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Anthem

Ayn Rand · *1938 (revised 1946) · original English text (Project Gutenberg #1250; this file is the later revision)*

It is a sin to write this. It is a sin to think words no others think and to put them down upon a paper no others are to see. A man named Equality 7-2521 writes in secret. The hosted text is Rand's own later English, Project Gutenberg #1250. Teach the book as she wrote it. For grades 8–12.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What happens when a city makes it a sin to think or write alone, and how should a school read the word this book sets in stone without turning the fable into a later program?

"It is a sin to write this. It is a sin to think words no others think and to put them down upon a paper no others are to see."
Part One

Equality 7-2521 lives in a city where men may not write unless the Council of Vocations permits it, and where the first person singular has been lost. He writes anyway. He finds a word, and at the end of this hosted file he will cut a sacred word in stone: EGO. Teach the fable as Rand wrote it in this revision, for grades 8–12. Do not import a later movement's language, and do not soften the ending this file actually prints.

KEY CHARACTERS

Equality 7-2521
The man who writes in secret, and who learns to say "I"

The Teachers and the Councils
The city's authorities, who already frown at his height and his thoughts

The brothers
The men of the city, named and numbered, who may not write alone

A FORBIDDEN PAGE

> *"It is a sin to write this. It is a sin to think words no others think and to put them down upon a paper no others are to see."*
> Part One

Grades 8–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01
A Sin to Write
PART ONE

The book opens on a forbidden page. To think words no others think, and to write them on a paper no others are to see, is called base and evil. The laws say that men may not write unless the Council of Vocations permits it.

- The first sentence is exact: "It is a sin to write this."
- This hosted file is the later revision (PG #1250). Quote it, not a memory of 1938 alone.
- The "we" voice is the city's grammar before it is a style.
- Teach the opening as a confession of a crime the city cannot even name yet.

> *"It is a sin to write this. It is a sin to think words no others think and to put them down upon a paper no others are to see."*
> Part One

02
Equality 7-2521
PART ONE

His name is written on an iron bracelet, as every man's name is. He is twenty-one, and six feet tall, and that height is already a burden. Teachers have said there is evil in his bones.

- Keep the name "Equality 7-2521" as printed.
- The iron bracelet is worn on the left wrist.
- The body that has grown beyond the brothers is treated as a fault.
- He cannot change his bones.

> *"Our name is Equality 7-2521, as it is written on the iron bracelet which all men wear on their left wrists with their names upon it"*
> Part One

03
I Am
LATE IN THE BOOK

The grammar changes. "I am. I think. I will." The hands, the spirit, the sky, and the forest are claimed in the first person. He stands on the summit of a mountain.

- Quote this turn as the file prints it.
- The change of pronoun is the book's event, not a decoration.
- Teach it as Rand wrote it, not as a slogan.
- For grades 8–12.

> *"I am. I think. I will."*
> Late in the book

04
The Word "I"
LATE IN THE BOOK

He says he sees the face of god, and that this god is one word: "I." In this file that sentence is printed before the last part.

- Keep the wording of this hosted revision.
- Do not confuse this sentence with the final word cut in stone.
- Teach the religious language as the book uses it, without turning the class into a debate club.
- The book is a fable, and it is also an argument; let students hear both.

> *"This god, this one word: "I.""*
> Late in the book

05
The Sacred Word
THE CLOSE

Over the portals of his fort he will cut in the stone the word that is to be his beacon and his banner. In this hosted file the sacred word is printed at the end: EGO.

- The last word of this file is EGO. Do not substitute a memory of another printing.
- Teach the ending this edition actually prints.
- Do not import a later program's language into the last page.
- Project Gutenberg #1250, complete.

> *"The word which can never die on this earth, for it is the heart of it and the meaning and the glory. The sacred word: EGO"*
> The close

A Forbidden Page · A Name on Iron · The First Person · A Word in Stone · A City of Councils

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 8–12

1. The book opens: "It is a sin to write this." The narrator's name is Equality 7-2521, written on an iron bracelet.
2. This hosted file is Rand's later English, PG #1250 (the revision, not only 1938). Teach the book as she wrote it in this edition.
3. Late in the book he says, "I am. I think. I will." The change of pronoun is the event.
4. The last word cut in stone in this file is EGO. Do not substitute a memory of another printing.
5. For grades 8–12. Do not import a later movement's language into the map or the lesson.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text (Project Gutenberg #1250; this file is the later revision), Project Gutenberg #1250, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/anthem/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.