Using the Document-Based Questions Technique for Literature: George Orwell’s 1984

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About the Author

Kristina Janeway is a Pre-AP®, GT, and PSAT®/Pre-AP English teacher at Terra Vista Middle School in Lubbock, Texas. In her 21-year career, Kristina has spent 19 years working with gifted and talented as well as Pre-AP, AP, and full-inclusion students in the West Texas area. She has written curriculum for grades seven through twelve, designed an academic vocabulary course for high school, designed a Pre-AP/PSAT English course for eighth graders, designed an ACT®/SAT® course for seventh graders in the Duke University Talent Search Program, and designed the seventh and eighth grade GT course.

Kristina has presented at numerous state and national conferences, several districts, and various Advanced Placement Summer Institutes for universities while working as a consultant for the College Board®. She has completed a master’s degree in Education Administration and holds a Principal’s Certificate.

Kristina was the recipient of the Frank and Nancy Newton Excellence in Education Award from the Beaumont Foundation in 2010 and the Panhandle South Plains TAGT Teacher of the Year award for 2014. Most recently, Kristina has published several books on writing instruction, reading materials, and poster projects with Teacher’s Discovery® and writing assessments with Kamico®.
About This Book

English instructors, by nature, want students to make connections between the literature they read and the real world, while at the same time creating a strong vertical connection through the introduction and practice of various concepts. In order for students to comprehend the more complex, classic texts of secondary ELA, an understanding of the context and its relationship to themes, character, plot, and conflict development is vital to making the words on the page come to life and unearthing the significance for the modern student.

*Using the Document-Based Questions Technique for Literature: George Orwell’s 1984* is designed to enrich the context of a reading selection while crossing the barrier of the page to bring a deeper understanding to students through the use of primary sources, poetry, various nonfiction selections, and graphics. Each document relates specifically to the main text through themes, topics, and/or motifs to bring something unique and somewhat unexpected to the instruction of the students. Teachers can use the prepared primary source, literary, and graphic materials as curriculum support or extension activities to make the analysis of *1984* a more interdisciplinary experience for the student.

As students work through the documents in order to answer the document-based questions, the goal for them is to see that the literature they are asked to read is relevant in the 21st century. The interaction the students must have with the documents and the text will create pathways for long-term memory and give the students the tools to continuously look for connections across subject areas as well as in real-life events. Showing students how to discover relevance creates lifelong learners.

We want students to be able to answer the question: Why are we still reading this selection and studying this material? The variety of genres addressed in the DBQ units will heighten interest and lead students to be more engaged, inquisitive learners while giving you, the teacher, the opportunity to extend assessments from the typical to the exceptional.
To the Teacher

Due to the various themes in *1984*, many of the reading selections in this book are from more conservative sources than in other books in this series. Sources for pieces are identified in the Answer Key and background information is included so that you may provide more context about the reading selections for your students.

Articles that express a more liberal perspective are included to not only provide a balance to the conservative-leaning articles, but also to allow students to analyze the often-contrary messages of opposing viewpoints. Guiding Questions for Understanding help students draw their own conclusions from the readings and their relationship to the novel, as well as the students’ relationship to current issues.

The reading selections in *Using the Document-Based Questions Technique for Literature: George Orwell’s 1984* are sure to spark discussions and fan the flames of thought to help students find their own opinions about the themes of *1984* and their relationship to current events.
How to Use This Book

*Using the Document-Based Questions Technique for Literature: George Orwell’s 1984 is divided into nine units:*

- a Handout section
- novel background and synopsis
- six DBQ units arranged around a thematic question
- an Answer Key

**Handouts** to copy and distribute include:

- a Paragraph Frame for Persuasive Writing
- a Persuasive Thesis Formula
- a Five-Paragraph Essay Graphic Organizer and blank version
- a DBQ Writing Rubric
- a Project-Based Learning activity
- a suggested reading list to Read More About It!

These are merely suggestions but are provided to streamline the writing and grading process.

The **background and synopsis** unit includes:

- an author biography
- setting and context
- a major character list with descriptions
- a synopsis of the novel

These can be copied and used as handouts to aid with reference and recall.

Each **DBQ** unit focuses on a thematic question based on the novel, and features four or five documents related to the theme. These documents include:

- editorial/political cartoons
- poetry
- newspaper articles
- blog posts
- speeches
- informational texts

Students read and analyze the documents to make connections and answer the unit question in the form of an essay.
Sections within each unit feature:

- **Guiding Questions for Understanding**, which the teacher may assign to students to answer individually or use for whole class discussion.
- **Guiding Question Writing Activity**, which allows students to build toward the final five-paragraph essay.

After students have completed the writing activities in the unit, they are to choose the three answers/paragraphs they wrote that they believe provide the strongest support for their position on the unit question. Then they write a final essay, incorporating their knowledge of *1984* and the facts and viewpoints they have learned from each DBQ to make a strong, cohesive argument supporting the theme of their essay.

The **Answer Key** contains possible answers for the **Guiding Questions for Understanding** as well as for the **Writing Activity**. There is also additional information for each document that may contain audience, purpose, historical background, and author’s point of view. This additional information may be used by the teacher to help introduce each document.

Copy the unit and distribute it to the students. Use the DBQ units separately or as a whole. The units may represent a two- to three-day lesson, depending on how they are used. The analysis of the documents along with the **Guiding Questions for Understanding** may be completed in the classroom and/or as homework. The writing activities should be completed in the classroom. Should you feel some of the selections are too long for your students, use excerpts in order to maintain the DBQ selections.
Suggestions for Teaching with DBQs

There are a number of ways for you to use this book in the context of teaching 1984 to your students.

Pre-Reading Assessment:
As a formative assessment, select DBQs to introduce the students to the context of the book. The topics of the six DBQs will provide them with a strong context for the plot development of the book once they begin:

- DBQ 1: Totalitarianism
- DBQ 2: Psychological Manipulation
- DBQ 3: Surveillance
- DBQ 4: Censorship and Control of History and Information
- DBQ 5: Technology
- DBQ 6: Language as Mind Control

Spiraling the DBQs as Extension Activities:
Once again, given the topics of the DBQs, you can stop the novel and do a DBQ as either a summative or a formative assessment of student comprehension.

If you want to provide a stronger context and create a formative assessment before the section of the novel dealing with a particular topic, stop the students, have them read and analyze before the section, complete the DBQ, and then continue with the analysis of the book.

If you want to provide the students with the ability to compare/contrast the treatment of the topic in the book to that of the materials in the DBQ as more of a summative assessment, read and analyze the specific section of the novel, complete the DBQ, then discuss the similarities and differences among the selections with regard to the treatment of the topic.

Post-Reading Assessment:
As a summative assessment, select DBQs to allow students to connect the context of the book to their own lives. The topics of the six DBQs will provide them with a stronger comprehension of George Orwell’s perspective at a unique time in history as well as allow them to make different text-to-text and text-to-world connections:

- DBQ 1: Totalitarianism
- DBQ 2: Psychological Manipulation
- DBQ 3: Surveillance
- DBQ 4: Censorship and Control of History and Information
- DBQ 5: Technology
- DBQ 6: Language as Mind Control
Handout 6
Writing Activity: Newspeak or Fake News?
1984

Materials Needed:
- paper
- pencil
- Handout 7: Tips for Spotting Fake News
- research article that possesses fake news

Directions:
1. In a class discussion, create a working definition of news based on the dictionary definition as well as the students' perceptions of what makes news.
3. Have the students create a matching chart on notebook paper.
4. Have students turn the page over, and on the back of the paper, create another T-chart with the title “Newspeak” and the headings “REAL News” on the left and “FAKE News” on the right.
5. Using the T-chart on the board in a whole class discussion, compose the characteristics of REAL News and FAKE News. Students should copy the words chosen in the discussion to their copies of the T-charts.
6. Create a working definition for “Newspeak” as it is used in context in the novel as well as in the dictionary.
7. Brainstorm a list of Newspeak words that would be indicators for REAL News and/or FAKE News. Add the words to the chart on the appropriate side of the column. Students should add the words to their copy of the chart in the appropriate column.
8. Discuss the users' purpose in the application of these words.
9. Create groups of students; break them up in pairs or groups of three.
10. Students are to find a REAL News article and a FAKE News article on the SAME topic. They should use the two charts they have created as well as Handout 7 to assist them in identifying the two articles.
11. Once the students have found the two articles, they are to read them, looking for Newspeak and identifying the author’s purpose in the use of the words. They should discuss their impressions of each article, using the handout and charts as a guide for critical questions.
12. When finished with the analysis, they are to present their findings to the class in a format of your choosing.
Using the Document-Based Questions Technique for Literature: George Orwell’s 1984

Author Biography

George Orwell was the pen name of Eric Arthur Blair (1903–1950), who was born in India, where his parents worked for the Indian Civil Service. He moved to London with his mother in 1904. His unhappy experiences in English schools had a great influence on him and are reflected in many of his writings, which were highly critical of the English class system.

After Orwell failed to win a scholarship to university, he became what he called an “amateur tramp,” living in the slums of Paris and London. His book, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), is a detailed account of that period of his life. Orwell was determined to write authentically about a variety of experiences. He even tried to get arrested for public intoxication in order to write an accurate account of life in prison.

Orwell was not able to support himself by writing alone and finished his first novel, *Burmese Days* (1934), while working as a teacher.

In *Animal Farm* (1945), Orwell satirized Joseph Stalin’s regime and ingeniously depicted the betrayal of a revolution. Using animals instead of humans to tell his story, Orwell was able to give readers a fresh perspective on the subject matter. *Animal Farm* became the book that put Orwell on the literary map.

Orwell's *1984* (1949) is widely believed to be one of the most influential novels of the last century. Orwell wrote *1984* while seriously ill with tuberculosis, and later commented that had he not been so ill, the book might not have been so bleak. To his dismay, after its publication, *1984* was used as propaganda itself, especially by Western forces in post-World War II Germany. Orwell died in London in 1950.

Setting and Context

Written in 1948 and published in 1949, *1984* presents Orwell’s vision of dystopia, which, according to Merriam-Webster, is “an imaginary place where people lead dehumanized and often fearful lives.” 1984’s world consists of three massive totalitarian states constantly at war with one another, each using technology to keep their respective populations under observation and control. Published at the beginning of the atomic age, the Cold War, and before the television had become a fixture in family homes, Orwell’s vision of a post-atomic dictatorship in which every individual would be ceaselessly monitored by means of the telescreen seemed chillingly possible.

Democracy ultimately won the Cold War, as seen in the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. However, technological advances continue to keep
1984 and its warnings of a constantly monitored and managed lifestyle current and at the forefront of concerns about corporate and governmental intrusion into private lives. 1984 remains an important novel, in part for the alarm it sounds against authoritarian governments, but even more so for its strong analysis of the psychology of power and the ways that manipulations of language and history can be used as means of control.

1984 made a deep—and continuing—impression on society, with many words and phrases such as “Big Brother is watching you,”—think of video cameras placed on city streets and government monitoring of phone and internet communication—“newspeak,” and “doublethink” eventually becoming commonly used. The adjective “Orwellian” is used to describe real-world developments reminiscent of 1984. Even the title has become a shorthand description of a repressive society.

**Major Characters**

**Winston Smith**
An unimportant member of the ruling Party in London, Oceania, who works at the Ministry of Truth. He hates the totalitarian control and repression of the government.

**Julia**
Winston’s lover, a beautiful girl working in the Fiction Department at the Ministry of Truth.

**O’Brien**
A mysterious and powerful member of the Inner Party whom Winston believes is also a member of the Brotherhood, a legendary group of anti-Party rebels.

**Big Brother**
Never appears in the novel, and he may not actually exist. However, Big Brother, the apparent ruler of Oceania, is an extremely important figure.

**Mr. Charrington**
Older man who runs a secondhand store in the prole district. He rents Winston a room without a telescreen in which to have an affair with Julia.

**Syme**
Works with Winston at the Ministry of Truth. He is working on a new edition of the Newspeak dictionary.

**Parsons**
Obnoxious but enthusiastic Party member who lives near Winston and works at MiniTrue. His nasty children are members of the Junior Spies.

**Emmanuel Goldstein**
Has influence without ever appearing in the novel. According to the Party, Goldstein is the legendary leader of the Brotherhood. The Party describes him as the most dangerous man in Oceania.
Synopsis

Winston Smith, 39 years old, is a low-ranking member of the ruling Party in London, in the nation of Oceania. Everywhere he goes, even his own home, the Party watches him through telescreens; everywhere he looks he sees the face of the Party’s leader, a figure known as Big Brother. Even thinking rebellious thoughts is illegal and is labeled “thoughtcrime.”

Winston works in the Ministry of Truth, where he alters historical records to fit the needs of the Party. There are four departments or ministries in the government: the Ministry of Peace, which actually concerns itself with war; the Ministry of Truth, which deals with propaganda; the Ministry of Love, which actually tortures political prisoners; and the Ministry of Plenty, which controls the supplies of a hungry country. The naming contradictions are not accidental: They are deliberate “doublethink.” The Party is also forcing the implementation of an invented language called “Newspeak,” which attempts to prevent political rebellion by eliminating all words related to it.

Winston is disturbed by the Party’s control and manipulation of facts and history: The Party claims that Oceania has always been allied with Eastasia in a war against Eurasia, but Winston recalls a time when this was not true. The Party also claims that Emmanuel Goldstein, the alleged leader of the Brotherhood, a group working to overthrow the government, is the most dangerous man alive.

Winston is frustrated by the oppression and rigid control of the Party, which prohibits free thought, sex, and individuality. Winston has illegally purchased a diary in which to write his “criminal” thoughts. He has also become fixated on a powerful Party member named O’Brien, whom Winston believes is a secret member of the Brotherhood, the mysterious—perhaps mythical—group that works to overthrow the Party.

Winston spends his evenings wandering through the poorest neighborhoods in London, where the proletarians, or proles, live, relatively free of Party monitoring.

Winston notices a coworker, a beautiful girl, staring at him, and worries that she is an informant who will turn him in for his thoughtcrime. He receives a note from the girl that reads “I love you.” Her name is Julia, and they begin an affair. They rent a room above the secondhand store where Winston bought the diary. As Winston’s affair with Julia progresses, his hatred for the Party grows stronger.

At last, Winston receives the message that he has been waiting for: O’Brien wants to see him. Winston and Julia go to O’Brien’s luxurious apartment. O’Brien tells them that he hates the Party, and says he works against it as a member of the Brotherhood. He inducts Winston and Julia into the Brotherhood, and gives Winston a copy of Goldstein’s manifesto of the Brotherhood. Winston reads the book to Julia in the room above the store. Suddenly, soldiers rush in and seize them. Mr. Charrington, the proprietor of the store, has been a member of the Thought Police all along.

Taken to the Ministry of Love, Winston finds out that O’Brien, too, is a spy who pretended to be a member of the Brotherhood to trap Winston into committing an open act of rebellion. O’Brien tortures and attempts to brainwash Winston, who resists. At last, O’Brien sends him to Room 101, the final
destination for anyone who opposes the Party. Room 101 always contains someone’s greatest fear. Throughout the novel, Winston has had recurring nightmares about rats; in Room 101, O’Brien straps a cage full of rats onto Winston’s head and prepares to allow the rats to eat his face. Winston cracks, pleading with O’Brien to do it to Julia, not to him.

Giving up Julia and a personal life is what O’Brien wanted from Winston all along. Broken, Winston is released to the outside world. He meets Julia, but no longer feels anything for her. He has learned to love Big Brother.

Directions: After reading and discussing the documents, you will compose a final essay that smoothly integrates your interpretation of Documents A through D and your knowledge of the events in 1984 to answer the unit question. Exemplary scores will only be earned by an essay that both cites at least three key pieces of evidence from the documents and draws on outside knowledge of the novel.

Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The black-moustachio’d face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston’s own. Down at street level another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word INGSOC.

UNIT QUESTION:

Should government be limited in the power it has over the people?
“Totalitarianism!”
By Sahil Mamtani

Within the spirit,
A cry was heard,
From the shores of the bloody beaches,
It whispered amongst the isles of men,
Marching with anger,
Marching with fear,
With trembling hands they fired their guns,
As the echoes of death crushed their fun,
Their minds could not see how it was done?
   For they were mere souls,
   Fighting for a cause unknown,
   For only a politician’s will,
   Has a license to kill,
Sworn in by the oath of nations,
   To rule the divided world,
   In a quest for domination,
   For another nomination,
As the propaganda corrupted people,
The conquests interrupted people,
   To mourn for the lost,
   Was a loan for the future,
Yet everyone understood,
   None could do,
And as for the nationalism,
   It was just totalitarianism...

Guiding Questions for Understanding:

1. How are the soldiers in the beginning of the poem puppets of the government?
2. How is it ironic that these soldiers march “with anger” and “with fear” when they really do not understand why they are there?
3. Why is it “a politician’s will” that is the driving force?
4. How does the “[mourning] for the lost” create a “loan for the future”?

Guiding Question Writing Activity:

● On a separate sheet of paper, compose a well-developed paragraph explaining how a government that leads for the wrong reasons is harmful to the people it governs. Refer back to examples from the poem as support for your explanation.
“Zgaiba”
By Stelian Tănase

[The Guardian] series of stories to mark the transformations of eastern Europe since 1989 continues with the story of an accident from Romanian author Stelian Tănase.

Zgaiba died Wednesday at 17:26—his head smashed in. A car travelling at speed killed him in the middle of the street. The sound of the blow kept ringing in Vivi’s brain. The driver never stopped. He must have heard a thud under the body of the car, there under the right front wheel. He floored the accelerator, and remoteness swallowed him. Vivi lost track of the car at the end of the street. *Tsak tsak tsak*: He went on shooting the images reflexively. That was the thing. Horrified. Zgaiba. Images on the sidewalk. The dog didn’t drop right away. He was hurled a metre along the curb. He didn’t bark. He didn’t let out a sound. Time stood still. It took Vivi a moment to come back to his senses. Zgaiba: images on the pavement—his eyes fogged over; his big eyes, stunned. In a state of shock. His tail lowered, his ears pricked. Vivi went on looking at the dog’s coffee-coloured spine there among the iron spears of the fence. *Tsak, tsak, tsak*. Zgaiba had started heading back to the gate that had let him out earlier. He had crossed the street. He had nearly slipped into the courtyard. He gazed into the familiar place without understanding what hit him. From dying to collapse, the whole scene lasted an instant. Right before Vivi’s eyes.

Vivi had been taking a cigarette break. Between smokes, he went on snapping pictures of Zgaiba, who he’d spotted down in the street. His favourite character. He had hundreds of clichéd snaps of the dog. Vivi himself was up in the attic at the time. He was looking at the cold weather, the cornices across the street. He’d been developing yesterday’s pix for an hour. Failures, without éclat, flops, dumb mistakes: he had spoiled ten rolls of film. Irritated, tired, Vivi had picked up the camera and started taking pictures of Zgaiba bumming around the area—it relaxed him, *tsak, tsak, tsak*—when the car had appeared. A shiny black body. With headlights on. Evening hadn’t fallen yet. There was a dirty ashen light. Overcast sky. It’ll snow, Vivi had told himself earlier, with his elbows on the sill. The blow to the brain flashed into being—unforeseeably—after that.

Vivi hurried down the stairs, skipping three steps at a time. Some voice on the landing set up a protest—he was making racket. He ripped open the entrance door. He made it into the courtyard and screeched to a halt. Zgaiba was lying prostrate on the roadway. Afraid to get closer, Vivi stopped a few steps away. As if inside an imaginary circle, he contemplated the dog for an instant. Bloody muzzle. Legs rigid. Thick fur. Unable to haul the truth in, without understanding, Vivi brought the camera to his eyes, pushed the button, *tsak*. Once, twice, without stopping. All stretched out like that, lifeless, Zgaiba was terribly beautiful. His black head, his sharp ears, powerfully pointed, his proud tail. The image of a pagan god, old and mysterious. Stiff as a board, emptied of life in an instant.
What should he do? Vivi hadn’t the faintest. Should he call a doctor? There was one among the neighbours. He managed to touch Zgaiba. No pulse. Nothing. The throat, the chest. Nowhere. “Stop kidding. Say something!” Vivi stroked the dog, played with his paws, brushed his muzzle, looked in his eyes. “Come on, Zgaiba, old man. Aren’t you happy? It’s me, Vivi!...”

“He’s dead!” a voice fell down from somewhere above. At her window, the neighbour leaned over her sill. For Vivi she counted as a rasping voice, a head that had popped out from a broken window. “He’s dead.” “No!” “Don’t weep for him. He’s in heaven. It’s better there. If it weren’t, someone would have come back with all the whys and wherefores...” “No!” “Be glad he’s escaped this vale of tears...” Another window opened. A head with messed up hair, a greenish dye job, pyjama top. Old, half-naked chest. “How did it happen?” Vivi couldn’t muster a word. The others had plenty to say, like, “Throw him in the garbage. There’s a bin at the vacant lot toward the tram.” “To let the worms eat him?” “He’ll stick. He’ll swell up and smell.” But now the mate of the head from a moment ago was popping up. The guy had called his wife from inside to see what was going. “Call the Board of Health...” “The garbage men!...”

“Who’s going to get rid of this cadaver for us?” “There’s an undertaker at the square. I’ll let them know we have a dead body in the courtyard...” Suspended from a balcony above, a flag began to shake over the wrought iron parapet. “And the police force, what’s it doing?” “Nothing. What’s there to do?” “It’s a dog, not a person,” the old lady chimed in in a nettlesome way, her sepulchral voice, low and very deep. “It’s a good thing he died. We’ve gotten rid of his mess. You step in [mess] all over the sidewalk...” “Hey man, what’re ya doin’ with that flag?” “I like waving it whenever I get a chance.” “Another madman...” Vivi takes a gander at a broad, flat head, a mask of something like whitewash on its face, the shoulders in a green dressing gown. “I was afraid to come home, for fear he’d attack me...” “Did he ever attack you, huh?” “That’s all I needed!” “What breed?” The rasping voice can’t say enough: “Hehe, he was a local mutt, what pedigree? He’s a certified Vacant Lot. Bravo!” “What’s with you, still with lords and aristocrats?” “I made mince meat of the lot of you in prison once... I was hunting you like rabid dogs—with a baseball bat over the head.” “You have blood on your hands.” “Yeah, and I’m proud of it, God forgive me...” “What has God got to do with it?” “When the brigade used to step out on parade with the flag, the whole town admired us. You have no idea...”

Vivi disappeared, entered the stairwell, lit a bulb. He lived in an apartment on the second floor in the old, Cotroceni district. The bloc was built between the wars, and he had a corner of the attic where he’d installed his lab. But now, Vivi was slamming the door against the wall in a rush on his way in. He ran up the stairs, panting. Zgaiba didn’t bound into the hall to welcome him. He didn’t yap happily. No one scolded Vivi for being late, for not having left him food and water, for not having taken him out for a walk, for leaving him alone. The cheerful bark, the leap into his arms—**nada**. Deserted rooms. Vivi looked around the apartment. Zgaiba didn’t frisk in from his basket, or the terrace or anywhere. Vivi grabbed the shovel from the storage closet, the coverlet from the sofa. He felt guilty. Zgaiba had escaped into the street through the gate he himself had left open.

He had come home loaded with baggage. He was carrying some photographic apparatus, a tripod. He was getting ready for a photo shoot somewhere off at the back of hell and gone. He would have to be at the North Station tomorrow at dawn. There wouldn’t be time to stop at the editorial office, so he’d brought everything home. He had his hands full, and he’d knocked the door shut with his knee. Near him, Zgaiba had bounded about happily, but Vivi had needed to put everything down. As it was, he barely made it up the stairs. It was a narrow, unaccommodating flight. With baggage, it was a problem...
dragging up to the first floor. After depositing his things, he'd stayed in the lab to develop some films. The urgent ones. Then, Vivi went on looking at Zgaiba.

Now he didn’t know how to mourn for him. Having made it back into the courtyard, Vivi sat with his arse on the entrance step, Zgaiba stretched out beside him. He ran his fingers through Zgaiba’s fur. He took him by the legs, pulled him onto the coverlet. He wrapped him up like a child. He took him in his arms, slung him over his shoulder. The courtyard wasn’t empty anymore. Posted on the landing, the tenants were waiting to see what he would do. They watched him in silence. Carrying the dog, he passed right by them. They stood back to give him room. Vivi chose a place at the back of the courtyard. Under a lilac. Near a bush. Summers, Zgaiba like[d] to doze there in the shade. To sleep when the sun beat down too hard. Vivi had photographed him here sometimes—stretched out, lost to this world—between the garage of the neighbour to the south and the garden wall.

Carefully, Vivi set the coverlet down beside him. He hesitated about where to start digging. Head toward the east. Vivi pawed the earth with the tip of the shovel, slowly. He tossed some stones aside. He dug with his head sunk between his shoulders—talking to himself, humming a song, measuring out the movements of the shovel.

But he can’t get away from the neighbours. The chorus begins: “Leave it, neighbour, don’t be sad. The Russians were cutting us to ribbons, like this, see. They were mowing us down, and we were frozen stiff.” Another chimes in: “Listen, neighbour, I sing at the church, among other things—from the lectern. Let’s make him a mass. I know the hymn...” “That’s what he needs!” says another. “We’re talking about a wild beast, we’d do better to flay him...” “You were always dogs...” By now it’s turning into the tower of Babel. “Be good,” someone says, “don’t wander around the house at night. I hear you. You scrabble around on the ceiling and wake me up. Better you should pay the maintenance. You’re late. They’ll cut off our gas... We’ll die of cold.” “I didn’t know you were still alive,” comes the reply. “Congrats! I was thinking that the apartment downstairs was empty, up for sale. Didn’t you die last winter?” “No. Don’t you see me? Are you blind or something?” “Kind of around February?” “NOT!” “A buyer came yesterday to find out about the price.” “I’m not selling. Better I should die.” “They’ll find you by the smell, rotting in the house. You’ll rot...” “[SOB].” “You have no one to give you a glass of water. Go to the old folks’ home.” “Me?” “Yeah, you!” “... With our eyes on the flag,” the standard bearer remarks: “The head of the work brigade was leading the column. We, in overalls under the official tribune, saluting. We were so proud!” “You gotta dig deep. I buried hundreds of our guys at Stalingrad. Just a couple of shovels doesn’t cut it...”

Vivi stops for an instant. He looks at the neighbours, a quartet. Frozen under one of the eaves of the building. When did it begin to snow? One of them opened a big black umbrella like a horse blanket, like a canvas sail. The old man from the first floor, leaning on his flag. The old lady, dyed blond, with a something like a mask of flour on her face, in a green dressing gown with hair curlers under her kerchief. This lady’s husband listens to the gentleman from the half-basement. “Let me introduce myself. The name’s Popescu.”

Vivi turned his back to them. He went on digging. He needed a deeper grave. A deeper grave. A deeper grave. He kept digging with the gnashing sound of the shovel in his ears.
“Who put him...?” “If he’d stayed in the courtyard he’d have lived...” says the old lady, struggling to close the front of her dressing gown. A shiny green dressing gown with big pink chrysanthemums. “Hehe, he chose freedom, and what did it get him? He died before his time! Good behaviour—that’s why obedience pays in the end. You shouldn’t revolt. You shouldn’t venture.” “Better an injection than on a chain. You ever hear of euthanasia?” The gentleman with the flag raised it over the others’ heads, as if it were something on a spear. “It’s a relief. Me, I’m happy waiting to die.” “Bite your tongue.” “The same thing’s waiting for you too, ya know. Or your relatives will kill you out of pity, to get hold of your place. One little prick and it’s torment bye-bye. You wind up in a place full of light, in a green place, in a place of rest from which all pain has flown—all pain and sadness and sighs.” “What’s come over you, Mr. Popescu, to frighten me this way?” “But dog catchers, what do you have to say about them?” “They were on the street yesterday, collaring stray dogs...” “That’s how it was at Stalingrad, you know. We were pickin’ up the dead, froze stiff, with ammunition carts.” “You’re one of them, pal” “What? A corpse?” “A stray dog.” “Let’s find a woman for him.” “A home body...” “Ha, when we were marching in parade, the whole herd followed me... I’ve kept the flag since then. Those were the days, not these! Volunteers! We were dedicating our youth to the fatherland!” [...] Goose-stepping on the spot, the gentleman with the flag took up the tune of an old march. He had caps on his boots, and in that courtyard they made a powerful sound. His determined chin jutted out from under his beret... his toothless mouth, his watery eyes.

“There’s no difference between a man’s bone and a dog’s.” “Only our spirit remains after we’re gone...” “Whaaaat remains?” “Are you deaf?” “Yeah, a bit I am!” “Leave it, man, no one has ever come back from there to tell us a thing.” “Lazarus... only he, touched by Jesus.” “Opium for the people. I’ll give you one with the flag that’ll hunch your back. Aren’t you ashamed to be up to such tricks???” “You’re lying...” “Who knows what kind of whore chaser you were, you little [jerk].” “You think I don’t know that you poisoned the dog last month. You’re happy now that he’s dead.” “At least it won’t smell of dog piss on the stairs anymore.” “Keeping animals in the building is forbidden. That’s how we voted. It’s a heresy. Mista’ Vivi doesn’t respect the rules.” “What an evil head he had, like a blood-thirsty wild beast, like a devil.” “Who, Mista Vivi?” “No, the dog!... the eyes he had... and those pointy teeth! Did you see those pointy teeth?” “Where do you see the devil? He was a sweetheart. He’d leap up to lick your face if you paid him the least attention.” “A pure soul. May the soil rest lightly on [h]is grave...” “The people in this building are like out of whore house.” “Who’ll bark for me now when I go for the paper?” “I should like to say a few words, in remembrance, now that death has settled in this beautiful dwelling bringing sadness.”

Vivi jumped into the grave, found it suitable, wiped the dirt off his hands, reached over to a low tap, washed his hands. Cold water, sharp as a knife. Then, he got hold of the coverlet, tried to pull it. No success, so he took Zgaiba in his arms. Zgaiba: wrapped in the coverlet like a child. The dog was heavy. Softly, carefully, Vivi deposited Zgaiba at the bottom of the grave. He stood there waiting for a minute, staring, broke up a lump of sand. He took up the shovel, temporarily forgotten and thrust into the ground a meter away. He cut carefully into the heap of earth and threw it into the hole. He rested his chin on the handle of the shovel. He stared at the grave. Zgaiba was covered in rime. They weren’t parted yet. They still had an instant. “But perhaps the dearly beloved gathered here would like to hear a few heart-felt words.”
“You’re not at church, mate. That’s where you deliver sermons, speeches.” “Let’s hear it for the Party!” “[Screw] the Party!” “Still,” Mr. Popescu took a step forward, “what a parting it is, oh my brothers! What lamentation, what mourning there is here now! Thus, come now to kiss the one who was with us a moment ago. For he goes down into the grave, covered with earth, to dwell in the house of darkness, to be buried with the dead. Now as we are parting, all his relatives and friends pray God to give him rest.” [...] “Now all the great deceptions and vanities of this life are undone, for the soul has left [its] place, the vessel is broken, the clay has blackened into the earth, voiceless, without feeling, dead, unmoving, for the one we accompany to the grave we pray God to give him peace without end.” “Let me help you!” “Do you know how to sing?” “We were doing it on the front. The Russians were pressing us from behind with bayonets—without shoes in the frost. Siberia. We, prisoners in rags.” “You’re lying, you old crook. What are you rattling on about over there? Which Siberia... I know you. You weren’t on any front. You kept a hotel full of hookers in Braila...” The speaker moved the huge black ragged umbrella aside. The snow fell down on the four of them, buried them, froze them, hid them from view. Vivi could barely make them out behind the curtain of snow. He only heard—tremolo—the pathetic voice of Mr. Popescu, the church singer. He guessed that Mr. Popescu sometimes left him some funeral sweet on the door mat or some twisted funeral breads hanging from the handle of his door. “What is our life?”

“In truth, flower, and mist, and morning dew. Come witness how all is made plain in the tombs: where is the beauty of the body? Where is youth? Where are the eyes and the body’s face? Everything has faded like grass, all have perished. Come. Thus let us fall before Christ with tears...” “Hey you old duffer, you’re getting all bent over under the snow. Do you want to die too?” The old woman began fastening the old guy’s buttons. Her husband remained submissive, silent. The former brigade leader advanced goose stepping through the garden. He spread the flag with its royal insignia over Zgaiba. He turned about face, faced front, clicked his heels. He saluted, rigid, his hand at his beret. Through pursed lips, he brought out some vague trumpet sounds. Those who had stayed under the eaves advanced a few paces. Vivi, outside the grave—bowing his head but still forced to look at them—went on throwing earth over Zgaiba. “Let’s leave them alone,” said the veteran of Stalingrad. The quartet made its way back, disappeared through the door, fadingly, amidst the snow.

Vivi trampled down the earth. He grabbed some flowers from the house and hurried back down the stairs. He scattered chrysanthemums over the earth of the tomb, under which Zgaiba’s body lay. Somehow, he divined the tenants’ faces flattened against the glass, their stares thrust into the back of his neck, his shoulder blades. He stayed like that for minutes on end so that it would snow on him—until he too whitened in his turn. Later, he sat with his arse on the entrance step, never taking his eyes from the grave. Vivi was frozen when he began to cry. He cried like a child. In that dark. In that snowfall. In that cold that comes before Christmas.

Guiding Questions for Understanding:

1. How was Vivi’s continual snapping of pictures of Zgaiba ironic, given the situation?
2. What does Vivi’s constant surveillance of Zgaiba compare to in 1984?
3. How are Vivi’s neighbors similar to the proles in 1984? Provide three examples from the book and the short story.
4. How is the government’s control in 1984 mirrored by Vivi’s reactions to the different situations in the story?

Guiding Question Writing Activity:

- On a separate sheet of paper, compose a well-developed paragraph explaining how Vivi’s photographs are both the same as and different from the actions of a totalitarian government. Be sure to provide textual evidence from the document to support your observations.
“Masking Totalitarianism”  
By Walter E. Williams

One of the oldest notions in the history of mankind is that some people are to give orders and others are to obey. The powerful elite believe that they have wisdom superior to the masses and that they’ve been ordained to forcibly impose that wisdom on the rest of us.

Their agenda calls for an attack on the free market and what it implies—voluntary exchange. Tyrants do not trust that people acting voluntarily will do what the tyrant thinks they should do. Therefore, free markets are replaced with economic planning and regulation that is nothing less than the forcible superseding of other people’s plans by the powerful elite.

Because Americans still retain a large measure of liberty, tyrants must mask their agenda. At the university level, some professors give tyranny an intellectual quality by preaching that negative freedom is not enough. [...] Let’s examine negative versus positive freedom.

Negative freedom or rights refers to the absence of constraint or coercion when people engage in peaceable, voluntary exchange. Some of these negative freedoms are enumerated in our Constitution’s Bill of Rights. More generally, at least in its standard historical usage, a right is something that exists simultaneously among people. As such, a right imposes no obligation on another. For example, the right to free speech is something we all possess. My right to free speech imposes no obligation upon another except that of noninterference. Likewise, my right to travel imposes no obligation upon another.

Positive rights is a view that people should have certain material things—such as medical care, decent housing and food—whether they can pay for them or not.

Seeing as there is no Santa Claus or tooth fairy, those “rights” do impose obligations upon others. If one person has a right to something he did not earn, of necessity it requires that another person not have a right to something he did earn.

If we were to apply this bogus concept of positive rights to free speech and the right to travel freely, my free speech rights would impose financial obligations on others to supply me with an auditorium, microphone and audience. My right to travel would burden others with the obligation to purchase airplane tickets and hotel accommodations for me. Most Americans, I would imagine, would tell me, “Williams, yes, you have the right to free speech and travel rights, but I’m not obligated to pay for them!”

What the positive rights tyrants want but won’t articulate is the power to forcibly use one person to serve the purposes of another. After all, if one person does not have the money to purchase food, housing or medicine and if Congress provides the money, where does it get the money? It takes it from some other Americans, forcibly using that person to serve the purposes of another. Such a practice differs only in degree, but not kind, from slavery.
Under natural law, we all have certain unalienable rights. The rights we possess we have authority to delegate. For example, we all have a right to defend ourselves against predators. Because we possess that right, we can delegate it to government, in effect saying, “We have the right to defend ourselves, but for a more orderly society, we delegate to you the authority to defend us.” By contrast, I don’t possess the right to take your earnings to give to another. Seeing as I have no such right, I cannot delegate it.

The idea that one person should be forcibly used to serve the purposes of another has served as the foundation of mankind’s ugliest and most brutal regimes. Do we want that for America?


**Guiding Questions for Understanding:**

1. The article mentions “negative rights” as being those things that do NOT impose upon others. Besides the two that were mentioned, what other negative rights do we have in the United States? How do they affect us?

2. The article mentions “positive rights” as being those things that DO impose economic responsibility on others. Besides the examples mentioned, what are other positive rights that are a benefit to the majority?

3. The article indicates that a positive rights tyrant wants power but hides it to force one person to serve another. Can you think of two examples of someone acquiring power in a stealthy fashion?

4. Is this article biased or unbiased? Why? Support your answer with three examples from the article.

**Guiding Question Writing Activity:**

- On a separate sheet of paper, compose a well-developed paragraph in which you choose negative rights or positive rights and attempt to convince a reader one is better than the other. Be sure to provide textual evidence from the document to support your observations.
That’s What’s the Matter
By Thomas Nast

Guiding Questions for Understanding:
1. What is the symbolism of the ballot in the cartoon?
2. Why does the power lie with the counter and not the voter?
3. How does the characterization of the man in the cartoon reinforce the artist’s message?

UNIT QUESTION RESTATEMENT:
Should government be limited in the power it has over the people?

Answer Key

DBQ 1: Totalitarianism

Document A: “Totalitarianism!”

Guiding Questions for Understanding:

1. How are the soldiers in the beginning of the poem puppets of the government? Answers will vary, but the soldiers are fighting for a cause without really knowing why.

2. How is it ironic that these soldiers march “with anger” and “with fear” when they really do not understand why they are there? Answers will vary, but one would expect that soldiers would understand the basic reason why they are fighting, so anger at ignorance and fear of the unknown controls the soldiers.

3. Why is it “a politician’s will” that is the driving force? Answers will vary, but politicians often dictate the ways of the world and the fate of the people.

4. How does the “[mourning] for the lost” create a “loan for the future”? Answers will vary, but students may note that those who died were the future existence of the people, so the future comes at a high price that can never be repaid.

Guiding Question Writing Activity: Compose a well-developed paragraph explaining how a government that leads for the wrong reasons is harmful to the people it governs. Refer back to examples from the poem as support for your explanation.

Components of document analysis may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Intended audience: any reader of the poem
- Purpose: a poetic statement against the power of totalitarianism on the people
- Historical context: written and published online in 2013 by the New York-based poet Sahil Mamtani
- The author’s point of view: Mamtani seems to be saying that nationalism is false; totalitarianism is the unmentioned and unacknowledged reality and is behind every movement.

Document B: “Zgaiba”

Guiding Questions for Understanding:

1. How was Vivi’s continual snapping of pictures of Zgaiba ironic, given the situation? Answers will vary, but Vivi spent more time documenting the accident and death of Zgaiba than trying to help or stop the tragedy.

2. What does Vivi’s constant surveillance of Zgaiba compare to in 1984? Answers will vary, but the way the neighbors and the government continually watch everyone and everything is similar to the way Vivi watches Zgaiba.

3. How are Vivi’s neighbors similar to the proles in 1984? Provide three examples from the book and the short story. Answers will vary, but they are always watching, they are judgmental, and they are very chatty and earthy.
4. How is the government’s control in 1984 mirrored by Vivi’s reactions to the different situations in the story?

Answers will vary. The sharp attention from the neighbors is unwanted and unhelpful. Everyone has something to say but nothing concrete or helpful to offer.

Guiding Question Writing Activity: Compose a well-developed paragraph explaining how Vivi’s photographs are both the same as and different from the actions of a totalitarian government?

Answers will vary. An example could be that a similarity is an ever-watchful presence that ultimately neglects the object of their attention; the difference is that Vivi truly loved Zgaiba, but accidents will happen.

Components of document analysis may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Intended audience: Published in The Guardian, a London newspaper, to commemorate the fall of Communism in 1989.
- Purpose: The story demonstrates the impact of totalitarianism on all types of people in everyday life.
- Historical context: The story reflects events in an Eastern European city that is described as bleak and similar to the London of 1984.
- The author’s point of view: Stelian Tănase is a Romanian author, born in Bucharest in 1952. He cofounded the political magazine 22 in 1990, and is active in Romanian politics. In “Zgaiba,” he uses what seems like a small event to display the many viewpoints of people to show the effect of Communism on them.

Document C: “Masking Totalitarianism”

Guiding Questions for Understanding:

1. The article mentions “negative rights” as being those things that do NOT impose upon others. Besides the two that were mentioned, what other negative rights do we have in the United States? How do they affect us?

Answers will vary, but students may mention freedom of religion, freedom of the press, petition, the right to bear arms, right to assembly, and other rights outlined in the Bill of Rights and Constitution. Students may note that each right exercised may impose a restriction on someone else.

2. The article mentions “positive rights” as being those things that DO impose economic responsibility on others. Besides the examples mentioned, what are other positive rights that are a benefit to the majority?

Answers will vary, but students may mention food stamps (subsidies), Medicaid, Medicare, WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), Social Security, and other government programs that are based on tax collections and distributed by the government.

3. The article indicates that a positive rights tyrant wants power but hides it to force one person to serve another. Can you think of two examples of someone acquiring power in a stealthy fashion?

Answers will vary. A tyrant acquires power in many ways and may hide that process from people who may or may not want to “see” the erosion of their rights.

4. Is this article biased or unbiased? Why?

Support your answer with three examples from the article.

Answers will vary based on student experiences and prior knowledge.
Guiding Question Writing Activity: Compose a well developed paragraph in which you choose negative rights or positive rights and attempt to convince someone one is better than the other.

Answers will vary.

Components of document analysis may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Intended audience: any reader of the opinion piece on the CNSNews site
- Purpose: The author is attempting to frame a conversation about the influence and effect of positive and negative rights.
- Historical context: Published on the CNSNews site in November 2013. CNSNews is run by the Media Research Center, which states on their site: “CNSNews.com is an indispensable online resource for conservatives in the media, public policy and at the grassroots level. A central problem of left-wing media bias is the media’s sin of omission or outright censorship—that is, their failure to report the news that hurts the left-wing agenda. To address this problem, MRC launched CNSNews.com with the mission to report the news the liberal media refuse to cover.” www.mrc.org/about
- The author’s point of view: Author Walter E. Williams is a professor of economics at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA, and a member of the Board of Advisors for the Media Research Center’s Free Market Project. Williams does not think that positive rights are in the best interests of the people.

Document D: That’s What’s the Matter

Guiding Questions for Understanding:

1. What is the symbolism of the ballot in the cartoon?
   Answers will vary, but it is an empty vessel; nothing is in it, so nothing counts.

2. Why does the power lie with the counter and not the voter?
   The power lies with the counter, who is subjective, to select the person or persons he wants to win. The voter is mute and powerless.

3. How does the characterization of the man in the cartoon reinforce the artist’s message?
   Answers will vary, but the man looks like a thug or thief and is essentially untrustworthy.

Components of document analysis may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Intended audience: any reader of Harper’s Weekly and now, in contemporary collections of Thomas Nast’s political cartoons
- Purpose: The cartoonist was contemplating and commenting on the true power of a vote. The man portrayed in the cartoon is Boss Tweed, a powerful politician in New York City in the 1870s.
- Historical context: Thomas Nast (1840–1902) was an influential artist and political cartoonist/commentator. He is credited with creating the commonly accepted version of Santa Claus and the political symbol of the Republican Party, the elephant. His political cartoons were instrumental in bringing down Boss Tweed and his corrupt partners. Tweed was arrested and convicted of fraud in 1873. When he escaped, he was identified by people who had seen his likeness in Nast’s cartoons.
- The author’s point of view: Nast is making the public aware that as long as Boss Tweed (or someone like him) counts the votes, the votes will go the way he wants.
Unit Question: Should government be limited in the power it has over the people?

Essay: Student opinions will vary based on the evidence from the selections.

DBQ 2: Psychological Manipulation

Document A: “No Time to Feel”

Guiding Questions for Understanding:

1. How is the lack of feeling Winston displays throughout the novel reflected in the voice of the narrator of the poem?
   Answers will vary, but students may note this is a way to deal with the world that allows self-protection, but it is also a way to merely exist and not fully live.

2. What is the tone of the last four lines of the poem? What is the author’s purpose in using this tone?
   Answers will vary, but the tone conveys regret and expresses uncertainty. The narrator doesn’t know if the self-psychological manipulation was worth it or not.

3. What mood is created by the narrator? How do they create the mood?
   Answers will vary, but students may say the mood is anxious, frustrated, and cautious; the narrator doesn’t engage in anything in life.

Guiding Question Writing Activity: In 1984, the entire society is psychologically manipulated by a malicious outside force; however, the narrator of the poem is being manipulated by an internal force that is attempting to help him cope. Compose a poem that focuses on the topic of psychological manipulation.
   Poems will vary.

Components of document analysis may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Intended audience: any reader of the online site *Mind Freedom*
- Purpose: The author is reflecting on personal psychological manipulation.
- Historical context: This is a contemporary poem published online.
- The author’s point of view: Tom Greening is a psychologist and a poet who has written serious and comical poetry for more than 50 years. His poems have been published online and in print publications. Greening is saying that manipulating your life to avoid pain can lead to regret.

Document B: “Button, Button”

Guiding Questions for Understanding:

1. How does Mr. Steward’s initial visit pique Mrs. Lewis’ curiosity about the button?
   Answers will vary, but students may think Mr. Steward’s curt comments and guarded, ambiguous statements are a way of manipulating her mind.

2. Why is Arthur so adamant about forgetting the button?
   Answers will vary, but Arthur values life over money.

3. How are the constant psychological manipulations of the Party as perceived by Winston similar to the manipulations Mrs. Lewis experiences?
   Answers will vary, but she is easily manipulated by Mr. Steward and the prospect of “free” money. She becomes obsessed with the things that the money can provide and forgets or doesn’t believe she could cause real harm.
Using the DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS Technique for Literature:

GEORGE ORWELL’S 1984