

# Knowledge Organiser: Animal Farm

Author: George Orwell (1903-1950)	A very short summary of <i>Animal Farm</i>			
<p>~Also known as <b>Eric Blair</b></p> <p>~An English novelist, essayist, journalist and critic.</p> <p>~A <b>democratic socialist</b></p> <p>~<b>Critical of Stalin</b> - thought Stalin (dictator of the Soviet Union from 1924-53) was a brutal dictator whose rule was founded on propaganda and terror.</p> <p>~Wrote <i>Animal Farm</i> in 1943 - 1944 but it was not published until 1945 due to concerns about aggravating the Soviet Union during WW2</p> <p>~Also wrote the dystopian classic <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i></p>	<p><i>Animal Farm</i> is a short <b>allegorical</b> novel about a group of animals who take control of the farm they live on. The animals get fed up of their master, Mr Jones, so overthrow him and take over the farm in the Rebellion (Chapter 2). Once they are free of the <b>tyrant</b> Mr Jones, life on the farm is good for a while and there is hope for a happier future of less work, better education and more food. They live by the principles of <b>Animalism</b> set out in the Commandment (an allegory for <b>Communism</b>), (Chapter 2&amp;3). The animals work together to protect the farm (now called 'Animal Farm') from an attack by Mr Jones and some fellow humans (Battle of the Cowshed, Chapter 4). However, trouble brews as two pigs, Napoleon and Snowball, fight for the hearts and minds of the other animals on the farm. Napoleon seizes power by force (using the dogs he has secretly trained) and Snowball is exiled (Chapter 5). Napoleon becomes an unchallenged dictator and ends up exploiting the animals just as Mr Jones had done, breaking the rules of <b>Animalism</b>, including trading with neighbouring human farms (Chapter 6-8). This downwards trajectory continues in Chapter 9-10, where the pigs start to behave and even dress like the humans and Boxer, the noble horse who represents the <b>proletariat</b>, is denied his promised retirement and sent to the Knackers when he has reached the end of his usefulness to the pigs. In the iconic final scene in Chapter 10, the other animals on the farm are no longer able to tell the pigs and the human leaders (Pilkington and Frederick) apart, which is symbolic the fact that one totalitarian regime has been replaced by another.</p>			
<p><b>Orwell's Core Message</b></p> <p>Orwell wrote <i>Animal Farm</i> as a 'fairy story' with the intent of teaching his readers of the dangers of totalitarian regimes of all kinds (from Fascism to Communism). In a very famous essay called 'Why I Write' Orwell says that, 'Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism, as I understand it'. The microcosm of <i>Animal Farm</i> is meant to be representative of what Orwell saw in the tyrannical regimes that were rife in twentieth century Europe. He was in this sense a very political writer with a clear purpose.</p>	Key themes in <i>Animal Farm</i>		Key Characters in <i>Animal Farm</i>	
	<p><b>Revolution</b></p>	<p>The overthrow of one government by another or by another political party or armed group. Usually involves force/violence. E.g. the Russian Revolution of 1917 or the Rebellion at the start of <i>Animal Farm</i>.</p>	<p><b>Napoleon</b></p>	<p>The 'fierce-looking Berkshire boar...with a reputation for getting his own way' who emerges as a natural <b>leader</b>, alongside <b>Snowball</b> after the Rebellion. After exiling Snowball in Chapter 5, he builds a <b>totalitarian</b> regime based on terror and lies. Napoleon is based on <b>Stalin</b> and other <b>totalitarian</b> rulers.</p>
	<p><b>Leadership &amp; Corruption</b></p>	<p><b>Leadership</b> means being in a position of power. Too much power can lead to corruption: 'Absolute power corrupts absolutely'. In <i>Animal Farm</i>, corrupt <b>leadership</b> passes from <b>Mr Jones</b> to <b>Napoleon</b> and the pigs. There is no model of good <b>leadership</b> in the novel.</p>	<p><b>Mr Jones</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Jones</b>, an alcoholic 'who was too drunk to remember to shut the popholes' was the owner of Manor Farm before the Rebellion. He represents despotic <b>totalitarian</b> rulers, such as Tsar Nicholas of Russia before the Russian Revolution in 1917. Typically these sorts of rulers were selfish and cared little about the welfare of their people.</p>
	<p><b>Inequality</b></p>	<p>It is the animals' awareness of the <b>inequality</b> that they are living under, under <b>Mr Jones'</b> regime that leads to the <b>Rebellion</b>. However, after a brief moment of equality (Chapter 2-3), the animals begin to be exploited by the pigs and end up living in a similarly unequal regime.</p>	<p><b>Old Major</b></p>	<p>Loosely based on Karl Marx (the inventor of Marxism) and Vladimir Lenin (one of the leaders of the Russian Revolution), <b>Old Major</b>, is an old pig who only appears in Chapter 1 (before he dies) and gives a speech in which he sets out the ideas behind <b>Animalism</b> and inspires the other animals to rebel.</p>
<p><b>Orwell's Overall Purpose</b></p> <p>The cyclical nature of <i>Animal Farm</i> illustrates the inevitability of exploitation of the people (the <b>proletariat</b>) if they are not educated. Orwell's overall purpose can thus be characterised as a clear desire to inspire the working classes to educate themselves and to hold their leaders to account and to insist on democracy: 'the masses should be alert and 'know how to chuck out their leaders when they have done their job' (Orwell, 1946).</p>	<p><b>Education &amp; The Power of Language</b></p>	<p><b>Education</b> is act of learning or of conveying more information about something. In <i>Animal Farm</i> education becomes a tool of power because the pigs are more educated than the other animals and this enables them to form a hierarchy of animals, which they are at the top of. <b>Napoleon</b> and <b>Squealer</b> both use their superior <b>education</b> to manipulate the other animals into believing their lies, through using persuasive language and <b>propaganda</b>.</p>	<p><b>Boxer</b></p>	<p><b>Boxer</b>, (who is symbolic of the <b>proletariat</b>) is a tremendously strong and honourable but he is not intelligent ('<b>Boxer</b> could not get beyond the letter D'). He believes deeply in <b>Animalism</b> and <b>Napoleon</b> especially ('Napoleon is always right') but is ultimately exploited and murdered by the pigs (Ch 9).</p>
	<p><b>Oppression &amp; Violence</b></p>	<p><i>Animal Farm</i> is marked by <b>oppression</b> and <b>violence</b> from the start (under Mr Jones). After a brief moment of respite, Napoleon uses the tools of <b>violence</b> and <b>propaganda</b> to control the animals and establish his <b>totalitarian</b> regime.</p>	<p><b>Squealer</b></p>	<p><b>Squealer</b> is another pig, who is amazing at speaking persuasively ('he could turn black into white') and convincing the animals that the pigs are acting in their best interests. He represents the <b>propaganda</b> that is often used to support <b>tyrannical</b> regimes.</p>
			<p><b>Snowball</b></p>	<p><b>Snowball</b> is an intelligent pig who believed in the values of Animalism but was also power hungry. He is outwitted by <b>Napoleon</b> and exiled from the farm. He is an <b>allegory</b> for Leon Trotsky.</p>

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Key Words, Concepts and Methods used in <i>Animal Farm</i>		
Word	Definition	Example
<b>Allegory</b>	A story that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one.	<i>Animal Farm</i> is an <b>allegory</b> for a totalitarian regime
<b>Capitalism</b>	An economic and political system in which property and businesses are controlled by private owners rather than by the state, with the purpose of making a profit.	The western world is built on <b>capitalism</b> . Profitability runs the economy.
<b>Communism</b>	The belief in a society without different social classes. Wealth, power, and rights are shared equally between all citizens. The model for <b>Animalism</b> in <i>Animal Farm</i> .	<b>Communism</b> is said to be the greatest idea that can never work, because all it takes is one person to exploit the system for it to fail.
<b>Cult of Personality</b>	A type of leadership where the leader becomes a figure of love and worship. The focus becomes less about ideas and more about the person.	Napoleon builds up a <b>cult of personality</b> throughout the novel, <i>Animal Farm</i> . Another pig called Minimus writes worshipful songs about him.
<b>Cyclical Structure</b>	When conditions at the end of a story are in many ways similar to those at the start.	Orwell uses the <b>cyclical structure</b> in <i>Animal Farm</i> to mirror the idea that without <b>democracy</b> , one <b>totalitarian regime</b> will just be replaced by another.
<b>Democracy</b>	Democracy is often said to mean 'rule by the people'. An example of this is any system of government in which people vote their elected representatives into parliament.	<b>Democracy</b> is never established in <i>Animal Farm</i> because the pigs take control over the other animals and refuse to implement <b>democratic</b> systems (such as voting).
<b>Dictator</b>	A person with supreme authority over a group of people, usually a country. Their word is law.	During <i>Animal Farm</i> , we meet several <b>dictators</b> , Mr Jones, Napoleon and Frederick.
<b>Foreshadow</b>	A warning or indication of a future event.	The pigs stealing the milk and apples (Ch 3) <b>foreshadows</b> that the inequality that follows.
<b>Microcosm</b>	Where a large place, often a country, is represented by a much smaller place and aspects of the larger place have been 'shrunk' or distilled into aspects of the smaller place.	The farm in <i>Animal Farm</i> is a <b>microcosm</b> for the Russian Revolution and <b>totalitarian</b> regimes in general.
<b>Paradox</b>	A statement that contains two contradictory ideas.	The final commandment 'all animals are equal but some are more equal than others' is a <b>paradox</b> because you logically cannot be 'more equal' than someone else.
<b>Pathos</b>	Something or someone who appeals to the emotions of the reader and makes them feel sympathy.	<b>Boxer's</b> death in Chapter 9 produces feelings of <b>pathos</b> in the reader because we feel sympathy for this honourable character.
<b>Proletariat</b>	A term used to refer to workers without high status, especially industrial workers.	In <i>Animal Farm</i> , the character of <b>Boxer</b> represents the <b>proletariat</b> .
<b>Propaganda</b>	Using language as a means to persuade or control a group of people. Propaganda affects their thoughts and behaviour.	The character of Squealer regularly uses <b>propaganda</b> to brainwash and indoctrinate the other animals in <i>Animal Farm</i> .
<b>Rhetorical Question</b>	A question asked in order to create a dramatic effect or to make a point rather than to get an answer. Often used as part of persuasive speech or as a rhetorical device.	<b>Squealer</b> is very well-known for his rhetoric (persuasive speech) and particularly his <b>rhetorical questions</b> , such as, "Surely there is no one among you who wants to see Jones come back?".
<b>Social Democracy</b>	<b>Social democracy</b> is frequently considered a practical middle course between capitalism and socialism. It is a political ideology that supports the establishment of a democratically run and decentralized form of socialist economy.	Orwell was a <b>socialist democrat</b> because he believed in a socialist society where the state would play a significant role in taking care of people but that it would still be a democracy with elections and other democratic structure.
<b>Syntactic Parallel</b>	Two or more phrases or clauses in a sentence that have the same grammatical structure.	The final sentence of <i>Animal Farm</i> is a <b>syntactic parallel</b> , which cements the cyclical structure of the novel: The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.
<b>Totalitarianism</b>	A system of government where one person has absolute power and all citizens are subservient.	The animals live in a <b>totalitarian</b> regime – they have no rights and live in fear.
<b>Tyranny</b>	The unchecked and particularly cruel use of power by a <b>tyrant</b> or <b>tyrants</b> to subdue and rule over citizens.	Napoleon uses various types of <b>tyranny</b> (violence, propaganda, corruption) to crush the spirits of the people.

