YEAR 9 · DYSTOPIAN FICTION

1984: Reading between the lines

How to make an inference and explain what it suggests

- Learn what an inference is, and how to make one
- Zoom in on single words to find methods and meaning
- Link your ideas to why Orwell wrote it

Online lesson · 60 minutes · every step is scaffolded

KEY WORDS FOR TODAY

Say it in plain English

Word	What it means
inference	an idea the writer **hints at** without saying it; you work it out from clues
suggests / implies	“this word makes me think…”
connotation	the extra ideas and feelings a word carries
method	the technique the writer uses (adjective, verb, simile…)
intention	what Orwell **wants** readers to think or feel, and why

SUCCESS CRITERIA

What good work looks like

Level	You can…
All	pick out key words and phrases and say what they suggest
Most	name a method and explain what it suggests, using **suggests** or **implies**
Some	give more than one inference about a single word and link each to Orwell’s intention

You will have sentence starters for every step.

TODAY’S ROUTE

What we are doing

Part	What you do	Time
Starter	Fix the punctuation of five sentences	5 min
1	Background: the world of 1984	6 min
2	Pairs: answer questions, find Orwell’s intention	12 min
3	Learn to make an inference, step by step	15 min
4	Booklet task: find three words with methods and inferences	15 min
5	Push your ideas further, then plenary	7 min

STARTER · 5 MINUTES · PUNCTUATION

Rewrite each sentence correctly

1. winston buys a notebook a pen and a bottle of ink
2. the partys posters are everywhere
3. winston is afraid he knows the telescreen is watching
4. the room was silent winston waited
5. big brother the face on every poster never blinks

Needed: capital letters · comma (lists) · apostrophe (owns) · colon (explains) · semi-colon (joins) · dashes (extra information)

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

Corrected sentences

1. Winston buys a notebook, a pen and a bottle of ink.
2. The Party’s posters are everywhere.
3. Winston is afraid: he knows the telescreen is watching.
4. The room was silent; Winston waited.
5. Big Brother — the face on every poster — never blinks.

Commas, a dash or brackets can all work for the last sentence.

BACKGROUND

The world of 1984

Where and who

Written by George Orwell in **1949**. Set in **Oceania**, ruled by the **Party** and its leader **Big Brother**.

How people are controlled

Telescreens watch everyone. The **Thought Police** punish anyone who thinks the wrong thing. The truth is rewritten.

The story

Winston Smith works rewriting old records. He secretly begins to question the Party.

This extract shows Winston arriving home. **Everything he sees is a clue.**

KEY WORDS BEFORE YOU READ

Words from the extract

Word	Meaning
telescreen	a screen that shows programmes and also watches and listens to you
Thought Police	officers who punish people for what they think
Hate Week	a Party event that makes people hate its enemies
vile	disgusting
gritty	full of rough dirt
snooping	secretly looking into other people’s business

FEEDBACK · 4 MINUTES

Which detail seems the most important?

Type in the chat, starting:

The most important detail is…
because…

Use the glossary and context slides to help you decide.

IN PAIRS · 8 MINUTES

Answer your two questions

No.	Question	Hint	Pairs
1	Where is the story set, and how would you feel living there?	Weather, smell, lift, posters	A, C
2	Who is Winston Smith, and what is he afraid of?	What must he hide from the telescreen?	A, D
3	What is the Party and how does it control people?	Posters, telescreen, patrols	B, D
4	Why would Orwell make telescreens that watch people?	What can a government do if it sees everything?	B, E
5	What warning might Orwell be giving readers?	Real-life governments that control people	C, E

Answer in full sentences, with a **because** in every answer.

FEEDBACK

What was Orwell’s intention?

What is an intention?

What the writer **wants** readers to think, feel or do, and **why**.

Improve your answer

Add a reason with **because** or **this suggests**.

Link

What is Orwell trying to make readers think or feel?

Big idea so far: Orwell shows a controlled society to **warn** us.

LEARN THE SKILL · 1

What is an inference?

Maya slams the door, drops her bag and says “Fine.” without looking at anyone.

What can you tell? The writer never says she is angry, but you **worked it out** from the clues *slams* and *without looking*.

Clue

the words the writer chose

+ What I know

how people really behave

= Inference

“This suggests she is upset.”

LEARN THE SKILL · 2

Inferences from the extract

Quote

“the clocks were striking thirteen”
What I know: clocks normally stop at twelve. **So I infer:** something is wrong; this world is not normal.

Quote

“no way of switching it off completely”
What I know: privacy means being able to switch things off. **So I infer:** Winston can never be private.

Quote

“eyes follow you about”
What I know: pictures cannot really watch. **So I infer:** you feel watched everywhere, even by a picture.

LEARN THE SKILL · 3

The inference ladder

Level 1 · What it says

“There is a poster of a man’s face on every landing.”

Level 2 · What it suggests

“The Party wants everyone to feel watched.”

Level 3 · Orwell’s intention

“Orwell shows watching as inescapable, to warn readers that constant surveillance destroys freedom.”

Aim for **Level 2** every time. Reach for **Level 3** to stretch.

WHERE TO LOOK

Clue map of the extract

Part	Clues about…
Opening sentence	weather and the clocks
The hallway and stairs	smell, the poster, the lift, effort
Inside the flat	the telescreen and the voice
Outside the window	colour, dust, posters, helicopter
The Ministries	power, size, windowless buildings

Pick words that **suggest** something, not just describe.

THE METHOD

Four steps: Spot, Name, Infer, Link

Spot	The word “___” …	Which word jumps out?
Name	The [verb / adjective / simile] “___” …	What type is it?
Infer	…suggests / implies that… so the reader feels…	What does it make you think?
Link	Orwell’s intention is to… / This links to…	Why did he choose it?

TOOLKIT

Methods to look for, with examples

Method	Example from the extract
Adjective	“vile” wind; “gritty” dust
Verb	“slipped” quickly through the doors
Sensory detail	“smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats”
Simile	“like a dulled mirror”; “like a bluebottle”
Capital letters	“BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU”
Personification	the poster “gazed from the wall”

THINK ALOUD

From one word to one idea

Spot

I choose “a swirl of gritty dust”.

Name

“Gritty” is an adjective that appeals to touch.

Infer

“Gritty” suggests rough and unpleasant. The dust blows in with Winston, so he cannot escape the dirty outside. This implies the city is neglected.

Link

Orwell’s intention is to show a place nobody cares for, warning us what happens when a government ignores ordinary people.

MORE WORKED EXAMPLES

Four rows to learn from

Word or phrase	Method	What it suggests	Orwell’s intention
“vile wind”	adjective	even the weather is hostile	make the world feel unwelcoming
“eyes follow you about”	personification	you are watched everywhere	warn about surveillance
“no colour in anything”	contrast / absence	life is dull and joyless	show how the Party drains happiness
“seldom working”	adverb	the Party neglects ordinary people	show a failing, uncaring government

MODEL PARAGRAPH · READ THE THINKING ON THE RIGHT

How does Orwell present the Party’s control?

Point	Orwell presents the Party’s control as impossible to escape through the telescreen.	Answer the question first.
Quote	The phrase “no way of switching it off completely”…	Short, exact, **embedded**.
Method / Infer	…suggests that even at home Winston cannot be private, because “completely” rules out any escape.	Zoom in on **one word**.
Infer	This implies the Party watches at every moment, so people can never relax or speak freely.	Say what it **implies**.
Infer	In addition, the simile “like a dulled mirror” could imply that citizens see only a lifeless version of themselves.	A **second idea**: “In addition…”.
Link	Orwell’s intention is to warn readers that a government with technology can control private life.	Link to **intention**.

BOOKLET TASK · 15 MINUTES

Decipher the methods and intentions

Word or phrase	Method	What it suggests	Orwell’s intention

Choose from: “vile wind” · “torn paper” · “no colour in anything” · “it was seldom working” · “gazed from the wall” · “snooping into people’s windows” · “no windows in it at all”

Mixed groups: share the work, everyone writes it in their booklet.

SENTENCE STARTERS

Choose your level

Support	Core	Stretch
The word “___” suggests… This makes the reader feel… Orwell wants us to think…	The verb / adjective “___” implies that… This could also suggest… Orwell’s intention is to show…	The connotations of “___” are… On a deeper level, it suggests that… By choosing this word rather than ___, Orwell…

Other ways to say “suggests”: implies · hints at · creates the impression · conveys · reveals · links to the idea of

PUSH FURTHER · 10 MINUTES

Challenge your inference

Ask…	Because it makes you…
Which exact word gives you that idea?	zoom in
What else could that word suggest?	give a second view
Why this word, rather than another?	think about Orwell’s choice
How does the reader feel, and what is the intention?	link to the whole text

Share one inference. Others challenge it with a question above.

AVOID THESE

Not this, try this

Instead of…	Try…
“It is descriptive.”	“The adjective ‘gritty’ suggests…”
Saying what the sentence says	Say what it **suggests**
One idea only	“In addition… this could also imply…”
No link to Orwell	“Orwell’s intention is to…”

PLENARY · 5 MINUTES

What were Orwell’s intentions in creating an oppressed society?

Type your answer in the chat. Use **suggests** and **because**.

Support: Orwell creates an oppressed society to show that…
Core: By making the society ___, Orwell suggests that… His intention is to…
Stretch: Orwell’s intention may be to warn that… This is effective because readers might…

Finish: Today I learned that an inference is…