

# Summer Reading Assignment

## IB English III HL Y1: *1984* by George Orwell

For each of the following questions choose **ONLY 1** to address. Your response must provide your assertion, integrated evidence from *1984* to back up your point and provide an example from modern day society. In addition to your response, find a visual (an advertisement, screen-shot of commercial still, a mural, a comic strip, magazine cover, billboard, art, album cover etc...) that comments/provides insight on your assertion and/or topic. (Your response should be at least 250-500 words, double-space, Times New Roman, 12-point font and should use proper, formal academic language.) This assignment is **due on September 8, 2020**, but you may turn it in beforehand.

Choose **ONE** of the following questions to address:

1. Can changing language change thought? Why or Why not? In addition, how do we use language to empower or to hurt?
2. Can individuals change a society? Why or Why not? Why do some individuals take a stand against oppression while others choose to participate in it?
3. What is power and how is it gained and used? What constitutes an abuse of power?

### EXAMPLE Provided Below:

#### Sample Question:

How does George Bernard Shaw, in his play *Pygmalion*, succeed in making his characters shed light on his concerns over society's beliefs and how these affect women?

#### Sample Answer:

Societies standards greatly impact stereotypes placed on women and can negatively impact gender roles and equality. For instance, in the play, *Pygmalion*, the character of Eliza Doolittle represents women in society and illustrates the manner in which society constantly impacts their every choice. For example, society expects the beautiful “ladies” from the high class to marry a gentleman who resides in the same class, affecting women’s choice, as stated by Eliza, “I sold flowers. I did not sell myself. Now you’ve made a lady of me – I’m not fit to sell anything else” (Shaw 100). The author details how Eliza finds herself in an existential crisis; she is full of regret

as she realizes the price of being a lady - stripped from her freedom. Societies standards need to be met and her free will is being tested. In today's society, women feel the constant obligation to meet society's standards, which ultimately impact women's choice from what they wear, to how they speak, act, look and even who they marry. From magazines glaring back as you wait for your groceries to Instagram posts from famous celebrities, like the Kardashians – every day what it means to be a “lady” is being declared to women, causing anyone like Eliza to fall into an existential crisis.

Additionally, Higgins's character has traditional beliefs on the value of women in regard to their appearance and language, which parallels with societies views. Society constantly diminishes the value of women, which is exactly what Higgins does when dehumanizing Eliza, as he states, “You go to bed and have a good nice rest; and then get up and look at yourself in the glass; and you won't feel so cheap” (Shaw 99). Higgins is a character who has traditional ideologies and direct and strong attitudes that reflect the ideologies that society has followed throughout the years. Higgins use of a strong adjective when specifically referring to Eliza as “cheap”, as if she were a non-worthy product, enhances the problem in society's beliefs; they diminish women's value within the society itself. Higgin's strict, traditional beliefs also highlight how his “respect” for women's value is contingent on them meeting certain standards and attractiveness, which according to him gives them better chances in life. Women are constantly expected to fulfill certain standards that are nearly impossible to achieve, and therefore, Shaw purposefully sculpts Eliza as a perfect woman once she was shaped by Higgins – an unattainable Galatea. Throughout *Pygmalion*, Shaw uses a multitude of stylistic devices to illustrate the fact that society bases their perspective of women according to their looks. The fact that society uses certain language to categorize women as worthy or unworthy, according to stereotypical looks

forces women to feel the need to meet certain standards that, unfortunately, many times conclude in low self-esteem and a lack of self-worth. The UN again stated that, “Given the key role that language plays in shaping cultural and social attitudes, using gender-inclusive language is a powerful way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias” (5). Women are expected to look skinny but not that skinny, wear makeup but not that much, speak but not too much.

Women are constantly limited and oppressed and as stated by Dina Gerdeman from Harvard University this is why “women might be shying away from certain professions: They lack confidence in their ability to compete in fields that men are stereotypically believed to perform more strongly in, such as science, math, and technology” (1). In his play, George Bernard Shaw expresses deep concern over societal beliefs that affect women’s value, as he emphasizes this when Eliza is constantly criticized for her appearances. First, when Eliza was dressed as a flower girl - nobody cared about her, not even her own father, but later when she became a “lady”, by appearance, anyone who saw her became immediately impressed. Once her Cockney language altered to sound more “acceptable” and fool respectable linguists, such as Nepommuck, as he claimed, “She pretended not to know the difference between Hungarian and French. Impossible: She knows both” (91), only then was she fully accepted in societies eyes. To society, Eliza’s worth as a woman changed throughout the story according to her appearance and language. Unfortunately, Eliza’s identity takes a hit as her feelings of unworthiness build, leaving her more lost and stripped from her freedom – quite a contrast from the strong, independent, “good girl” (Shaw 9) readers saw at the beginning of the play. Eliza’s identity is sacrificed just to appease values set by society.

# GIRLS' LIFE

FALL  
FASHION  
YOU'LL  
LOVE

100+ ways to  
SLAY on the  
first day

Wake up  
pretty!  
Because mornings  
are rough...

Best. Year. Ever.

How to have fun, make  
friends and get all A's

Confessions!  
MY FIRST  
KISS

Real girls smooch  
and spill

OLMIA HOLT  
show her style  
secrets!

YOUR  
DREAM  
HAIR  
Next-level  
tips & trends

Bye,  
drama  
The friendship  
rules  
squads  
swear by

THE 'NEW'  
DENIM  
CHECKLIST

Get ready to hear  
"I love your jeans!"

QUIZ!  
Are you  
ready



# Boys' Life

FOR ALL BOYS

SEPTEMBER 2016

EXPLORE  
YOUR  
FUTURE

ASTRONAUT? ARTIST? FIREFIGHTER? CHEF? HERE'S HOW TO  
BE WHAT YOU WANT TO BE.



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2015  
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2426-2427 (421) 421/421/426  
2427-2428 (422) 422/422/427  
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