I'm not a robot

Table of Contents What is 1984 about? This book tells the story of Winston Smith’s terrifying journey in a dystopian society, where he experiences forbidden love and battles oppressive regimes that control every aspect of life. Title: 1984 Author: George Orwell Foreword: Thomas Pynchon Genre: Dystopian, Science Fiction, Classics First Published: June 8, 1949 Pages: 368 George Orwell’s “1984” unfolds in a grim vision of the future where society is under the tyrannical rule of a superstate called Oceania. The story is set in what’s left of Great Britain, now known as Airstrip One. The regime enforces its iron grip through omnipresent surveillance and unrelenting propaganda. It’s a world where “Big Brother” constantly watches, and the “Thought Police” monitor even the most private thoughts. The foundational slogans—”War is Peace,” “Freedom is Slavery,” and “Ignorance is Strength”—exemplify the doublespeak and psychological manipulation that Orwell so chillingly articulates. Winston Smith, the protagonist, works in the Ministry of Truth, where his job is to rewrite historical records to align with the Party’s ever-changing narrative. Surrounded by falsified records and neighbor spies, Winston lives in a constant state of fear and inner turmoil. He begins to harbor rebellious thoughts and questions the Party’s version of reality. His life takes a dramatic turn when he falls in love with Julia, a fellow Party member who also despises the totalitarian regime. Their illicit affair represents a profound act of rebellion. They dream of a time when people will rise against Big Brother’s oppression, yet deep down they sense the bleak reality—rebellion is nearly impossible. One of the novel’s most striking features is Orwell’s invention of “Newspeak,” a language the Party develops to limit the range of thought. By reducing the number of words available, the regime aims to eliminate rebellious thoughts before they can even be conceptualized. The idea is if you lack the words to articulate dissent, you cannot summon the mental faculties to rebel. Winston grapples with the realization that reality itself is manipulated. The state controls all information, rewriting and erasing history to fit its needs. Phrases like “doublethink” become standard as citizens are forced to accept two contradictory beliefs simultaneously. As Winston and Julia’s defiance grows, they are lured into believing they can join a secret Brotherhood aimed at overthrowing the Party. Unfortunately, this hope shatters when they are betrayed by O’Brien, a high-ranking Party member who had been feigning dissent. Winston is beaten, tortured, and subjected to intense psychological manipulation in the Ministry of Love, where he endures unimaginable suffering. The infamous Room 101 is where prisoners confront their worst fears. For Winston, this is the ultimate breaking point. Overwhelmed by fear and pain, he betrays Julia, and any remnants of rebellion within him are systematically destroyed. By the novel’s end, Winston renounces his illicit thoughts and professes his love for Big Brother. The Party’s victory is complete; Winston has been broken both physically and mentally. Orwell’s “1984” concludes on a note of utter despair, a poignant reminder of the dangers of absolute power and totalitarianism. The novel continues to resonate due to its incisive take on topics like surveillance, information control, and personal freedom. Its relevance persists, serving as a cautionary tale about what happens when the state seizes total control over not just lives, but also the minds of its citizens. “1984” isn’t just a story; it’s an unsettling vision that compels readers to reflect on their realities. The terminology birthed from the book—like “Big Brother” and “Thought Police”—remains part of our lexicon, constantly reminding us of the need to safeguard our freedoms against draconian measures. This novel is a must-read for anyone pondering the relentless march of oppressive regimes and the fragile state of personal liberty. From here you can jump to the Spoilers section right away. Below you can search for another book summary: How do you find this alternative cover we've created? “Perhaps one did not want to be loved so much as to be understood.”—George Orwell,1984 “Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.”—George Orwell,1984 “War is peace.Freedom is slavery.Ignorance is strength.”—George Orwell,1984 You want to give 1984 a try? Here you go! Winston Smith: The main protagonist who rebels against the Party’s control. Julia: Winston’s lover who also resents the Party’s oppression. O’Brien: A high-ranking member of the Inner Party who deceives Winston and Julia. Big Brother: The dictatorial leader of the Party and the personification of surveillance. Prophetic Themes: Explores the dangers of totalitarianism and government surveillance. Psychological Torture: The cruel methods used to control thoughts and beliefs. Rebellion and Conformity: Winston’s struggle and ultimate failure against oppressive power. Language Control: The concept of Newspeak aims to limit freedom of thought. Spoiler Alert! If you want to read the book, don’t click “Show more” and spoil your experience. Here is a link for you to get the book. Setting and Control: The story is set in a dystopian society under total control by the Party, led by Big Brother. The Party controls all information, history, and even people’s thoughts, using surveillance, propaganda, and oppressive laws to maintain its authority.Winston’s Rebellion: Winston Smith, the protagonist, secretly despises the Party. He starts to rebel by writing in a journal, an act punishable by death. He begins a forbidden love affair with Julia, a fellow Party worker, which represents his first real experience of human connection and personal freedom.The Brotherhood and Betrayal: Winston and Julia get involved with O’Brien, a high-ranking Party official who appears to be part of a resistance group called the Brotherhood. They confide in O’Brien and express their hatred for the Party, hoping to join the rebellion. However, it turns out that O’Brien is loyal to the Party and was using the guise of the Brotherhood to entrap them.Room 101: Winston and Julia are eventually arrested by the Thought Police. Winston is taken to the Ministry of Love, where he is tortured and brainwashed by O’Brien. The most harrowing part of Winston’s torture takes place in Room 101, where he’s confronted with his worst fear — rats. In a moment of sheer terror, he betrays Julia, showing that the Party can force even the deepest bonds to break under extreme fear and pressure.Final Defeat: After being tortured, brainwashed, and reconditioned, Winston is released back into society. He is now a shell of his former self, completely loyal to Big Brother. In the chilling final line of the novel, Winston realizes that he truly loves Big Brother, symbolizing his complete surrender to the Party’s control. FAQs about 1984 What is the main theme of 1984? The book explores themes of extreme totalitarianism, surveillance, and loss of individuality. Who is Big Brother? Big Brother is the symbolic figurehead of the Party, representing pervasive government control and surveillance. What is the importance of Newspeak? Newspeak is a controlled language, limiting freedom of thought and personal expression. What happens to Winston at the end? Winston is tortured and brainwashed until he fully accepts the Party’s ideology and loves Big Brother. Why is 1984 considered a classic? It provides a haunting and influential warning about the dangers of unchecked government power. Reviews For a deeper dive into 1984 and to explore its pros and cons, even what your friends think about it, visit our full review. Are you looking for a nice read that perfectly fits your current mood? Here is a free book suggestion tool. It gives you suggestions based on your taste. Also a likelihood rating for each recommended book. Would you like to find the book you will love later or now? George Orwell, born Eric Arthur Blair, was an English author known for his sharp social commentary and opposition to totalitarianism. His most famous works include “1984” and “Animal Farm”. Orwell’s insightful writing continues to influence contemporary political discourse. Are you looking for a nice read that perfectly fits your current mood? Here is a free book suggestion tool. It gives you suggestions based on your taste. Also a likelihood rating for each recommended book. Would you like to find the book you will love later or now? Conclusion We hope you found this synopsis of 1984 fun. Summaries are just the beginning, much like trailers for movies. If you enjoyed what you’ve read, the full book promises even more. Ready to enjoy further? Here is the link to buying 1984 DISCLAIMER: This book summary is meant as a summary and an analysis and not a replacement for the original work. If you are the original author of any book on our website and want us to remove it, please contact us. George Orwell’s 1984 depicts a fictional dystopian realm that is eerily reflective of some modern-day societies. Want a brief rundown of the book’s anti-totalitarianism plot? Here it is. For more quick and easy book summaries, check out our hub. 1984 opens in a grim London as the clocks strike thirteen. Winston Smith, a bureaucrat ensnared in the oppressive machinery of the Party, lives in a world where every action, word, and thought is scrutinized by the omnipresent eyes of Big Brother. The Party enforces loyalty and love for Big Brother through fear, manipulation, and control. Winston, who works at the Ministry of Truth, is responsible for altering historical records to match the Party’s shifting narratives. Despite his façade of obedience, Winston harbors rebellious thoughts which are a perilous offense in a society where even a facial twitch can betray subversion. As Winston’s disillusionment grows, he begins a forbidden love affair with Julia, a coworker who shares his contempt for the Party. Their relationship is an act of rebellion as it defies the Party’s ban on free love and loyalty to anything other than the state. They rent a room above an antique shop for their trysts, a seeming haven from the watchful eyes of the Party. Their illusion of sanctuary shatters when they are betrayed by the shop owner, a secret agent of the Thought Police. The couple is arrested and separated. Winston is taken to the Ministry of Love, where he is detained, tortured, and re-educated. The Party’s aim is not merely to punish, but to break and reshape thoughts and allegiances. In the novel’s climax, Winston is broken by the threat of being consumed by rats, his deepest fear, in Room 101. His final act of betrayal is begging for Julia to suffer in his place, thus demonstrating the Party’s power to crush the human spirit. Ultimately, Winston is released back into society, a shell of a man who has accepted the Party’s dominion in all things. He meets Julia one last time, and they admit to betraying each other. The novel closes with Winston, sitting alone in a café as the victory of the Party is announced. He reflects on his newfound love for Big Brother, the acceptance of which signifies his complete and utter subjugation to the Party’s ideology and control. Check out our list of thrilling dystopian novels. Totalitarianism and Oppression: The novel portrays the extreme authoritarian abuse of power, where the state controls every aspect of life and personal freedom is non-existent. Surveillance and Privacy: 1984 scrutinizes the invasive monitoring of individuals by the government, questioning the boundaries between public order and personal liberty. Reality Control and Propaganda: It explores how a government can manipulate reality through propaganda, controlling the population’s perception of truth. Individualism vs. Collectivism: The book contrasts the importance of individual thought and identity against the demands of a collective society. Language as Mind Control: Orwell introduces the concept of Newspeak, a language designed to diminish the range of thought, illustrating how language can be used to control thought and behavior. The Betrayal of Trust: The book delves into how extreme regimes destroy trust between individuals, using betrayal as a tool for control. Orwell’s Inspiration: The concept and the grim political warning of 1984 were largely inspired by Orwell’s experiences during the Spanish Civil War and the rise of totalitarian regimes in Russia and Germany. Orwell’s Health: Orwell wrote 1984 while battling tuberculosis, and the bleakness of the novel may reflect his own suffering and deteriorating health. The Title: The title 1984 was chosen as a reversal of the last two digits of the year it was written, 1948, although it is often mistaken as a prediction of the future. Big Brother: The phrase “Big Brother is watching you” has transcended the novel and entered the lexicon as a synonym for the abuse of government power, particularly in respect to civil liberties, often related to mass surveillance. Newspeak: Many terms from the novel’s language, Newspeak, such as “doublethink” and “thoughtcrime,” have also become common in discussions of privacy and security in the age of technology. This post contains Amazon affiliate links. Please read our privacy policy for more. 1984 by George Orwell opens in April of 1984. After vaguely described disastrous wars and economic collapses, the world has been divided up into continent-spanning superpowers. The novel focuses on Airstrip One, part of Oceania. The totalitarian Party rules with “Ingsoc”, a shortening of English Socialism. They do not tolerate opposition in any form, even negative thoughts about the Party are a crime (Thought Crime). At the center of the Party is a mysterious figurehead who goes by the name of Big Brother. He is never seen, but is omnipresent, watching citizens from their TVs, posters, and money. Big Brother is a source of fear, but also adoration. He is, as the posters state, always watching. This is a reference to the enormous amount of surveillance the party and the Thought Police utilize on every street, in every building, and in every room. The palpable dread that Big Brother instills, a figure both revered and feared, mirrors the complex relationship we often hold with authority. Orwell ingeniously taps into this psychological conflict, exploring the dichotomy between the human desire for safety and the equally strong yearning for personal freedom. In terms of the rising action, the protagonist of the novel, Winston Smith, is a member of the Outer Party. He has a job in the Ministry of Truth that places him at the level of an office worker. Winston is responsible for rewriting history by destroying and rewriting newspaper articles. Often this means erasing from the record those who have been disappeared by the Party (become “unpersons”) or rearranging events in order to suit a new narrative promoted by the state. Winston hates the Party and is miserable in his everyday life. Winston is seen at the beginning of the novel with a diary he bought from Mr. Charrington, the owner of a secondhand shop. He has to hide the book whenever he writes in it so that the television (telescreen) can’t see it. Winston meets Julia at the Ministry of Truth and initially expects that she’s spying on him. Later, after handing him a note confessing her love for him, Julia and Winston draw close to one another. This is a serious act of treason against the party as all relationships are supposed to be conducted only for the creation of children. Julia also dislikes the party, but she’s more interested in escaping than becoming part of a revolution. Reflecting on Winston’s secret acts of rebellion, such as his diary, strikes a poignant chord. It reminds me of the profound necessity of personal spaces and thoughts in an increasingly monitored world. Winston’s diary is not merely an act of defiance; it is an existential assertion of self in a world that seeks to deny such autonomy. Winston also speaks with Syme, someone who is working on the creation of the newest “Newspeak” dictionary and is responsible for erasing words from the English language. He, Winston thinks, is too smart and is, in the end, a danger to himself. Julia and Winston meet up for the first time in a room above Mr. Charrington’s shop. There, Winston tells Julia about his relationship, or lack thereof, with his wife Katharine. The turning point of the novel comes over the following days, Winston notices that Syme has disappeared as Winston predicted. Winston is also approached by O’Brien, his supervisor and someone who Winston thinks is a member of the group working to overthrow the Party (The Brotherhood). O’Brien shares a book with Winston, The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism by Emmanuel Goldstein. Goldstein is one of the Party’s main enemies and the leader of a rebellion against the state. The book informs Julia and Winston about how the Party works. It inspires and confirms to Winston that the Party can be defeated if the “proles” or lower class, rise up. The encounter with O’Brien and the forbidden book opens a Pandora’s box of revolutionary ideas for Winston. This moment resonates with me as a reflection on the power of ideas as weapons against oppression-a reminder that knowledge can ignite the sparks of rebellion. We approach the climax at this point in the novel. Just when Winston is starting to think that he’s going to be able to join the fight against the Party, it is revealed that Mr. Charrington is a member of the Thought Police. He turned in Winston and Julia who are both captured and taken to the Ministry of Love. There, Winston comes into contact with other characters from the novel who have all been arrested for various reasons. O’Brien enters into the scene, revealing that he too was an agent of the state. The previous months of gaining Winston’s trust were nothing more than an elaborate way of ensnaring him. Winston is trapped in the Ministry of Truth for a number of months. Over this period his mind is rearranged through torture and humiliation. He’s forced to confront his deepest fear in Room 101. For Winston, this means rats. It proves to be the thing that makes Winston betray Julia. The falling action occurs later, after he has been successfully brainwashed, he is released. Winston and Julia, who was also tortured, meet again in a park but the two longer have any interest in one another. The novel concludes with Winston celebrating the reported victory over Eurasia and reveling in his newfound love for the Party. The resolution of the story can be seen to be the tragic end of Winston’s journey, embracing the love for Big Brother, serves as a somber meditation on the corrosive effects of totalitarianism on the human psyche. It leaves me pondering the resilience of the human spirit and the price of peace at the expense of freedom. By Dr Oliver Tearle (Loughborough University) George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four, completed in 1948 and published a year later, is a classic example of dystopian fiction. Indeed, it’s surely the most famous dystopian novel in the world, even if its ideas are known by far more people than have actually read it. (According to at least one survey, Nineteen Eighty-Four is the book people most often claim to have read when they haven’t.) Like many novels that are more known about than are carefully read and analysed, Nineteen Eighty-Four is actually a more complex work than the label ‘nightmare dystopian vision’ can convey. Before we offer an analysis of the novel’s themes and origins, let’s briefly recap the plot. Nineteen Eighty-Four: plot summary In the year 1984, Britain has been renamed Airstrip One and is a province of Oceania, a vast totalitarian superstate ruled by ‘the Party’, whose politics are described as Ingsoc (‘English Socialism’). Big Brother is the leader of the Party, which keeps its citizens in a perpetual state of fear and submission through a variety of means. Surveillance is a key part of the novel’s world, with hidden microphones (which are found in the countryside as well as urban areas, and can identify not only what is said but also who says it) and two-way telescreen monitors being used to root out any dissidents, who disappear from society with all trace of their existence wiped out. They become, in the language of Newspeak (the language used by people in the novel), ‘unpersons’. People are short of food, perpetually on the brink of starvation, and going about in fear for their lives. The novel’s setting is London, where Trafalgar Square has been renamed Victory Square and the statue of Horatio Nelson atop Nelson’s Column has been replaced by one of Big Brother. Through such touches, Orwell defamiliarises the London of the 1940s which the original readers would have recognised, showing how the London they know might be transformed under a totalitarian regime. The novel’s protagonist is Winston Smith, who works at the Ministry of Truth, rewriting historical records so they are consistent with the state’s latest version of history. However, even though his day job involves doing the work of the Party, Winston longs to escape the oppressive control of the Party, hoping for a rebellion. Winston meets the owner of an antique shop named Mr Charrington, from whom he buys a diary in which he can record his true feelings towards the Party. Believing the working-class ‘proles’ are the key to a revolution, Winston visits them, but is disappointed to find them wholly lacking in any political understanding. Meanwhile, hearing of the existence of an underground resistance movement known as the Brotherhood – which has been formed by the rival of Big Brother, a man named Emmanuel Goldstein – Winston suspects that O’Brien, who also works with him, is involved with this resistance. At lunch with another colleague, named Syme, Winston learns that the English language is being rewritten as Newspeak so as to control and influence people’s thought, the idea being that if the word for an idea doesn’t exist in the language, people will be unable to think about it. Winston meets a woman named Julia who works for the Ministry of Truth, maintaining novel-writing machines, but believes she is a Party spy sent to watch him. But then Julia passes a clandestine love message to him and the two begin an affair – which is itself illicit since the Party decrees that sex is for reproduction alone, rather than pleasure. We gradually learn more about Winston’s past, including his marriage to Katherine, from whom he is now separated. Syme, who had been working on Newspeak, disappears in mysterious circumstances: something Winston had predicted. O’Brien invites Winston to his flat, declaring himself – as Winston had also predicted – a member of the Brotherhood, the resistance against the Party. He gives Winston a copy of the book written by Goldstein, the leader of the Brotherhood. When Oceania’s enemy changes during the ritual Hate Week, Winston is tasked with making further historical revisions to old newspapers and documents to reflect this change. Meanwhile, Winston and Julia secretly read Goldstein’s book, which explains how the Party maintains its totalitarian power. As Winston had suspected, the secret to overthrowing the Party lies in the vast mass of the population known as the ‘proles’ (derived from ‘proletarian’, Marx’s term for the working classes). It argues that the Party can be overthrown if proles rise up against it. But shortly after this, Winston and Julia are arrested, having been shopped to the authorities by Mr Charrington (whose flat above his shop they had been using for their illicit meetings). It turns out that both he and O’Brien work for the Thought Police, on behalf of the Party. At the Ministry of Love, O’Brien tells Winston that Goldstein’s book was actually written by him and other Party members, and that the Brotherhood may not even exist. Winston endures torture and starvation in an attempt to grind him down so he will accept Big Brother. In Room 101, a room in which a prisoner is exposed to their greatest fear, Winston is placed in front of a wire cage containing rats, which he fears above all else. Winston betrays Julia, wishing she could take his place and endure this suffering instead. His reprogramming complete, Winston is allowed to go free, but he is essentially living under a death sentence: he knows that one day he will be summoned by the authorities and shot for his former treachery. He meets Julia one day, and learns that she was subjected to torture at the Ministry of Love as well. They have both betrayed each other, and part ways. The novel ends with Winston accepting, after all, that the Party has won and that ‘he loved Big Brother.’ Nineteen Eighty-Four: analysis Nineteen Eighty-Four is probably the most famous novel about totalitarianism, and about the dangers of allowing a one-party state where democracy, freedom of movement, freedom of speech, and even freedom of thought are all outlawed. The novel is often analysed as a warning about the dangers of allowing a creeping totalitarianism into Britain, after the horrors of such regimes in the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and elsewhere had been witnessed. Because of this quality of the book, it is often called ‘prophetic’ and a ‘nightmare vision of the future’, among other things. However, books set in the future are rarely simply about the future. They are not mere speculation, but are grounded in the circumstances in which they were written. Indeed, we might go so far as to say that most dystopian novels, whilst nominally set in an imagined future, are really using their future setting to reflect on what are already firmly established social or political ideas. In the case of Orwell and Nineteen Eighty-Four, this means the novel reflects the London of the 1940s. By the time he came to write the novel, Orwell already had a long-standing interest in using his writing to highlight the horrors of totalitarianism around the world, especially following his experience fighting in the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s. As Orwell put it in his essay ‘Why I Write’, all of his serious work written since 1936 was written ‘against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism’. In his analysis of Nineteen Eighty-Four in his study of Orwell, George Orwell (Reader’s Guides), Jeffrey Meyers argues convincingly that, rather than being a nightmare vision of the future, a prophetic or speculative work, Orwell’s novel is actually a ‘realistic synthesis and rearrangement of familiar materials’ – indeed, as much of Orwell’s best work is. His talent lay not in original imaginative thinking but in clear-headed critical analysis of things as they are: his essays are a prime example of this. Nineteen Eighty-Four is, in Meyer’s words, ‘realistic rather than fantastic’. Indeed, Orwell himself stated that although the novel was ‘in a sense a fantasy’, it is written in the form of the naturalistic novel, with its themes and ideas having been already ‘partly realised in Communism and fascism’. Orwell’s intention, as stated by Orwell himself, was to take the totalitarian ideas that had ‘taken root’ in the minds of intellectuals all over Europe, and draw them out ‘to their logical consequences’. Like much classic speculative fiction – the novels and stories of J. G. Ballard offer another example – the futuristic vision of the author is more a reflection of contemporary anxieties and concerns. Meyers goes so far as to argue that Nineteen Eighty-Four is actually the political regimes of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia ‘transposed’ into London of the early 1940s, during the Second World War. Certainly, many of the most famous features of Nineteen Eighty-Four were suggested to Orwell by his time working at the BBC in London in the first half of the 1940s: it is well-known that the Ministry of Truth was based on the bureaucratic BBC with its propaganda department, while the infamous Room 101 was supposedly named after a room of that number in the BBC building, in which Orwell had to endure tedious meetings. The technology of the novel, too, was familiar by the 1940s, involving little innovation or leaps of imagination from Orwell (‘telescreens’ being a natural extension of the television set: BBC TV had been established in 1936, although the Second World War pushed back its development somewhat). Orwell learned much about the workings of Stalinism from reading Trotsky’s The Revolution Betrayed (1937), written by one of the leading figures in the Russian Revolution of 1917 who saw Stalinist Russia as the antithesis of what Trotsky, Lenin, and those early revolutionaries had been striving to achieve. (This would also be important for Orwell’s Animal Farm, of course.) And indeed, many of the details surrounding censorship – the rewriting of history, the suppression of dissident literature, the control of the language people use to express themselves and even to think in – were also derived from Orwell’s reading of life in Soviet Russia. Surveillance was also a key element of the Stalinist regime, as in other Communist countries in Europe. The moustachioed figure of Big Brother in Nineteen Eighty-Four recalls nobody so much as Josef Stalin himself. Not only the ideas of ‘thought crime’ and ‘thought police’, but even the terms themselves, predate Orwell’s use of them: they were first recorded in a 1934 book about Japan. One of the key questions Winston asks himself in Nineteen Eighty-Four is what the Party is trying to achieve. O’Brien’s answer is simple: the maintaining of power for its own sake. Many human beings want to control other human beings, and they can persuade a worrying number of people to go along with their plans and even actively support them. Despite the fact that they are starving and living a miserable life, many of the people in Airstrip One love Big Brother, viewing him not as a tyrannical dictator but as their ‘Saviour’ (as one woman calls him). Again, this detail was taken from accounts of Stalin, who was revered by many Russians even though they were often living a wretched life under his rule. Another key theme of Orwell’s novel is the relationship between language and thought. In our era of fake news and corrupt media, this has only become even more pronounced: if you lie to a population and confuse them enough, you can control them. O’Brien introduces Winston to the work of the traitor to the Party, Emmanuel Goldstein, only to tell him later that Goldstein may not exist and his book was actually written by the Party. Is this the lie, or was the book the lie? One of the most famous lines from the novel is Winston’s note to himself in his diary: ‘Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows.’ But later, O’Brien will force Winston to ‘admit’ that two plus two can make five. Orwell tells us, ‘The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears.’ Or as Voltaire once wrote, ‘Truly, whoever is able to make you absurd is able to make you unjust.’ Forcing somebody to utter blatant falsehoods is a powerful psychological tool for totalitarian regimes because through doing so, they have chipped away at your moral and intellectual integrity. Subscribe to get the latest posts sent to your email.