

## 1984 Discussion & Essay Questions

1. Orwell wrote 1984 as a warning. Explain what he was warning people about. Be sure to examine the influence of political climates in the world during the time when Orwell wrote. Does The Actors' Gang production of "1984" also send out a warning, or does it say something else?
2. Do you believe that Julia did confess right away as O'Brien states, or do you believe this is just another torture tactic, knowing that your one love crumbled before you did?
3. Orwell creates a very specific social structure in his novel 1984. Oceania's political structure is divided into three segments: the Inner Party, the ultimate ruling class, consisting of less than 2 percent of the population; the Outer Party, the educated workers, numbering around 18 to 19 percent of the population; and the Proles, or the proletariat, the working class. Do you believe that Los Angeles has a similar social caste system? If so, how is it divided? On a larger scale, does the United States?
4. The Actors' Gang production brings Orwell's novel into the present day. Do you see examples of governmental control over privacy in your life? ( i.e. Internet tracking and Google Earth) Do we have a contemporary version of a telescreen in our homes?
5. Can you find any examples of Newspeak in our contemporary language? ( ex. Interpol, Email, cell)
6. Discuss the power of media in both The Actors' Gang production and in your own life?
7. 1984 is rife with irony (that is, things being different from what is expected) and doublethink (being able to absolutely believe in two opposing ideas simultaneously). Divide a piece of paper into two columns. On one side, list as many examples of doublethink as you can; on the other, list examples of irony. Discuss what you think Orwell's purpose was in using both.
8. What role does the "voice" play within the theatrical production? What effect does it have on Winston? Is Winston's obsession with Big Brother fundamentally similar to or different from his obsession with O'Brien?

Courtesy of

**THE ACTORS' GANG**

Tim Robbins, Artistic Director