Module Focus
The human condition is the characteristics, key events and situations which compose the essentials of human existence, such as birth, growth, emotionality, aspiration, conflict and morality.

The Human Experience (Concept)
• Individual human experience.
• Collective human experience.
• Human qualities and emotions arising from these experiences.
• Anomalies (something that deviates from what is standard, normal or expected), paradoxes (a person or thing that combines contradictory features or qualities) and inconsistencies (no staying the same throughout) in human behaviour and motivations.
• Particular lives and cultures.
• Universal themes (love, betrayal, relationships, society structure and system).

Reader response (Appreciate, explore, interpret, analyse and evaluate)
• Deepen their understanding of how texts represent... Examine how texts represent...
• Invite the responder to see the world differently to challenge assumptions, ignite new ideas or reflect personally.
• Increasingly informed judgements about how aspects of texts shape meaning.
• Draw from personal experience to make connections between themselves, the world of the text and their wider world.
• Develop a repertoire of skills in comprehending, interpreting and analysing complex texts.

Representations (How texts)
• The ways language is used to shape representations in a range of texts in a variety of forms, modes and media.
• May give insight to...
• The role of storytelling throughout time to express and reflect.
• How aspects of these texts such as context, purpose, structure form and stylistic features can shape meaning.
• Different modes and media use visual, verbal and/or digital language elements.

Composition
• Develop skills and confidence using various literary devices, language concepts, modes and media to formulate a considered response to texts.
• Communicate ideas using figurative language to express universal themes.
• Evaluative language to make informed judgements about texts.

In relation to the text:
What drives the characters? Ambition, love, desire, greatness, power.
How is power used by some to control others? Manipulating history, language and knowledge as well as forcing the collective identity, eradicating original, individual thought and opposition.
What is the role of the state in the lives of its citizens? The party has infiltrated every part of its citizens lives. Private life (ownslife) is non existent and ‘dangerous’. Constant surveillance and violence/torture.
What is the value of individuality, or relationships, or human connections? There is no value placed on individuality, relationships and human connections. The totalitarian regime is strongly against individual identity and experiences and relies on the collective identity of the public to keep them under control and oppressed. A confronting narrative that highlights the characteristics that make us human.
What power does an individual have against the state? Can power structures ever be changed? The individual has extremely limited power against the state and the party knows that. In order to suppress the people and threats of opposition they try to eradicate individual thought and expression through terror.

Jacinta-Lea Fa’Asolo
turn, destroying the individual experiences and qualities such as emotions and connections that are so deeply important to what makes us human.

George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four

Representations of individual and collective human experiences

Winston Smith is a tool for Orwell. Representation of the ‘average man’ ‘the individual’ complete with his own strengths and weaknesses when faced with the threat that is totalitarianism. Under the oppressive regime of the Party led by Big Brother, Winston lives a life characterised by hatred for the Party and rebellion. He hates the Party and constantly challenges its authority. By writing "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER" in his diary, through his love affair with Julia, and joining the Brotherhood, Winston outright rebels against the Party in attempt to establish his own individuality and values.

- Loss of freedom (denying people their individuality and freedom of expression through the use of propaganda and terror)
  "This was no illegal, but if detected it was reasonably certain it would be punished by death, or at least twenty-five years in a forced-labour camp."
  "He had committed the essential crime that contained all others in itself. Thoughtcrime, they called it."
  "In the end the Party would announce that two and two made five, and you would have to believe it."
  "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows."
  "He gazed up at the enormous face. Forty years it had taken him to learn what kind of smile was hidden beneath the dark moustache. O cruel, needless misunderstanding! O stubborn, self-willed exile from the loving breast! Two gin-scented tears trickled down the sides of his nose. But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother."

Ultimately, at the demise of Winston’s character Orwell demonstrates how Totalitarian rule can kill the human spirit — a warning to us all. We witness Winston totally surrender to the Party, highlighting his character's transformation and loss of his own values and sense of self. Winston is not the same person we came to know during the course of the story. He is reduced to an obedient party member, lacking emotional substance.

- Abuse of power
  "The two aims of the Party are to conquer the whole surface of the earth and to extinguish once and for all the possibility of independent thought."
  "Never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you ourselves."
  "The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness: only power, pure power... We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means, it is an end."

O’Brien and Winston’s conversation further emphasises the toxic, corrupt nature of the party and their quest for power. O’Brien explains to Winston that the Party seeks power for no other reason than to have it. Again Orwell presents readers with a warning about the dangers of totalitarianism and the resulting loss of humanity. O’Brien is the antithesis of human qualities, lacking compassion, integrity understanding and purpose.

- Power is inflicting pain and humiliation."
  "Don’t you see the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thought crime impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it."

Representations of human qualities and emotions

- Fear
  "It was almost normal for people over thirty to be frightened of their own children."
  "Today there was fear, hatred and pain but no dignity of emotion, no deep or complex sorrows."

Orwell uses further characterisation and the enigma that is O’Brien to be the antithesis of human values and quality. O’Brien represents the Party and all of its contradictions and cruelty. This destructive mentality is demonstrated in the torture and horror that O’Brien inflicts upon Winston. In room 101, Winston is confronted by his greatest fear. After months of being subjected to torture and brainwashing, Winston betrays Julia and in the process loses his humanity and sense of self and desires. By presenting a world
where people are oppressed and dehumanised as a result others thirst for power and control, Orwell successfully highlights the value of love and self-expression and the absolute tragedy and desolate state of the world if these values, hopes, and desires were to be destroyed.

- Love (compassion, empathy, intimacy and friendship)
  Love, hope and relationships are essential elements of the human condition.
  Winston gives in to the suffering he is subjected to and in the process of betraying Julia Winston loses his sense of love and sense of self. His spirit is destroyed.

- Desire
  Orwell uses the characterisation of Winston Smith to embody and reflect core features of the human condition. Winston Smith is presented as the ‘everyday man’ living under the oppressive rule of INGSOC, who over the course of the novel transforms into a revolutionary individual, aware of the atrocities of the party and able to privately reject and resist its control and authority. Winston asserts his sense of self and individuality through by writing in his diary where he explicitly expresses his resistance to the regime and documents his memories. Winston's love and forbidden relationship with Julia are also symbolic of his desire for freedom and human connection — a luxury not at all afforded in the world of 1984. Winston’s capacity to feel love and compassion and trust in his relationship with Julia represents hope and everything that is of value to us as humans.

- Hopes and values
  “You will have to get used to living without results and without hope.”
  Human experience (what it means to be happy and human in this context are all lost in 1984):
  - Individuality
  - Autonomy (freedom from control or influence)
  - Intellect (the proles — 85% of the population, represent the opposite. Little education, labour and live in poverty. “Proles and animals are free”)
  - Own thinking
  - Humour
  - Love and pleasure (Julia and Winston’s relationship)
  - Privacy (Mr Charrington’s shop was symbolic of privacy and freedom from the party. This idea is completely shattered during Winston and Julia’s arrest when it is revealed Mr Charrington was a member of the thought police all along.)

They value freedom from
  - Tyranny
  - Hunger
  - Sickness
  - Poverty
  - War conditions
  - Unemployment

As well as
  - Safety
  - Stability

Anomalies, paradoxes and inconsistencies in human behaviour and motivations
Winston Smith believes himself to be an anomaly in the world of 1984 ‘the last man’. “It was a bright cold day in April.” Reflects the entire paradoxical nature of the text.

“The Ministry of Peace concerns itself with war, the Ministry of Truth with lies, the Ministry of Love with torture and the Ministry of Plenty with starvation. The contradictions are not accidental, nor do they result from ordinary hypocrisy; they are deliberate exercises in doublethink.”

Orwell's novel is rich in paradoxes and anomalies. This particular passage from Goldstein's book highlights the party's inconsistencies and deliberate exercise of doublethink. Doublethink is a necessary tool of psychological manipulation used to control the threat of logic to the party's power and reflects the hypocrisy and deceptiveness of totalitarianism.

Winston’s job in the records department of the ministry of truth serves as one of the biggest paradoxes in his human experience. His job is to rewrite historical documents so that they match the constantly changing party ideals and to cover up any mentions of people that the party has vaporised. It’s ironic how his job at the ‘Ministry of Truth’ is to fabricate and change the historical truth of events and people.

‘Victory Mansions’, where Winston lives is also paradoxical. It’s a run down, dirty and uninviting apartment complex and represents urban decay in the society of 1984 and the party’s disinterest in the wellbeing of their public.
How language structures, forms and features shape meaning

- Symbolism (Big Brother, Mr Charrington’s room, paperweight.)
- Narrative structure and perspective
- Characterisation (Winston, Julia and O’Brien)
- Imagery
- Satire (Outlines extreme totalitarianism, making the flaws of the system evident. Mind control “2+2=5”, “War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength”, double think. Erasing the past. Stripping individuality. Ministries — Peace, Love, Truth, Plenty.)

Character Information

- Winston
  - An antihero — lacking any classical heroic attributes — challenges audience’s expectations and increases the relevance and realism of Winston.
  - Yearns for privacy, intimacy, love, freedom.
  - Represents the human condition: helplessness and death of the individual.
  - Embody irony in that he believes in an unalterable past, yet he is effectively complicit in the very thing he despises — the mutilation and mutability of the past.
  - Desire for truth/mutability of the past.
  - Sex, lust or love.
  - Search for identity.
  - Desire for freedom — privacy, individuality, freedom from control.
  - Cruelty, subjugation, oppression and fear.
  - Isolation, loneliness, ‘the last man’.
- Julia
  - Embodies Orwell’s belief in feminine passivity and possibly intellectual inferiority (she is portrayed as a rebel in action, not in thought).
  - Every (misogynistic) man’s dream — loves sex and uses it as a form of rebellion.
  - Sensual, bold, pragmatic, opportunistic.
  - Ironically wears her ‘Anti Sex League’ red sash as means to enhance her sexual attractiveness.
  - Winston’s love interest and his ally in the struggle against Big Brother. She represents the element of humanity that Winston does not: pure sexuality, cunning and survival.
  - Sleeps with party members regularly no to destroy the Party but to quench her own desires.
  - Her rebellion is purely incidental to her own desires.
  - Not until their love was strong did the party intervene. Separating the couple diminished their effectiveness.
- O’Brien
  - Represents the party and all of its contradictions and cruelty.
  - Enigmatic, seductive, powerful.
  - Symbol of military regimentation, mindlessly following orders.
  - Winston sees in his eyes a hint of unorthodoxy — it is possible that he was once like Winston before his conversion.
  - Antithesis of humanity and human qualities.
  - Represents the party and all of its contradictions and cruelty.
  - O’Brien is trying, through torture, to make Winston “perfect”, to “save him”.
  - The party wants to purify all through, believing that one stray thought has the potential to corrupt the Party.

Thesis Statements

Stories are universal and one of the most important features of our human existence. Throughout history and different cultures, stories have been used to make sense of our world, to explore the qualities, emotions and behaviours that make us human and share that understanding with others. They invite us to see the world differently, challenge our assumptions, ignite new ideas and allow us to reflect on our own human experiences.

George Orwell’s dystopian novel Nineteen Eighty-Four is a vision of the future that reflects contemporary fears of totalitarianism and reality control as well as contemporary values of love and relationships and individualism. Nineteen Eighty-Four serves as Orwell’s own creative critique of the dictatorships and
authoritarian regimes that he was personally witness to following the world wars and a warning to the dangers of such regimes. Winston Smith, the protagonist of the novel, embodies and reflects human experiences such as desire, expression, love and loss.

One of the most important features of humanity is our ability to share individual and collective experiences through stories and texts. Stories are used universally to make sense of the human condition and share that understanding with others. Texts are able to represent human qualities and emotions such as love, fear and one's sense of self-arising from individual and collective human experiences. George Orwell's ‘Nineteen Eighty-Four’ manifests contemporary values and fears and manipulate language to provide us with a more holistic view of how texts can represent love and relationships, confronting fears and our own identity and sense of self.

One of the most significant elements of our existence as humans are the connections we make with others and interpersonal relationships that we establish. In 1984, we are witness to how the lack of human connection along with the loss of love, trust and loyalty can result in a desolate world full of suffering and terror and meaningless, lonely existence as individuals. Winston’s heartbreaking submission to the torture inflicted by O’Brien and his ultimate betrayal of Julia leads to the loss of everything that makes him human and everything of value in his life.

Hope and the desire for freedom and expression are central characteristics of the human spirit — without desires and hope, life wouldn’t be life but more so just surviving. In 1984, we see how desolate and purposeless life living in this dystopian Oceania is. Living under the party’s regime robs the individual from their human rights and experiences of sexual, parental instinct, friendship, loyalty, love and most detrimental of all — thought and self-expression. Orwell uses his character Winston to reflect these core features of the human condition through his expression of resistance to the party by writing in his diary and his forbidden, passionate relationship with Julia. Julia is a symbol of Winston’s desire for freedom, rebellion and resistance. ‘And what he wanted, more even than to be loved, was to break down that wall of virtue, even if it were only once in his whole life. The sexual act, successfully performed, was rebellion. Desire was thoughtcrime.’ Julia gives Winston hope, but its this continuation of hope that leaves them both broken and destroyed in the hands of the party.