**Study Questions – Part I**

**Chapter 1**

1. What atmosphere or mood is established in the descriptions given in the first two paragraphs?
2. In the second paragraph, what important items of information do we learn about the society in which Winston Smith lives? What do we learn of Winston’s physical discomfort?
3. Once Winston is inside his flat, what item is identified, and what is its significance?
4. Large posters of Big Brother are all over the city, and we see for the first time the term INGSOC. What does INGSOC refer to? What do the two words mean to you?
5. On page six, what disturbing feature do we learn that the telescreen possesses?
6. What do we learn of the two types of police?
7. What is the stark contrast between the Ministry of Truth building and its surrounding? What does this point out about its society?
8. The three Party slogans on the side of the building are paradoxes. Explain why.
9. Oceania has four ministries that run the government. Identify what each is responsible for.
10. There is an irony in all of these names and what they do. Point out the irony in the names. Do you find any of this irony humorous?
11. Winston secretly begins to write in the diary he is starting. Why is this action not illegal? What consequences could it have, however?
12. Why do you suppose this government would frown on writing in a diary?
13. Winston begins to write about the films he had seen the night before. He relates the horrific incidents that took place on the screen and the audience’s amused responses, apparently without them being aware of the horror of the incidents or the inappropriateness of their responses.
    1. Why do you suppose that he and the audience are not sickened by the horror of what they see?
    2. The only victim remotely identified in the film is the middle-aged woman sitting with the boy in the boat. How is she identified? Given the time period, 1949, why might this identification be significant?
    3. One of the proles reacts negatively to the exposing of children to this kind of violence. Why does Winston believe nothing will happen to her?
14. Winston realizes that he felt the necessity to begin writing the diary because of the Hate Week incident and two people who were there. What was it about O’Brien and the girl that caused Winston to notice them?
15. The arch enemy of Oceania is Emmanuel Goldstein, once a leading figure in the party, “almost on a level with Big Brother himself,” but now the party’s much reviled enemy. Goldstein is modeled after Leon Trotzky, a Jewish intellectual and leader of the Bolshevik revolution, whom Stalin demonized and finally had hunted down and killed. Why do you suppose the rulers of Oceania make Goldstein the creator of every crime, conspiracy, and act of sabotage that occurs in the country?
16. The “hate session” images fade from that of the despised Goldstein, to the beloved and fatherly image of Big Brother. As the Party’s slogans are superimposed, the viewers rhythmically chant “B-B”.
    1. What is Winston’s reaction?
    2. How do you suppose a Party member might explain the three paradoxical Party slogans?
17. What passes between O’Brien and Smith, and what does this suggest to Winston?
18. Winston realizes that writing “Down with Big Brother” in his diary, he has committed a thought crime that will be severely punished when, not if, it is discovered. What is his conclusion, though, as he goes to answer the knock on his door?

**Chapter 2**

1. The narrator explains that the neighbor’s flat is dingy, but in a different way than Winston’s. Inside, there was the usual boiled cabbage smell, common in the whole building. What is the point of the numerous mentions of the prevalence of the boiled cabbage smell?
2. What is the point of view of the narration?
3. What makes the neighbor’s children and all children in his society so frightening to Winston?
4. Having caught O’Brien’s eye, Winston reflects that he was not even sure “whether O’Brien was a friend or an enemy. Nor did it even seem to matter greatly. There was a link of understanding between them that was more important that the affection or partisanship. What does this thinking reveal about Winston’s emotional needs?
5. While Winston is watching the telescreen, how does Winston know that bad news is coming?
6. After mentioning the constant surveillance under which the people live, Winston says that there is nothing of your own except for what one small thing? What is ironic about the phrase, “the mutability of the past?
7. Can people like Winston’s neighbor, who has completely accepted the party thinking, be free in those cubic centimeters?
8. Overwhelmed by the size of the Ministry of Truth building and by the size of the strength of the Party, Winston sees opposition as futile, yet, what is his conclusion about “human heritage” and dying? Find two quotes.

**Chapter 3**

1. What do we learn of Winston’s memory of his mother?
2. Toward the end of this chapter, Winston describes “doublethink”. How does the Party use “doublethink”?
3. What chilling occurrence happens during the morning exercise?

**Chapter 4**

1. Winston’s job is to change past statements made by the party so that the old facts conform to the new realities. Does it seem to you that this could actually be done by a government? Give some examples.
2. Find a quotation on pages 41-42 that explains the callousness with which people are treated and why the Party acts as it does.
3. Why do you suppose that Orwell mentions the names of people with whom Winston works and give details of their jobs.

**Chapter 5**

1. What was Winston’s relationship with Syme? Why does he believe Syme will be vaporized?
2. Syme says, “Don’t you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought?” Explain why Syme believes the narrowing of thought is necessary.
3. Why does Winston feel that the man sitting next to him in the cafeteria is “not a real human being but some kind of dummy”?
4. Why does Winston say that he must have some “ancestral memory that things had once been different?”
5. Parsons agrees that the Ministry of Plenty did a “good job this year.” Why is the question that he asks Winston at that point ironic?
6. Why does Winston start to sweat when he discovers that the dark-haired girl sitting next to him has been looking at him? Is his reaction normal?

**Chapter 6**

1. For what reason would the Party not approve a marriage between two people?

**Chapter 7**

1. Why does Winston believe that the only hope of a government overthrow lies in the hands of the proles? What do the proles have that the upper class do not?
2. What is he speaking of when Winston says, “ I understand the HOW; I do not understand WHY”?

**Chapter 8**

1. Why is the old man that Winston talks to in the bar unable to tell him whether the old days had been better than times are now?
2. Why does Winston think of renting Mr. Charrington’s room?
3. What is Winston’s first reaction when he sees the dark haired girl on the street? What action does he consider?
4. This chapter marks the end of Part I. What do you think will happen in Part II?

**Study Questions - Part II**

**Chapter 1**

1. When Winston helps the girl with the dark hair up, we are told that there is a frightened look in her eyes. What do we later find is the reason for that frightened look?
2. Other than the fear of safety, what is Winston’s biggest fear in meeting the girl?
3. What is strange about the conversation between the girl and Winston?
4. What is revealed in the arranged meeting?

**Chapter 2**

1. What imagery is depicted in the beginning of the chapter? How is this different from what has been described earlier on?
2. What does the girl say about her many activities in the Anti-Sex League?
3. What made Winston, a man ten or fifteen years older than the girl is, and not particularly handsome, attractive to her, and what does it say about her?
4. Instead of being jealous of the other men that the girl has been with, Winston is pleased. Why is that?
5. What is the meaning of the last three sentences in this chapter?
6. Define motif and explain why one motif in the novel is the scarcity of consumer goods such as butter, razor blades, and real chocolate. Why does this scarcity exist?
7. Why is this world constantly at war?

**Chapter 3**

1. Although she hates the party, why can Julia be called “apolitical”?
2. From Julia’s perspective, why does the party want to extinguish sexual activity?
3. What is the difference in the way that Winston and Julia appear to view the future?

**Chapter 4**

1. Some critics see a significance in the words of the song that the woman outside is singing. What do you think?
2. Why, although they know it is dangerous, do they rent the room above Charrington’s shop?
3. If the first stanza of the woman’s song has a significance, what is the significance of the second stanza?
4. Since Orwell puts a great deal of emphasis into the discussion on rats, what can we assume?

**Chapter 5**

1. What happens to Syme? Why is this important?
2. In the course of this chapter, why and how does Winston change?
3. Between what two points of view do Winston and Julia swing?
4. Why does Julia find it quite plausible that Winston trusts O’Brien on the basis of a look in the Party member’s eye?
5. Winston feels that Julia, in some ways, is far more acute than he is in regards to the Party propaganda. What points does she raise that Winston has never considered?
6. What is your opinion of Julia? Is she a realist or a cynic?

**Chapter 6**

1. For what reason does Winston believe that O’Brien has talked with him? What are the feelings about this as the chapter ends?

**Chapter 7**

1. What realization does Winston make regarding the proles? How does he reach that conclusion?
2. What does Winston say is the one thing he and Julia must never do?
3. When Julia says everyone confesses, Winston says confessing is not important; a confession is just words. The important thing is if the Party can make them stop loving one another. That would constitute betrayal, Julia says the State can make her say anything, but cannot make her change how she feels about Winston. Winston agrees with her. Is this belief bravery, foolishness, or something else?

**Chapter 8**

1. When they visit O’Brien, what does he tell them about the Brotherhood?
2. What is the one thing Winston and Julia will not do for the cause?
3. What is confusing about the encounter with O’Brien?

**Chapter 9**

1. What change in the war situation takes place in Oceania, and how does the government treat this change?
2. What is in the briefcase that the man gives Winston, and why is this item of special importance to Winston?
3. According to Goldstein, for what reason do the three superpowers prefer continuous warfare to peace?
4. Why does Goldstein say that, although the superpowers talk about total victory, no power believes it is possible or even desirable?
5. For what reason does Goldstein say that it is not important for an artificial scarcity of goods to exist?
6. Goldstein says that the war being waged against another superpower is not the real war. What is the real war?
7. What is Goldstein’s theory about the new aristocracy? Who are they, and whom are they replacing?
8. Who does Goldstein say Big Brother is?
9. What is it that Goldstein says holds the ruling members of the Party together and ensures the survival of the Party?
10. For what reason, do you suppose, did Orwell think it necessary to include these chapters from Goldstein’s book?

**Chapter 10**

1. What is there about the prole washerwoman that Winston admires?
2. The washerwoman again leads Winston to believe that sooner or later the proles will overthrow the government. Do you think they really will, or is this belief just Winston’s optimism?
3. Why is it appropriate that this chapter begins with the singing of two song verses?
4. What might the shattering of the coral encased in the glass dome be symbolic of?
5. Although the reader may or may not be surprised by Mr. Charrington’s identity, why does it make perfect sense that the does turn out to be who he is?
6. There are still many pages left in this novel. What would you guess will happen in Part Three?

**Study Questions - Part 3**

Chapter 1

1. Twice, Winston says that he feels no love for Julia. He says that he sits waiting for them to come for him, that all he can feel is fear. Do you believe that what he says is true? Is it easy under adverse circumstances to lose the love you feel for someone?
2. Room 101, which is especially feared by the prisoners, appears to be an interrogation room. What could they have in that room, do you suppose, that is so feared?
3. When O’Brien arrives, he says to Winston, “You knew this, Winston… Don’t deceive yourself. You did know it- you have always known it.” What is O’Brien saying that Winston has always known?

Chapter 2

1. After the physical beatings, what happens to Winston?
2. What are Winston’s feelings toward his interrogator?
3. O’Brien tells Winston the object of the interrogation is not to get a confession. What is the object of the interrogation?
4. Since there is a strong likelihood that they are going to execute him anyway, Winston asks why they are going to the trouble of trying to change him. What answer does the interrogator give him?
5. If Winston is allowed to live, do you think he will accept life as it is offered to him?
6. What is the frightening question that Winston hesitates to ask? What is the literary term implied in the answer?

Chapter 3

1. What does O’Brien tell Winston about Goldstein’s book?
2. When Winston is asked why he thinks the Party clings to power, what answer forms in his head? What is Winston told is the real reason?
3. What does O’Brien’s answer about the real reason the Party seeks total power? Tell us about Orwell’s view of why totalitarian government exists.
4. Do O’Brien’s remarks in his explanation of reality, laws of nature, and power seem irrational to you? Does he seem insane?
5. Winston says that the party will ultimately fail. What does he say will eventually destroy the party?
6. For an answer, what does O’Brien show Winston? Why does O’Brien use this strategy?

Chapter 4

1. Winston now has “capitulated” nearly completely. How and why can you tell?
2. Winston tells us he has surrendered his mind. How does he still reveal his inner heart?
3. At this point, O’Brien arrives and questions Winston, who reveals that he hates Big Brother. What is O’Brien expecting to accomplish by sending Winston to Room 101?

Chapter 5

1. What is in room 101, as O’Brien describes it?
2. What would be the worst thing in the world for Winston?
3. Describe Winston’s hallucinations.
4. In order to save himself what does Winston cry out, and why is that crying this out, he will be saved?

Chapter 6

1. As we see Winston sipping his drink in the Chestnut Tree Café, what is this scene meant to remind us of?
2. In addition to changing physically, how else has Winston changed since his arrest?
3. He meets Julia and they talk, but neither seems to have any fear of the police. Why not?
4. How do they feel about each other? Why?
5. What is the significance of the repeated poem on page 241?
6. What happens to Winston in the last section?
7. What is implied in the next to last paragraph?
8. Does the reading of the last paragraph in the novel suggest that O’Brien or Winston won?
9. Would you say that the novel’s ending represents for Orwell an optimistic or pessimistic view for the future of our society?
10. Do you think that Orwell believed that the coming of such a society was inevitable?