1. What similarities and differences did you note between *1984* and “Minority Report”? Discuss each of the following:

* Tone
* Diction
* Subject matter
* Government methods
* Level of government intrusion
* Characters’ depth of thought/independence

2. Explain how this description of the precogs in “Minority Report” could pertain to the normal citizens in *1984:*

All day long the idiots babbled, imprisoned in their special high-backed chairs, held in one rigid position by metal bands, and bundles of wiring, clamps. Their physical needs were taken care of automatically. They had no spiritual needs. Vegetable-like, they muttered and dozed and existed. Their minds were dull, confused, lost in shadows.

3. This story was written in 1956, but what do you notice regarding the diction related to technology in this paragraph?

Of course, the conspiracy could be large-scale and elaborate, involving far more than a “rigged” card inserted somewhere along the line. The original data itself might have been tampered with. Actually, there was no telling how far back the alteration went. A cold fear touched him as he began to see the possibilities. His original impulse — to tear open the machines and remove the data — was uselessly primitive. Probably the tapes agreed with the card: He would only incriminate himself further.

4. Respond to this quote from *1984*. How does it compare with “Minority Report”?

Thoughts and actions which, when detected, mean certain death are not formally forbidden, and the endless purges, arrests, tortures, imprisonments, and vaporizations are not inflicted as punishment for crimes which have actually been committed, but are merely the wiping-out of persons who might perhaps commit a crime at some time in the future.

5. How could you describe the mood of this story? Look at this excerpt as an example:

Anderton was still trying futilely to grasp the implications of what had happened, when the car came to a rutted side road, turned off, and descended into a gloomy sub-surface garage. Someone shouted and order. The heavy metal lock grated shut and the overhead lights blinked on. The driver turned off the car motor. “You’ll have reason to regret this,” Anderton warned hoarsely, as they dragged him from the car. “Do you realise who I am?”

6. Explain the irony in these two lines from different sections of the story:

On the card was his name. Line one — an already accused future murderer! According to the code punches, Precrime Commissioner John A. Anderton was going to kill a man — within the next week. With absolute, overwhelming conviction, he didn’t believe it.

“Which means more to you — your own personal safety or the existence of the system?” “My safety,” Anderton answered, without hesitation.

7. Notice any red flags in this passage from after Anderton makes the decision to kill Kaplan?

He had never killed a man. He had never even seen a man killed. And he had been Police Commissioner for thirty years. For this generation, deliberate murder had died out. It simply didn’t happen. A police car barrier carried him to within a block of the Army rally. There, in the shadows of the back seat, he painstakingly examined the pistol Fleming had provided him.

8. Why did Anderton sacrifice himself for a system he recently professed to disagree with (see #6)?

9. How has the mood changed by the end?

Anxiously, Witwer trotted along beside the truck, his smooth, blond face creased with worry.

“Will it happen again? Should we overhaul the set-up?” “It can happen only in one circumstance,” Anderton said. “My case was unique, since I had access to the data. It could happen again — but only to the next Police Commissioner. So watch your step.” Briefly, he grinned, deriving no inconsiderable comfort from Witwer’s strained expression. Beside him, Lisa’s red lips twitched and her hand reached out and closed over his.

“Better keep your eyes open,” he informed young Witwer. “It might happen to you at any time.”