**1984 Essay Topics**

Directions: Choose an essay topic below, and write a well-constructed essay that is 4-5 pages long. It should be typed, and in MLA format.

**Rough Draft Due: Monday, November 2**

**Final draft Due: Monday, November 9**

* Orwell once wrote that “in a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act.” In a well-written essay, analyze how Orwell’s use of characterization and plot in 1984 helps to establish this theme.
* One theme common of the dystopian novel is that government’s intentions are not benevolent, but self-serving. In a well-written essay using 1984 as your example, defend the accuracy of this statement of theme.
* Humanistic philosopher Erich Fromm wrote that 1984, in its dystopian tendencies, expressed “the powerlessness and hopelessness of modern man just as the early utopias expressed the mood of self-confidence.” In a well-organized essay, analyze how the literary devices of irony, paradox, and tone contribute to express this sense of hopelessness in the novel?
* Critic Roland Barthes has said, “Literature is the question minus the answer.” Choose a novel or play and, considering Barthes’ observation, write an essay in which you analyze a central question the work raises and the extent to which it offers any answers. Explain how the author’s treatment of this question affects your understanding of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

**Challenge topic: Read Brave New World and choose one of the following topics:**

* In both Brave New World and 1984, maintaining stability in the interest of political power appears to be the primary goal of each society’s political leaders. Drawing on evidence from both novels, analyze how stability is achieved in these two fictional societies and what Huxley and Orwell are ultimately suggesting about the possibility – or impossibility – of political change.
* In Brave New World, when John first starts reading Shakespeare, he discovers that the words make his emotions "more real" - they even make other people more real. Conversely, in 1984, Syme explains to Winston that “the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought.” Drawing on evidence from both novels, discuss what Huxley and Orwell are suggesting about the power of language, especially in relation to the question of social or political power/control.