

# Intro to *1984* & Dystopian Literature

***1984***

# History

- Orwell wrote 1984 just after World War II ended, wanting it to serve as a warning to his readers.
- Orwell lived during a time in which tyranny was a reality in Spain, Germany, the Soviet Union, and other countries.
- In these places...
  - the government kept an iron fist (or curtain) around its citizens
  - there was little, if any, freedom
  - hunger, forced labor, and mass execution were common
- Orwell's Oceania is a terrifying society reminiscent of Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union.
- **Big Brother** is a fusing of both Stalin and Hitler.

# Setting

Time: 1984

Location: London, Air Strip One  
in Oceania



# Genre

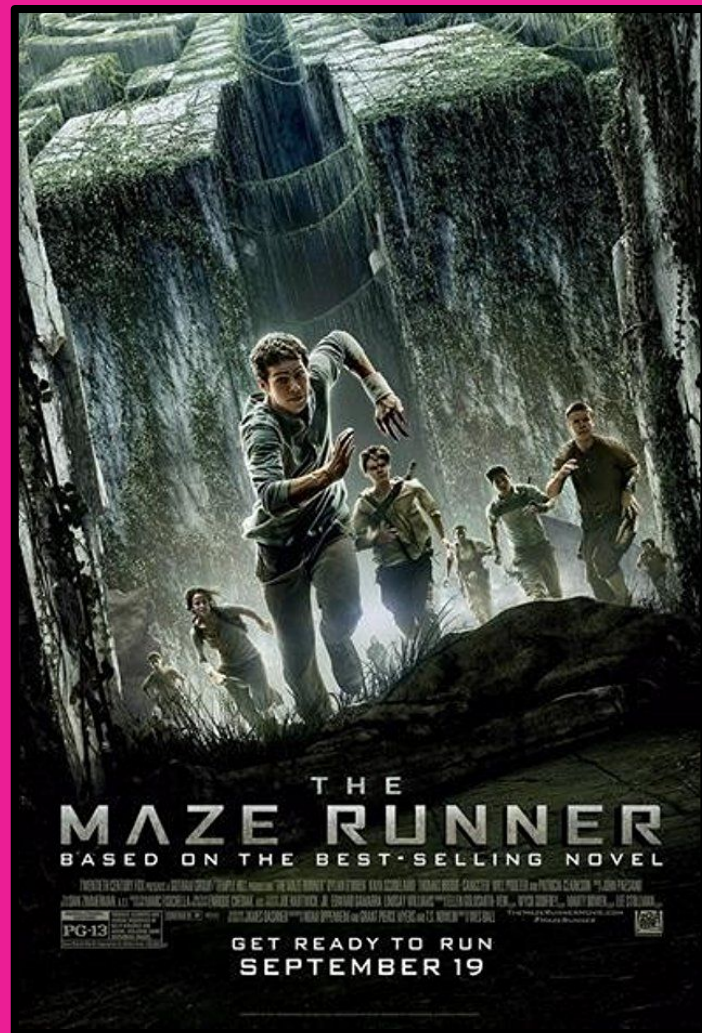
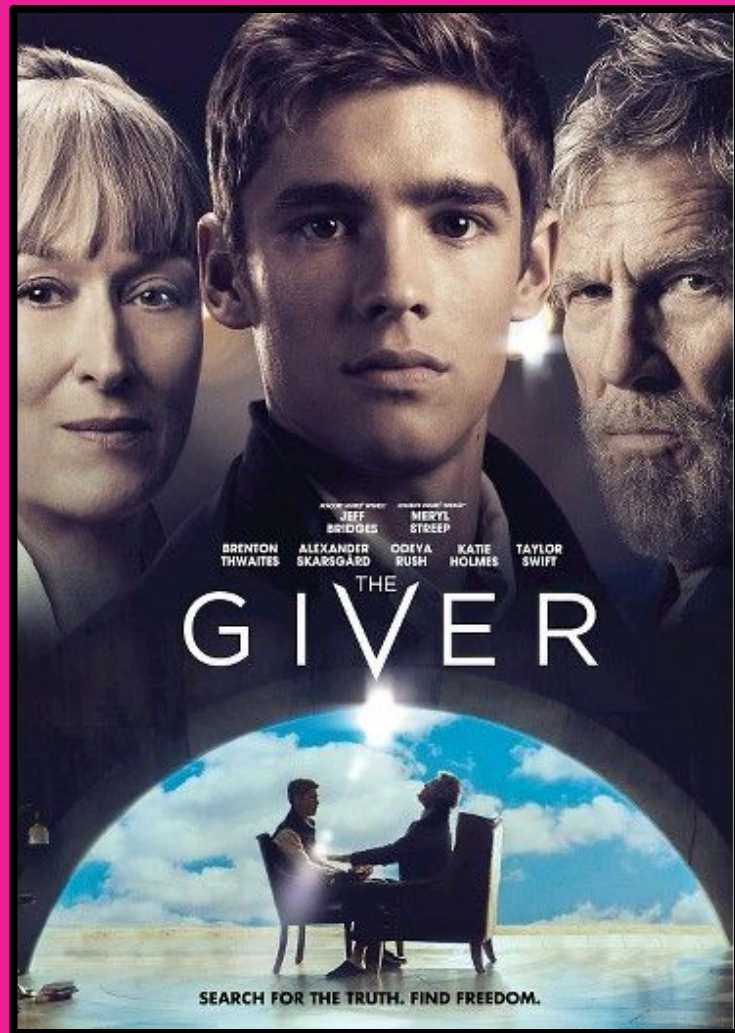
- 1984 is Dystopian Literature
  - dys- = bad; ill
  - topia = place
- A futuristic, imagined universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through corporate, bureaucratic, technological, moral, or totalitarian control.
- Dystopias, through an exaggerated worst-case scenario, make a criticism about a current trend, societal norm, or political system.

# **Dystopias in Popular Culture**

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# **Clips & Images of Dystopian Elements**

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# Searching for Common Elements

Genre, as you know, is the way that texts are classified into categories. Knowing the genre of a story helps the reader make predictions, connections, and have a more analytical approach when reading a text. If the reader already knows basically what to expect from this kind (genre) of story, the reader can then focus on more complicated parts of the reading experience.

Today, we are going to examine several film clips and images that are classified already as dystopian. It is your job to take careful notes on the details and patterns that you notice. These details and patterns are the key to unlocking the genre. Be observant and don't dismiss any ideas! Record all of your thoughts in the chart below.















# SIGHT



**HD**

# Elements of Dystopian Literature

Now that we have finished watching the film clips and viewing the images, try to write your own definition of each of the elements that characterize a dystopian society. You have been given only a few clue words for each element. It is up to you to come up with the rest of the definition!

# 10 Common Characteristics

1. Propaganda is used to control the citizens of society.
2. Information, independent thought, and freedom are restricted.
3. A leader, concept, or tradition is worshipped by the citizens of the society.
4. Citizens are perceived to be under constant surveillance.
5. Citizens have a fear of the outside world.
6. Citizens live in a dehumanized state.
7. Nature is banished and distrusted while technology is heavily relied upon.
8. Citizens conform to uniform expectations. Individuality and dissent are bad.
9. The society is an illusion of a perfect utopian world.
10. Citizens experience desensitization from the violence and corruption around them.

# Types of Control

Most dystopian works present a world in which oppressive societal control is maintained through one or more of the following types of controls:

- Corporate control
  - Large corporations control society through products, advertising, and/or the media.
- Bureaucratic control
  - Society is controlled by a mindless bureaucracy through a tangle of red tape, relentless regulations, and incompetent government officials.
- Technological control
  - Society is controlled by technology—through computers, robots, and/or scientific means.
- Philosophical/religious control
  - Society is controlled by philosophical or religious ideology often enforced through a dictatorship.

# The Dystopian Protagonist...

- often feels trapped and is struggling to escape.
- questions the existing social and political systems.
- believes or feels that something is terribly wrong with the society in which he or she lives.
- helps the audience recognize the negative aspects of the dystopian world through his or her perspective.

