

~~1984~~

2061

STUDY GUIDE

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Study Guide by Caite Clark

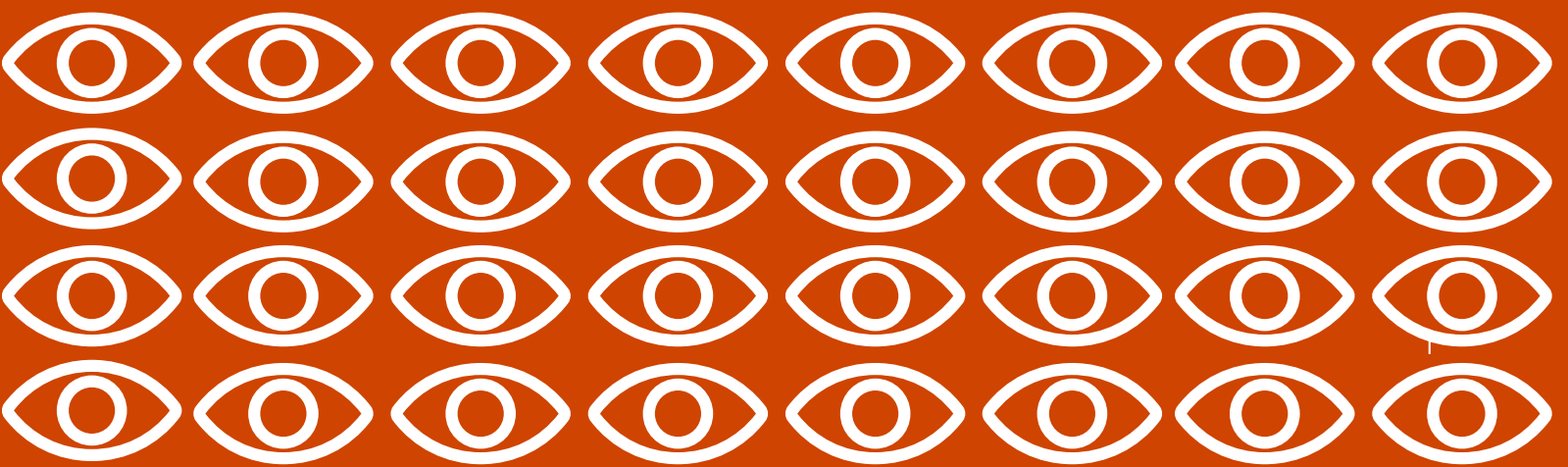


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Geordie's 2Play Tour



Geordie Theatre is Montreal's leading English-language professional theatre for audiences of all ages, entertaining and engaging the imaginations of children and their families since 1980!

This study guide was created as a tool for teachers to help introduce young students to the world of theatre, as well as engage them more deeply with the themes and concepts developed in *2061* by Harry Standjofski. The guide contains a synopsis, character and setting information, a summary of the themes and concepts at play, as well as discussion questions and activities that can be implemented in the classroom before and after the performance.

While listed in a suggested order, we invite teachers to adapt activities based on the needs of their classroom and curriculum. The activities include presentations and handouts that are class-ready for easy distribution to students. Additionally, most activities can be adapted to an online-learning platform. Corresponding cross-curricular and subject-specific competencies from the Quebec Education Plan (QEP) are indicated for each lesson plan.

Over the course of eight months, our 2Play tour travels to schools throughout Eastern Canada, from the Bruce Peninsula to the Magdalen Islands. The touring company has three actors and a tour manager, and is supported by our administrative team at our Montreal office.

Geordie Theatre is located on the unceded Indigenous lands of the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Tiotià:ke (known as Montréal) has existed as a meeting place of many First Nation peoples, including but not limited to the Abenaki, Anishinaabeg (Algonquin), and the Huron-Wendat. We extend our deepest respect to the elders of these communities and to all Indigenous peoples who carry the history of this island's land and waters – caring for it and calling it home. We are honoured and privileged to share stories on this land.

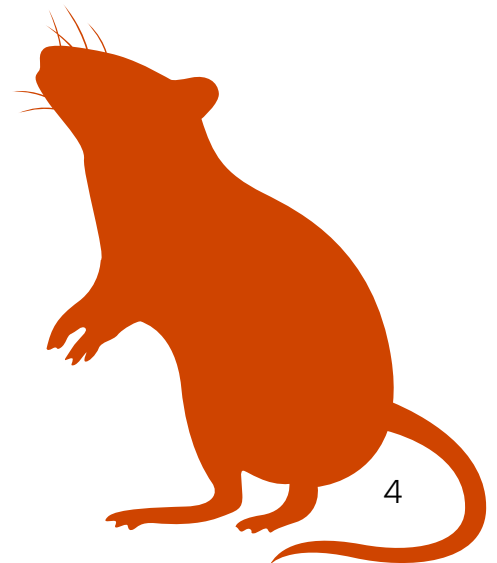
About the Show

In the gleaming, corporate-controlled superstate of the Free West, where the skies are clear and the streets are surveilled, Winston Smith knows something isn't right. The war is over. Peace has been declared. But the truth? It's been buried, rewritten, or deleted entirely. When Winston meets Julia, a bold, sharp-witted colleague, the two begin a dangerous journey through forbidden love, underground resistance, and the fractured memories of a world that once was. Together, they challenge a system powered by AI surveillance, media manipulation, and emotional control—risking everything to reclaim the freedom to think, to feel, and to love. 2061 is a darkly funny, gripping reimagining of Orwell's classic that feels chillingly close to home. Set in a tech-saturated future shaped by climate collapse and government-controlled information, this play asks urgent questions about truth, autonomy, and the cost of comfort in a screen-bound world.

A Note On the Original Novel and Resources

2061 is an adaptation of George Orwell's 1984, commissioned by Geordie with the purpose of incorporating current conversations (AI, bodily autonomy, as examples) that today's youth can connect to. While it's great to teach 1984 alongside this production, we understand each classroom is different and this text is not mandatory for understanding 2061.

- [Read the Audiobook](#)
- [Imagining a theatrical Adaption](#)
- [Brief video summary](#)
- [Julia: A 2023 novel detailing Julia's perspective](#)



About the Show

Characters



Winston Smith

A young person working in Memory.

Played by Luigi Tiberio



Julia Holland

A young person working in Telescreen production.

Played by Rae-Michelle Comodero



Supervisor O'Brien

A person working for the Inner Party connected to Big Brother.

Played by Vassilios Iliopoulos

Additional Characters

Big Brother: The all-powerful entity that watches over the citizens of the Free West.

Parson, Syme: Colleagues of Winston's who are punished for trying to rebel against the government.

Julia's daughter: Learns of Winston and Julia's story and is alive to see the downfall of Big Brother (epilogue).

About the Show

Themes

- Power and Surveillance
- Censorship and Information Control or Media Manipulation
- Individuality and Critical Thought

QEP Competencies

Broad Areas of Learning

- Health & Wellbeing
- Media Literacy
- Citizenship & Community Life

Drama

- Perform and create dramatic work
- Appreciate dramatic work

Visual Art

- Produce individual works in the visual arts

English Language Arts

- Write self-expressive, narrative, and information-based texts
- Represent literacy in different media
- Use language to communicate and learn

Culture and Citizenship in Quebec

- Studies cultural realities
- Reflects on ethical questions

Physical Education

- Adopt a healthy, active lifestyle

Words to Watch Out For

Total War

The “Before Times,” a global conflict that decimated present day society.

Great Peace

The state of the world in *2061*, where everything is “in order” and the government has complete control over its people.

Big Brother

The ultimate leader of the society Winston lives in. “He has addressed us on screen only; we only know his voice and his eyes.” – Winston

Cost Mart

The universal consumer product company. “Everything, all owned by the state.” – Winston

Telescreens

Communication devices. “They can’t be turned off, they play news, ads & entertainment all day. They can listen and watch everything we do, use facial recognition...” – Winston

Newspeak

Developing language to be more simplified so people produce less original thought.



Before the Show

Activity: Hypnosis

Objective: *Examine power, surveillance, and control*



Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* uses theatre as a medium for understanding power structures and how individuals can be agents of change or liberation. This exercise can be used in drama or classroom settings for embodied learning and group reflection.

FIRST: Have students break off into pairs and establish the rules for **Hypnosis**. Ensure there is space to move around and the game is played without any physical touch. Have the students explore for a few minutes.

Come back as a class and discuss. How did it feel to be the person in control or the person following? What was challenging about the exercise?

THEN: As a class, have one pair repeat the activity while everyone observes. After a moment of observation, have a volunteer join the demonstration. They are now "hypnotized" by the person currently following, creating a chain. You can add more students to the chain at your discretion. Perhaps some students are even tasked with using both hands.

What did the class observe as more people were added to the chain of "hypnosis"? For those participating in the demonstration, how did it feel to be in their position? Are there any dynamics, structures, or relationships we can connect this to in the real world? Who is ultimately in control?

Before the Show

Activity: Blackout Poetry

Objective: *Understand the change of meaning in the written word through an artistic lens*



1984 and 2061 refer to Newspeak, a method of simplifying language. How does the omitting of words or simplifying text impact our understanding of what we're reading?

Blackout Poetry is a unique art form that allows us to produce a new- or perhaps simplified version of a text. You can use the pages of an old book, copies of a poem, or even an excerpt from **1984** itself!

FIRST: Start with students working individually on a single page of text. Before putting pen to paper, have them read the text and take notes on what it is about, and their initial impression on a separate document. It is okay for it to feel fragmented or inconclusive, especially if it is an excerpt from a longer text.

After taking notes, students can begin blocking out text. What essential words or information do they want to keep and why?

THEN: Working in pairs, have students trade blackout poems and examine them. Have them write notes on their partner's poem, what impression or message it leaves them with.

After taking notes, have them compare one another's impressions with the reflections on the individual text. How did the messaging change after words were blocked out? How did the impressions differ?

FURTHER REFLECTION: How might this exercise feel different if we used a news article? Is omitting words or information helpful or hindering?

Before the Show

Case Study: What's The Reality?

Objective: *Reflect on how media is manipulated through both participant and audience perspectives*



Reality television is a rapidly evolving genre that puts people from the “real world” in front of the camera, where the audience is permitted to observe and sometimes even intervene in their life. How can “real life,” or unscripted television create a narrative, and what is our relationship to it as a person on the outside?

Have students identify a reality show in the cultural sphere, be it unscripted or a competition. Examine the intentionality and curation that is behind audience enjoyment or escapism.

Resources to get started...

Read: [How Reality TV Shaped Our World, Whether We Like it Or Not](#)

Watch: [How Reality TV Houses Are Built to Break People](#)

Case Study Examples

- Big Brother
- Survivor
- Love Island
- The Bachelor



Before the Show

Case Study: What's The Reality?

Objective: *Reflect on how media is manipulated through both participant and audience perspectives*

Guiding Questions

What is the world of the show?

- Where is it filmed?
- Who is participating? What do you observe about the cast of “characters”?
- What are the “rules” or unspoken expectations?
- What is motivating the cast to participate?
- To what degree are people in touch with the “outside world” while filming?

How has the show impacted its cast/contestants?

- Can you find news articles or interviews that describe their experience?
- How is it different from yours as a viewer?

What is the “edit”?

- What “story” is told to the audience in an episode? In a season?
- How much of the “story” comes from the actions of the cast, those working on set (example: camera confessionals), and what is edited for the audience to see?
- How does social media become a part of the viewing experience?
- Have any memes or viral quotes/audios come out of this show?

Why do people watch it?

- Is this a show you are watching outside of the case study? Why or why not?
- What kind of people do you assume watch this show?
- What ideas or social norms does it promote? How successful is it?

After the Show

Activity: Rupture and Repair

Objective: *Embody understanding of how power dynamics are represented in a relationship*



Reflecting on Winston and Julia's trajectory in *2061*, they go from forming a connection to turning the other over to Big Brother. After Winston is tortured, they can no longer stand to look at each other. What information can we discern from the use of **levels**, **proximity**, and **eye contact**? How do they help inform an audience about a relationship between characters?

FIRST: Recall the "beats" or moments of Winston and Julia's relationship and how it changes throughout the course of the play. Select a few people to volunteer, directing them before or as a class into a series of tableaux* that capture each moment in their relationship arc.

How can we show...

- How close or far away can they be?
- Who holds the power in the situation?
- Are they listening to each other?

THEN: In pairs or small groups, have students create a tableau series that tells the story of a particular relationship (friends, coworkers, familial, etc.). Each tableau must use different levels, proximity to one another, and forms of eye contact. How does the relationship change? Where does the power lie in this relationship? Once the tableaux are solidified, have the groups present to the class. After a group has shown their piece, provoke the audience to share what story they surmised while watching the performance.

**Tableau:* A "frozen" stage picture, everyone on stage holds a pose for a few moments before changing to the next.

After the Show

Case Study: Information and Control

Objective: *Apply critical thinking skills to analyzing media manipulation*



Assign a current event or brainstorm as a class. Working in pairs or small groups, have students investigate the same movement or moment in time, through at least two different news publications (example: Fox News, NBC, CBC, and La Presse, etc.). Compare and contrast the following:

- **Title of the article:** What is catching our attention?
- **Language:** Who is discussed in the article? Does it speak in favour or degrade anyone? A particular population? Why do you think?
- **Call to action:** Does it demand anything of the reader? Is this presenting or pushing a certain political agenda?
- **Author:** Who are they? What perspective do they bring? What is their background or connection to the media outlet? What else have they written?
- **Surrounding Information:** What other articles and advertisements are visible on the webpage? Do they have any connection to the one you're reading?

What are the differences between various media coverages of the same event? Who is reading what? How does what we read inform how we see the world?

After the Show

Activity: Play Review

Objective: *Communicate artistic analysis and personal reflection*



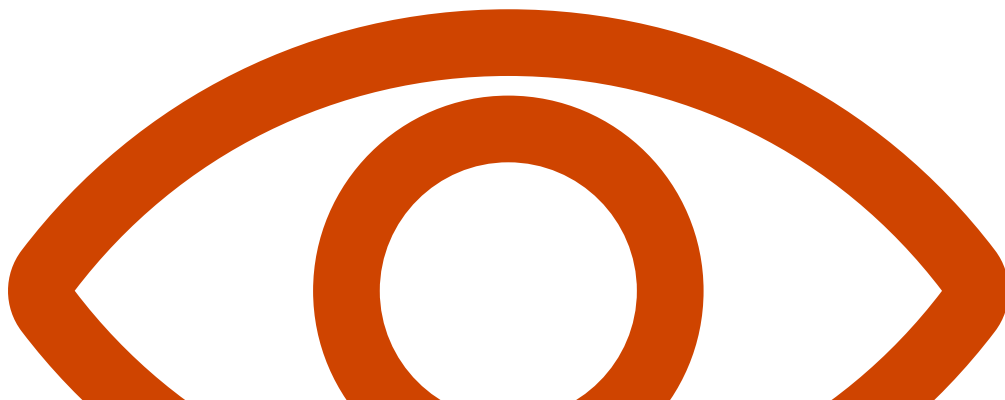
Have students formulate a personal review of the play. You can use your own template, or Geordie's guiding questions (page 11) for a written or oral response.

Options for Assessment Format

Podcast Episode: A conversation or structured interview in pairs.

Social Media Post: Examine a theatre content creator and their review of a performance. What information is communicated in a 90 second-3 minute video? Assign the same structure for individual video creation.

Written Review: Printable on page 15.



Writing a Play Review

Introducing the Production

- Title of the Play and Producing Company
- The text: A published/existing play, adaption, or new work
- Where the performance was
- A brief synopsis

Acting

- The performer(s) and the character(s) they played
- Clarity in speech and expression
- Conveying emotion with their body and voice
- How did the characters relate to one another? Did it feel believable?

Writing

- What was the play about?
- What transformation happened in the story?
- How did you observe time passing? Did it feel slow or fast?
- Did any lines stand out to you?

Design

- What do you recall seeing (set, costume, projection) and hearing?
- Did it help inform your perception of the characters and the world they inhabited?
- Did it help you understand the tone of the play?

Personal Impressions

- Did you enjoy your experience as an audience? Why or why not?
- Who would you recommend this show to?
- What are you left with after seeing the performance; A feeling? A sound? An image?
- If you were the director, what is one thing you would change?

Share with Geordie!

Thanks for seeing the show!
We'd love to hear your thoughts.

Write a Review

We value your feedback! Taking student reviews beyond the classroom helps us continue to ensure the shows we create are resonating with the youth of today.

Teacher Testimonials

As a non-profit, we rely on arts and culture funding to ensure touring is accessible and sustainable. Help us continue Geordie's powerful youth impact by sharing why you bring the 2Play tour to your school!

Connect online

Follow us on social media to hear the latest news about Geordie! If you're sharing photos and videos of the performance, be sure to tag @geordietheatre on Facebook and Instagram.



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