Recap of Part I

- In part I of *1984*, we were introduced to the present day, the world of Winston Smith:
  - Hierarchical, totalitarian government
  - Dominated by four Ministries (Minitrue, Minipax, Miniluv, Miniplenty)
  - Paradoxes of thought dominate the three slogans of Oceania: War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength
  - Constant surveillance: Big Brother is Watching You, thoughtcrime, telescreens
  - World of privation in which no pleasure is allowed: no pleasure in food (greasy, spongy meat), in drink (oily gin), in smoking (dry tobacco that falls out), in dress (uniforms), in family (distrust and betrayal), in marriage (arranged, and if done for pleasure, forbidden), or in sexuality
  - Weak bonds between people – no friendships possible because of constant fear of betrayal
  - Energy channeled into hatred and love – hatred of Goldstein and the current enemy and love for Big Brother and the Party
  - In this ugly present, Winston works at destroying the past bit by bit, bringing it “up to date” with every article he sends down the Memory Hole, the incinerator.

Part II

- If Part I addressed the present, then Part II addresses the past.
- Part II forms a sharp contrast almost immediately.
- The focus is now on Winston’s relationship with Julia.
- Physical surroundings change-- not just the city now, but two new places:
  - English countryside
  - Mr. Charrington’s shop

**Countryside**

- English countryside is a place of beauty
- Privacy
- Nature, the natural world is unchanged by Big Brother
- The thrush sings and its song is a thing of rare beauty

**Mr. Charrington’s Shop**

- Apartment has no telescreen
- Privacy
- Home-like – Winston feels in his bones that somehow this is right, to be in a room like this, with his feet on the hob, with someone else there
- Simple, honest pleasures
Part III – Foreshadowed doom (the future)

- Major foreshadowing in the statement “We are the dead” and in Winston’s and Julia’s persistent conviction that they will be caught.
- Orwell is not being secretive with the idea that this idyll is doomed.

Text Work

I. Assemble a Database

a. Make a list of the relics of the past Winston collects or is intrigued by. What physical, tangible items does he himself collect or note or find interesting?

Examples: The coral paperweight, the engraving of the churches, the nursery rhyme, the diary.

b. Individual Answers

Answer the following questions individually:

- Choose the two relics of the past you find most interesting. Why are these specific relics of the past important to Winston?
- What does this specific relic signify to Winston?
- What ideas or emotions or concepts does Winston associate with it?

c. Larger Issues

Answer the following questions individually WITHOUT reference to a database or to a computer or other resource besides your own mind:

- When did America declare its independence? (1776)
- What was the first book ever published on a press? (the Gutenberg Bible)
- Who perfected and popularized the lightbulb? (Thomas Edison)
- What was the world’s first known work of epic poetry? (Sumerian epic Gilgamesh)
- When did the U.S. drop the atomic bomb on Japan? (1945)
- What language is English primarily derived from? (German)
- Who discovered penicillin? (Alexander Fleming)

d. Small-Group Discussion

Discuss the answers to the history questions in small groups (if desired). Then turn the question to the main issue that the past presents in 1984:

- What do these relics signify to Winston?
- Why does Winston cling so desperately to these relics of the past?
- Why is the past important?
- Is it important? Many people argue that it is not important to remember the past, to remember math formulae, to remember history dates, et cetera because one can “always look it up.” Do you agree?
- What evidence do you have to suggest that Orwell disagrees with that idea?
e. **Large-Group Discussion**

Discuss these issues in large groups, focusing on the larger-scale thematic issue of the past and its importance to Orwell’s work.

- What argument about the importance of the past is Orwell using this book to make to his readers?
- Do you agree?
- Does Orwell prove his case?
- Were you able to answer all or most of the questions about the past asked earlier? How did that affect or change your answer?