Read the following passage from 1984:

Actually, as Winston well knew, it was only four years since Oceania had been at war with Eastasia and in alliance with Eurasia. But that was merely a piece of furtive knowledge which he happened to possess because his memory was not satisfactorily under control. Officially, the change of partners had never happened. Oceania was at war with Eurasia: therefore Oceania had always been at war with Eurasia. **The enemy of the moment always represented absolute evil, and it followed that any past or future agreement with him was impossible…**

The Party said that Oceania had never been in alliance with Eurasia. He, Winston Smith, knew that Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia as short a time as four years ago. But where did that knowledge exist? Only in his own consciousness, which in any case must soon be annihilated**. And if all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed—if all records told the same tale---then the lie passed into history and became truth.** “Who controls the past,” ran the Party slogan, “controls the future: who controls the present, controls the past.” And yet the past, though of its nature alterable, never had been altered. Whatever was true now was true from everlasting to everlasting. It was quite simple. All that was needed was an unending series of victories over your own memory. “Reality control,” they called it; in Newspeak, “doublethink.”…

**To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them…(34-35)**

1. Consider the first bolded section. Can you see any connection between American society and this statement? Consider people’s views on our current enemies.

2. Reflect on the second bolded passage. Can you see any connections to our world? How could or does this work in our world? In theirs?

3. In what ways could the slogan be true: “who controls the past, controls the future.” How does this work? What is the connection between past and future?

4. Consider the third bolded passage. How could this be possible? How can you be truthful while telling lies? How can you hold two opposing opinions simultaneously and fully believe both of them?