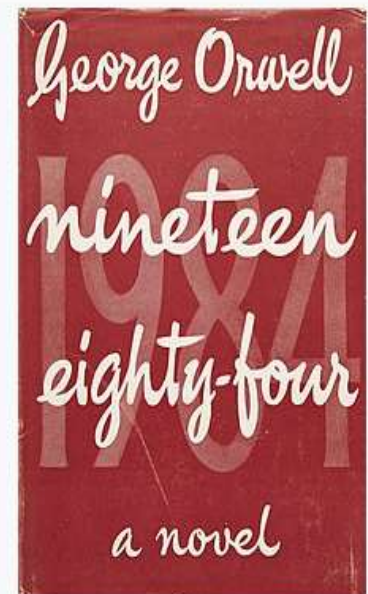
Pal – Colour

Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1

Library Image



Nineteen Eighty-Four



First-edition cover

Author	George Orwell
Cover artist	Michael Kennar
Country	United Kingdom
Language	English
Genre	Dystopian · political fiction · social science fiction
Set in	London, Airstrip One, Oceania
Publisher	Secker & Warburg
Publication date	8 June 1949
Media type	Print (hardback and paperback)
Pages	328
OCLC	470015866 ↗
Dewey Decimal	823.912 ^[1]
Preceded by	<i>Animal Farm</i>

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Storyline

In 1984, civilisation has been ravaged by world war, civil conflict, and revolution. Airstrip One (formerly known as Great Britain) is a province of Oceania, one of the three totalitarian super-states that rule the world. It is ruled by "The Party" under the ideology of "Ingsoc" (a Newspeak shortening of "English Socialism") and the mysterious leader Big Brother, who has an intense cult of personality. The Party brutally purges out anyone who does not fully conform to their regime, using the Thought Police and constant surveillance through telescreens (two-way televisions), cameras, and hidden microphones. Those who fall out of favour with the Party become "unpersons", disappearing with all evidence of their existence destroyed.

In London, Winston Smith is a member of the Outer Party, working at the Ministry of Truth, where he rewrites historical records to conform to the state's ever-changing version of history. Winston revises past editions of *The Times*, while the original documents are destroyed after being dropped into ducts known as memory holes, which lead to an immense furnace. He secretly opposes the Party's rule and dreams of rebellion, despite knowing that he is already a "thought-criminal" and is likely to be caught one day.

While in a proletarian neighbourhood he meets Mr. Charrington, the owner of an antiques shop, and buys a diary where he writes criticisms of the Party and Big Brother. To his dismay, when he visits a proletarian quarter, he discovers they have no political consciousness. As he works in the Ministry of Truth, he observes Julia, a young woman maintaining the novel-writing machines at the ministry, whom Winston suspects of being a spy, and develops an intense hatred of her. He vaguely suspects that his superior, an Inner Party official O'Brien, is part of an enigmatic underground resistance movement known as the Brotherhood, formed by Big Brother's reviled political rival Emmanuel Goldstein.

One day, Julia secretly hands Winston a love note, and the two begin a secret affair. Julia explains that she also loathes the Party, but Winston observes that she is politically apathetic and uninterested in overthrowing the regime. Initially meeting in the country, they later meet in a rented room above Mr. Charrington's shop. During the affair, Winston remembers the disappearance of his family during the civil war of the 1950s and his tense relationship with his estranged wife Katharine. Weeks later, O'Brien invites Winston to his flat, where he introduces himself as a member of the Brotherhood and sends Winston a copy of *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism* by Goldstein. Meanwhile, during the nation's Hate Week, Oceania's enemy suddenly changes from Eurasia to Eastasia, which goes mostly unnoticed. Winston is recalled to the Ministry to help make the necessary revisions to the records. Winston and Julia read parts of Goldstein's book, which explains how the Party maintains power, the true meanings of its slogans, and the concept of perpetual war. It argues that the Party can be overthrown if proles rise up against it. However, Winston never gets the opportunity to read the chapter that explains 'why' the Party is motivated to maintain power.

Winston and Julia are captured when Mr. Charrington is revealed to be a Thought Police agent, and they are separated and imprisoned at the Ministry of Love. O'Brien also reveals himself as a Thought Police agent to Winston. Over several months, Winston is starved and tortured to bring his beliefs in line with the Party. O'Brien tells Winston that he will never know whether the Brotherhood actually exists and that Goldstein's book was written collaboratively by him and other Party members. For the final stage of re-education, O'Brien takes Winston to Room 101, which contains each prisoner's worst fear. When confronted with rats, Winston denounces Julia and pledges allegiance to the Party.

Winston is released into public life and continues to frequent the Chestnut Tree café. He encounters Julia, and both reveal that they have betrayed the other and are no longer in love. Back in the café, a news alert celebrates Oceania's supposed massive victory over Eurasian armies in Africa. Winston finally accepts that he loves Big Brother.

Overview: Longing for freedom, the lowly bureaucrat of the Ministry of Truth, Winston Smith, summons up the courage to write down his unspoken desires in his little secret diary. Serving silently at the pleasure of the grim, autocratic hyper-state of Oceania, Smith knows that the English Socialist Party's supreme leader, the omnipotent Big Brother, watches his every move, condemning the already terrified people into a life of slavery. Under those dire circumstances--as the totalitarian government's suffocating stranglehold tightens more and more--Julia, another equally seditious party member, crosses paths with Winston, and a dangerous clandestine affair begins. Now, there's no turning back, and, sooner or later, the illicit couple will have to pay for its hideous crimes against the dictatorial state. What makes a good citizen? —Nick Riganas (IMDb)

Cast

Main characters

Winston Smith – the 39-year-old protagonist who is a phlegmatic everyman harbouring thoughts of rebellion and is curious about the Party's power and the past before the Revolution.

Julia – Winston's lover who is a covert "rebel from the waist downwards" who publicly espouses Party doctrine as a member of the fanatical Junior Anti-Sex League. Julia enjoys her small acts of rebellion and has no interest in giving up her lifestyle.

O'Brien – A mysterious character, O'Brien is a member of the Inner Party who poses as a member of The Brotherhood, the counter-revolutionary resistance, to catch Winston. He is a spy intending to deceive, trap, and capture Winston and Julia.

Secondary characters

Aaronson, Jones, and Rutherford – former members of the Inner Party whom Winston vaguely remembers as among the original leaders of the Revolution, long before he had heard of Big Brother. They confessed to treasonable conspiracies with foreign powers and were then executed in the political purges of the 1960s. In between their confessions and executions, Winston saw them drinking in the Chestnut Tree Café—with broken noses, suggesting that their confessions had been obtained by torture. Later, in the course of his editorial work, Winston sees newspaper evidence contradicting their confessions, but drops it into a memory hole. Eleven years later, he is confronted with the same photograph during his interrogation.

Ampleforth – Winston's one-time Records Department colleague who was imprisoned for leaving the word "God" in a Kipling poem as he could not find another rhyme for "rod"; Winston encounters him at the Ministry of Love. Ampleforth is a dreamer and intellectual who takes pleasure in his work, and respects poetry and language, traits which cause him disfavour with the Party.

Charrington – an officer of the Thought Police posing as a sympathetic antiques dealer amongst the proles.

Katharine Smith – the emotionally indifferent wife whom Winston "can't get rid of". Despite disliking sexual intercourse, Katharine married Winston because it was their "duty to the Party". Although she was a "goodthinkful" ideologue, they separated because the couple could not conceive children. Divorce is not permitted, but couples who cannot have children may live separately. For much of the story Winston lives in vague hope that Katharine may die or could be "got rid of" so that he may marry Julia. He regrets not having killed her by pushing her over the edge of a quarry when he had the chance many years previously.

Tom Parsons – Winston's naïve neighbour, and an ideal member of the Outer Party: an uneducated, suggestible man who is utterly loyal to the Party, and fully believes in its perfect image. He is socially active and participates in the Party activities for his social class. He is friendly towards Smith, and despite his political conformity punishes his bullying son for firing a catapult at Winston. Later, as a prisoner, Winston sees Parsons is in the Ministry of Love, as his daughter had reported him to the Thought Police, saying she heard him speak against Big Brother in his sleep. Even this does not dampen his belief in the Party, and he states he could do "good work" in the hard labour camps.

Mrs. Parsons – Parsons's wife is a wan and hapless woman who is intimidated by her own children.

The Parsons children – a nine-year-old son and seven-year-old daughter. Both are members of the Spies, a youth organization that focuses on indoctrinating children with Party ideals and training them to report any suspected incidents of unorthodoxy. They represent the new generation of Oceanian citizens, without memory of life before Big Brother, and without family ties or emotional sentiment; the model society envisioned by the Inner Party.

Syme – Winston's colleague at the Ministry of Truth, a lexicographer involved in compiling a new edition of the Newspeak dictionary. Although he is enthusiastic about his work and support for the Party, Winston notes, "He is too intelligent. He sees too clearly and speaks too plainly." Winston predicts, correctly, that Syme will become an unperson.

Additionally, the following characters, mentioned in the novel, play a significant role in the world-building of 1984. Whether these characters are real or fabrications of Party propaganda is something that neither Winston nor the reader is permitted to know:

Big Brother – the leader and figurehead of the Party that rules Oceania. A deep cult of personality is formed around him.

Emmanuel Goldstein – ostensibly a former leading figure in the Party who became the counter-revolutionary leader of the Brotherhood, and author of the book *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*. Goldstein is the symbolic enemy of the state—the national nemesis who ideologically unites the people of Oceania with the Party, especially during the Two Minutes Hate and other forms of fearmongering.

Parents Guide

Certification

Argentina:18 Australia:M Brazil:16 Canada:R (Manitoba/Nova Scotia/Ontario) Canada:13+ (Quebec) Chile:18 Finland:K-16 France:12 Greece:K-12 Iceland:16 India:A Ireland:15 Italy:VM14 Netherlands:12 New Zealand:M Norway:18 (1984) Philippines:R-18 (self-applied) Poland:16 (self-applied) Portugal:M/16 (Qualidade) Singapore:M18 South Africa:16 (N, V) South Korea:Youth not allowed (self-applied) Spain:13 Sweden:15 Taiwan:15+ Turkey:13+ (DVD rating) United Kingdom:15 United States:TV-MA (LSV, TV rating) United States:R (certificate #27674) United Arab Emirates:15+ (self-applied) West Germany:16 (f)

Sex & Nudity – Severe **Violence & Gore** – Moderate, **Profanity** – Mild, **Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking** – Mild **Frightening & Intense Scenes** – Severe

Background

Writing and publication

Idea

The Orwell Archive at University College London contains undated notes about ideas that evolved into *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The notebooks have been deemed "unlikely to have been completed later than January 1944", and "there is a strong suspicion that some of the material in them dates back to the early part of the war".

In one 1948 letter, Orwell claims to have "first thought of [the book] in 1943", while in another he says he thought of it in 1944 and cites 1943's Tehran Conference as inspiration: "What it is really meant to do is to discuss the implications of dividing the world up into 'Zones of Influence' (I thought of it in 1944 as a result of the Tehran Conference), and in addition to indicate by parodying them the intellectual implications of totalitarianism". Orwell had toured Austria in May 1945 and observed manoeuvring he thought would likely lead to separate Soviet and Allied Zones of Occupation.

In January 1944, literature professor Gleb Struve introduced Orwell to Yevgeny Zamyatin's 1924 dystopian novel *We*. In his response Orwell expressed an interest in the genre, and informed Struve that he had begun writing ideas for one of his own, "that may get written sooner or later." In 1946, Orwell wrote about the 1931 dystopian novel *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley in his article "Freedom and Happiness" for the *Tribune*, and noted similarities to *We*. By this time Orwell had scored a critical and commercial hit with his 1945 political satire *Animal Farm*, which raised his profile. For a follow-up he decided to produce a dystopian work of his own.

Writing

In a June 1944 meeting with Fredric Warburg, co-founder of his British publisher Secker & Warburg, shortly before the release of *Animal Farm*, Orwell announced that he had written the first 12 pages of his new novel. He could only earn a living from journalism, however, and predicted the book would not see a release before 1947. Progress was slow going; by the end of September 1945 Orwell had written some 50 pages. Orwell became disenchanted with the restrictions and pressures involved with journalism and grew to detest city life in London. His health also suffered, with the harsh winter worsening his case of bronchiectasis and a lesion in one lung.

In May 1946, Orwell arrived on the Scottish island of Jura. He had wanted to retreat to a Hebridean island for several years, to which David Astor recommended he stay at Barnhill, a remote farmhouse on the island that his family owned. Barnhill had no electricity or hot water, but it was here where Orwell intermittently drafted and finished *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. His first stay lasted until October 1946, during which time he made little progress on the few already completed pages and at one point, did no work on it for three months. After spending the winter in London Orwell returned to Jura; in May 1947 he reported to Warburg that despite progress being slow and difficult, he was roughly a third of the way through. He sent his "ghastly mess" of a first draft manuscript to London where Miranda Christen volunteered to type a clean version. Orwell's health took a turn in September, however, and was confined to bed with inflammation of the lungs. He lost almost two stone in weight and had recurring night sweats, but he decided not to see a doctor and continued writing. On 7 November 1947, he completed the first draft in bed and subsequently travelled to East Kilbride near Glasgow for medical treatment, where a specialist confirmed a chronic and infectious case of tuberculosis.

Orwell was discharged in the summer of 1948, after which he returned to Jura and produced a full second draft of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which he finished in November. He asked Warburg to have someone come to Barnhill and retype the manuscript, which was so untidy that the task was only considered possible if Orwell was present, as only he could understand it. The previous volunteer had left the country and no other could be found at short notice, so an

impatient Orwell retyped it himself at a rate of roughly 4,000 words a day during bouts of fever and bloody coughing fits. On 4 December 1948, Orwell sent the finished manuscript to Secker & Warburg and left Barnhill for good in January 1949. He recovered at a sanatorium in the Cotswolds.

Title

Shortly before completion of the second draft, Orwell hesitated between two titles for the novel: *The Last Man in Europe*, an early title, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Warburg suggested the latter, which he took to be a more commercially viable choice. There has been a theory — doubted by Dorian Lynskey (author of a 2019 book about *Nineteen Eighty-Four*) — that 1984 was chosen simply as an inversion of the year 1948, the year in which it was being completed. Lynskey says the idea was "first suggested by Orwell's US publisher," and it was also mentioned by Christopher Hitchens in his introduction to the 2003 edition of *Animal Farm* and 1984, which also notes that the date was meant to give "an immediacy and urgency to the menace of totalitarian rule". However, Lynskey does not believe the inversion theory:

This idea [...] seems far too cute for such a serious book. [...] Scholars have raised other possibilities. [His wife] Eileen wrote a poem for her old school's centenary called 'End of the Century: 1984.' G. K. Chesterton's 1904 political satire *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, which mocks the art of prophecy, opens in 1984. The year is also a significant date in *The Iron Heel*. But all of these connections are exposed as no more than coincidences by the early drafts of the novel [...] First he wrote 1980, then 1982, and only later 1984. The most fateful date in literature was a late amendment."

Publication

A 1947 draft manuscript of the first page of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, showing the editorial development

In the run up to publication, Orwell called the novel "a beastly book" and expressed some disappointment towards it, thinking it would have been improved had he not been so ill. This was typical of Orwell, who had talked down his other books shortly before their release. Nevertheless, the book was enthusiastically received by Secker & Warburg, who acted quickly; before Orwell had left Jura he rejected their proposed blurb that portrayed it as "a thriller mixed up with a love story." He also refused a proposal from the American Book of the Month Club to release an edition without the appendix and chapter on Goldstein's book, a decision which Warburg claimed cut off about £40,000 in sales.

Nineteen Eighty-Four was published on 8 June 1949 in the UK; Orwell predicated earnings of around £500. A first print of 25,575 copies was followed by a further 5,000 copies in March and August 1950. The novel had the most immediate impact in the US, following its release there on 13 June 1949 by Harcourt Brace, & Co. An initial print of 20,000 copies was quickly followed by another 10,000 on 1 July, and again on 7 September. By 1970, over 8 million copies had been sold in the US and in 1984, it topped the country's all-time best seller list.

In June 1952, Orwell's widow Sonia Bronwell sold the only surviving manuscript at a charity auction for £50. The draft remains the only surviving literary manuscript from Orwell, and is presently held at the John Hay Library at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.



A 1947 draft manuscript of the first page of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, showing the editorial development

