

ENGLISH TEXT SUMMARY NOTES  
**“Nineteen Eighty-Four”**

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SAMPLE

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# AREA 1:

## READING & RESPONDING:

### NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR

#### *Chapter 1*

#### GENRE

A novel is a long or extended work of fiction, written in prose, usually in the form of a story. It is longer and more complex than a short story or a novella, and it is not bound by the restrictions of plays and poetry. 'Novel' is from the Italian word 'novella', which means 'new'.

Fiction is information created from the imagination, whereas non-fiction makes factual claims about reality. Fictional works of any kind may be partly based on factual occurrences but always contain some imaginary content. Fiction is largely perceived as a form of art or entertainment, although not all fiction is necessarily artistic.

Most novels contain the following qualities, but in each case there are exceptions:

- Intended as entertainment [but may also be didactic].
- The subject matter is wholly fictional [but may include or be based on fact].
- The subject matter is realistic [but may be surreal or fantastic].
- The subject matter is human beings, their actions and relations [but may also be animals or inanimate objects].
- There are a small number of central characters.
- A single plot links the events and characters.
- The main character or characters have evolved and grown by the end of the novel [unless the timescale is too brief].

#### **Genre: Political Satire.**

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a dystopian novel that points out the dangers of a totalitarian society. While it is fictional, it attempts to be didactic [instructional] and realistic about the themes that it addresses.

Satire is a form of writing in which the subject, in this case, Stalin's USSR, is criticized through ridicule.

## 1.1 Title

A novel's title can often be revealing and may give direct and/or indirect indications of the genre and aspects of the plot, characters and/or themes. There is considerable comment about the title of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*:

- The novel is about a future society in the not-too-distant future – a novel about how society might be very soon.
- The title is named after the centenary of the Fabian society, a socialist political organization formed in 1884.
- The original title was *The Last Man in Europe*, but the publisher suggested a change to assist the novel's marketing.

### **The title:**

Regardless of the theories surrounding its name, the novel's relevance is that it is about society in the not-too-distant future: so, a novel about how society might be very soon.

## 1.2 Audience

A writer will have a target audience in mind when he writes. These are the people whom he is writing for, who share an interest in the genre or the themes that he is addressing. Genre can often be useful to help determine who the audience may be.

### **Audience:**

Orwell wrote political novels, particularly about the nature of totalitarian societies.

## 1.3 Purpose

A writer will write a novel for a particular reason. Often, the purpose can be recognized, especially in relation to the themes, as the writer may wish to address particular issues. The novel is about the nature and structure of society and of political and social power.

### **Purpose:**

To explore the nature and structure of totalitarian societies and notions of social and political power.