

The Handmaid's Tale

The extract below is taken from the beginning of chapter 45. This point in the novel occurs after the new Ofglen informs Offred that the previous Ofglen hanged herself when she saw the van coming for her. Offred realizes that the authorities of Gilead must have discovered Ofglen's resistance to their regime. Read the excerpt and then complete the activities following it.

I stand a moment, emptied of air, as if I've been kicked.

So she's dead, and I am safe, after all. She did it before they came. I feel great relief. I feel thankful to her. She has died that I may live. I will mourn later.

Unless this woman is lying. There's always that. I breathe in, deeply, breathe out, giving myself oxygen. The space in front of me blackens, then clears. I can see my way. I turn, open the gate, keeping my hand on it a moment to steady myself, walk in. Nick is there, still washing the car, whistling a little. He seems very far away.

Dear God, I think, I will do anything you like. Now that you've let me off, I'll obliterate myself, it that's what you really want; I'll empty myself, truly, become a chalice. I'll give up Nick, I'll forget about the others, I'll stop complaining. I'll accept my lot. I'll sacrifice. I'll repent. I'll abdicate. I'll renounce.

I know this can't be right, but I think it anyway. Everything they taught at the Red Centre, everything I've resisted, comes flooding in. I don't want pain. I don't want to be a dancer, my feet in the air, my head a faceless oblong of white cloth. I don't want to be a doll hung up on the Wall, I don't want to be a wingless angel. I want to keep on living, in any form. I resign my body freely, to the uses of others. They can do what they like with me. I am abject.

I feel, for the first time, their true power.

1. Consider the significance of the following themes and issues in the extract:

- sacrifice
- heroism
- courage
- control and resistance in the Gilead regime
- narrative technique
- language

2. Choose one of the themes or issues above and write an essay about its importance in the novel as a whole. **A minimum of 6 fully explained and properly cited quotations must be used in your essay.** You should use the extract as the starting point of your essay. **This essay is to be typed, double spaced and is due the first day of class. It will be a test grade.**

Example of proper internal citation when citing from a single novel:

“Of all the dreams, this is the worst” (Atwood 75).

Or

“Of all the dreams, this is the worst” (75).

1984

Answer the following questions, in your notebook, while reading 1984. This will be checked the first day of class and will be counted as a quiz grade.

Part One

1. Describe the opening setting.
2. Tell what Mini-Pax, Mini-Luv, Mini-True and Mini-Plenty are.
3. What does Winston Smith do that is considered illegal?
4. Describe Winston’s room.
5. What is *The Book*?
6. Who is Emanuel Goldstein?
7. Who is Big Brother?
8. What does one do during the 2 minutes of Hate?
9. What does it mean to be **vaporized**?
10. Use a quotation from the novel to identify the following:
 - O’Brien
 - Parson Family
 - Dark-haired girl
 - Syme
11. Who is Katherine? What happened to her?
12. Define the following:
 - Double Think

- Newspeak
- Ingsoc
- Duck Speak
- Thought Crime

13. What is Winston's job? Describe exactly what he does.
14. In what context is the Chestnut Tree Café mentioned?
15. What are the slogans of the Party?
16. What is the antique shop and why is it unique?
17. Describe Winston's encounter with the prostitute.
18. Winston has several dreams. Detail them.
19. What are: the proles; Inner Party; Outer Party?

Part Two

1. What does the note, which was passed to Winston, say?
2. How do Winston and Julia meet?
3. What does the reader find out about society from Julia and Winston's conversation?
4. What does Winston understand about the Party that Julia does not? How do their philosophies differ?
5. Why is Winston happy to find out that Julia has had many sexual partners?
6. What happens to Syme?
7. Describe O'Brien's apartment.
8. What conclusions can you draw about O'Brien and the Inner Party from his apartment?
9. What do Winston, Julia and O'Brien discuss?
10. What is the one thing that both Julia and Winston tell O'Brien they refuse to do?
11. What happens in the room at the end of Part Two? What does the reader find out?

Part Three

1. What is Winston's imprisonment like?
2. How is Winston "educated"?
3. What does Winston think when he hears O'Brien?
4. What is Room 101?
5. At what point does Winston betray himself as not "Re-educated"?
6. How or when does the reader know Winston is broken?
7. Where does Winston find himself at the end of 1984?
8. What do you think probably happens to Winston and Julia at the end? Why do you think this?