1984
Adapted by Michael Gene Sullivan from the novel by George Orwell
*Especially for Grades 8-12

Barter Theatre Stage II – Spring, 2016

(Note: standards listed below are for reading 1984 seeing a performance of the play, and completing the study guide.)

Virginia SOLs
English – 8.2, 8.4, 8.5, 8.7, 8.9, 9.1, 9.3, 9.4, 9.6, 9.8, 10.3, 10.4, 10.6, 10.8, 11.3, 11.6, 11.8, 12.1, 12.3, 12.4, 12.6
Theatre Arts – 8.5, 8.12, 8.18, 8.22, TI.10, TI.11, TI.13, TI.17, TII.6, TII.9, TII.12, TII.15, TII.17, TIII.11, TIII.12, TIV.12, TIV.13

Tennessee/North Carolina Common Core Standards
English Language Arts – Reading Literature: 8.1, 8.4, 8.7, 8.10, 9-10.1, 9-10.4, 9-10.6, 9-10.10, 11-12.1, 11-12.4, 11-12.7, 11-12.10
English Language Arts – Writing: 8.1, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 9-10.1, 9-10.7, 9-10.8, 9-10.9, 11-12.1, 11-12.7, 11-12.8, 11-12.9

Tennessee State Standards
Theatre 6-8 – 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.2  Theatre 9-12 – 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2

North Carolina Essential Standards
Theatre Arts – 8.A.1, 8.AE.1, 8.CU.1, 8.CU.2, B.C.1, B.C.2, B.A.1, B.AE.1, B.CU.1, B.CU.2, I.A.1, I.AE.1, I.CU.2, P.C.1, P.A.1, P.AE.1, A.C.2, A.A.1, A.AE.1

Setting
Various locations in Oceania, a dystopian society in the not-too-distant future.
Characters

Winston Smith – staunchly against the Party
Julia – Winston’s love interest and ally
O’Brien – member of the Inner Party,
Big Brother – leader of the Party.
Emmanuel Goldstein – leader of the Brotherhood
Mr. Charrington – owns shop where Winston rents a room
Parsons – Winston’s neighbor
Syme – Winston’s coworker at the Ministry of Truth

Vocabulary Words

precise         propaganda         diabolical
treason         redundancy         invincible
revolution      ignorance          stratagem
undermine       torrent            dictator
cubical         deviant            abomination
indentation     saccharine         oligarchy
vaporize        spontaneous        collectivism
denounce        amateur            irreconcilable
degenerate      ingenious           drudgery
ration          reduction          hierarchy
freedom         conspiracy         oblivion
fester          siege              infallible
sabotage        catechism          tribunal
annihilate      blackmail          sedition
ingraving       demoralize         heretic
rectify         inevitable          degradation

“Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past.”
Synopsis

Winston Smith works in the Records Department in the Ministry of Truth, rewriting and distorting history. To escape Big Brother’s tyranny, Winston begins a diary – an act punishable by death. Winston is determined to remain human under inhuman circumstances. Yet telescreens are placed everywhere monitoring his every move. No place is safe.

One day Winston catches the eye of an Inner Party Member, O’Brien, whom he believes to be an ally. He also catches the eye of a dark-haired girl from the Fiction Department, Julia. A few days later, Julia secretly hands him a note that reads, “I love you.” Winston takes pains to meet her, and when they finally do, Julia draws up a complicated plan whereby they can be alone.

Alone in the countryside, Winston and Julia make love and begin their allegiance against the Party and Big Brother. Winston secures a room above a shop where he and Julia can go for their romantic trysts. While they know that they will someday be caught, Winston and Julia believe that the love and loyalty they feel for each other can never be taken from them, even under the worst circumstances.

Eventually, Winston and Julia confess to their hatred of the Party to O’Brien, whom they believe to be a member of the Brotherhood, an underground organization aimed at bringing down the Party. O’Brien welcomes them into the Brotherhood with an array of questions and arranges for Winston to be given a copy of “the book,” the underground’s treasonous volume written by their leader, Emmanuel Goldstein, former ally of Big Brother turned enemy.

When the book arrives, Winston takes it to the secure room where he reads it with Julia napping by his side. Suddenly they hear a noise behind a painting in the room and discover a telescreen. They are dragged away and separated. Winston finds himself imprisoned alone in the Ministry of Love for several days. Finally, O’Brien comes. Initially Winston believes that O’Brien has also been caught, but he soon realizes that O’Brien is there to torture him and break his spirit.

O’Brien uses electrical shocks to change Winston’s way of thinking. Winston believes that the human mind must be free, and to remain free, one must be allowed to believe in an objective truth, such as $2 + 2 = 4$. O’Brien wants Winston to believe that $2 + 2 = 5$, but Winston is resistant.

Finally, O’Brien takes Winston to Room 101, the most dreaded room of all in the Ministry of Love, the place where prisoners meet their greatest fear. Winston’s greatest fear is rats. O’Brien places over Winston’s head a mask made of wire mesh and threatens to open the door to release rats on Winston’s face. When Winston screams, “Do it to Julia!” he relinquishes his last vestige of humanity. By the time the story ends, there is no doubt that Winston loves Big Brother.
Biography of the Author – George Orwell

George Orwell is the pen name of Eric Arthur Blair, born in 1903 in Motihari, Bengal, India, during the time of the British colonial rule. When he was a boy, Orwell’s mother brought him to England to be educated. Orwell soon discovered he had a gift for writing, and when he was just eleven he published his first poem *Awake Young Men of England*. He attended Eton College, where he came into contact with liberalist and socialist ideals, thus forming the political views he would later espouse.

In 1922 Orwell moved to Burma, where he served as an Assistant Superintendent of Police. After five years he resigned, citing his growing dislike for British Imperialism. In 1928, he moved to Paris and then to London, taking low-paying jobs and living in what he termed “fairly severe poverty.” These experiences provided the material for his first novel, *Down and Out in Paris and London*. In 1933, while teaching in Middlesex, he developed tuberculosis. Orwell gave up teaching and spent a year in Southwold writing his next book, *Burmese Days*. During this time, he worked part time in a bookshop, where he met his future wife, Eileen O’Shaughnessy. He and Eileen were married in 1936, shortly before he moved to Spain to write newspaper articles about the Spanish Civil War.

In Spain, joined the struggle against the Fascist party but had to flee when the group with which he was associated was falsely accused of secretly helping the Fascists. Orwell returned to England and eventually took a position as the literary editor of *The Tribune*. Shortly after Orwell and Eileen adopted a son in 1944, Orwell became a war correspondent. Eileen died in the beginning of that year, just before the publication of one of his novel *Animal Farm*. Despite the loss of his wife and his own battle with poor health, Orwell continued his writing and in 1948 completed his next novel *1984*.

Orwell remarried in 1949 to Sonia Brownell, only a year before his own death of tuberculosis. He is buried in the churchyard of All Saints, Sutton Courtenay, Berkshire.

Biography of the Playwright– Michael Gene Sullivan

Michael Gene Sullivan is an award-winning actor, director, and playwright. His political dramas, musicals, and satires have been produced all over the world. They include *1600 Transylvania Avenue*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Obscuristan* (with Josh Kornbluth), *Godfellas, Red State, Too Big to Fail, Possibilidad or The Death of the Worker*, the all-woman farce *Recipe*, and his one person show, *Did Anyone Ever Tell You -- You Look Like Huey P. Newton?* In 1989 Mr. Sullivan became a member of the San Francisco Mime Troupe, where he has acted in, directed, or written over 30 productions. In 2000 he became the Troupe’s Resident Playwright, and has since written some of SFMT’s most successful political comedies.
A Brief History

Barter Theatre was founded during the Great Depression by Robert Porterfield, an enterprising young actor. He and his fellow actors found themselves out of work and hungry in New York City. Porterfield contrasted that to the abundance of food, but lack of live theatre, around his home region in Southwest Virginia. He returned to Washington County with an extraordinary proposition: bartering produce from the farms and gardens of the area to gain admission to see a play.

Barter Theatre opened its doors on June 10, 1933 proclaiming, “With vegetables you cannot sell, you can buy a good laugh.” The price of admission was 40 cents or the equivalent in produce, the concept of trading “ham for Hamlet” caught on quickly. At the end of the first season, the Barter Company cleared $4.35 in cash, two barrels of jelly and enjoyed a collective weight gain of over 300 pounds.

Playwrights including Noel Coward, Tennessee Williams and Thornton Wilder accepted Virginia ham as payment for royalties. An exception was George Bernard Shaw, a vegetarian, who bartered the rights to his plays for spinach.

Today, Barter Theatre has a reputation as a theatre where many actors performed before going on to achieve fame and fortune. The most recognized of these alumni include Gregory Peck, Patricia Neal, Ernest Borgnine, Hume Cronyn, Ned Beatty, Gary Collins, Larry Linville and Frances Fisher. The list also included James Burrows, creator of Cheers, Barry Corbin, and the late Jim Varney.

Robert Porterfield passed away in 1971. His successor, Rex Partington, had been at Barter in the 1950s as an actor and in the 1970s as stage manager. Rex returned as chief administrator from 1972 until his retirement in 1992. In March 2006, he passed away.

Richard Rose was named the producing artistic director in October 1992. In that time, attendance has grown from 42,000 annual patrons to more than 163,000 annual patrons. Significant capital improvements have also been made. Including maintenance to both theatres, and in 2006, the addition of The Barter Café at Stage II and dramatic improvements to Porterfield Square.

Barter represents three distinct venues of live theatre: Barter Theatre Main Stage, Barter Theatre Stage II and The Barter Players. Barter Theatre, with over 500 seats, features traditional theatre in a luxurious setting. Barter Stage II, across the street from Barter Main Stage and beyond Porterfield Square, offers seating for 167 around a thrust stage in an intimate setting and is perfect for more adventurous productions. The Barter Players is a talented ensemble of actors, producing plays for young audiences throughout the year.

History is always in the making at Barter Theatre, building on legends of the past; Barter looks forward to the challenge of growth in the future.
From the Page to the Stage!
How does a book become a stage play? Here are some of the elements that went into Barter Theatre’s production of 1984…

1. **Script**
   It all starts here. A playwright (in this case, Michael Sullivan) turns the prose of literature into dialogue and dramatic action. This is called “adapting”. Sound easy? **Try it yourself!**
   Pick a scene from your favorite story and adapt it into a scene for the stage. Try not to use the narrative voice – focus instead on creating “dialogue” between the characters.

2. **Director/Actors**
   The director and actors begin the rehearsal process. The director “blocks” the play, which means he tells the actors where to move and stand and sit. The actors work on learning their lines, finding their character’s motivation and creating the world of the play. The length of a rehearsal process for a Barter Theatre production ranges from 100 – 120 hours spread out over 4-6 weeks, depending on the play.

3. **Set Design**
   The set designer designs a set that will not only serve the aesthetic needs of the production by creating beautiful visuals that represent the various locations in the story (i.e. the interrogation room, flashback scenes in the antique shop and the Golden Field) but also function as a safe environment upon which the actors will move (or be moved). A good set design will also allow the action to flow from one scene to another smoothly, with seamless transitions. **Try it yourself!**
   Using the scene you adapted, design a set that will both visually serve the story and function effectively for the actors.

4. **Costumes/Wigs**
   The costume designer is responsible for creating a different look for each character while maintaining the overall aesthetic of the production. Each actor’s costume must be tailored to fit and be built to take the wear-and-tear of 8 shows a week! Also, in a show where the actor is required to play more than one character, the design must incorporate a method to facilitate “quick changes”. The wig designer is responsible for designing, building and styling the wigs that will appear in the show. Like the costumes, wigs are necessary to help distinguish characters. **Try it yourself!**
   Design a costume/wig for the character in your scene. Make sure your costume includes a mechanism to make “quick changes possible.

5. **Props**
   Winston’s shackles! The coral paperweight! Goldstein’s book! These are a few examples of the props designed and built by Barter’s props department for this production. A prop is defined as an object used on stage by actors for use in the plot or story line of a theatrical production. **Try it yourself!**
   Design and build the props you will need for your scene.

6. **Lights/Sound**
   Lights not only illuminate the actors and pull focus to various spots on the stage but, together with sound, help create a mood. Lights and sound can also, along with the set, help establish location. The sound of electrical jolts, the light of the telescreen and suddenly we are in the interrogation room! **Try it yourself!**
   Put together a soundtrack for your scene that establishes place and mood. Feel free to use recorded music/sound effects or perform it live!

7. **Stage Manager/Crew**
   The Stage Manager attends all the rehearsals and once the show goes into production, is “in charge”, calling all the sound and light cues and maintaining the integrity of the piece during its run. The SM is aided in these endeavors by the Crew, the unsung heroes who work backstage moving sets, changing wardrobe, placing props – whatever is necessary for the show to go on!
Word Search
Find the following words in the puzzle below:
Winston Smith, Big Brother, telescreen, Goldstein, Oceania, Syme, Ministry of Truth, O’Brien, Eastasia, war, peace, freedom, slavery, ignorance, strength, prole, be precise, Charrington, coral, Julia rectify, thoughtcrime, George Orwell, Barter Theatre, Parsons
True and False

Write T if the statement is True and F if the statement is False.

1. ____ Winston is a Records Department employee in the Ministry of Plenty.
2. ____ When Winston first sees Julia, he thinks she is a member of The Brotherhood.
3. ____ Julia slips Winston a note that reads “I love you.”
4. ____ Emmanuel Goldstein is the leader of The Brotherhood.
5. ____ Charrington owns the antique shop above which Winston rents a room.
6. ____ Winston loves rats and wants to keep one as a pet.
7. ____ Julia and Winston plan for a future that includes children.
8. ____ Charrington gives Winston a glass paperweight with a ruby in the middle.
9. ____ In reality, Mr. Charrington is a member of the Thought Police.
10. ____ The play 1984 was written by George Orwell.
11. ____ O’Brien is a member of the Brotherhood.
12. ____ In Oceania, children are taught to spy on their parents.
14. ____ Parsons is imprisoned for keeping the word “God” on the end of a poem.
15. ____ Rather than be tortured himself, Winston suggests they torture Julia.

Matching

There are 4 Ministries in Oceania’s government. Draw a line connecting the Ministry in the 1st column with its description in the 2nd.

1. Ministry of Love          a. concerned with war
2. Ministry of Truth         b. responsible for economic affairs
3. Ministry of Peace         c. maintains law and order
4. Ministry of Plenty        d. concerned with news, education, entertainment, and the fine arts
Questions/Activities

1. Read *1984* by George Orwell then attend a performance of Barter’s production. How are they similar? How are they different?

   **Write a paper that compares and contrasts the book with Barter’s production!**

2. “**Doublethink**” is the ability to have two opposite or contradictory thoughts at the same time, and accept both of them. People who practice doublethink are able to tell lies and believe them or forget about facts that they don’t need. They deny objective reality while they are aware of that same reality. Why would The Party employ this sort of thinking? **Discuss.**

   Study the speeches given by the candidates running for President in the upcoming 2016 election – do any of these speeches contain “doublethink?” What responsibility do citizens listening to these speeches have in recognizing doublethink? **Discuss.**

3. According to Goldstein’s book, the superstates are not really fighting each other. Instead, they are fighting their own people in order to keep the societal hierarchy intact (the rich stay rich and the poor stay poor). Is this objective of Big Brother and The Party something you can envision happening in America’s future? Is any of it happening now? **Discuss.**
4. Although 1984 is a work of fiction written in 1948, Orwell’s novel foreshadowed many philosophies/technologies prevalent in America today.

Consider how Orwell’s telescreens might compare to today’s security cameras; is Big Brother alive and well in our country? How about the information that can be gleaned from our computers and cellphones. Is privacy a thing of the past? Given that the Fourth Amendment protects us from “unreasonable searches and seizures,” does our government have the right to collect data from our phones and computers without our knowledge? What if the government insists it is doing so as a security measure? How much freedom are you willing to give up in order to be “safe?” How would you feel if it was against the law to keep a private journal? Discuss!

EXTRA CREDIT

In May 2013, former CIA member Edward Snowden revealed to the press details of classified United States government surveillance programs. Using the internet, research the details he revealed. Divide the class in two, and have them debate the following: Edward Snowden – Hero or Traitor?
5. Using pictures from magazines or newspapers, construct a collage representing one of the characters from *1984*. Display the collages around the room and see if the other students are able to match the collage to the character.

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**Write it!**

Even though it was against the law, Winston Smith kept a daily journal. What might the other characters have written if they were brave enough to do the same? Select your favorite character from *1984*, pick an important day in their life then write a journal entry about that day as that character. For example, you might pick the character of Julia and write about the day you put the note in Winston’s hand, or you might pick the character of O’Brien and write about the day you convinced Winston to love Big Brother. Be as specific as possible and write as that character would.

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6. **Write a critique of Barter Theatre’s production of *1984*.** Be sure to include what you liked, didn’t like and what you would have done differently.
7. In Orwell’s novel, the world is divided into three superstates: Oceania, Eurasia and Eastasia. Using the book and the internet as a resource, make a list of the countries in today’s world that make up each of these superstates, as well as the disputed area. Compare this list of countries to the countries that existed when Orwell finished this novel in 1948. How has the world changed? Do you think it’s possible that these superstates could ever exist? Discuss.

Extra Credit - PERSUADE ME!

As Winston Smith, write a paper persuading Symes to join the Brotherhood.
Comedy vs. Tragedy

**comedy:** a dramatic work that is light and often humorous or satirical in tone and that usually contains a happy resolution of the thematic conflict.

**tragedy:** A drama or literary work in which the main character is brought to ruin or suffers extreme sorrow, especially as a consequence of a tragic flaw, moral weakness, or inability to cope with unfavorable circumstances.

Given these definitions, would you categorize *1984* as a comedy or a tragedy? **Cite three samples from the play to support your position.** Does a character’s point-of-view influence your findings? **Discuss.**

Suggested Further Reading

**Other books by George Orwell:**

- *Burmese Days*
- *A Clergyman’s Daughter*
- *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*
- *Coming Up for Air*
- *Animal Farm*

**Books written about George Orwell**

- *George Orwell* by Gordon Bowker
- *George Orwell: A Life in Letters* by George Orwell & Peter Davison
- *Why Orwell Matters* by Christopher Hitchens