CAPITOLO

10

Dreams and Nightmares: Fitzgerald, Huxley and Orwell

'Who controls the past,' ran the Party slogan, 'controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.' — George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949), I.3

OBIETTIVI

1. I can outline the years 1920–1949 — the Jazz Age, Prohibition, the Crash and the Depression, the dictators, the Second World War and the start of the Cold War — with the key dates.
2. I can explain the American Dream, the Jazz Age and the Lost Generation, and analyse Fitzgerald's narrator and symbols in *The Great Gatsby*.
3. I can define dystopia, Newspeak and doublethink, and analyse how Orwell uses fable and dystopia to expose power.
4. I can edit my own writing for clarity and concision, using Orwell's six rules.
5. I can plan, write and edit an essay on a quotation under time limits, and discuss a hypothetical scenario.
6. I can compare Orwell's Party with Plato's guardians and with Fascist control of the press, and explain nuclear fission in plain words.

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In 1925 an American novel ended with a man stretching out his arms towards a green light across the water. In 1949 an English novel began with a face on a poster whose eyes follow you up the stairs. Between those two images lie the richest decade America had known, the worst economic collapse of modern times, the rise of the dictators, a second world war and the first atomic bombs. The writers of this chapter lived through all of it, and each of them asked the same question in a different form: what happens to a dream — of wealth, of equality, of a better society — when it meets reality?

F. Scott Fitzgerald answered with a love story set among millionaires on Long Island. Aldous Huxley imagined a world in which everybody is happy because nobody is free. George Orwell, who had seen empire in Burma, poverty in England and revolution in Spain, wrote a fable about farm animals and a nightmare about a state that rewrites the past. Orwell also wrote about something closer to your own desk: how bad English helps bad politics, and how a writer can fight back by writing clearly. That is the language point of this chapter — editing your own writing — and the skill you will practise is the one the colloquio and every essay ask of you: taking a quotation and arguing about it.

10.1 History and Society: Boom, Crash and War, 1920–1949

Chapter 9 followed Britain into the 1920s. This section crosses the Atlantic first, then returns to Europe as the democracies face the dictators. Follow the dates on the timeline in Figura 10.1: in thirty years the world went from jazz to the atomic bomb.

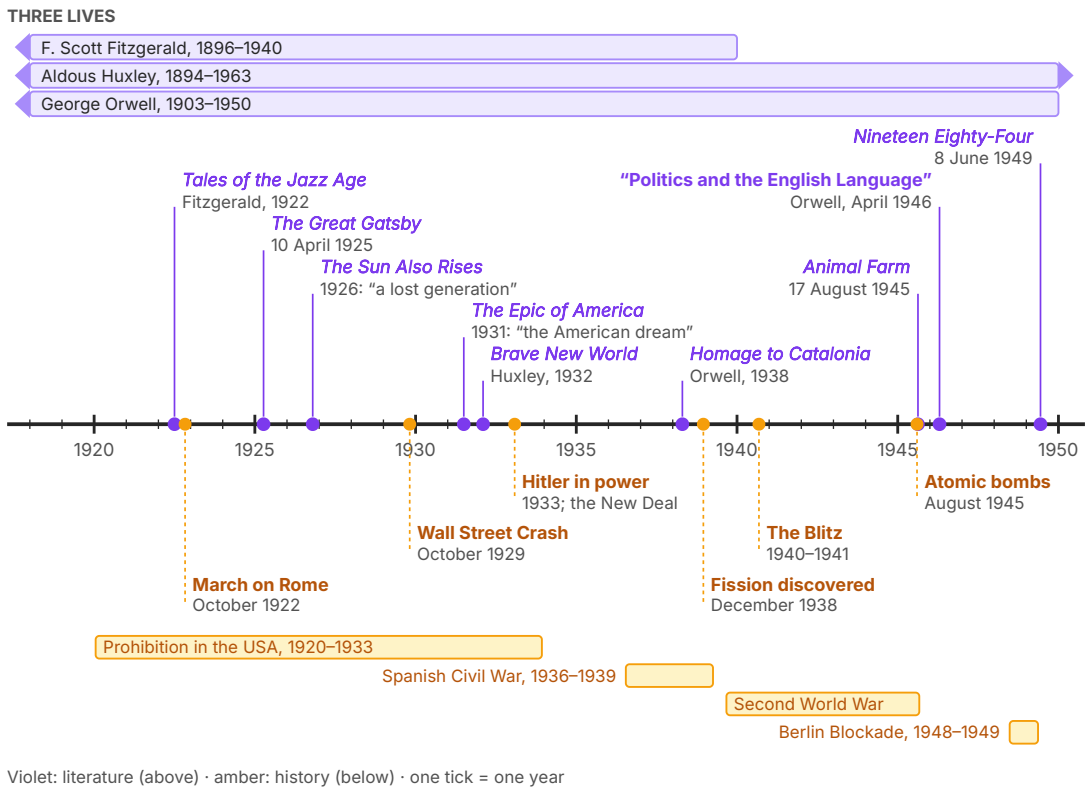


Figura 10.1 Fitzgerald, Huxley and Orwell: lives (top), works (above the axis, violet) and events (below, amber), 1918–1950, on a proportional axis. Huxley lived until 1963.

10.1.1 The Jazz Age: boom and Prohibition

The United States came out of the First World War as the richest country in the world. In the 1920s millions of families bought their first car, radio or refrigerator, often *on credit*, paying in monthly instalments. Cities grew upwards with skyscrapers; Hollywood made the cinema a mass entertainment; and jazz, born among the Black musicians of New Orleans, travelled with them north to Chicago and to Harlem in New York. Young women cut their hair short, wore short dresses and danced the Charleston: the newspapers called them *flappers*.

The same decade tried to make the nation sober. **Prohibition** (*proibizionismo*) was introduced by the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in January 1919, and lasted from 1920 to 1933: it banned the production, import, transport and sale of alcoholic drinks. Drinking did not stop; it went underground. Illegal bars called **speakeasies** (probably because customers had to speak quietly about them) opened in every city, smugglers known as *bootleggers* supplied them, and organised crime grew rich on the trade — Al Capone in Chicago is the famous name.

In 1933 the Twenty-first Amendment repealed the Eighteenth, the only time in American history that one amendment has been passed to cancel another.

10.1.2 The Crash and the Great Depression

In the late 1920s share prices rose so fast that ordinary people borrowed money to buy shares, sure that they would sell them later at a profit. The Dow Jones Industrial Average, the best-known index of the New York Stock Exchange, reached its peak on 3 September 1929. In October the bubble burst: on 28 and 29 October, "Black Monday" and "Black Tuesday", the index lost 23% in two days. This was the *Wall Street Crash*. The fall then continued for almost three years, until July 1932, when the index stood almost 90% below its peak (Figura 10.2).

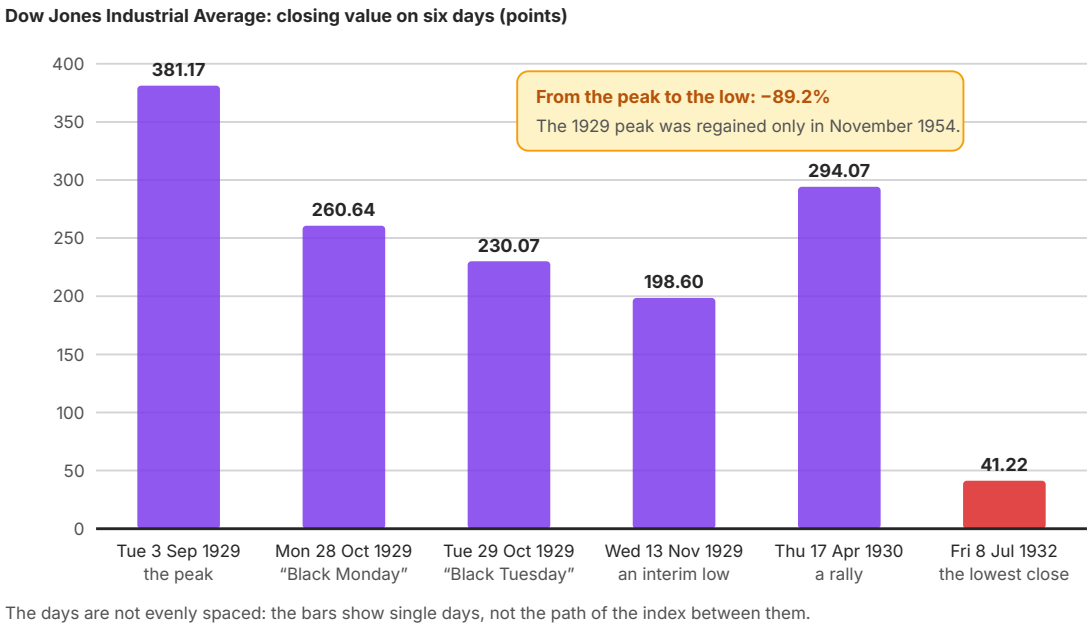


Figura 10.2 The Dow Jones Industrial Average on six days between 1929 and 1932: closing values as given in the English Wikipedia article "Wall Street crash of 1929" (retrieved October 2026). Each bar is one day; the path of the index between them is not shown.

The crash was followed by the **Great Depression** (*Grande depressione*), the deepest economic crisis of the twentieth century. Thousands of banks failed and took their customers' savings with them; factories closed; farmers could not sell their crops; millions of workers lost their jobs. Because American banks called back the loans they had made abroad, the crisis spread to Europe, and above all to Germany. Historians still debate its causes, and they agree that the crash was one cause among several, not the only one.

In 1932 Americans elected Franklin D. Roosevelt president. From 1933 his **New Deal** used the power of the federal government to fight the crisis: public works that gave jobs to millions, help for farmers, new rules for banks and the stock market, and in 1935 the Social Security Act, which introduced pensions for the old and benefits for the unemployed. The New Deal did not end the Depression on its own, but it changed for ever the idea of what a government owes its citizens.

10.1.3 The age of the dictators

In Europe the crisis helped men who promised order and greatness. Benito Mussolini had been in power in Italy since October 1922; in Germany Adolf Hitler became chancellor on 30 January 1933 and within months had abolished every other party; in the Soviet Union Joseph Stalin, who had won the struggle to succeed Lenin (d. 1924) by the end of the 1920s, launched the Great Terror: according to the secret police's own records, in 1937–1938 alone about one and a half million people were arrested and some 680,000 of them shot. Different as their ideas were, these regimes shared the features that political scientists call **totalitarianism** (*totalitarismo*): one party, one leader presented as almost superhuman, a secret police, propaganda in every newspaper, school and radio, and the claim to control not only what people did but what they thought. The word itself is Italian: in 1923 the anti-fascist Giovanni Amendola used it to describe Mussolini's government, and the regime later adopted it with pride.

In July 1936 army officers led by Francisco Franco rose against the elected government of the Spanish Republic. The Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) became a rehearsal for the larger war to come: Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany sent troops and aircraft to Franco, the Soviet Union sent weapons to the Republic, and volunteers from many countries went to fight for it. One of them was a British writer called George Orwell. Franco won in April 1939.

10.1.4 The Second World War

Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939; on 3 September Britain and France declared war. In 1940 Germany conquered most of Western Europe; Winston Churchill became prime minister, and Britain fought on alone. From September 1940 to May 1941 German bombers attacked London and other cities night after night: *the Blitz*. The Soviet Union, invaded in 1941, and the United States, attacked by Japan at Pearl Harbor in December 1941, turned the war into a world war.

Behind the front, Nazi Germany carried out the **Holocaust** (*Shoah*): between 1941 and 1945, with the help of collaborators, it systematically murdered around six million Jews — about two thirds of the Jews of Europe — by mass shootings and in extermination camps such as Auschwitz. The war in Europe ended on 8 May 1945. On 6 and 9 August 1945 the United States dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Japan surrendered. The bomb was the result of a discovery made in a Berlin laboratory in 1938 (Connections).

10.1.5 A cold peace

The two great winners of the war, the United States and the Soviet Union, soon became rivals. In March 1946 Churchill, speaking in Fulton, Missouri, said that an "iron curtain" had descended across Europe; in 1948–1949 the Soviet Union blockaded West Berlin, and the Western allies supplied it by air for almost a year. The **Cold War** (*guerra fredda*) — a long confrontation between the two superpowers, fought with propaganda, spies, arms races and wars in other countries, but never directly — had begun. The phrase itself appears in an essay of October 1945, "You and the Atomic Bomb": its author was Orwell, who imagined a world divided between a few super-states, each too strong to be conquered and permanently at "cold war" with the others. Four years later he gave that world a name: Oceania.

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ «Il proibizionismo vietava agli americani di bere alcolici.» → ✓ L'Emendamento vietava la **produzione, l'importazione, il trasporto e la vendita** di alcolici; bere in sé non era un reato. Proprio per questo il commercio illegale prosperò.

✗ «Il crollo di Wall Street del 1929 fu la causa della Grande depressione.» → ✓ Fu **una delle cause**: gli storici ricordano anche il fallimento di migliaia di banche, i debiti delle famiglie, il calo della domanda e la crisi del commercio mondiale. In un tema scrivi *one of the causes*, non *the cause*.

✗ «Orwell inventò la guerra fredda.» → ✓ Orwell usò l'espressione *cold war* nel 1945 per descrivere un futuro possibile; la guerra fredda come fatto storico cominciò negli anni successivi.

10.2 Literature: the Dream and the Nightmare

10.2.1 F. Scott Fitzgerald and the Jazz Age

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald (1896–1940) was born in St Paul, Minnesota, in the Middle West, studied at Princeton without taking a degree, and became famous overnight with his first novel, *This Side of Paradise* (1920). In the same year he married Zelda Sayre, and the young couple became a symbol of their generation: rich, glamorous, always at parties, in New York, in Paris, on the French Riviera — and always in debt. His collection of stories *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922) gave the decade its name. The **Jazz Age** (*l'età del jazz*) is the America of the 1920s seen through its music, its parties and its new freedoms — and, in Fitzgerald's stories, through its emptiness.

Many writers of those years felt that the old values had died in the trenches of the First World War. The American writer Gertrude Stein, who lived in Paris, is credited with calling them a "lost generation"; Ernest Hemingway made the phrase famous as the epigraph of his

novel *The Sun Also Rises* (1926). The **Lost Generation** (*generazione perduta*) is the name given to these writers — Hemingway, Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos and others — and to the young people who came of age during the war. Hemingway's novels (*A Farewell to Arms*, 1929, set partly on the Italian front) are still protected by copyright, so we only mention them here.

The Great Gatsby was published on 10 April 1925. Its narrator is Nick Carraway, a young man from the Middle West who moves East in the spring of 1922 to work in the bond business in New York. He rents a small house at West Egg, on Long Island, next to the enormous mansion of a mysterious millionaire, Jay Gatsby, who gives wild parties every weekend. Across the bay, in fashionable East Egg, live Nick's cousin Daisy and her rich, brutal husband Tom Buchanan. Little by little Nick discovers Gatsby's secret. He was born James Gatz, the son of poor farmers; he met Daisy in 1917, when he was a young officer with no money, and lost her; he has made a fortune — by dubious means — only to win her back. Every night he looks across the water at the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. The dream ends in a car accident, a murder and a funeral that almost nobody attends.

Gatsby is the purest example in literature of the **American Dream** (*il sogno americano*): the belief that in America anyone, however humble, can rise through effort and become whatever he wants to be. The idea is as old as the Declaration of Independence and its "pursuit of happiness", but the phrase itself was made popular in 1931, six years after Gatsby, by the historian James Truslow Adams. Fitzgerald's novel shows the dream from two sides. Gatsby really does reinvent himself; but the old-money world of Tom and Daisy never accepts him, his wealth is built on crime, and what he wants is not the future but a moment of the past — Daisy as she was in 1917. Nick, who tells the story, is both inside it and outside it: a *first-person narrator* (English 4, chapter 6) who admires Gatsby and judges everybody else, so that readers still argue about how far to trust him.

Three images hold the novel together, and each is a *symbol*: the **green light** (hope, money, the colour of the dollar, the future that moves away as you approach it); the **valley of ashes**, a grey industrial wasteland between Long Island and New York, where the poor live (the price of the rich world's glitter); and the huge eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg on a faded advertising board, which seem to watch over the valley like the eyes of an absent God.

APPROFONDIMENTO

How Gatsby became "great". The novel was not a success at first. It sold fewer than 20,000 copies by October 1925, much less than Fitzgerald's earlier books, and when he died in Hollywood in December 1940, at forty-four, he believed that he was a failure and that his work was forgotten. During the Second World War, an organisation of American publishers, the Council on Books in Wartime, distributed free copies of *The Great Gatsby* to soldiers serving overseas. A generation of young readers discovered it; critics re-read it; and within a few years it had become one of the most studied novels in American schools. A book's fame, like a stock price, can collapse and recover.

10.2.2 From utopia to dystopia

You met the word *utopia* with Thomas More (English 3, chapter 8): an ideal society, and a Greek pun — *ou-topos*, "no place", which sounds like *eu-topos*, "good place". A **dystopia** (*distopia*) is its opposite: an imagined society, usually in the future, in which life is controlled, unjust and frightening, described as a warning about tendencies already present in the writer's own time. The word combines the Greek prefix *dys-*, "bad", with *topos*; in a parliamentary speech of 1868 John Stuart Mill attacked his opponents as "dys-topians", one of the earliest recorded uses of the idea. A utopia asks "how could society be perfect?"; a dystopia asks "what would happen if we pursued someone's idea of perfection to the end?"

Aldous Huxley (1894–1963) published *Brave New World* in 1932. It is set in London in the year 632 "After Ford" (AD 2540), in a World State where babies are produced in laboratories and conditioned, partly by lessons repeated while they sleep, to belong to one of five castes, from the clever Alphas to the Epsilons who do the simplest work. Everybody is kept happy with entertainment, easy sex and a drug called *soma*; the state's motto is "Community, Identity, Stability". John "the Savage", who has grown up outside it reading Shakespeare, cannot accept a happiness without love, art, pain or freedom. The title is a quotation from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (Act V), where Miranda, who has never seen other people, cries out at the "brave new world" of human beings. Huxley's use of it is bitterly ironic. Huxley died in 1963: his novel is still in copyright, so we summarise it.

IN SINTESI

Two dystopias

- **Control.** *Brave New World*: through pleasure, comfort and conditioning — people are trained to enjoy their lack of freedom. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: through fear, surveillance and pain — people obey or disappear.
- **The past.** Huxley: nobody cares about history ("history is bunk" is a remark attributed to Henry Ford, the World State's god). Orwell: history is rewritten every day by the Ministry of Truth.
- **Language.** Huxley: slogans repeated in sleep. Orwell: Newspeak, a language designed to make rebellious thought impossible.
- **Technology.** Huxley: biology and drugs. Orwell: the telescreen, which watches as well as broadcasts.
- **Hope.** Huxley: John the Savage, who refuses and is destroyed. Orwell: the proles — "if there is hope", Winston writes, it lies with them.

10.2.3 George Orwell

George Orwell was the pen name of Eric Arthur Blair (1903–1950). Born in Motihari, in British India, and educated at Eton, he served in the Indian Imperial Police in Burma (1922–1927) and came home hating the empire. He lived among tramps and dishwashers for his first book, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), and reported on the unemployed of the North in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937). In December 1936 he went to Spain to fight for the Republic in the militia of a small left-wing party, the POUM; in May 1937 a sniper's bullet passed through his throat. When the Communists suppressed the POUM, he had to escape from Spain. In *Homage to Catalonia* (1938) he told the story of his war and of the lies printed about it. From then on, he wrote, all his serious work was aimed against totalitarianism and in favour of democratic socialism.

Animal Farm, subtitled "A Fairy Story", was written between November 1943 and February 1944, when the Soviet Union was Britain's ally. Several publishers refused it — at Faber and Faber, T. S. Eliot praised its writing and still turned it down — and it appeared only on 17 August 1945. It is a **fable** (*favola*): a short story in which animals act like human beings in order to teach a lesson, a form as old as Aesop and Phaedrus. Inspired by the old boar Old Major, the animals of Manor Farm drive out their drunken owner and paint their principles on the barn wall as the Seven Commandments. The pigs, who are the cleverest animals, take charge; Napoleon expels his rival Snowball, uses dogs as his secret police, and with the help of his spokesman Squealer changes the Commandments one by one. Orwell said that the story was based on the history of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and of Stalin's dictatorship, so it is also an *allegory* (English 3, chapter 7): Old Major suggests Marx and Lenin, Napoleon Stalin, Snowball Trotsky, and the loyal, hard-working horse Boxer the workers who believed in the revolution.

Nineteen Eighty-Four, written largely on the Scottish island of Jura while Orwell was gravely ill with tuberculosis, was published on 8 June 1949. Britain is now Airstrip One, a province of Oceania, one of three super-states permanently at war. Oceania is ruled by the Party, whose leader is Big Brother — a face on every poster that nobody has ever seen in person. Winston Smith, a member of the Outer Party, works at the Ministry of Truth, where his job is to rewrite old newspapers so that the past always agrees with the Party's present: inconvenient documents are destroyed in the "memory holes", and people who have been "vaporised" become *unpersons*, as if they had never existed. Every home has a *telescreen* that broadcasts propaganda and watches whoever is in front of it; the Thought Police punish even private thoughts. Winston begins a secret diary and a love affair with Julia, and trusts a member of the Inner Party, O'Brien. O'Brien betrays them; in Room 101 Winston is broken, and the novel ends with him loving Big Brother. The structure of power in Oceania is shown in Figura 10.3.

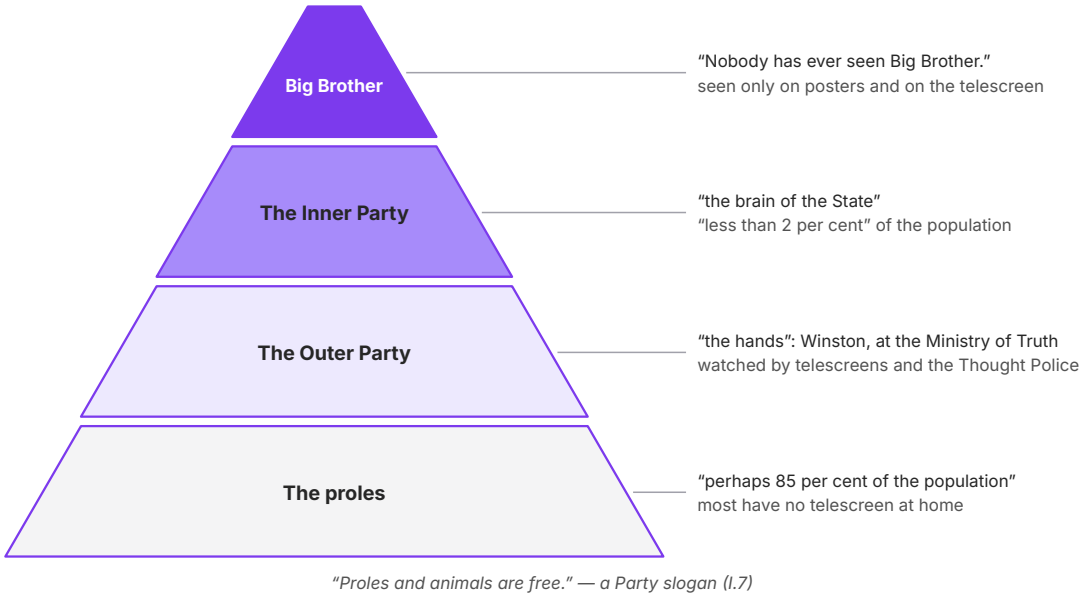


Figura 10.3 The structure of power in Oceania, as described in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Goldstein's book, II.9, and I.7). The quoted phrases are Orwell's; the shape is schematic, not to scale.

Two of Orwell's inventions have become part of the English language. **Newspeak** (*neolingua*) is the official language of Oceania, explained in an appendix to the novel: a language that becomes smaller every year, from which words like *freedom* in its political sense have been removed, so that rebellious ideas will literally be impossible to express. **Doublethink** (*bipensiero*) is the ability to hold two contradictory beliefs at the same time and accept both — to know that the past has been changed and to believe at the same time that it has not. The Party's three slogans are doublethink made visible:

> WAR IS PEACE
> FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
> IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH
> — George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), I.1

Orwell died in University College Hospital, London, on 21 January 1950, seven months after the novel appeared. Three years earlier, in April 1946, he had published in the magazine *Horizon* an essay that explains why Newspeak frightened him: "Politics and the English Language". It argues that vague, worn-out, pompous English is not only ugly but dangerous, because it lets politicians defend the indefensible without making anyone see it. You will use its rules in the Language section.

DA RICORDARE

Six terms of this chapter. Jazz Age — the 1920s in America (Fitzgerald's phrase) · **Lost Generation** — the writers marked by the First World War (Stein's phrase, made famous by Hemingway in 1926) · **American Dream** — success for anyone who works for it (popularised by J. T. Adams, 1931) · **dystopia** — a nightmare society that warns the present · **Newspeak** — a language made to stop thought · **doublethink** — believing two contradictory things at once.

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ «Gatsby racconta la sua storia.» → ✓ Il narratore è **Nick Carraway**, testimone e amico: Gatsby lo conosciamo solo attraverso di lui.

✗ «Fitzgerald inventò l'espressione "American Dream".» → ✓ L'espressione fu resa popolare dallo storico **J. T. Adams** nel 1931; *Gatsby* è del 1925.

✗ «*Animal Farm* è un libro per bambini.» → ✓ È una **favola politica** e un'allegoria della Rivoluzione russa e dello stalinismo: gli animali parlano, ma il bersaglio è il potere.

✗ «Big Brother è il dittatore di Oceania.» → ✓ Nel romanzo **nessuno lo ha mai visto**: è il volto con cui il Partito si presenta. Forse non esiste nemmeno.

10.3 Texts: a Green Light, a Wall and a Clock

Three endings and a beginning: the last lines of *The Great Gatsby*, the last Commandment on the barn wall of *Animal Farm*, and the first lines of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In each, look at how a single concrete object — a light, a wall, a poster — carries the meaning of the whole book.

10.3.1 T1 · F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, ch. 9: "boats against the current"

Context. Gatsby is dead, and Nick is about to go back to the Middle West. On his last night he walks down to Gatsby's empty beach and looks across the dark bay towards Daisy's house. In the paragraph just before the extract he imagines the island as the first Dutch sailors saw it, three centuries earlier: a "fresh, green" new world.

Tabella 10.1 T1 — *The Great Gatsby* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), ch. 9, the last three paragraphs, as transcribed on en.wikisource.org; checked against Project Gutenberg eBook #64317, which follows a later edition (see the Glosses).

> And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night.

> Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—to-morrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And one fine morning———
>
> So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

Glosses. *brooding on*: thinking deeply and sadly about · *picked out*: noticed, distinguished · *dock*: a small landing place for boats · *grasp*: take hold of · *obscurity*: darkness · *the republic*: the United States · *orgastic*: of intense excitement (the word of the 1925 edition; many later editions print *orgiastic*, and *further* for *farther*) · *recedes*: moves back, away · *eluded us*: escaped us · *beat on*: keep rowing hard · *borne back*: carried back · *ceaselessly*: without stopping.

Analysis

Two kinds of time. The first paragraph looks back: Gatsby's *wonder* when he first saw the green light, and a dream that *must have seemed so close*. Then comes the cruel correction: *it was already behind him*. What Gatsby wanted — Daisy as she was in 1917 — lay in the past, back in the dark Middle West where he and Nick came from, and no amount of money could buy it. The verb tenses follow the idea: past perfect and past (*had come, did not know, was*) for Gatsby, then a sudden present (*recedes, beat on*) for us.

From "he" to "we". In the second paragraph the pronouns change: *the orgastic future that year by year recedes before **us**. It eluded **us** then … **we** will run faster*. Gatsby's private dream becomes everybody's — the dream of Americans, and perhaps of all human beings, always stretching towards something that moves away. The sentence breaks off with dashes (*And one fine morning———*): the hope cannot be completed, even grammatically.

The final image. The last sentence is a single metaphor. We are *boats* rowing *against the current*; we keep going (*beat on*), but the current carries us *back … into the past*. Listen to it: the alliteration on *b* (*beat, boats, borne back*) and the long, slow rhythm of *ceaselessly into the past* imitate the movement of oars. The paradox is the novel's meaning: the American Dream points to the future, but its real object is a lost past.

1. Which three details in the first paragraph make the dream sound physical and close?
2. Explain in your own words: *He did not know that it was already behind him.*
3. Find the pronouns in the second paragraph. Who are "we" and "us"?
4. Why do you think the sentence *And one fine morning———* is left unfinished?
5. Paraphrase the last sentence without the metaphor. What is lost?
6. Is Nick's tone admiring, ironic or sad? Support your answer with two words from the text.

10.3.2 T2 · George Orwell, *Animal Farm*, ch. 10: the single Commandment

Context. Years have passed since the revolution. Boxer is dead, sold by the pigs to a horse slaughterer; most of the animals who remember the old days have died; the pigs have started to

walk on two legs. Clover, the old mare, cannot read; Benjamin, the cynical donkey, can read as well as any pig but has always refused to. At the beginning of the story the seventh and last Commandment was “All animals are equal”; others had since been secretly rewritten — “No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets”, “No animal shall kill any other animal without cause”, “No animal shall drink alcohol to excess”.

Tabella 10.2 T2 — *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1945), ch. 10, text of orwell.ru; checked against Project Gutenberg Australia eBook 0100011h (which misprints *tarred* as *tatted*). Capitals as printed.

Benjamin felt a nose nuzzling at his shoulder. He looked round. It was Clover. Her old eyes looked dimmer than ever. Without saying anything she tugged gently at his mane and led him round to the end of the big barn, where the Seven Commandments were written. For a minute or two they stood gazing at the tarred wall with its white lettering.
‘My sight is failing,’ she said finally. ‘Even when I was young I could not have read what was written there. But it appears to me that that wall looks different. Are the Seven Commandments the same as they used to be, Benjamin?’
For once Benjamin consented to break his rule, and he read out to her what was written on the wall. There was nothing there now except a single Commandment. It ran:
ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS.

Glosses. *nuzzling*: pushing gently with the nose · *mane*: the long hair on a horse’s or donkey’s neck · *dimmer*: less bright, weaker · *tarred*: covered with tar, a black liquid · *my sight is failing*: I can no longer see well · *consented*: agreed · *break his rule*: Benjamin’s rule was never to use his ability to read.

Analysis

A logical scandal. *Equal* is an *ungradable* adjective (English 4, chapter 12): two things are equal or they are not, and nothing can be *more equal* than something else. The new Commandment keeps the old words — *ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL* — and adds a clause that destroys them. It is doublethink before the word existed: the pigs ask the animals to believe two contradictory things at once, and the capital letters give the absurdity the authority of law.

Reading and memory. The scene depends on who can read. Clover *could not have read* the wall even when young; she only feels that it *looks different*. Benjamin can read, but has always refused to take sides. Orwell suggests that a population that cannot read, or will not, cannot check what power writes about the past. The method is the Ministry of Truth’s: change the record a little at a time, at night, and let memory do the rest.

Plain style, terrible content. The sentences are short and simple, as in a children’s story (*He looked round. It was Clover.*). The tenderness of the two old animals — a nose on a shoulder, a

gentle tug at a mane — makes the final sign colder. Orwell's irony works by understatement: he never comments; he lets us read the wall.

1. What does Clover notice, and why does she need Benjamin?
2. What is unusual about Benjamin's reaction? What is "his rule"?
3. Explain why *more equal* is grammatically and logically impossible.
4. Compare the single Commandment with the original seventh Commandment. What has been added, and what has been kept?
5. How does the style of the extract (sentence length, vocabulary) contrast with its meaning?
6. Which real historical practice of totalitarian regimes does the changing of the Commandments represent?

10.3.3 T3 · George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, I.1: "a bright cold day in April"

Context. The opening of the novel. Winston Smith, thirty-nine, has left the Ministry where he works in the middle of the day and is coming home to his flat in Victory Mansions, London. Nothing has happened yet; everything is already there.

Tabella 10.3 T3 — *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1949), Part One, ch. 1, text of Project Gutenberg Australia eBook 0100021h; checked against the text of orwell.ru. Capitals as printed; [...] marks five omitted sentences, in which Winston climbs the seven flights of stairs.

> It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.

> The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a metre wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. [...] On each landing, opposite the lift-shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran.

Glosses. *striking thirteen*: sounding the hour of 1 p.m. on a 24-hour clock · *nuzzled into his breast*: pressed into his chest · *vile*: very unpleasant · *a swirl of gritty dust*: dust full of tiny stones, blown round and round · *rag mats*: small rugs made from old cloth · *tacked*: fixed with small nails · *ruggedly handsome*: attractive in a strong, masculine way · *contrived*: made with a hidden purpose · *caption*: the words printed under a picture.

Analysis

An ordinary sentence with one wrong word. *It was a bright cold day in April* could begin any novel. Then: *the clocks were striking thirteen*. Clocks that strike the hours stop at twelve; the number tells us at once that this world is like ours but not quite — that even the measure of time has been changed by someone. The rest of the paragraph is physical and small: Winston's chin

pressed into his chest against the wind, the glass doors, the dust that gets in with him. The name *Victory Mansions* sounds triumphant; the building smells of cabbage.

The face. The poster appears twice, and grows: first *too large for indoor display, more than a metre wide*; then on every landing. Its description is almost friendly — a man of forty-five, *ruggedly handsome* — until the eyes, which are *so contrived* that they *follow you about when you move*. The narrator switches from *Winston* to *you*: the reader too is being watched. The caption saves its threat for the last word, *WATCHING*, and wraps it in a family word: *Big Brother*. A brother protects you; this one spies on you. The slogan is a small piece of doublethink.

1. What is strange in the first sentence, and what does it suggest about this world?
2. Find three details that appeal to the senses (touch, smell, sight). What kind of life do they suggest?
3. Why is the name *Victory Mansions* ironic?
4. How does the description of the poster change between its first and its second appearance?
5. Why does Orwell use *you* in *the eyes follow you about when you move*?
6. Explain the contradiction in the words *Big Brother is watching you*.

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

From a question to a PEE paragraph (T3). *How does Orwell create a sense of being watched in the opening of* Nineteen Eighty-Four*?*

1. **Point.** Answer the question in one sentence, using the words of the question: *Orwell creates a sense of being watched by making the poster of Big Brother grow larger and closer until it looks at the reader.*
2. **Evidence.** Choose two short quotations and fit them into your own sentence: the poster is *more than a metre wide*, and its eyes *follow you about when you move*.
3. **Explanation.** Say what the language does, not what the story says: the shift from *Winston* to the impersonal *you* includes the reader; the caption keeps its threat for the last word; *Big Brother* turns a family word into a word of power.
4. **Link.** Close with the wider meaning: *From its first page, the novel makes surveillance a feeling as well as a fact.*

Check the tense: the literary present for what the text does (*Orwell creates, the poster grows*), as you learnt in chapter 1.

10.4 Language: Clarity and Concision — Editing Your Own Writing

At B2 you can already write correct English. The next step is to write **clear** English, and that happens mostly after the first draft, when you edit. The Indicazioni nazionali ask the fifth-year student to "reflect on the formal features" of the texts he or she produces; this section gives you

a method. It has a famous guide: in "Politics and the English Language" Orwell argues that "the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts", and that the cure begins with each writer's own sentences.

10.4.1 Orwell's six rules

Near the end of the essay Orwell sums up his advice in six rules. Here they are exactly as printed in 1946, with what each means for your own essays.

Tabella 10.4 Orwell's rules, from "Politics and the English Language" (*Horizon*, April 1946), text of the Orwell Foundation, checked against orwell.ru and Project Gutenberg Australia; and what they mean for a student essay.

Orwell's rule	What it means for you
i. Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.	Avoid ready-made images (*a double-edged sword*, *the tip of the iceberg*). Find your own, or say it plainly.
ii. Never use a long word where a short one will do.	*use*, not *utilise*; *help*, not *facilitate*; *show*, not *demonstrate* — unless the long word is more precise.
iii. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.	Read every sentence and ask: what happens if I delete this word? If nothing is lost, delete it.
iv. Never use the passive where you can use the active.	Prefer a subject that does something. Keep the passive for when the doer is unknown or unimportant (see below).
v. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.	Avoid unnecessary Latin or French tags (*ipso facto*, *raison d'être*) and jargon that only experts understand.
vi. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.	The rules serve clarity; when following one would make a sentence ugly or unclear, break it.

Notice rule vi. Orwell offers not a law but a habit of attention, and he is honest about how hard it is: "Look back through this essay, and for certain you will find that I have again and again committed the very faults I am protesting against." Editing is not something good writers skip; it is what makes them good.

10.4.2 Cutting words

Wordiness (*prolissità*) is using more words than the meaning needs. Its commonest forms are long phrases that replace one short word, and **redundancy** (*ridondanza*), saying the same thing twice (*past history*, *free gift*, *repeat again*, *in my personal opinion I think*). The table lists phrases that examiners meet in almost every essay.

Tabella 10.5 Wordy phrases and their concise equivalents.

Wordy	Concise
in view of the fact that · due to the fact that	because
at this moment in time · at the present time	now
in order to	to
a large number of · a great deal of	many · much
has the ability to · is in a position to	can
in spite of the fact that	although
make a decision · come to a conclusion	decide · conclude
it is important to note that · it can be said that	(cut)
each and every · first and foremost	each · first
the reason why is because	because · the reason is that

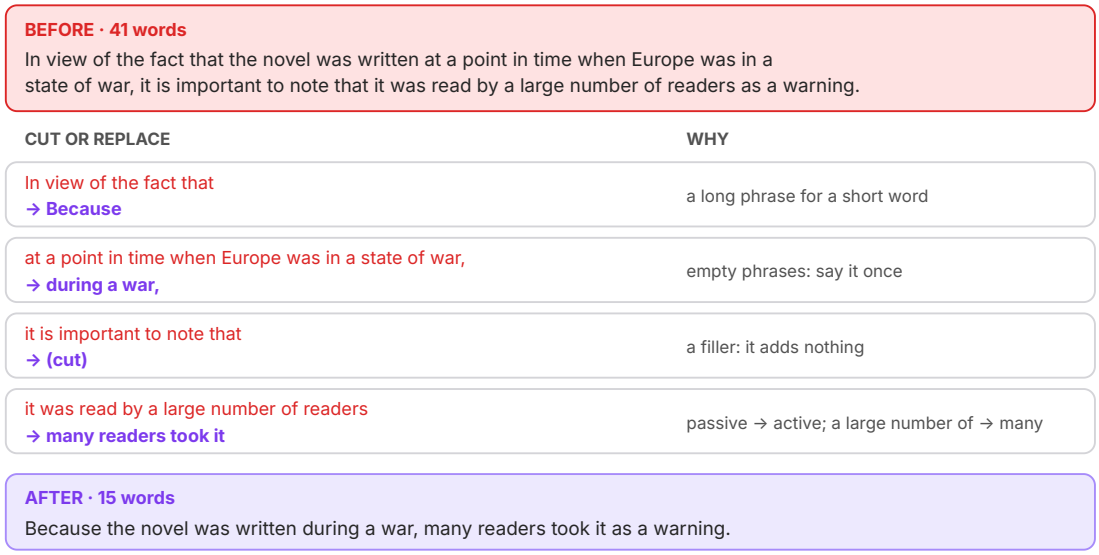


Figura 10.4 Editing one sentence: each cut or replacement (left) and the reason for it (right). The sentence shrinks from 41 to 15 words and loses nothing essential.

10.4.3 Active or passive?

You studied the passive at B2 in English 3 (chapter 4). It is not wrong; it is a choice. Use it when the doer is **unknown** (*Orwell's diary was found after his death*), **obvious** (*Orwell was wounded in*

Spain — by a sniper, of course), or **less important than the thing done** (*The novel was published in June 1949*); and use it to keep the topic of your paragraph at the start of the sentence. Use the active when the doer matters: *The Party rewrites the past* is stronger than *The past is rewritten*, because it names the guilty.

That is Orwell's real objection. The passive, and abstract nouns, can hide who did what. His most famous example describes a bombing raid and then gives it a gentle name:

> Defenceless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called pacification.
>
> — George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language" (1946)

The verbs are passive (*are bombarded, driven out, machine-gunned, set on fire*) and nobody does them; then one abstract noun, *pacification*, covers them all. This is *euphemism* (chapter 7) in the service of power. When you edit your own writing, ask of every passive: do I know who did it, and should I say so?

10.4.4 Clichés and empty nouns

A **cliché** (*luogo comune, frase fatta*) is an expression used so often that it no longer makes the reader see or think anything: *at the end of the day*, *in today's society*, *since the dawn of time*, *plays a key role*, *food for thought*. Clichés are Orwell's rule i in practice. Empty *nominalisation* (English 4, chapter 5) is its academic cousin: a verb turned into a noun and propped up by a weak verb — *carry out an analysis of* (analyse), *give consideration to* (consider), *have a discussion about* (discuss). In formal writing a noun phrase is sometimes the right choice; when it adds only length, turn it back into a verb.

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

Editing a paragraph in three passes. Before (58 words): *It is a well-known fact that in today's society there are a lot of people who think that Orwell's novel is a book that is only about the past. However, at the end of the day, it can be said that it was written as a warning that is still relevant for the future, in my personal opinion.*

1. **Cut.** Delete fillers and redundancies: *It is a well-known fact that*, *it can be said that*, *in my personal opinion*, *a book that is*. Ask of each: is anything lost?
2. **Replace.** Clichés and long phrases out: *in today's society there are a lot of people who think* → *many readers think*; *at the end of the day* → *in fact*.
3. **Activate.** Put a doer in front of the verb: *it was written as a warning* → *he wrote it as a warning*; *that is still relevant for the future* → *it still speaks to the future*.

After (25 words): *Many readers think that Orwell's novel is about the past. In fact, he wrote it as a warning, and it still speaks to the future.* — two sentences, every word working.

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Scrivere chiaro in inglese. La prosa saggistica italiana tollera periodi lunghi, molte subordinate, lo *stile nominale* (*la realizzazione del progetto*) e formule di apertura (*è importante sottolineare che…*). L'inglese accademico preferisce frasi più brevi, il **soggetto e il verbo all'inizio**, i verbi al posto dei nomi astratti e la forma attiva quando l'agente conta.

Confronto con l'italiano. Tradurre parola per parola produce prolissità: *è necessario sottolineare che* → ✗ *it is necessary to underline that*; meglio tagliare e affermare direttamente. Lo stesso vale per *al giorno d'oggi* (✗ *nowadays, in today's society* come apertura automatica) e per *secondo il mio personale parere*. Le regole di Orwell servono anche in italiano: il tema della prima prova premia chi dice una cosa sola, chiaramente, per frase.

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *In my personal opinion, I think that Gatsby is a tragic hero.* → ✓ *Gatsby is a tragic hero.* (o, se serve, *In my view, Gatsby is…*): un solo segnale di opinione basta.

✗ *Due to the fact that Orwell was ill, he wrote the novel slowly.* → ✓ *Because Orwell was ill, he wrote slowly.*

✗ «La forma passiva è sempre sbagliata.» → ✓ Orwell scrive *where you **can** use the active*: il passivo è giusto quando l'agente è ignoto, ovvio o poco importante.

✗ *The novel's past history shows…* → ✓ *The novel's history shows…* (la storia è già passata: è una ridondanza).

10.5 Skills: an Essay on a Quotation

10.5.1 Vocabulary: power, control and propaganda

These words appear in every discussion of dystopian fiction — and in many history and philosophy lessons. Learn them with the preposition or the collocation that goes with them.

Tabella 10.6 Power, control and propaganda: key words.

Word	Meaning	Example
surveillance (n.)	the careful watching of people, especially by the state or the police	*The telescreen is a tool of constant surveillance.*
regime (n.)	a government, especially one that has not been freely elected	*The regime controlled the press and the radio.*
censorship (n.)	the control of what may be published, shown or said	*Fascist censorship blocked foreign books.*
propaganda (n., uncountable)	information, often false or one-sided, spread to make people support a cause	*The posters were pure propaganda.*
dissent (n. / v.)	disagreement with official opinion; to disagree openly	*In Oceania even private dissent is a crime.*
conform (v.) **to**	to behave as the rules or the majority expect	*Most citizens conform to the Party's rules out of fear.*
manipulate (v.)	to control or influence someone cleverly and unfairly	*Squealer manipulates the animals with numbers.*
totalitarian (adj.)	controlling every part of people's lives	*Orwell wrote against totalitarian states of both right and left.*
privacy (n.)	the right to keep your life and thoughts to yourself	*Winston has no privacy, even in his flat.*
truth (n.)	what is real; facts as they are	*The Ministry of Truth produces lies.*

Word formation: coinages from fiction

A *coinage* is a new word that someone has invented. Some of the most successful coinages in English come from novels and plays: they enter the language because they name something for which there was no word before. One kind you know already: the *eponym* (English 4, chapter 14), a word made from a person's name — *Orwellian* is one.

Tabella 10.7 Coinages and phrases from fiction that are now everyday English.

Word or phrase	Source	Everyday meaning today
Big Brother	Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949)	any person or organisation that watches people too closely
doublethink, *Newspeak*	the same	believing contradictions; misleading official language
thoughtcrime, *unperson*	the same	a forbidden opinion; someone officially ignored or erased
Room 101	the same	the place where your worst fear waits
Orwellian	from Orwell's name (an eponym)	describing a society or language that controls and deceives
a brave new world	Shakespeare, *The Tempest* V.1, via Huxley (1932)	a new situation, often a disturbing one (frequently ironic)
robot	Karel Čapek's play *R.U.R.* (1920); Čapek said his brother Josef invented it, from Czech *robota*, "forced labour"	a machine that works automatically
catch-22	Joseph Heller, *Catch-22* (1961)	a situation you cannot escape because the rules contradict each other

10.5.2 Reading: Who Controls the Past?

Sam is in his first year of English at university in Manchester. Before each seminar students post short notes to start the discussion. Sam wrote these for the week on *Nineteen Eighty-Four* — which is also on this year's list of the Link Reading Club — and shared them with Giulia and the club.

Tabella 10.8 Reading text — Sam's seminar notes

Who Controls the Past? Notes for Thursday's seminar on *Nineteen Eighty-Four* · by Sam Taylor, first-year English, Manchester (shared with the Link Reading Club)

When people talk about *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, they usually talk about Room 101, the rats and the torture. I want to start somewhere quieter: at Winston's desk. Winston is not a rebel because he is brave. He becomes one because of his job. Every day, at the Ministry of Truth, he takes old copies of *The Times*, finds the sentences that no longer agree with what the Party says today, and rewrites them. Then he drops the originals into a "memory hole", where they are burnt. Nobody can prove that anything was ever different, because the proof no longer exists.

Orwell gives us a perfect small example. The Ministry announces that the chocolate ration will be reduced from thirty grammes a week to twenty. The next day the telescreen thanks Big Brother for *raising* it to twenty,

and people hold demonstrations of gratitude. Winston is almost sure he remembers the old figure, but "almost sure" is all he has. My first point, then, is that the novel is less about lying than about **records**. A lie can be exposed if you can compare it with a document. Destroy the document, and the lie becomes the truth.

This was not science fiction when Orwell wrote it. In the Soviet Union under Stalin, officials who fell from power were not only arrested; they were removed from photographs. The most famous case is a photograph of Stalin at the Moscow–Volga Canal with Nikolai Yezhov, the head of the secret police beside him. After Yezhov's arrest he was scrubbed out of the picture, and the official version shows Stalin with nobody there. Orwell did not need to invent the Ministry of Truth; he only needed to give it a building.

My second point is that the problem has changed shape, not disappeared. Today we keep most of our records on screens, and a webpage can be changed in seconds without leaving any visible trace. A news site can quietly correct a headline; a politician can delete a post. This is why archives matter. The Internet Archive, a non-profit library, has been saving copies of webpages since 1996, and its Wayback Machine, open to the public since 2001, lets anyone see what a page said on a given day. Good newspapers also publish their corrections openly instead of editing in silence. These are not glamorous institutions, but they are the opposite of a memory hole.

My third point is about us. Winston's real tragedy is that his own memory is not strong enough. He cannot remember his childhood clearly; he is not even sure what year it is. The Party wins because people forget, and because forgetting is easier than checking. So here are the questions I would like us to discuss on Thursday:

1. Is Winston's diary an act of rebellion, or only of memory? Can the two be separated? · 2. Does a society need professional "keepers of the past" — archivists, historians, librarians — and who should control them? · 3. Think of one thing you are sure happened in the last five years. How would you prove it, if all the screens told you otherwise?

1. According to Sam, why does Winston become a rebel?
2. Why is the chocolate ration a "perfect small example"?
3. What, according to Sam, is the difference between a lie and a destroyed record?
4. Which two real institutions does Sam describe as "the opposite of a memory hole", and why?
5. Answer one of Sam's three seminar questions in 60–80 words.

10.5.3 Speaking: discussing a hypothetical scenario

Dystopias are hypothetical scenarios: "what would happen if…?". Discussing one well means imagining consequences, comparing them and defending a position — exactly what you do in the colloquio when the commission asks "And if…?". You will need the conditionals you know (English 3, chapters 7 and 13) and some fixed phrases.

Tabella 10.9 Useful language — discussing a hypothetical scenario.

Function	Phrases
setting up the scenario	*Supposing… · Imagine (that)… · Let's say… · What would happen if…? · Assuming that…*
imagining consequences	*In that case… · That would mean… · The first thing that would change is… · Sooner or later…*
adding conditions	*…provided that… · …as long as… · …unless… · Only if…, would…*
weighing up	*On the one hand…, on the other… · The real risk would be… · It depends on who…*
challenging the scenario	*I'm not sure that would happen, because… · That assumes that… · Isn't that a bit unlikely?*
concluding	*So, all things considered, I'd say… · If I had to choose, I would…*

1. **A week without a phone.** In pairs: *Supposing your school banned all phones and screens for one week, for students and teachers alike, what would change?* Talk for three minutes about school, friends, family and information; then decide together whether you would vote for the experiment.
2. **A city with cameras everywhere.** In groups of three: one student defends a plan to put face-recognition cameras in every street of your town ("safer streets"), one opposes it ("the end of privacy"), one chairs and asks "What would happen if…?" questions. **Colloquio link:** end by connecting the debate to one other subject — Plato's guardians in Greek, the history of the Fascist police state, or the philosophy of power you study this year.

10.5.4 Writing: an essay on a quotation

An essay on a quotation (*"Discuss: '…'"*) asks you to take a short text — a line from a novel, a famous sentence, a slogan — and argue about it: what it means, whether it is true, and how far. It is the English cousin of the Italian *trattazione* and of the essay of the prima prova, and it is also the shape of many colloquio questions. A good essay has a **thesis** (your answer, stated in the introduction — the thesis statement of English 3, chapter 14), two arguments with evidence, one **counter-argument** that you take seriously and then answer (a *rebuttal*), and a conclusion that goes one step further than the introduction.

Tabella 10.10 Model text — an essay on a quotation (253 words, title excluded)

Discuss: "All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others." (George Orwell, *Animal Farm*)

The last Commandment of *Animal Farm* is a joke, but a serious one. Logically it is nonsense: nothing can be "more equal" than something else. Politically, I will argue, it is one of the most accurate sentences of the twentieth century, because it describes how revolutions that promise equality can end by creating new masters.

First, the sentence shows how power uses language. The pigs do not abolish the principle of equality; they keep its words and add a clause that empties them. This is the method of every regime that calls itself a "people's republic" while one party rules: the ideal survives as a label, and the reality contradicts it.

Second, the sentence works only because the animals let it. Clover cannot read and Benjamin refuses to take sides, so nobody checks the wall. Orwell suggests that inequality returns not only through violence but through ignorance and indifference.

It could be objected that the sentence is too pessimistic: some revolutions have reduced inequality, and modern democracies are built on the principle that the law is the same for everyone. This is true. But even in a democracy, the rich and powerful often enjoy privileges in practice that they would never defend in theory — and this, too, is being "more equal".

In conclusion, Orwell's sentence is not a law of history but a warning. Equality is not a result that, once reached, defends itself; it has to be checked, like the barn wall, by citizens who can read and are willing to.

How it works. *Introduction*: the quotation placed in its book, then the thesis (*I will argue that…*). *Paragraphs 2–3*: one argument each, opened by a signpost (*First, Second*) and supported by evidence from the text. *Paragraph 4*: the counter-argument, introduced impersonally (*It could be objected that…*), conceded (*This is true*) and answered (*But…*). *Conclusion*: the thesis restated in new words and widened (*not a law of history but a warning*), with a final image taken from the text.

- Have I explained what the quotation means before arguing about it?
- Is my thesis in the first paragraph, in one clear sentence?
- Does each paragraph contain one argument and one piece of evidence?
- Have I answered a real counter-argument, not a straw man?
- Have I edited with Orwell's rules: no fillers, no clichés, active verbs where the doer matters?
- Is the essay within the word limit, with the quotation copied exactly?

Task. Write an essay of about 300 words on **one** of these quotations: (a) "Political language – and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists – is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind." (Orwell, "Politics and the English Language", 1946); (b) "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." (Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*) — is the past a trap or a resource?

LEARNING TO LEARN

Timed writing. In the spring your class will sit simulations of the written tests, and in every one of them the clock decides as much as your knowledge. Practise the same routine in English, Italian, Latin and Greek, until it is automatic.

- **Plan (5 minutes for a 300-word essay).** Underline the key words of the task. Write your thesis in one sentence. Note two arguments, one counter-argument and one piece of evidence for each. Do not start writing until the plan fits on six lines.
- **Write (about 30 minutes).** Follow the plan; one paragraph, one idea. If you get stuck, leave a gap and move on.
- **Edit (5 minutes).** Read once for Orwell's rules — cut fillers, clichés and redundancies, turn empty nouns back into verbs — and once for accuracy: verb forms, articles, spelling, the exact words of the quotation. Count the words.
- **Transfer.** The same plan–write–edit cycle works for the *tema* of the prima prova; and the editing pass is the habit that saves a Latin or Greek translation: re-read your Italian as Italian, and cut what no Italian writer would write.
- **Colloquio link.** Orwell's dystopias → **philosophy** (power and the individual) or **history** (the totalitarian regimes of the 1930s): prepare one sentence that makes the bridge.

10.6 Connections: Fascist Words, Plato's City, a Split Atom

10.6.1 Fascism and words

Orwell's Ministry of Truth had real models, and Italy provided one of them. On 27 May 1937 the Fascist government turned its Ministry for the Press and Propaganda into the *Ministero della Cultura Popolare*, known by its abbreviation **Minculpop**. It controlled every publication, seized whatever it judged dangerous to the regime, and directed propaganda in the press, the radio, the cinema and the theatre. Newspapers received daily *ordini di stampa*, nicknamed **veline** because they were typed on thin carbon-copy paper (*carta velina*): they told editors which news to print, which to ignore, and even how large the headlines should be. Such orders were already being sent before the ministry took its final name. Like Winston at his desk, Italian journalists of those years learnt to write the present as power wanted it.

Censorship could not stop curiosity. In the 1930s a group of young writers, Cesare Pavese and Elio Vittorini among them, translated American novelists and made America a myth of freedom and energy, everything the regime seemed to deny (Pavese's *Moby-Dick*, chapter 5). Vittorini's anthology of American writers, *Americana*, was hit by the censors and could appear only in 1942, without his introductory notes and with a preface by the critic Emilio Cecchi instead. After the war Pavese looked at the myth more coldly. In his last novel, *La luna e i falò*

(1950), the narrator has come back rich from America to the hills of his childhood, and his friend Nuto says of a poor village boy:

> *Ma è inutile mandarlo in America. L'America è già qui. Sono qui i milionari e i morti di fame.*
>
> — Cesare Pavese, *La luna e i falò* (1950), cap. IX (text of it.wikisource.org, from Pavese, *Romanzi*, vol. 2, Einaudi 1961)

("But it's no use sending him to America. America is already here. The millionaires and the starving are here." — translation by the editors.) Nuto's three sentences say what *The Great Gatsby* shows: the land of the dream contains the same inequality as the place you left — Gatsby's mansion and the valley of ashes. For the regime's victims and its witnesses, read Ignazio Silone and Primo Levi in your Italian literature course; their works are still protected by copyright, so we only name them here.

10.6.2 Plato's city and the noble lie

The Greek word *utopia* reminds us that the first great ideal state in European thought is Greek. In the *Republic*, which you have met in Greek and in philosophy, Plato's Socrates designs a just city ruled by philosopher-guardians — and his design includes the control of stories, art and even belief.

Tabella 10.11 Plato, *Republic* II, 377b–c, and III, 414b–c. Greek text of the Perseus Digital Library (ed. Burnet), checked against the transcription of el.wikisource.org. Translations by the editors.

Greek	English (translation by the editors)
πρῶτον δὴ ἡμῖν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐπιστατητέον τοῖς μυθοποιοῖς,… (*prōton dē hēmin, hōs eoiken, epistatēteon tois mythopoiois*)	"First, then, it seems, we must supervise the makers of stories." (377b–c)
τίς ἂν οὖν ἡμῖν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, μηχανὴ γένοιτο τῶν ψευδῶν τῶν ἐν δέοντι γιγνομένων, ὧν δὴ νῦν ἐλέγομεν, γενναῖόν τι ἓν ψευδομένους πεῖσαι μάλιστα μὲν καὶ αὐτοὺς τοὺς ἄρχοντας, εἰ δὲ μή, τὴν ἄλλην πόλιν; (*tis an oun hēmin, ēn d' egō, mēchanē genoito tōn pseudōn tōn en deonti gignomenōn, hōn dē nyn elegomen, gennaion ti hen pseudomenous peisai malista men kai autous tous archontas, ei de mē, tēn allēn polin*)	"How, then," I said, "could we find a way — one of those lies that are told when they are needed, of which we were speaking just now — to persuade with one noble lie above all the rulers themselves, and if not them, the rest of the city?" (414b–c)

The **noble lie** (*nobile menzogna*; in Greek *gennaion pseudos*) that follows is a myth: all citizens were formed inside the earth, and the god mixed gold into the rulers, silver into their helpers and iron and bronze into farmers and craftsmen, so that each class should accept its place. In

Book X Socrates goes further and sends most poets out of the city, speaking of an "ancient quarrel" between philosophy and poetry. Plato wanted a perfect city; to many modern readers his methods look like a blueprint for Oceania. In 1945 the philosopher Karl Popper, in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, read Plato as an ancestor of totalitarian thought; other scholars reply that the *Republic* is a thought experiment about justice in the soul, not a political programme. Either way, the comparison shows that utopia and dystopia are two faces of the same question.

COLLEGAMENTI

Classico: Plato's guardians and Orwell's Party. Set the two side by side — **a comparison, not a source**: nothing shows that Orwell wrote with the *Republic* in mind. **Stories**: Plato's guardians select the myths children may hear; the Ministry of Truth rewrites newspapers, books and songs. **The lie**: Plato's noble lie is told "for the good" of the city and believed by the rulers too; the Party's lies are told for power alone, and the Inner Party practises doublethink so that it, too, can believe them. **Classes**: gold, silver, iron and bronze; Inner Party, Outer Party, proles (Figura 10.3). **The difference**: Plato's aim is justice; Orwell's Party, as O'Brien tells Winston, seeks "power entirely for its own sake". In the colloquio, ask the question both texts raise: may a government ever lie to its citizens for their own good?

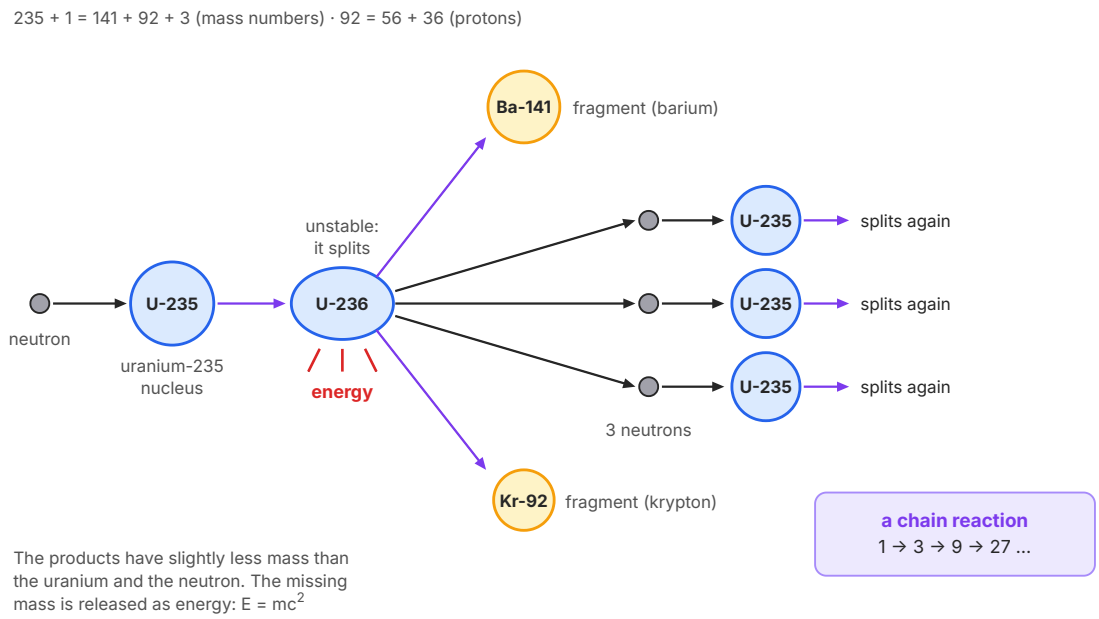


Figura 10.5 Nuclear fission of uranium-235 (simplified). One of many possible pairs of fragments is shown; real fissions release on average about 2.5 neutrons. In a reactor, control rods absorb enough of them that on average only one neutron from each fission causes a new one, so the chain is controlled. Here every fission is drawn releasing three neutrons, all of which cause a new fission.

COLLEGAMENTI

Physics: splitting the atom. In 1934 Enrico Fermi and his group in Rome bombarded uranium with neutrons; Fermi received the 1938 Nobel Prize in Physics for this work, and in the same year left Italy, because the new racial laws threatened his Jewish wife, Laura Capon. In December 1938, in Berlin, the chemists Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann found barium among the products of uranium bombarded with neutrons — an element whose atoms are about 40% lighter than uranium's. Hahn wrote to his former colleague Lise Meitner, who had fled Nazi Germany to Sweden. Over Christmas, Meitner and her nephew Otto Robert Frisch understood what had happened: the uranium nucleus had split into two smaller nuclei. Frisch borrowed a word from biology, where cells divide by "fission", and **nuclear fission** (*fissione nucleare*) had a name.

The pieces together weigh slightly less than the original nucleus and the neutron, and the missing mass is released as energy, as Einstein's relation $E = mc^2$ says: mass and energy are two forms of the same thing. Each fission also frees two or three neutrons (2.5 on average for uranium-235), and each of them can split another nucleus: a **chain reaction** (*reazione a catena*), Figura 10.5. On 2 December 1942, in Chicago, a team led by Fermi achieved the first controlled, self-sustaining chain reaction; in August 1945 two uncontrolled ones destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Hahn alone received the 1944 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for the discovery.

SINTESI

- The 1920s in America were the **Jazz Age**: prosperity, credit, cars, radio and jazz, and **Prohibition** (1920–1933), which banned the production and sale of alcohol and made organised crime rich.
- The **Wall Street Crash** (October 1929) began a fall of the Dow Jones of almost 90% by July 1932 and opened the **Great Depression**; Roosevelt's **New Deal** (from 1933) used the state to fight it.
- Mussolini (1922), Stalin (in power by the late 1920s) and Hitler (1933) built **totalitarian** regimes; the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) foreshadowed the Second World War (1939–1945), in which Nazi Germany carried out the **Holocaust**.
- The atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (August 1945) ended the war against Japan; the **Cold War** — a phrase Orwell used in October 1945 — divided the world.
- **F. Scott Fitzgerald** (1896–1940) named the Jazz Age; *The Great Gatsby* (1925), narrated by Nick Carraway, shows the **American Dream** (a phrase popularised in 1931) turned towards a lost past.
- The **Lost Generation** is Gertrude Stein's phrase for the writers marked by the First World War, made famous by Hemingway in 1926.
- A **dystopia** is a nightmare society that warns the present; Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) controls people through pleasure, Orwell's Oceania through fear.
- **George Orwell** (Eric Blair, 1903–1950) wrote *Animal Farm* (1945), a **fable** and allegory of the Russian Revolution and Stalinism, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), with **Newspeak**, **doublethink** and Big Brother.
- In the texts, a single object carries the book: Gatsby's **green light**, the rewritten **Commandment**, the poster whose eyes follow you.
- Good writers **edit**: Orwell's six rules (1946) — cut words, prefer short and everyday ones, avoid clichés and use the active where you can — make writing clearer and harder to use for deception.
- An **essay on a quotation** explains the quotation, states a thesis, develops two arguments, answers a counter-argument and concludes; timed writing follows plan–write–edit.
- Connections: the Fascist **Minculpop** and its *veline*; Pavese's cooler America; Plato's **noble lie** and the control of stories; and **nuclear fission** (1938), from Fermi's Rome to Hiroshima.

ESERCIZI

History and Literature

1. ● What did Prohibition (1920–1933) ban in the United States?
   - **A.** drinking alcohol, even at home
   - **B.** the production, import, transport and sale of alcoholic drinks
   - **C.** spirits such as whisky, but not beer or wine
   - **D.** the sale of alcohol to people under twenty-one

2. ● Who made the phrase “the American Dream” popular?
   - **A.** F. Scott Fitzgerald, in *The Great Gatsby*
   - **B.** Gertrude Stein, in Paris
   - **C.** the historian James Truslow Adams, in 1931
   - **D.** Franklin D. Roosevelt, in a speech on the New Deal

3. ● Who tells the story of *The Great Gatsby*?
   - **A.** Nick Carraway, Gatsby’s neighbour and Daisy’s cousin
   - **B.** Jay Gatsby himself, in the first person
   - **C.** Daisy Buchanan, in letters
   - **D.** an omniscient narrator who knows every character’s thoughts

4. ● What is Winston Smith’s job at the Ministry of Truth?
   - **A.** He interrogates prisoners in Room 101.
   - **B.** He writes the new dictionary of Newspeak.
   - **C.** He watches citizens on the telescreens.
   - **D.** He rewrites old newspapers so that the past agrees with the Party.

5. ●● Match each author with a work and its date. Authors: Fitzgerald · Hemingway · Huxley · Orwell · Orwell — Works: *Brave New World* · *Homage to Catalonia* · *Nineteen Eighty-Four* · *The Great Gatsby* · *The Sun Also Rises* — Dates: 1925 · 1926 · 1932 · 1938 · 1949.

6. ●● True or false? Correct the false statements. a Prohibition ended in 1933 with the Twenty-first Amendment. b Hitler became chancellor of Germany in 1929. c The Spanish Civil War ended with Franco’s victory. d *Animal Farm* was published in 1943, during the war. e Orwell used the phrase “cold war” in an essay of 1945. f *Brave New World* is set in the year 1984.

7. ●●● Short answer (60–80 words). Define *dystopia*, *Newspeak* and *doublethink*, and show how the three are connected in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Text Analysis

8. ●● T1. Explain the final image, “boats against the current”, and how it sums up Gatsby’s dream (60–80 words).

9. ● T1. Find in the extract: a an alliteration in the last sentence; b two words or phrases for darkness; c a sentence that is left unfinished; d the point where “he” becomes “we”.

10. ●● T2. Explain why *more equal* is a contradiction, using the term *ungradable adjective*. Then explain why the single Commandment is an example of doublethink.

11. ● T2. Why does Clover ask Benjamin to read the wall?
    A. Because Benjamin is the pigs’ official reader.
    B. Because she wants to test whether Benjamin can read.
    C. Because her sight is failing and she could not read it even when young.
    D. Because the Commandments are written in a foreign language.

12. ●● T3. Find three details that suggest poverty or decay, and three that suggest control or surveillance.

13. ●●● Compare T2 and T3 in a PEE paragraph (100–120 words): how does Orwell use a written sign — the wall, the caption under the poster — to show the power of the regime?

14. ●●● Colloquio link (60–80 words). Starting from T3 or from Plato’s noble lie (Connections), build a bridge to one other subject: history, philosophy or Greek.

Language

15. ● Rewrite more concisely. a In view of the fact that the ration was cut, people were hungry. b At this moment in time, the novel is more popular than ever. c Winston has the ability to remember the old figure. d In spite of the fact that he was ill, Orwell kept writing. e A large number of critics have praised the ending. f The reason why Gatsby gives parties is because he hopes Daisy will come.

16. ●● Cut the redundancy. a the past history of the farm · b a free gift · c repeat the slogan again · d In my personal opinion I think… · e each and every citizen · f return back to the West.

17. ●● Active or passive? Decide whether each sentence is better active, and rewrite it if so. Give a reason. a *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published in June 1949. b Mistakes were made, and the chocolate ration was reduced. c The decision to rewrite the article was taken by the Ministry. d Orwell was wounded in the throat in May 1937. e It is believed by many critics that Nick is not a reliable narrator.

18. ●● Replace the empty noun phrase or the cliché with a verb or a plainer phrase. a carry out an investigation of · b give consideration to · c make a comparison between · d come to the conclusion that · e have a discussion about · f at the end of the day.

19. ●● Each sentence is wordy or wrong. Correct it. a ✗ Due to the fact that Gatsby loved Daisy, he bought a house across the bay. b ✗ Orwell’s novel was written by him on the island of Jura. c ✗ In my personal opinion, I think that the ending is pessimistic. d ✗ The pigs return back to the farmhouse. e ✗ The Ministry made a reduction of the ration.

20. ●● Edit this sentence (58 words) to 25 words or fewer, without losing information that matters: *It is a fact that is well known to everybody that Huxley's novel, which was published in the year 1932, describes a society in which people are made happy by means of a drug, and in a certain sense it could be said that in our modern world of today we are perhaps not completely different from them.*

21. ●● Which of Orwell's six rules does each sentence break? a *The Crash was just the tip of the iceberg.* b *Fitzgerald utilised a first-person narrator.* c *It goes without saying that Gatsby is rich.* d *The villages were destroyed.* e *Big Brother is, ipso facto, infallible.*

22. ●●● Translate into clear, concise English. a Poiché il romanzo fu pubblicato nel 1949, molti lettori lo lessero come un avvertimento sulla guerra fredda. b È importante sottolineare che Orwell non era contrario al socialismo, ma al totalitarismo. c Al giorno d'oggi molte persone pensano che la tecnologia ci controlli.

23. ●●● Rewrite this official announcement in plain English (at most 15 words), then explain in one sentence what the original hides: *Owing to an adjustment in the distribution of resources, a reduction in the chocolate ration will be implemented with effect from next week in order to ensure continued stability.*

Vocabulary

24. ● Complete with words from Tabella 10.6: surveillance · censorship · propaganda · dissent · conform · privacy. a In Oceania, telescreens make _____ constant. b Winston's diary is an act of private _____. c The regime's _____ blocked foreign novels. d The posters are _____: they tell only one side. e Most citizens _____ to the rules out of fear. f Without _____, even your thoughts are not your own.

25. ●● Complete each sentence with a coinage from Tabella 10.7. a To get a job you need experience, but to get experience you need a job: it's a real _____. b The new app records every place you visit — very _____. c Factories now use _____s to weld car bodies. d After the merger, staff felt they had entered a _____, with new rules nobody understood. e Some people feel that _____ is watching them through their phones.

26. ●● Word formation. Complete with a word formed from the word in capitals. a Oceania is a _____ state. (TOTAL) b Orwell fought against _____ in all its forms. (EQUAL) c The _____ of the animals by the pigs is gradual. (MANIPULATE) d In Huxley's world, _____ is rewarded and difference is feared. (CONFORM) e Winston longs for a moment of _____. (PRIVATE)

Writing and Speaking

27. ●●● Write the essay on a quotation set in the Skills section (about 300 words): thesis, two arguments with evidence, a counter-argument and its answer, a conclusion. Plan for 5 minutes and edit for 5.

28. ●● Speaking (2 minutes). *Supposing all history books in your country were replaced by a single official online version, which the government could update at any time, what would happen?* Use at least four phrases from Tabella 10.9.

Towards the Exam

29. ●● Reading (format inspired by INVALSI grade 13). Read Sam's notes again and choose the best answer (a–d), then answer e–f in no more than 15 words. a Sam begins "at Winston's desk" because… A the torture scenes are not important · B Winston's job explains why he becomes a rebel · C the seminar is about the Ministry building · D he has not finished the novel. b The chocolate ration is a "perfect small example" because… A it shows that Winston has a perfect memory · B the ration was really increased · C the Party is bad at hiding its lies · D people accept the new figure when the old record has gone. c The photograph of Stalin and Yezhov shows that… A the novel described a real practice · B Stalin did not trust photographers · C the canal was never finished · D Orwell took the photograph. d What does Sam say about webpages? A They cannot be changed once published. · B Only politicians change them. · C They can be changed without leaving a visible trace. · D The Wayback Machine prevents all changes. e Who are the "keepers of the past" in Sam's second question? f Why, according to Sam, does the Party win?

30. ●● Open cloze. Write ONE word in each gap. Fitzgerald published *The Great Gatsby* (1) _____ 1925. Although it is now one of the most famous American novels, it did not sell (2) _____ at first: fewer than 20,000 copies by October. When Fitzgerald died in 1940, he believed that his work (3) _____ been forgotten. Things changed during the Second World War, (4) _____ free copies were sent to American soldiers overseas. Thousands of young men read it for the (5) _____ time, and after the war critics began to study it (6) _____ seriously. Today it is read in schools all (7) _____ the world, and its last sentence is one of the (8) _____ often quoted in American literature.

31. ●●● Key-word transformation. Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, using the word in capitals. Write 2–5 words, including the word given. a The Party rewrites the past every day. IS — The past _____ the Party every day. b Gatsby did not know that his dream was already behind him. UNAWARE — Gatsby _____ his dream was already behind him. c Although the pigs were greedy, the animals trusted them. DESPITE — The animals trusted the pigs _____ greedy. d It's a pity I didn't read *Animal Farm* earlier. WISH — I _____ *Animal Farm* earlier. e Nobody has ever seen Big Brother. BEEN — Big Brother _____ by anybody.

32. ●●● Colloquio prompt. **Material:** a photograph shows a city street at night; on every lamppost there is a small black camera, and on a large screen above a shop a face looks down at the passers-by. Under the screen, someone has written with spray paint: BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU. **Guided questions:** a Describe the picture and say what the graffiti refers to. b Which ideas from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* does it recall, and how is today's surveillance similar or different? c Link the material to one other subject (history, philosophy, Greek or physics). d Give your own view: how much privacy should a citizen give up for safety? Speak for about three minutes.

PER APPROFONDIRE

- [NAA] *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*: the introduction to American literature between the wars, and Fitzgerald.
- [NOR] S. Greenblatt (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*: the introduction to the twentieth century, and Orwell's essays.
- [BRA] M. Bradbury, *The Modern British Novel*: the novel of the 1930s and 1940s, Huxley and Orwell.
- [CHI] P. Childs, *Modernism*: the modernist context to which Fitzgerald, Huxley and Orwell responded.
- [SAN] A. Sanders, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*: the pages on Huxley and Orwell.
- [ABR] M. H. Abrams, G. G. Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*: the entries on utopias and dystopias, fable and allegory.
- [SWA] M. Swan, *Practical English Usage*: the entries on the passive and on formal and informal style.

Glossario del capitolo

American Dream
sogno americano — the belief that in America anyone can rise and succeed through effort; the phrase was popularised by J. T. Adams in 1931.

Chain reaction
reazione a catena — a process in which each fission frees neutrons that cause further fissions.

Cliché
luogo comune, frase fatta — an expression used so often that it no longer makes the reader see or think anything.

Cold War
guerra fredda — the long confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union after 1945, fought without direct war between them.

Doublethink
bipensiero — in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the ability to hold two contradictory beliefs at the same time and accept both.

Dystopia
distopia — an imagined society, usually in the future, that is controlled and unjust, described as a warning to the present.

Fable
favola — a short story in which animals behave like people, written to teach a lesson.

Great Depression
Grande depressione — the world economic crisis that followed the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and lasted through the 1930s.

Holocaust
Shoah, Olocausto — the systematic murder of around six million European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, 1941–1945.

Jazz Age
età del jazz — the 1920s in America, seen through their music, parties and new freedoms; Fitzgerald's phrase.

Lost Generation
generazione perduta — the writers and young people marked by the First World War; Gertrude Stein's phrase, made famous by Hemingway.

New Deal
New Deal — Franklin D. Roosevelt's programme, from 1933, of public works, relief and reforms against the Great Depression.

Newspeak
neolingua — the official language of Oceania in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, reduced so that rebellious thought cannot be expressed.

Noble lie
nobile menzogna — in Plato's *Republic*, a myth told to the citizens "for the good" of the city, so that each class accepts its place.

Nuclear fission
fissione nucleare — the splitting of a heavy atomic nucleus, such as uranium-235, into two lighter nuclei, which releases energy and neutrons.

Prohibition
proibizionismo — the ban on the production, import, transport and sale of alcoholic drinks in the United States, 1920–1933.

Redundancy
ridondanza — saying the same thing twice in different words, as in *past history*.

Speakeasy
locale clandestino — an illegal bar during Prohibition.

Totalitarianism
totalitarismo — a system in which one party and one leader control every part of public and private life.

Wordiness
prolissità — using more words than the meaning needs.

Soluzioni

1. B. Drinking itself was not a federal crime; that is why the illegal trade flourished.

2. C (*The Epic of America*, 1931 — six years after *Gatsby*).

3. A (Daisy is Nick's "second cousin once removed"; Nick is a first-person narrator).

4. D (documents that contradict the Party go into the "memory holes").

5. Fitzgerald — *The Great Gatsby* — 1925 · Hemingway — *The Sun Also Rises* — 1926 · Huxley — *Brave New World* — 1932 · Orwell — *Homage to Catalonia* — 1938 · Orwell — *Nineteen Eighty-Four* — 1949.

6. a T (5 December 1933). b F: on 30 January 1933. c T (April 1939). d F: written between November 1943 and February 1944, it was published on 17 August 1945, after the war in Europe had ended. e T ("You and the Atomic Bomb", October 1945). f F: in AD 2540, the year 632 "After Ford".

7. *Traccia.* A dystopia is an imagined nightmare society that warns about tendencies of the writer's own time. Newspeak is the official language of Oceania, made smaller every year so that rebellious thoughts cannot be expressed. Doublethink is holding two contradictory beliefs and accepting both. They are connected because the Party controls minds through language and memory: Newspeak removes the words for dissent, doublethink lets people accept the Party's contradictions, and together they make the dystopia stable.

8. *Traccia.* The boats are human beings, rowing hard (*beat on*) towards the future, while the current carries them back into the past. Gatsby too strained towards a future — Daisy, the green light — that was really a moment of the past, 1917. The image widens his dream to everyone (*we*): Americans, perhaps all people, pursue a future that is shaped, and limited, by what they have lost. It is both heroic and hopeless.

9. a *beat … boats … borne back* (b). b *vast obscurity*; *the dark fields … under the night* (also *brooding*, for the mood). c *And one fine morning———*. d *the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us* — from here on, *us* and *we*.

10. *Equal* is ungradable: something is equal or not, so it cannot be compared with *more*. The sentence keeps the original principle (*All animals are equal*) and adds a clause that denies it; the animals are asked to accept both halves at once — which is exactly doublethink, believing two contradictory things together.

11. C.

12. Poverty or decay: the *vile wind* and *gritty dust*; the hallway that *smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats*; the poster *tacked* to the wall (also, in the omitted lines, the lift that seldom works and the electricity cut off during the day). Control: the clocks striking *thirteen* (even time is redefined); the poster on *each landing*; the eyes that *follow you*; the caption *BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU*.

13. *Traccia.* P: In both books power speaks through a public sign. E: in *Animal Farm* the Commandments painted on the barn wall are quietly rewritten until only *ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS* remains; in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the caption under the poster announces *BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU*. E: the wall shows power changing the law and the past; the poster shows power watching the present. Both are in capitals, both use simple, almost childish words, and both make a contradiction (more equal; a brother who spies) look like a natural truth. L: Orwell suggests that a regime is first of all a writer who controls what everyone reads.

14. *Traccia* (one possible link). From the poster in T3 to **history**: the Fascist and Soviet regimes of the 1930s used posters, radio and the leader's face eve-

rywhere; in Italy the Minculpop sent newspapers daily orders (*veline*). Or to **Greek and philosophy**: Plato's guardians control the stories citizens hear and tell a "noble lie" to keep each class in its place; Orwell's Party controls the past for power alone.

15. a Because the ration was cut, people were hungry. b The novel is now more popular than ever. c Winston can remember the old figure. d Although he was ill, Orwell kept writing. e Many critics have praised the ending. f Gatsby gives parties because he hopes Daisy will come.

16. a the history of the farm · b a gift · c repeat the slogan · d I think… / In my view… · e every citizen / each citizen · f return to the West.

17. a Keep the passive: the topic is the novel, and the publisher is not the point (or: *Secker and Warburg published…* if the publisher matters). b Active: the passive hides who made the mistakes — *The Ministry made mistakes and reduced the chocolate ration.* c Active: *The Ministry decided to rewrite the article.* d Keep the passive: the sniper is unknown and unimportant. e Active: *Many critics believe that Nick is not a reliable narrator.*

18. a investigate · b consider · c compare · d conclude (that) · e discuss · f cut it, or *in the end* / *finally*.

19. a Because Gatsby loved Daisy, he bought a house across the bay. b Orwell wrote the novel on the island of Jura. c In my view, the ending is pessimistic. (or: *I think the ending is pessimistic.*) d The pigs return to the farmhouse. e The Ministry reduced the ration.

20. Model (17 words): *Huxley's novel (1932) describes a society kept happy by a drug. Perhaps we are not so different.* Cuts: *It is a fact that is well known to everybody that* (filler), *in the year*, *by means of* (→ *by*), *in a certain sense it could be said that*, *our modern world of today* (redundant and a cliché). Other versions are acceptable if they keep the date, the drug and the comparison with today.

21. a rule i (a dying metaphor) · b rule ii (*utilised* → *used*) · c rule iii (cut it: if it goes without saying, do not say it) · d rule iv (who destroyed them?) · e rule v (a foreign phrase: *by that very fact*, or simply cut it).

22. a Because the novel came out in 1949, many readers took it as a warning about the Cold War. b Orwell was not against socialism, but against totalitarianism. (The opening filler is cut.) c Many people now believe that technology controls us.

23. Model: *The Ministry will cut the chocolate ration next week.* (9 words.) The original hides **who** decides (no agent: *will be implemented*), **what** is happening (*reduction*, *adjustment*: abstract nouns instead of "cut") and **why** (*to ensure continued stability* means nothing precise) — Orwell's "pacification" on a small scale.

24. a surveillance · b dissent · c censorship · d propaganda · e conform · f privacy.

25. a catch-22 · b Orwellian · c robot(s) · d brave new world · e Big Brother.

26. a totalitarian · b inequality · c manipulation · d conformity · e privacy.

27. *Assessment.* Content (the quotation explained, a clear thesis, two arguments with evidence, a counter-argument answered, a conclusion that widens the thesis) 6 · organisation and linking 3 · range and accuracy of language 4 · editing (no fillers, no clichés, the quotation copied exactly, word count) 2. Model: see the essay in Tabella 10.10.

28. Model answer: *Supposing the government could update history at any time, the first thing that would change is trust: nobody could be sure that what they read today would still be there tomorrow. In that case, schools would teach whatever was convenient, and anyone who remembered differently would have no proof — exactly Winston's problem in* Nineteen Eighty-Four. *On the one hand, a single online version would be cheap and easy to correct; on the other, the real risk would be that "correcting" becomes rewriting. It would only be acceptable provided that independent archives kept every old version and anyone could compare them. So, all things considered, I'd say no: history needs many keepers, not one.*

29. a B · b D · c A · d C · e archivists, historians and librarians · f because people forget, and forgetting

is easier than checking.

30. (1) in (2) well (*much* is also accepted) (3) had (4) when (5) first (6) more (7) over (*around* is also accepted) (8) most.

31. a is rewritten by · b was unaware that · c despite their being (informally: *despite them being*) · d wish I had read · e has never been seen.

32. Model answer: *The picture shows a modern street watched by cameras on every lamppost and by a face on a giant screen; the graffiti quotes the caption under the posters in* Nineteen Eighty-Four*, so whoever wrote it sees the cameras as a kind of Big Brother. The similarity is the feeling of being watched all the time; the difference is that Orwell's telescreens belonged to one Party, while today cameras are installed by many different authorities and companies, often for safety, and are usually regulated by law. This links to history: Fascist Italy and Stalin's Soviet Union surrounded citizens with the leader's face and controlled the press through the Minculpop and the secret police. In my view, some cameras in public places are acceptable, provided that the images are protected and the rules are public; what Orwell teaches is to ask who watches the watchers.*