**Orwell, “Politics and the English Language” Comprehension Questions**

Paragraph One

1. The statement, “…it is generally assumed that” is inserted in order to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?
2. Why did Orwell insert the statement, “So the argument runs,” and why did he put it in dashes?
3. True or false: Orwell believes that any struggle against the abuse of language is an old-fashioned and ridiculous preference, like preferring candles or carriages to lights and cars.

Paragraph Two

1. What example does Orwell use to back up the idea that “an effect can *become* a cause”?
2. In what way does bad English make us stupid?

Paragraph Three

1. What is bad about the first example, beginning, “I am not…”?

Dying Metaphors Paragraph

1. How do dying metaphors contribute to making us stupid?
2. What does “toe the line” mean?

Operators or Verbal False Limbs Paragraph

1. Why does eliminating simple verbs contribute to sloppy thought?

Pretentious Diction Paragraph

1. What advantage to the writer is there in using pretentious diction, according to Orwell?
2. Why would a writer want to “cover one’s meaning”?
3. How does pretentious diction contribute to making us stupid?

Meaningless Words

1. Why do leaders, especially leaders of a regime, resist coming up with an actual, precise definition of the word “democracy”?

Ecclesiastes Paragraphs, beginning “Now that I have made…”

1. Why would a modern writer avoid using words like *race*, *battle*, and *bread* instead of “objective considerations of contemporary phenomena…”?

Defense of the Indefensible Paragraph, beginning, “In our time, political speech and writing…”

1. Why is it beneficial for political parties to use vague language?
2. Give one of Orwell’s examples of naming something without giving a mental image of it.

“But If Thought Corrupts Language” Paragraph

1. Why does Orwell compare meaningless phrases to a packet of aspirins always at one’s elbow?
2. Why does Orwell compare words to cavalry horses?

“I Have Not Here Been Considering the Literary Use of Language”

1. If you follow Orwell’s rules, why will it be immediately obvious when you make a stupid remark?