***1984* Essay Contest**

Penguin Group is giving away scholarship money (5 prizes of $1,000). You are going to pick one of the following topics to enter into the school-wide contest. One student will be chosen to represent the school in the national Penguin Essay Contest. This essay will also be 100 points of your 4th quarter grade.  **The essay will be 2-3 pages in length and will be due April 8th, 2013.**

1. Erich Fromm, in the "Afterword" in the Signet Classic edition of *1984*, states:

*"George Orwell's 1984 is the expression of a mood, and it is a warning. The mood it expresses is that of near despair about the future of man, and the warning is that unless the course of history changes, men all over the world will lose their most human qualities, will become soulless automatons and will not even be aware of it." (p. 313)*

What specifically is the warning about? Cite examples from the book that highlight Fromm's concerns.

1. In *1984* the Party is able to generate enthusiasm for war, no matter the enemy or the local conditions. What methods does it use to build support for war and how do the citizens respond? What does this suggest about human behavior?
2. How is Julia characterized? In what ways is she different from Winston? What are her major interests and concerns? Why is she willing to rebel against the Party?
3. One of the most frightening aspects of *1984* is "Newspeak," the systematic deterioration of language as a medium of truth, e.g. "War is Peace," "Freedom is Slavery." Why do the people in the novel accept these so-called truths? How are they used as tools to manipulate opinion and reinforce the total dominance of the state? Can you find examples in our own day of the corruption of language as a dependable reflection of reality?
4. Would Winston have been better off not challenging the party and keeping his rebellious thoughts to himself in order to preserve his personal safety and dignity? In the face of totalitarian rule, is it better to dissent in silence and close one's eyes to atrocities and excesses in order to survive? Is there any way he might have succeeded in challenging the party? Explain your point of view using Winston and Julia's experiences.
5. Some of the surveillance technologies that appear in *1984* are now realities that we take for granted, such as closed circuit television cameras and GPS devices. Discuss the use of technology to control public and private behavior in *1984* and in the present. What limits do you think should be placed on the use of technology to avoid the kind of totalitarian excesses represented in *1984*?

**Choosing a Topic**

**Step 1:** Choose two of the prompts in which you would be interested.

**Step 2:** Look back at your University of Chicago Writing Guide from before Kairos. Attempt to write an arguable thesis on your opinion of these two prompts. Remember that it needs to be arguable, interesting, and narrow.

If you must…start out by simply writing that “I am writing about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in order to prove/show \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” This can help focus you. Then turn it into a third-person thesis.

Example:

“I statement:” I am writing about methods of war in *1984* in order to prove that humans are inherently weak-minded and aggressive.

Thesis: Through examining the methods of war in *1984,* Orwell believes that humans are inherently weak-minded and aggressive.

**Step 3:** Gather evidence from the novel to back up your opinion. Show this by having a typed-page of quotations from the novel that could back up your opinion on the each prompt (a total of two pages). You should include in-text citations next to your quotations. **This is due tomorrow.**