

Connecting *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to Today

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Abstract

When teaching *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in the past, I found that students often had difficulty relating to and comprehending many of the main ideas and societal critiques in the book. On the other hand, I find that many of my students are relatively political, especially when it comes to racism, equality and being treated fairly, but often do not know enough about history, politics and current events to back up their assertions and beliefs. While aspects of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are dated, I believe it is still relevant to the world today. This unit would help students make connections between their own lives and personal knowledge, current events and political issues, and the themes of equal human rights, freedom of thought and the individual vs. the state in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

The School District of Philadelphia places *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in a unit under the theme “When and how is literature political?” In order to help students compare and contrast the issues, themes and ideas in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* with today, students will examine different political and current issues throughout the unit. Reading and analyzing the novel through a political lens will also serve to reinforce and support the School District of Philadelphia’s Senior Social Science curriculum, allowing students to make connections across curriculum. In addition, allowing students to analyze and debate issues and ideas in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, compare them to current events and policies, and debate them with classmates will reinforce their study of social science, engage them in the reading, and help them to become involved citizens.