"1984" Excerpt Reading

Read this article about the video games industry. Then do the multiple choice.

'How is the Dictionary getting on?' said Winston, raising his voice to overcome the noise.
'Slowly,' said Syme. 'I'm on the adjectives. It's fascinating.'

He had brightened up immediately at the mention of Newspeak. He pushed his bowl aside, took up his hunk of bread in one delicate hand and his cheese in the other, and leaned across the table so as to be able to speak without shouting.'

The Eleventh Edition is the definitive edition,' he said. 'We're getting the language into its final shape -the shape it's going to have when nobody speaks anything else. When we've finished with it, people like you will have to learn it all over again. You think, I dare say, that our chief job is inventing new words. But not a bit of it! We're destroying words – scores of them, hundreds of them, every day. We're cutting the language down to the bone. The Eleventh Edition won't contain a single word that will become obsolete before the year 2050.'

He bit hungrily into his bread and swallowed a couple of mouthfuls, then continued speaking, with a sort of pedant's passion. His thin dark face had become animated, his eyes had lost their mocking expression and grown almost dreamy.'

It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words. Of course the great wastage is in the verbs and adjectives, but there are hundreds of nouns that can begot rid of as well. It isn't only the synonyms; there are also the antonyms. After all, what justification is there for a word which is simply the opposite of some other word? A word contains its opposite in itself. Take "good", for instance. If you have a word like "good", what need is there for a word like "bad"?" "Ungood" will do just as well - better, because it's an exact opposite, which the other is not. Or again, if you want a stronger version of "good", what sense is there in having a whole string of vague useless words like "excellent" and "splendid" and all the rest of them? "Plusgood" covers the meaning, or "doubleplusgood"if you want something stronger still. Of course we use those forms already. But in the final version of Newspeak there'll be nothing else. In the end the whole notion of goodness and badness will be covered by only six words - in reality, only one word. Don't you see the beauty of that, Winston? It was B.B.'s idea originally, of course,' he added as an after thought.

A sort of vapid eagerness flitted across Winston's face at the mention of Big Brother. Nevertheless Syme immediately detected a certain lack of enthusiasm.

'You haven't a real appreciation of Newspeak, Winston,' he said almost sadly. 'Even when you write it you're still thinking in Oldspeak. I've read some of those pieces that you write in "The Times" occasionally. They're good enough, but they're translations. In your heart you'd prefer to stick to Oldspeak, with all its vagueness and its useless shades of meaning. You don't grasp the beauty of the destruction of words. Do you know that Newspeak is the only language in the world whose vocabulary gets smaller every year?'

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Winston did know that, of course. He smiled, sympathetically he hoped, not trusting himself to speak. Syme bit off another fragment of the dark-coloured bread, chewed it briefly, and went on:

'Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thought crime literally impossible because there will be no words in which to express it. Every concept that can ever be needed, will be expressed by exactly one word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten. Already, in the Eleventh Edition, we're not far from that point. But the process will still be continuing long after you and I are dead. Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller. Even now, of course, there's no reason or excuse for committing thought crime. It's merely a question of self-discipline, reality control. But in the end there won't be any need even for that. The Revolution will be complete when the language is perfect. Newspeak is Ingsoc and Ingsoc is Newspeak,' he added with a sort of mystical satisfaction.' Has it ever occurred to you, Winston, that by the year 2050, at the very latest, not a single human being will be alive who could understand such a conversation as we are having now?'

For each questions choose the answer – A, B, C or D.

Winston and Syme are
A. in a cafeteria.
B. at a party.
C. at school.
D. in an office.

2. Syme likes
A. the food.
B. hearing Winston's opinions.
C. talking about his work.
D. to shout.

3. Syme's work with the dictionary involves
A. inventing new words.
B. eliminating words.
C. explaining a theory.
D. teaching people to think.

4. What kind of words are being the most greatly reduced?
A. Adjectives
B. verbs and adjectives
C. Nouns
D. everything except antonyms

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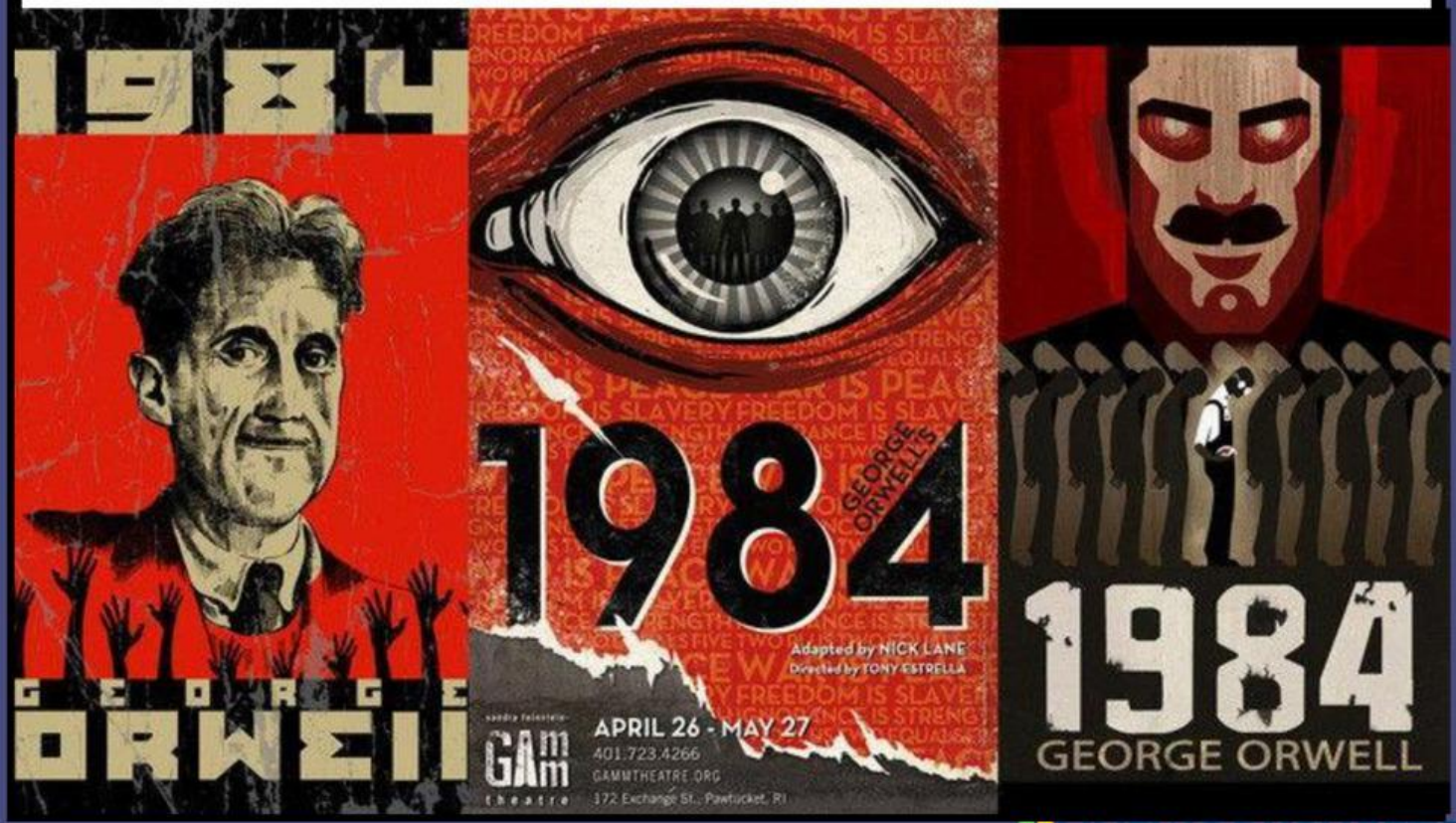
5. What does the author show in paragraph 7 at the top of column 2?
A. Winston tries to seem appreciative but is not really.
B. Winston has great enthusiasm for Newspeak.
C. Syme doubts Winston but this in unjustified.
D. Winston does not believe a word that Syme has said.

6. What can be gathered about Winston's attitude towards Newspeak?
A. He finds it exciting.
B. He studies it eagerly.
C. He is outspokenly against it.
D. He accepts it unhappily.

7. Which of the following best describes Newspeak?
A. It is a historical language being reconstructed.
B. It is a highly simplified language designed to prevent thought.
C. It was invented to help citizens escape an oppressive government.
D. It is a new language that is incredibly difficult to learn.

8. What kind of future does Syme imagine?
A. Everyone will be better educated.
B. People will be safe because there will be no violent crime.
C. People will not have enough language to think at all.
D. People will communicate better and more effectively.



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