



# Critical Response

ATTITUDE RECTIFIED. DOUBLEPLUSGOOD.

## AS 91475: WRITING PORTFOLIO - 6 CREDITS

2.4: PRODUCE A SELECTION OF FLUENT AND COHERENT WRITING WHICH DEVELOPS, SUSTAINS, AND STRUCTURES IDEAS



Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas.	Produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas and is <b>convincing</b> .	Produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas and <b>commands attention</b> .



# doublethink

'dʌb(ə)lθɪŋk/

**noun:** doublethink; noun: double-think

The acceptance of contrary opinions or beliefs at the same time, especially as a result of political indoctrination.

## Outline

This task is a culmination of our genre study of the dystopia *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell. This is an opportunity to generate a “Critical Response” to the novel by exploring whether it succeeds in its certain intention: to act as a warning to people in the future.

### CENTRAL QUESTION

George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is more than a work of fiction. It is a dire warning. Explore the means by which Orwell reaches through the decades and grabs us by the neck: what is he trying to tell us?

## Preparation

### RESEARCH

1. Make a decision about **what aspect** of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is relevant to today. Examples of these are: The Action of a Totalitarian State, Control through fear, Invasion of privacy, Newspeak and Fake News, Surveillance, Thought Crime.

2. Identify **key material** and supporting quotations in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that illuminate this line of inquiry
3. Consider the realities of the UK and New Zealand during the year 1984 in the light of Orwell’s prediction.
4. Research parallels with 2017
  - News
  - Media
  - Internet
  - Multinationals
  - Contemporary dystopian fiction
5. Decide on your ‘lense’
  - Feminism
  - Marxism
  - Genre Study of dystopia
  - Setting analysis
  - Examination of Historical context
6. Plan the structure of your answer
7. Draft a practice paragraph



## The Final Piece

### SIZE

Once your initial research and preparation is completed, the final piece should be written in the form of a literary essay. While there is no specific word limit, making an effort to keep it to **1200-1500 words** will allow you to keep your argument focussed.

### CONDITIONS

The final piece will be written in class over **4 periods**. You may use your online journals to complete the writing and some superficial feedback may be sought as part of the initial drafting process.

### SCOPE

Your proficiency with spelling, grammar and punctuation will aid the clear and effective communication of your argument, as will conforming to a clear structure with your writing.

### ADVICE

You are advised to refer to examples of critical essays that you have been exposed to as part of the genre study in order to refine your understanding of how such a piece can be constructed for effect.

Seek feedback from your teacher in the early stages of your drafting in order to ensure you are on the right track.



# Exemplar

GEORGE ORWELL

## Politics and the English Language

Most people who bother with the matter at all would admit that the English language is in a bad way, but it is generally assumed that **we** cannot by conscious action do anything about it. Our civilization is decadent and our language — **so the argument runs** — must inevitably share in the general collapse. It follows that any struggle against the abuse of language is a sentimental archaism, like preferring candles to electric light or hansom cabs to aeroplanes. Underneath this lies the half-conscious belief that language is a natural growth and not an instrument which we shape for our own purposes.

Now, it is clear that the decline of a language must ultimately have political and economic causes: it is not due simply to the bad influence of this or that individual writer. But an effect can become a cause, reinforcing the original cause and producing the same effect in an intensified form, and so on indefinitely. **A man may take to drink because he feels himself to be a failure, and then fail all the more completely because he drinks.** It is rather the same thing that is happening to the English language. It becomes **ugly** and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the **slovenliness** of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts. The point is that the process is reversible. Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble. If one gets rid of these habits one can think more clearly, and to think clearly is a necessary first step toward political regeneration: so that the fight against bad English is not frivolous and is not the exclusive concern of professional writers. **I will come back to this presently**, and I hope that by that time the meaning of what I have said here will have become clearer. Meanwhile, here are five specimens of the English language as it is now habitually written.

**These five passages** have not been picked out because they are especially bad — I could have quoted far worse if I had chosen — but because they illustrate various of the mental vices from which we now suffer. They are a little below the average, but are fairly representative examples. I number them so that I can refer back to them when necessary:

[CONTINUE READING: [HTTP://WWW.ORWELL.RU/LIBRARY/ESSAYS/POLITICS/ENGLISH/E\\_POLIT/](http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e_polit/)]

The introduction engages the reader through the parallel employment of inclusive pronouns and a 'conversational' tone, exemplified in the use of the dashes to express an aside.

The introduction establishes the argument and clearly takes a position: Language influences thought and is by no means a benign organic entity

Use of analogy to support a theory in a logical sequence

Sparing, but effective use of emotive language to emphasise points

Clear discourse markers allowing for the reader to navigate the piece and follow the developing logic

Use of specific examples to support ideas and argument.