



# ANIMAL FARM

GEORGE ORWELL



## Social/Historical Context

### George Orwell

- Author and passionate socialist and opponent of Communist Russia.

### Russian revolution

- A people's revolution, led by Vladimir Lenin which overthrew Tsar Nicholas II and established the world's first socialist republic.

### Tsar Nicholas II

- Last emperor of Russia; was considered a poor ruler who lived in luxury whilst many of his people starved and suffered.
- Overthrown in 1917 and executed in 1918.

### Karl Marx

- German philosopher who created the Communist manifesto in 1848

### Vladimir Lenin

- Led the Russian Revolution and led the Soviet Union from 1917 until his death in 1924.

### Joseph Stalin

- Rose to power, following death of Lenin in 1924, by discreetly manipulating and threatening other members of the party.
- He ruled by fear: there were executions, imprisonments & disappearances.
- He was corrupt and lived in luxury whilst many people lived in poverty.

### Leon Trotsky

- Held senior position in Soviet government but was seen as a threat by Stalin
- Exiled in 1929
- Assassinated on Stalin's orders in 1940

### Communist Soviet Union

- Marx's idea was that the working classes would be the ruling class in a socialist democracy
- In reality, Stalin used fear to terrorise the workers into obedience.

### Communism

- a theory or system where all property is owned by the people
- Each person contributes according to their ability and needs.

### Socialism

- A theory or system where property is owned and run by government. Sits between Communism and Capitalism

### Capitalism

- a theory or system where all property is owned by individuals and private businesses

## Characters

### Napoleon

- The pig who leads the rebellion; he is lazy, selfish, and cunning He uses propaganda and terror to control the other animals.
- Represents Joseph Stalin

### Squealer

- A pig who is a persuasive speaker, who uses this skill to manipulate the other animals to ensure Napoleon's popularity.
- Represents propaganda.

### Snowball

- A pig who challenges Napoleon for leadership.
- He is more moral and less manipulative than the other pigs. He is popular with the other animals.
- Represents Leon Trotsky.

### Old Major

- An old boar whose dream of the animals working for themselves inspires the rebellion.
- Represents a combination of Karl Marx & Vladimir Lenin.

### Boxer

- A carthorse who represents the strength, work ethic and loyalty of the ordinary working people.
- He lacks intelligence and is easily manipulated by the pigs.

### Benjamin

- An old donkey who is not enthusiastic about the rebellion.
- Believes that conditions for workers will never change. Represents older sections of Russian society.

## Plot

### Chapter 1

Old Major's meeting: he declares that the revolution will happen.

### Chapter 2

Old Major dies, The animals rebel and Mr Jones is removed from the farm.

### Chapter 3

Manor Farm has become Animal Farm, led by the pigs. Boxer works harder than anyone. Snowball and Napoleon disagree on everything.

### Chapter 4

Other farmers fear that rebellion will spread to their farms so join with Jones to attack Animal Farm. The animals unite to defeat them in the Battle of the Cowshed.

### Chapter 5

Snowball puts forward the idea of a windmill. Napoleon sets the dogs he raised on Snowball and chases him from the farm. Squealer convinces the animals that Snowball has always been a traitor.

### Chapter 6

The animals toil to build the windmill. Napoleon decides to start trading with the neighbouring farms. The pigs move into the farmhouse and start to sleep in beds. A violent storm destroys the windmill.

### Chapter 7

Animals are forced to admit to 'crimes' on the farm and animals are executed. 'Beasts of England' is banned a new song is composed in praise of Napoleon.

### Chapter 8

Inequalities continue to grow. Napoleon is referred to as 'leader'. Napoleon is given fake bank notes by Mr Frederick. The windmill is blown up.

### Chapter 9

Rations are reduced once again and work on the windmill starts for a third time. Boxer's ambition is to finish it before he retires so he works even harder. Boxer collapses through overwork.

### Chapter 10

Years later, the windmill is finished but is used to create a profit rather than for electricity to make their lives easier. The pigs appear walking on their back legs and carrying whips.

## Key vocabulary

**Marxism** – ideas of Karl Marx: basis of communism

**Revolution** – forcible overthrow of the government

**Utopia** – a perfect society

**Dystopia** – an imagined society where there is great suffering/injustice (opposite of utopia)

**Tyranny** – cruel, oppressive rule/ government

**Communism** - a theory or system where all property is owned by the people

**Socialism** - a theory or system where property is owned and run by government. Sits between Communism and Capitalism

**Capitalism** - a theory or system where all property is owned by individuals and private businesses

**Oppression** – cruel or unfair use of power to control

**Manipulation** – using clever but deceitful argument to persuade

**Democracy** – a system where the people vote to decide who is in power

**Allegory** – a story with a hidden meaning, typically moral or political

**Fable** – a short story, often with animals as characters which conveys a moral message.

**Dictator** – a ruler with total power, often gained by force

**Totalitarian** – a system of government run by a dictator and demands total obedience.

**Apathy** – lack of interest or enthusiasm

**Formidable** – inspiring fear or respect through being impressively large, powerful or capable

**Propaganda** – misleading or biased information to promote a political cause.

**Corruption** – abusing power for personal gain (often linked to money)

**Foreshadowing**- a warning or indication of a future event.

## Themes/Symbols/Motifs

Power and corruption – The pigs use their power to control and oppress the other animals just like Stalin did in the Soviet Union.

Manipulation and deceit – the pigs manipulate the animals to control them, just as propaganda was used in the Soviet Union.

Violence – used to control the animals and demonstrate the unravelling of the imagined utopia.

Hopes and dreams – throughout the novel, the animals stay hopeful despite the fact that the conditions become worse than even before.

Windmill – a motif for the hard work of the people and the manipulation of the pigs

Songs and poems – act as a motif to symbolise unity but are also used to control the other animals and are used as propaganda.



## Social/Historical Context

1. Who wrote Animal farm?
1. Who was the last Tsar of Russia? What happened to him?
1. In which year did the Russian Revolution take place?
1. Who wrote the Communist manifesto in 1848?
2. Explain what 'communism' is?
1. Explain how a 'capitalist' system works?
1. How is 'socialism' different to 'communism'?
1. Who was Vladimir Lenin?
1. How did Joseph Stalin come to power in 1924?
1. What happened to Leon Trotsky after Lenin's death?



## Plot

- Chapter 1**  
Who calls a meeting to describe a dream about an animal rebellion?
- Chapter 2**  
What is the name of the farmer who is driven out of the farm?
- Chapter 3**  
Which two characters battle for control and leadership of the farm?
- Chapter 4**  
What is the name given to the battle to defend the farm from attack by a group of local farmers?
- Chapter 5**  
How is Snowball driven out of the farm? How do the other pigs justify this action?
- Chapter 6**  
What move do the pigs make which sets them apart from all the other animals on the farm? What happens to the windmill?
- Chapter 7**  
Which song is banned and replaced? Which terrifying new development in Napoleon's power over the animals begins with the hens refusing to hand over their eggs?
- Chapter 8**  
What name does Napoleon insist the other animals use to refer to him?
- Chapter 9**  
What is Boxer's final fate after years of hard work?
- Chapter 10**  
How is the finished windmill used by the pigs? What final change in the pigs' behaviour signals that they have become just like the humans?

## Key vocabulary

1. Explain the difference between a utopia and a dystopia.
1. What is a dictator? Which character in 'Animal Farm' could be described as a dictator?
1. What is the name for the system in which all property is owned by the people?
1. What is a fable? Explain how 'Animal Farm' can be described as a fable.
1. Which term, meaning a system run by a dictator who demands total obedience, could be used to describe Animal Farm under the leadership of Napoleon?

## Characters

1. Which character in Animal Farm is a representation of Joseph Stalin?
1. What is Squealer's role on the farm?
1. Explain how Snowball and Napoleon are different?
1. Which animal has the dream which eventually leads to the rebellion on the farm?
1. How is Benjamin's view of the rebellion different to that of the other animals on the farm?

## Themes/Symbols/Motifs

1. How do the pigs represent the theme of power and corruption? Give at least 3 examples of their actions to illustrate this.
2. How is violence used to control the animals on the farm. Give 2 examples.
3. What does the windmill symbolise for the animals?
4. How are songs and poems used to influence and control the animals?