Sample Synthesis Essay
George Orwell’s 1984

Introduction:
George Orwell’s visionary and disturbing novel, 1984, establishes a haunting setting: the near future. Orwell’s creation implies that—rather than some distant planet or people—the current unbalanced circumstances of the world are enough to throw society, in the span of one generation, into tragedy. Orwell displays a profound cynicism about the ability for the individual heart—its spirit of love and freedom—to survive against oppressive indoctrination. Although our democratic ideology may appear to immunize us against totalitarian control, one need only cast a casual glance at modern efforts to defeat terrorism by circumventing civil liberties to see how governments convince us to sacrifice freedom for security. Those efforts, along with the overwhelming presence of surveillance tools, manipulation of language, and our rapid acceptance of technology, reveal a society ripe for exploitation by a less just political leadership.

First Body Paragraph:
To begin, the basic assumption of using “systems of surveillance” to protect us from “war, terror,” and “disease” appears, on the part of the government, benevolent (Source A). After all, the argument of the Party goes, what good is freedom if you’re unprotected from foreign aggression? Big Brother would insist that kind of freedom is slavery. In Oceania, political realities convince Winston and others that it’s necessary to eliminate “unreliable elements” (Source C) as that refers to enemies from Eastasia or Eurasia. But when the Party uses its absolute power over media and public language “to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable,” by “eliminating” Winston’s neighbors and workmates, that’s oppression (Source C). Winston and Julia hunger for a “secret life,” a “private life” (Source E)—an “inch” of personal space that is indeed “small and…fragile and…the only thing in the world worth living for” (Source A). This “inch” is denied them, and it leads to their sadly inevitable doom.

Second Body Paragraph:
Orwell’s novel remains an argument for maintaining individuality as the only means for preserving a healthy democracy, where a greater “leader-as-facilitator as opposed to the leader-as-god” dynamic prevails (Source F). Strong leadership initially inspires us to better things, but in Big Brother, Orwell illustrates how power in the hands of too few leads to corruption. As Nunberg insists, “force is the prerogative of official power” (Source B). Same as in any propaganda initiated either by democratic or totalitarian forces, an inevitable part of the process is visualization of an enemy. In other words, successful propaganda suggests a definite object of hate and contempt, which should be blamed for all disasters and consequently unite all people on the opposite side against it. “Immigrants, Muslims, homosexuals, terrorists” remain convenient symbolic targets for hate in the speeches and public events of political oppressors who offer a distraction to their own abuses (Source A). In the novel, the Party illustrates this principle through public executions, the Two Minutes Hate, and their ever-present messages of manipulation broadcast on telescreen—essentially, a media with a two-way component, without an off switch (Orwell 12-17). Winston finds little escape from this universal brainwashing courtesy of The Party, bringing “the sound of marching, charging feet” to one’s doorstep every morning (Source D). Hi-definition, indeed.