



## Euphemisms/Orwellian Newspeak

### Description

A euphemism is a generally innocuous word or expression used in place of one that may be found offensive or suggest something unpleasant. Some euphemisms are intended to amuse, while others use bland, inoffensive terms for concepts that the user wishes to downplay. Euphemisms are used to refer to taboo topics in a polite way, or to mask profanity. [More at Wikipedia](#)

Newspeak is the language of Oceania, a fictional totalitarian state ruled by the Party, who created the language to meet the ideological requirements of English Socialism. [More at Wikipedia](#)

Orwell, G.. (2000). Appendix: The Principles of Newspeak. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

### Show/hide publication abstract

“First published by martin secker & warburg ltd. 1949 ... this edition first published by martin secker & warburg ltd in the complete works of george orwell series [vol. 9] 1987. published in penguin books with an introduction and a new note on the text 1989’—title page verso. introduction by ben pimlott; textual note by peter davison, editor of the complete works of george orwell. in ‘nineteen eighty-four’, one of the 20th century’s great myth-makers george orwell takes a cold look at the future.”

Bergman, J.. (1994). *Totalitarian language: Orwell’s newspeak and its nazi and communist antecedents*. History of European Ideas

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1016/0191-6599(94)90522-3

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“As with so much else in george orwell’s novel nineteen eighty-four, the idea for newspeak evolved from the author’s reading, rumination, and observations, set forth in earlier books, articles, and essays, on the political and intellectual tendencies of his age. newspeak sharpens to a satirical focus these observations of orwell and his concern about the deterioration of language and literature, not only in totalitarian societies but among western intellectuals infected with totalitarian habits of thought. it also reflects orwell’s belief that language and politics are closely connected, and that while politics can



adversely affect language, language itself, when persistently abused, can contribute to political decay. through his description of the language of oceania, orwell provides us with a kind of model of totalitarian language. the major components of that model are (1) intent of the rulers to control thought and action through language, (2) exaltation of the state over the individual, (3) violence and vilification, (4) euphemism, (5) special political terminology, and (6) the failure of words to reflect reality. for the most part, this model accurately describes the language used by the nazis and communists, and for that reason among others, orwell remains an author of considerable importance for political discussion. but contrary to what nineteen eighty-four might lead us to believe, the abuse of language by historical totalitarian regimes has so far not enabled them to control the thought and behavior of their subjects—at least not to the extent achieved by orwell's oceanic regime. for when, as is inevitably the case, the words and deeds of totalitarian governments consistently fail to correspond—when official rhetoric and reality do not agree—many of the subjects grow sceptical and cynical. this gives rise to the phenomenon of counter-languages, in which private citizens attempt to portray life as it really is under dictatorial rule."

Joseph, J. E.. (2000). Orwell on Language and Politics. Edinburgh Working Papers in Applied Linguistics

### Show/hide publication abstract

"Newspeak, the engineered language of george orwell's novel nineteen eighty-four, is discussed in the context of orwell's wider views on language & politics & the need for linguistic intervention as part of the struggle against tyranny, & of the related or opposed ideas of some of orwell's contemporaries & ferdinand de saussure. 7 references. adapted from the source document"

Buchen, I. H.. (1984). The future of 1984. Technology in Society

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1016/0160-791X(84)90036-8

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"George orwell's 1984 is essentially about the future of technology, in particular, four technologies: the technology of surveillance, of behavior modification, of reclamation, and of newspeak. practical issues that follow in the wake of orwell's indictment of technology have to do with the predictive power of the work: how close has science fiction come to predicting socio-technical fact? finally, orwell raises the ethical issue of how scientists can identify the future consequences of their technologies and how they can be exonerated from these consequences. © 1985."

Waters, A.. (2015). "Orwellian" discourse in ELT: A threat to professional diversity. RELC Journal

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1177/0033688214555354

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"The diversity of opinion about pedagogy within elt (english language teaching) makes it essential that its professional discourse is sufficiently inclusive. however, this often fails to occur because elt



professional discussion is frequently too 'orwellian' in nature, i.e. behaves in a manner resembling the political structures in the novel 'nineteen eighty-four' (orwell, 1949). for example, a form of professional 'newspeak' often exists, whereby meanings of words are aligned with 'approved' ways of thinking, such as in the use of the term 'authentic'. a second frequent occurrence is 'thoughtcrime' (views contrary to those of the 'ruling party' being seen as unacceptable). the over-promotion of task-based learning can be seen as often taking such a form. third, 'doublethink' (simultaneously believing in two contradictory ideas) is all too common, as in the advocacy of professional inclusivity, on the one hand, and the rejection of 'english as a native language' (enl) as a pedagogical model on the other. as a result of such forms of 'thought control', a number of valid professional pedagogical perspectives are denigrated. the paper concludes by discussing how a less orwellian and more representative form of professional discourse might be created."

**Category**

1. General

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