



Key Vocabulary Help

'1984' by George Orwell

1. **contrived**

Showing effects of planning or manipulation

*It was one of those pictures which are so **contrived** that the eyes follow you about when you move (1-2). [Book 1, Chapter 1]*

2. **sordid**

Foul and run-down and repulsive

*"...and the places where the bombs had cleared a larger path and there had sprung up **sordid** colonies of wooden dwellings like chicken houses?" (3). [Book 1, Chapter 1]*

3. **archaic**

So extremely old as seeming to belong to an earlier period

*"The pen was an **archaic** instrument, seldom used even for signatures...." (6). [Book 1, Chapter 1]*

4. **interminable**

Tiresomely long; seemingly without end

*"All he had to do was to transfer to paper the **interminable** restless monologue that had been running inside his head...." (7-8). [Book 1, Chapter 1]*



5. dissemble

Behave unnaturally or affectedly

*"To **dissemble** your feelings, to control your face, to do what everyone else was doing, was an instinctive reaction" (17). [Book 1, Chapter 1]*

6. sanctioned

Formally approved and invested with legal authority

*"Repairs, except what you could do for yourself, had to be **sanctioned** by remote committees which were liable to hold up even the mending of a window pane for two years" (21). [Book 1 Chapter 2]*

7. demeanor

The way a person behaves toward other people

*"Winston raised his hands above his head, but with an uneasy feeling, so vicious was the boy's **demeanor**, that it was not altogether a game" (23). [Book 1, Chapter 2]*

8. clamor

Utter or proclaim insistently and noisily

*"Children always **clamored** to be taken to see [the hanging of criminals]" (23). [Book 1, Chapter 2]*

9. unorthodox

Breaking with convention or tradition

"Another year, two years, and [those children] would be watching [Mrs. Parsons] night and day for symptoms of unorthodoxy" (24). [Book 1, Chapter 2]



10. reproach

A mild rebuke or criticism

*"There was no **reproach** either in their faces or in their hearts, only the knowledge that they must die in order that he might remain alive...." (30-31). [Book 1, Chapter 3]*

11. disdainful

Expressing extreme contempt

"With what seemed a single movement she tore off her clothes and flung them disdainfully aside" (31). [Book 1, Chapter 3]

12. furtive

Marked by quiet and caution and secrecy

*"But that was merely a piece of **furtive** knowledge which he happened to possess because his memory was not satisfactorily under control" (34). [Book 1, Chapter 3]*

13. repudiate

Refuse to acknowledge, ratify, or recognize as valid

*"...to **repudiate** morality while laying claim to it...." (35). [Book 1, Chapter 3]*

14. inscrutable

Difficult or impossible to understand

*"His face remained completely **inscrutable**" (36). [Book 1, Chapter 3]*



15. subtlety

The quality of being difficult to detect or analyze

*"...to apply the same process to the process itself--that was the ultimate **subtlety**: consciously to induce unconsciousness, and then, once again, to become unconscious of the act of hypnosis you had just performed" (35). [Book 1, Chapter 3]*

16. intricate

Having many complexly arranged elements; elaborate

*"It was an **intricate** and responsible job and had better be dealt with last" (38). [Book 1, Chapter 4]*

17. supersede

Take the place or move into the position of

*"The largest section of the Records Department, far larger than the one in which Winston worked, consisted simply of persons whose duty it was to track down and collect all copies of books, newspapers, and other documents which had been **superseded** and were due for destruction" (40). [Book 1, Chapter 4]*

18. multifarious

Having many aspects

*"And the Ministry had not only to supply the **multifarious** needs of the Party but also to repeat the whole operation at a lower level for the benefit of the proletariat" (43). [Book 1, Chapter 4]*



19. heretical

Departing from accepted beliefs or standards

*"Perhaps Withers or someone close to him had been suspected of **heretical** tendencies" (45).
[Book 1, Chapter 4]*

20. implicate

Bring into intimate and incriminating connection

*"Very occasionally some persons whom you had believed dead long since would make a ghostly reappearance at some public trial where he would **implicate** hundreds of others by his testimony before vanishing, this time forever" (46). [Book 1, Chapter 4]*

21. obsolete

No longer in use

*"The Eleventh Edition won't contain a single word that won't become **obsolete** before the year 2050" (51). [Book 1, Chapter 5]*

22. vapid

Lacking significance or liveliness or spirit or zest

*"A sort of **vapid** eagerness flitted across Winston's face at the mention of Big Brother" (52).
[Book 1, Chapter 6]*

23. venerate

Regard with feelings of respect and reverence

*"He believed in the principles of Ingsoc, he **venerated** Big Brother, he rejoiced over victories, he hated heretics, not merely with sincerity but with a sort of restless zeal, and up-to-dateness of information, which the ordinary Party member did not approach" (55). [Book 1, Chapter 5]*



24. proliferate

Grow rapidly

*"It was curious how that beetlelike type **proliferated** in the Ministries: little dumpy men, growing stout very early in life, with short legs, swift scuttling movements, and fat inscrutable faces with very small eyes" (60). [Book 1, Chapter 5]*

25. incredulous

Not disposed or willing to believe; unbelieving

*"In any case, to wear an improper expression on your face (to look **incredulous** when a victory was announced, for example) was itself a punishable offense" (62). [Book 1, Chapter 5]*

26. inextricable

Incapable of being disentangled or untied

"Only the proles used scent. In his mind the smell of it was inextricably mixed up with fornication" (65). [Book 1, Chapter 6]

27. martial

Suggesting war or military life

*"By careful early conditioning, by games and cold water, by the rubbish that was dinned into them at school and in the Spies and the Youth League, by lectures, parades, songs, slogans, and **martial** music, the natural feeling had been driven out of them" (68). [Book 1, Chapter 6]*



28. impregnable

Incapable of being attacked or tampered with

*"They were all **impregnable**, as the Party intended that they should be" (68). [Book 1, Chapter 6]*

29. formidable

Extremely impressive in strength or excellence

*"It was a great **formidable** cry of anger and despair, a deep loud 'Oh-o-o-o-oh!' that went humming on like the reverberation of a bell" (70). [Book 1, Chapter 7]*

30. grievance

A complaint about a wrong that causes resentment

*"And even when they became discontented, as they sometimes did, their discontent led nowhere, because, being without general ideas, they could only focus it on petty specific **grievances**" (72). [Book 1, Chapter 7]*

31. listless

Lacking zest or vivacity

"It struck him that the truly characteristic thing about modern life was not its cruelty and insecurity, but simply its bareness, its dinginess, its listlessness" (74). [Book 1, Chapter 7]

32. abject

Most unfortunate or miserable

*"All three had written long, **abject** articles in the Times, analyzing the reasons for their defection and promising to make amends" (76). [Book 1, Chapter 7]*



33. tacitly

By unexpressed agreement

*"Not merely the validity of experience, but the very existence of external reality, was **tacitly** denied by their philosophy" (80). [Book 1, Chapter 7]*

34. strident

Unpleasantly loud and harsh

*"The **strident** voices stopped abruptly. The women studied him in hostile silence as he went past" (83). [Book 1, Chapter 8]*

35. conspicuous

Obvious to the eye or mind

*"With the feeling that he would be less **conspicuous** inside than hanging about on the pavement, he stepped through the doorway" (94). [Book 1, Chapter 8]*

36. acrid

Strong and sharp, as a taste or smell

*He was everywhere at once, pushing, pulling, sawing, hammering, improvising, jollying everyone along with comradely exhortations and giving out from every fold of his body what seemed an inexhaustible supply of **acrid**-smelling sweat. [Book 2, Chapter 5]*

37. subside

Wear off or die down

*He had grown fatter, his varicose ulcer had **subsided**, leaving only a brown stain on the skin above his ankle, his fits of coughing in the early morning had stopped. [Book 2, Chapter 5]*



38. inviolate

Safe from harm or desecration

*Now that they had a secure hiding-place, almost a home, it did not even seem a hardship that they could only meet infrequently and for a couple of hours at a time. What mattered was that the room over the junk-shop should exist. To know that it was there, **inviolate**, was almost the same as being in it. The room was a world, a pocket of the past where extinct animals could walk. [Book 2, Chapter 5]*

39. palpable

Capable of being perceived

*'If there is hope,' he had written in the diary, 'it lies in the proles.' The words kept coming back to him, statement of a mystical truth and a **palpable** absurdity. [Book 2, Chapter 5]*

40. mutable

Capable of or tending to change in form or quality or nature

Whenever he began to talk of the principles of Ingsoc, doublethink, the mutability of the past, and the denial of objective reality, and to use Newspeak words, she became bored and confused and said that she never paid any attention to that kind of thing. [Book 2, Chapter 5]

41. intermittent

Stopping and starting at irregular intervals

*He remembered better the rickety, uneasy circumstances of the time: the periodical panics about air-raids and the sheltering in Tube stations, the piles of rubble everywhere, the unintelligible proclamations posted at street corners, the gangs of youths in shirts all the same colour, the enormous queues outside the bakeries, the **intermittent** machine-gun fire in the distance--above all, the fact that there was never enough to eat. [Book 2, Chapter 7]*



42. superfluous

More than is needed, desired, or required

*She did everything that was needed--cooked, washed, mended, made the bed, swept the floor, dusted the mantelpiece--always very slowly and with a curious lack of **superfluous** motion, like an artist's lay-figure moving of its own accord. [Book 2, Chapter 7]*

43. beseech

Ask for or request earnestly

*At every meal she would **beseech** him not to be selfish and to remember that his little sister was sick and also needed food, but it was no use. [Book 2, Chapter 7]*

44. remonstrance

The act of expressing earnest opposition or protest

*There was a long, nagging argument that went round and round, with shouts, whines, tears, **remonstrances**, bargainings. [Book 2, Chapter 7]*

45. avert

Turn away or aside

*It was no use, it changed nothing, it did not produce more chocolate, it did not **avert** the child's death or her own. [Book 2, Chapter 7]*

46. folly

Foolish or senseless behavior

*"It had been a rash act to come here at all, and sheer **folly** to arrive together; though it was true that they had come by different routes and only met on O'Brien's doorstep" (167).*



47. equivocal

Open to two or more interpretations

*"For what evidence had he in reality that O'Brien was any kind of political conspirator? Nothing but a flash of the eyes and a single **equivocal** remark: beyond that, only his own secret imaginings, founded on a dream" (169).*

48. catechism

An elementary book summarizing the principles of a religion

*"He began asking his questions in a low, expressionless voice, as though this were a routine, a sort of **catechism**, most of whose answers were known to him already" (172).*

49. deprive

Take away

*"It appeared to Winston that a long time passed before he answered. For a moment he seemed even to have been **deprived** of the power of speech. His tongue worked soundlessly, forming the opening syllables first of one word, then of the other, over and over again" (173).*

50. grave

Requiring serious thought

*"Again O'Brien nodded. With a sort of **grave** courtesy he completed the stanza" (178).*



51. delirium

A usually brief state of excitement and mental confusion

*"...after six days of this, when the great orgasm was quivering to its climax and the general hatred of Eurasia had boiled up into such **delirium** that if the crowd could have got their hands on the 2,000 Eurasian war-criminals who were to be publicly hanged on the last day of the proceedings, they would unquestionably have torn them to pieces" (180).*

52. lurid

Glaringly vivid and graphic; marked by sensationalism

"It was night, and the white faces and the scarlet banners were luridly floodlit. The square was packed with several thousand people, including a block of about a thousand schoolchildren in the uniform of the Spies" (180).

53. feral

Wild and menacing

*"One minute more, and the **feral** roars of rage were again bursting from the crowd. The Hate continued exactly as before, except that the target had been changed" (181).*

54. infallible

Incapable of failure or error

*"Given this background, one could infer, if one did not know it already, the general structure of Oceanic society. At the apex of the pyramid comes Big Brother. Big Brother is **infallible** and all-powerful" (208).*



55. profound

Showing intellectual penetration or emotional depth

*"He fell asleep murmuring 'Sanity is not statistical,' with the feeling that this remark contained in it a **profound** wisdom" (217).*

56. surly

Unfriendly and inclined toward anger or irritation

*"He remembered a **surly** barber arriving to scrape his chin and crop his hair, and businesslike, unsympathetic men in white coats feeling his pulse, tapping his reflexes, turning up his eyelids, running harsh fingers over him in search for broken bones, and shooting needles into his arm to make him sleep" (230).*

57. respite

A pause from doing something

*"It was he who decided when Winston should scream with pain, when he should have a **respite**, when he should be fed, when he should sleep, when the drugs should be pumped into his arm" (244).*

58. ebb

Flow back or recede

*"The grip of his limbs tightened again, but the pain had **ebbed** away and the trembling had stopped, leaving him merely weak and cold" (251).*



59. wanton

Unprovoked or without motive or justification

"He felt certain that O'Brien was about to twist the dial out of sheer wantonness" (253).

60. penitence

Remorse for your past conduct

*"Even those three miserable traitors in whose innocence you once believed -- Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford -- in the end we broke them down. I took part in their interrogation myself. I saw them gradually worn down, whimpering, grovelling, weeping -- and in the end it was not with pain or fear, only with **penitence**" (255).*

61. evade

Escape, either physically or mentally

*"The dial, also, had grown to be less of a terror. He could **evade** its pangs if he was quick-witted enough: it was chiefly when he showed stupidity that O'Brien pulled the lever" (261).*

62. relinquish

Part with a possession or right

*"We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of **relinquishing** it. Power is not a means, it is an end" (263).*

63. solipsism

The philosophical theory that the self is all that exists

*"I told you, Winston," he said, "that metaphysics is not your strong point. The word you are trying to think of is **solipsism**. But you are mistaken. This is not **solipsism**. Collective **solipsism**, if you like" (266).*



64. digression

A message that departs from the main subject

*"But that is a different thing: in fact, the opposite thing. All this is a **digression**," he added in a different tone" (266).*

65. contemptible

Deserving of scorn or disrespect

*"Always we shall have the heretic here at our mercy, screaming with pain, broken up, **contemptible** -- and in the end utterly penitent, saved from himself, crawling to our feet of his own accord" (268).*