



IB English Paper 2 Question Bank



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1. In the two works you have studied, discuss the means as well as the effectiveness with which power or authority is exercised. (Persepolis and 1984)

In Orwell's 1984, power is the sole catalyst that establishes the government and wants it for its own sake. The Party takes away the privacy of their citizens by watching them through tele-screens, and brainwash them to an extent where they are nothing but blindly loyal. The Party intends to control the past because when they control the memories and the history, they gain the reigns to control the life of Oceania's citizens. The antagonist of the book, Winston Smith is employed to change the pasts of people that may have become enemies in the present. Thus, in doing so, the people's records that have been changed will remain in the unfavored light. History is rewritten and manipulated by the Party.

1984 makes us live through totalitarianism followed in a dystopian culture. The book extensively discusses how power is abused, privileged and allocated in and amongst society. The power in 1984 is primarily the Party and Big Brother. They have the liberty and authority to decide anything and everything that happens in the society. While it is not proven that Big Brother exists, the thought of him being there everywhere has made the citizens live in fear of disappearing without a trace if they don't follow the Party's rules. The citizens that harbor rebellious thoughts are "vaporized". Some of the means that the Party used to establish authority was monitoring the behaviors of all their constituents, summoning everyone for morning exercises, demanding that the citizens should be loyal to no one else but the Party. It further condemns sex and does not support the idea of a family. The only family that exists is everyone as a whole under the rule of the Party. The Party controlling the past has given them a major control over the citizens of Oceania. The people tend to look back at history so they are reminded of what mistakes have been done, what to avoid and what was good. All in all, the people reflect on the history and compare it to the present time they are in. Therefore, when people look back on history and the events that have not been altered to suit the Party's needs, the Party fears that the citizens of Oceania would rebel against them eventually leading them to lose control. To avoid this, the Party exercises their power in a way to erase the truthful history to show that the present times are in fact better than the past. This was quite an effective method to use their power because the Party is taking away the incentive of people rebelling against them by playing with their memories.

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This includes the “Thought Police” which the Party created where they ensured the citizen’s memories never came out into the open apart from what was told to them by the Party. The Party essentially depends on fear, classicism and physical torture to govern and rule the society. They had so much authority over the people, they happened to only control them rather than protect them like any government should. The book boils down to how the ideologies of the totalitarian system encourages slavery and gives no place for human rights. The Party was very effective with their power as the protagonist, Winston along with Julia were not successful in rebelling against them.

In Satrapi’s *Persepolis*, the power and authority is debated between the individuals versus the government. The book explores the people’s agency before and after the Islamic Revolution in Iran since they overthrew the Shah that was American-backed. Essentially, in the book, the people of Iran showcase their power by rebelling and protesting against their Iranian leader. Standing united, they managed to overthrow the Shah. This was one of the indications where the power of the people was established and more powerful. It is understood from this that, if their people are together, they can possibly achieve anything. Furthermore, the Guardians of the revolutions were also considered to be the ones with power. They demonstrated their authority by arresting women who were wearing their veils incorrectly, or stopping Marji for wearing punk like clothes and sneakers as she did not adhere to the norms of a normal Muslim woman. According to the Muslim culture, the government dictated the dress code for women which happens to be a black dress with a veil. Marji frequently encounters trouble when she fails to follow these new regulations. Marji realizes throughout the story that her power, the power of an (rebellious) individual, is limited when she faces the power of the Iranian government.

Power is also wielded by the government at one point when they place numerous restrictions on how a family and/or individuals are supposed to lead their lives. For instance, alcohol was banned from consumption and storage in peoples houses. Therefore, before their houses were inspected every now and then, Marji and her grandmother used to flush down everything that they had. Another instance where the government displayed power and authority was when they forced kids to go to war. The kids were brainwashed by the government and under their control. This depicted that the government was ready to go to any extent with their deceiving lies to tell people that it is a good thing that people are being sacrificed on behalf of their country.



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+91 9540653900