

To: Perspectives in Literature and Composition Honors students
Summer reading novel (August/September, 2017): *1984*
Quarter two novel (Late November, 2017): *The Picture of Dorian Gray*
Quarter four novella (April 2017): *Heart of Darkness*

One major course of study throughout your entire Perspectives in Literature and Composition honors class will consist of an examination of both rhetoric and propaganda and their respective effects on readers and listeners. Accordingly, I have selected for your first foray into these ideas *1984* by George Orwell. Tying in nicely to our first quarter unit of utopias and dystopias, this classic text should undoubtedly be an interesting read, considering both today's turbulent social and political climates throughout the world and the effect that the media has on it.

We will not test on or discuss *1984* for at least the first ten school days to allow for late adds or transfers to catch up. After that, you should ideally enter class having read the novel and having noted the uses of rhetoric and propaganda throughout the text. Pay special attention to the terms *newspeak*, *doublethink*, and *thoughtcrime*, and the implications of the existence of such words. You should also note how language can be used to manipulate an individual's (and, indeed, a whole society's) psychology. The development of the central characters *Winston*, *Julia*, and *O'Brien* illustrate Orwell's ideas clearly while providing a warning for those of us in the future (Orwell wrote the novel in the mid 1940s) who are sufficiently intelligent to recognize it.

While using one's trusty highlighter and pen (for margin notes) while reading is a tried and true method of analysis, the purpose of your reading is not really to glean the classic literary elements that you have been trained to find over the past three years. Instead, I ask that you mark only what you need so that you can avidly participate in class discussion about rhetoric, propaganda, and their connections to *language* as it relates to the concepts of utopia and dystopia.

Finally, high level thinking and writing requires the distillation of one's *own opinion* with the topic at hand; many would simply call this idea "writing with 'voice' or 'purpose'." In order to accomplish this, please make certain to place post-its or margin notes when you find passages of the text particularly stirring or interesting to you. It is from these passages that you will eventually formulate your own "voice" about these particularly relevant topics. All teachers are more than aware of such resources as eNotes, SparkNotes, etc. While these are valuable tools if you feel that you are missing an idea in a chapter, they are no substitute for completing your reading, and discussions and tests will be geared toward our class's discoveries, not a website's. Your tests on our texts will often be OPEN BOOK, which should tell you that I expect you to use TEXTUAL EVIDENCE in your constructed responses. A summary from a webpage will be unlikely to provide you with insights about which passages will prove what you believe using text evidence.

Please also plan to have *The Picture of Dorian Gray* read for after Thanksgiving break. If you start it in early November, you should have plenty of time to finish it as it is a quick read (Oscar Wilde was a playwright, so it is dialogue-heavy). *Dorian Gray* will tie nicely into our Comedy and Satire unit. Further directions about what to mark and look for in the text will be available as we begin quarter two.

RK News has offered a 20% discount if you obtain the texts through them. I have let them know that up to 90 students could inquire. I teach from the Signet classics version of the book: ISBN 978-0451524935, and that is the one that they will have in stock. I typically teach from the Barnes and Noble classic version of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, ISBN 9781593080259. For late in the year, I teach from the Dover edition, ISBN 9780486264646, of *Heart of Darkness*. Obviously, RK can supply neither the B&N classic, nor the Dover edition; however, I do NOT require you to submit a marked copy of the text EVER, so you may use whatever version you wish. It may take you a minute to find passages that we talk about in any of the texts if you elect not to use the version that I do, but I understand that cost is a factor. As such, you may use a printed .pdf of both *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Heart of Darkness* if you need to since the copyrights have expired for both.

If you have any questions, I will try to check my KUSD email intermittently throughout the summer, so feel free to drop me a line at dshimon@kUSD.edu. Have a great break!