



Worksheet 1: Identifying Theme in 1984

1984 is a political novel written with the purpose of warning readers in the West of the dangers of totalitarian government. Let's examine the book's themes and motifs.

Theme: Fundamental and often universal ideas explored in literary works. You extract theme by interpreting the characters, action, and setting that make up the story.
Motif: Recurring structures, contrasts, and literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.

Activity: Complete the chart below with a partner. Site the pages on which you find your examples, analyze each example, and try to connect the example to a modern example.

| Theme/Motif | Example | Analysis (connect theme to concept) | Modern Example |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Control of Information (Theme) | "Orthodoxy means not thinking—not needing to think." | Through the elimination of opposing ideas and freedom of thought, the Party transformed its citizens into a mindless mass incapable of dissent. | Close control on social information (Chinese human rights activists and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Liu Xiaobo, remains behind bars for calling for reform). |
| Psychological Manipulation (Theme) | | | |
| Dangers of Totalitarianism (Theme) | | | |
| Technology (Theme) | | | |
| Doublethink (motif) | | | |