

Context
<p>George Orwell was the pseudonym of Eric Arthur Blair. He was born in India in 1903 and died in 1950. His experiences in life led him to become a life-long socialist, and his writing explored how humanity often exploited and oppressed others. He was appalled by oppressive political regimes and concerned about the welfare of ordinary people. He was also disillusioned by revolutionaries who initially fought to overthrow such oppressive regimes but who then eventually allowed that level of power, control and inequality within society to return. For this reason, he based his allegorical fable 'Animal Farm' on events in Russia in the first half of the twentieth century.</p>
<p>'Animal Farm' - a political allegory: Orwell condemns the dictatorship that Stalin had established in Russia from 1929 onwards. He writes about certain events and ideas in Russian history – particularly the revolution of 1917 that helped bring about Stalin's rise to power. His characters are used symbolically e.g. Napoleon represents Stalin and his brutal regime. However, the novella isn't just about Russia: he also criticises power, selfishness and greed generally. 'Animal Farm' was published in 1945, at the end of World War 2, when the world had witnessed the devastating impact of dictatorships for persecuted people, individual countries and world peace. At this time, Russia was seen as an important British ally against the Nazis, which is one reason why Orwell found it so hard to get the story published. It is now regarded as one of the 20th century's most important and influential novels. 'Animal Farm' is also subtitled 'A Fairy Story' but Orwell subverts this genre. Fairy stories tend to be about a battle between good and evil, but in 'Animal Farm', good is punished rather than rewarded, and evil triumphs.</p>
<p>Russia before 1917: Russian society was unequal - a tiny minority controlled most of the country's wealth, while the vast majority of the country's inhabitants were impoverished and oppressed peasants. Communism arose when the workers and peasants, assisted by a class of concerned intellectuals known as the intelligentsia, rebelled against the wealthy and powerful capitalists and aristocrats. They hoped to establish a socialist utopia based on the principles of Karl Marx.</p>
<p>Karl Marx was a German philosopher who believed that in a capitalist society, workers were exploited by the people they worked for. Orwell wrote that Major's speech was intended to show "Marx's theory from the animals' point of view". Orwell's ideal society was a socialist one because the nobody would be oppressed and all people would live as equals.</p>
<p>The Russian Revolution: after an initial uprising in February 1917, Tsar Nicholas II, the leader of Russia, was forced to abdicate the throne. The Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, led another uprising in October 1917 and took control of Russia. Lenin aimed to turn Russia into the world's first socialist state. The Communist Party was formed, and the new regime took land and industry from private control and put them under government control. Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin vied for power after Lenin's death. Trotsky was a popular and charismatic leader, famous for his impassioned speeches, while Stalin was a more crafty and manipulative politician who preferred to build his power behind the scenes.</p>
<p>Stalin was the dictator of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) from 1929 until his death in 1953. He transformed the Soviet Union from a peasant society into an industrial and military superpower. However, he ruled by terror, and millions of his own citizens died during his brutal reign - Stalin was responsible for more deaths than Adolf Hitler. Trotsky was made the scapegoat for all the problems that Russia suffered under Stalin.</p>
<p>Orwell and the truth: unlike many British socialists in the 1930s and 1940s, Orwell felt that Stalin had betrayed the revolution's original, socialist ideals. He could not turn a blind eye to the cruelty, hypocrisy and dictatorship of Stalin. He felt Stalinism was no better than the Tsarist system it had replaced. Overall, Orwell was opposed to any system that seeks to control human beings in an unjust way.</p>

Themes	
<p>Power: Orwell explores how power is wielded by the powerful. He suggests that power leads to corruption e.g. many of the characters are eventually corrupted by the power they have - they mistreat others and use them for their own profit. Orwell links power and dictatorship. He warns about the abuse of power and the dangers of unlicensed and unchecked power e.g. Napoleon is driven by power and his tyranny leads to a shocking conclusion. Orwell suggests that the exploited can rise up and be powerful e.g. the animals have the power to take control of the farm and overcome human control. Orwell also suggests that 'knowledge is power'. The pigs are the most intelligent animals on the farm – some use it for good, but others use their knowledge and learning to benefit themselves. It allows them to achieve and hold on to their power.</p>	<p>Social class: Orwell suggests that class divides cause hardship and suffering. Just like the working classes in Russia, the animals live in terrible conditions and what they farm is taken from them leaving them to face starvation and poverty. Mr Jones symbolises the lazy, neglectful and ignorant rule of the aristocracy who held power. Orwell suggests that class divides cause inequality. The farm is a microcosm of society: there is a strict hierarchy, with humans ruling the animals. Also, some animals are stronger and bigger than others and are seen as more valuable. The setting reflects any country where the working class, or proletariat, is unfairly treated by the ruling class. Orwell suggests that class and education are linked. The pigs create a divide by calling themselves "mindworkers" to separate themselves from the other animals. The other animals work so hard that they have no time to learn or educate themselves or think deeply about their world. Orwell implies that whether because of ignorance, inaction, or fear, the working class allows itself to be dominated by the "mindworkers."</p>
<p>Equality: Orwell suggests that equality can be fought for, and that a perfect society is an equal one. After the rebellion, the animals are free from tyranny and seek to establish equality. One of the Commandments is 'All animals are equal'. The animals achieve more when they are united e.g. their first successful harvest and the Battle of the Cowshed. Orwell also suggests that equality must be protected and that within humanity, there will be those who seek to undermine it.</p>	<p>The power of language: Orwell suggests that language can be dangerous. He suggests that language blinds the animals to the truth e.g. Squealer's speeches disguise what is happening. Orwell suggests that language is manipulative: the powerful use propaganda and misinformation to control thoughts and to present outrageous ideas in such a way that they seem acceptable e.g. the pigs rewrite the Seven Commandments; they rewrite history; they reshape memories and beliefs. The pigs use language and information to build and hold their power.</p>

Characters	
<p>Old Major is very intelligent, well-respected, an excellent speaker and an inspiration to the animals. He is Mr Jones' "highly regarded" prize boar. His passionate speech inspires the rebellion. It is a mix of Marxism and Leninism, and it presents a socialist view of life as a struggle against tyranny, and the need to strive for a free and equal society. Marx's ideas formed the basis of communism (i.e. Marxism) like 'Animalism' in the novella. Lenin was a Russian revolutionary who established a form of Marxism in Russia after the 1917 revolution.</p>	<p>Napoleon is a threatening and ruthless boar. Alongside Snowball, he creates 'Animalism'. He is not a gifted speaker but is known for getting his own way. He uses the other animals to strengthen his position. Napoleon is an allusion to the dictator, Joseph Stalin. The name is also an allusion to Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821), a military officer who rose to power during the French Revolution, then named himself emperor of France in 1804 and then became a feared dictator.</p>
<p>Snowball is one of the pigs who takes Old Major's teachings and turns them 'Animalism'. He is intelligent, inventive and thoughtful. He disappears halfway through the novella and his good deeds are systematically erased from history and memory. He is used by Napoleon as a scapegoat. He is an allusion to Leon Trotsky, who opposed Stalin's decisions and was eventually forced into exile from the Soviet Union in 1929.</p>	<p>Squealer is another of the three most important pigs. Like Snowball, he is clever and a skilled speaker and he is excellent at persuading the other animals. He becomes Napoleon's voice: he delivers Napoleon's orders, explains his choices and tells lies to support Napoleon.</p>
<p>Boxer, a horse, is a tragic character. This "enormous beast" is the revolution's most loyal disciple who is prepared to make huge sacrifices for the farm's success. He symbolises people who are exploited by the powerful, such as the proletariat who hoped for a better world and the peasant workers of Russia who were exploited by Tsar Nicholas II.</p>	<p>Clover, like Boxer, symbolises the proletariat. She is also a loyal disciple of the rebellion, right to the end.</p>
	<p>Benjamin is an old and pessimistic donkey. He is presented as a realist who observes events from afar. He refuses to question or interfere with the changes that happen on the farm...until it is too late.</p>
<p>Moses, the raven, symbolises religion (specifically, the Russian Orthodox Church). He convinces many of the animals that there is a better life on Sugarcandy Mountain. He persuades the animals to accept their misery, and to see it as something to be endured before they find eternal peace and happiness in paradise.</p>	
<p>Mr Jones owns Manor Farm but he is incapable of running it humanely and he neglects his animals. He is an allusion to people like the Tsar and capitalists who profit from exploiting the proletariat and who ignore their suffering.</p>	<p>Mollie is an allusion to the so-called White Russians – members of the middle classes who opposed the revolution because they enjoyed a privileged life under the Tsar. She is not committed to the rebellion. She is vain, spoiled and selfish.</p>
<p>The dogs symbolise Stalin's secret police – they are an instrument of Napoleon's rule and show how his control of the farm was plotted from the beginning. They act and think as one terrifying force.</p>	<p>The sheep symbolise ignorance and blind faith, as well as the most mindless elements of society, or the 'mob'. No individual sheep is given a name. They act, behave and follow as one, without any thought or question. They show how an unthinking mob can prop up a tyrant.</p>
<p>The pigs are the intelligentsia, the most intelligent and capable creatures. They understand Animalism and translate it into easy slogans for the other animals. They are the decision-makers on the farm and become an elite class, exploiting the animals and living a life of luxury that is unimaginable to the rest.</p>	<p>Mr Pilkington, a fellow farmer, exploits his workers. His farm is neglected while he enjoys fishing, hunting and pursuing his own pleasure. He is an allusion to Winston Churchill. Mr Frederick, another farmer, is a hard, greedy and argumentative businessman, but he is also shrewd and crafty. He is cruel and is an allusion to Hitler. Mr Whymper, a solicitor, profits from the animals' misery and suffering. He is sly and symbolises selfishness and exploitation.</p>
<p>*What you already know</p>	

Subject terminology	Definition
ALLEGORY	A story with two different meanings, where the straightforward meaning on the surface is used to reveal/ unlock a deeper meaning underneath. In this allegory, Orwell explores political power and corruption.
ALLUSION	A reference to something else, such as a historical event, a person, a place or another text. Orwell makes many allusions to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the events that followed.
Anthropomorphism	A description of animals that are seen to behave like humans. They talk, think and are given human characteristics.
CYCLICAL STRUCTURE	A structural technique where the ending of the text mirrors the opening. In this novella, the animals end up in the same position they were at the beginning: exploited by a tyrannical leader.
Dystopia	An imagined world of great suffering and injustice – usually set in the future – which is far worse than our own.
Fable	A short story that contains a moral. Orwell makes use of the beast fable form (stories in which animal characters are used to make serious moral points e.g. to raise questions about equality, power and corruption).
Foil	A character whose purpose is to emphasise or contrast with the qualities of another character e.g. Snowball acts as a foil for Napoleon.
*Narrative perspective	The voice telling the story or relating a sequence of events (the viewpoint from which a story is told). Omniscient narrator : a god-like, all-knowing figure, who sees everything that happens in the story. Orwell uses a third person omniscient narrator who knows everything the animals see, say, know and do as a group.
Rhetoric	The art of speaking (and writing) effectively in order to persuade an audience.
Satire	Literature that targets an issue, institution or idea and attacks it in such a way as to make it look ridiculous or worthy of contempt. 'Animal Farm' is a satire on political power.
Literary techniques	Definition
*Imagery	The use of vivid language to evoke a sensory experience or create a picture with words for a reader. Writers often use the different senses to describe something – such as seeing, hearing and touching – in order to help the reader experience what is being described.
*Foreshadowing	Where the author gives the reader hints or signs about the future . It suggests what is to come through imagery, language, and/or symbolism. It does not directly give away the outcome, but rather, suggests it.
*Metaphor	A type of image when one thing is compared to another thing to help the reader to understand an aspect of the original thing more clearly. The original thing (called the ' tenor ') is compared to another thing (this is called the ' vehicle ') to help the reader to understand it more clearly (understanding the link between the tenor and the vehicle is called the ' ground ').
*Motif	An object, image, symbol or idea that is repeated throughout a literary work. Motifs help to explain bigger ideas or themes .
PATHETIC FALLACY	A type of personification where emotions are given to a setting, a natural object or the weather .
PATHOS	A moment that makes us feel pity or sorrow . Orwell uses pathos to describe the animals' suffering at various points in the novella.
*Personification	A type of image where a human quality is attached to a thing or idea.
SEMANTIC FIELD	A group of words that are very similar in meaning . Semantic fields are often used by writers to keep or reinforce a certain image/ feeling/ impression in the reader's mind.
*Simile	A type of image that writers use to compare one thing with another, using 'like' or 'as' .
*Symbol/ symbolism	A thing that represents or stands for something else – usually, this is an object that represents a much deeper idea, emotion or feeling. A symbol might occur only once to signify a particular emotion or idea. It becomes a motif if it is repeated at various points in a text. Therefore, a symbol could be described as a 'mini-motif'!