

Animal Farm

by: George Orwell



Key Concepts:

About author: George Orwell

Communism

Russian Revolutions

Propaganda

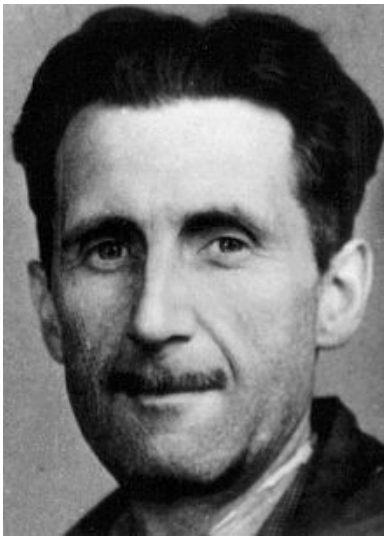
Persuasive Writing and Speaking

Allegory

Fable

Satire

At a Glance:



- George Orwell is his pen name
- Born Eric Blair in India, 1903
- Sent to prep school in England at 8
- Joined Indian Imperial Police
- Quit police, traveled, went to Paris to write--struggled
- Traveled to Spain to write about Spanish Civil War as war journalist
- Joined militia and was wounded fighting
- Fled Spain, back to England

What do we know about George Orwell?

1903-1950

a novelist and political journalist

wrote *Animal Farm* toward the end of WWII

could not publish it until after the war
because to the British public, Stalin was
"Uncle Joe" the brave leader of a nation that
stood up to Nazi Germany

It was NOT a good time to criticize Russia and its leader.

Beneath the surface of *AF*, Orwell shows the techniques used by Stalin to pervert the original aims of the 1917 Russian Revolution. Like the pig Napoleon, Stalin rose to power by killing or exiling off his rivals. Eventually he achieved the same position as the tsar whom the Revolution had tried to replace with more just system of government.

Why did Orwell feel so strongly about this?

His father was one of the officials who ran the "Raj"-- in India when it was still part of the British Empire. Orwell went on scholarship to Eton, an English public school-- he wasn't there because he was rich or royalty. He left there and went to Burma and joined the Indian Imperial Police, but hated it and hated Imperialism. He went to Paris and London, and eventually made money in journalism and wrote some novels that didn't sell well until he wrote *AF*.

1936--Orwell gets married, just before the civil war breaks out in Spain. This war was fought between the left-wing Republican government and right-wing Fascist rebels. Like many European socialists--and Orwell strongly believed in Socialism--<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/socialism>--Orwell and his wife went to Spain to help government forces.

Most foreigners in Spain joined the "International Brigade," but Orwell attached himself to the Spanish Trotskyists, followers of Leon Trotsky, Stalin's rival in the Communist power struggle that followed the death of Lenin.

In Spain, Orwell experienced first-hand the same kind of events happening in Russia. Orwell said, "when the communists gained control...of the Spanish Government and began to hunt down the Trotskyists, we both found ourselves among the victims. We were very lucky to get out of Spain alive.

These manhunts in Spain went on at the same time as the great purges in the USSR..

Animal Farm was written to make people wake up to the truth about Stalin. It seems strange today that the facts took so long to come out, but we must remember that these events took place before television and other forms of social media were available to many people.

At first, Orwell could not think of a form simple enough to be understood by everyone, then, while he was living in a small village, he saw a huge cart being whipped along a narrow path by a 10-year-old boy:

It struck me that if only such animals became aware of their strength we should have no power over them, and that men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the proletariat.

Those two thoughts expanded into the main theme of *Animal Farm* and the tragic story of Boxer.

The book would not have been a huge success if it had been about only ONE ruthless political leader. Through Napoleon/ Stalin Orwell examines the methods that unscrupulous leaders use to acquire power over people and how they abuse it. He was writing about the world of politics. What he has to say applies to every social group or institution where some people wish to be more equal than others.

What does this mean? The Cause and Effect:

- Orwell had a constant sense of failure
- He believed the rich and strong made the world's rules
- He identified with the underdog and sympathized with victims of poverty
- After an unpleasant experience as a police officer in India and a militia member in Spain....
- Orwell concluded that
 - 1.) imperialism was wrong (India rule)
 - 2.) All revolutions fail because those who attain power are corrupted by it, a theme that has influenced his writing

Why ANIMALS?

Stories about animals have been popular in every period of human history. Those that show them talking and behaving like human beings are known as fables. A modern version exists in many different Disney films.

A fable is NOT about animals, but about us humans. It takes certain animal qualities and expresses them in human terms. It tries to TEACH A LESSON ABOUT HUMAN NATURE AND CONDITION OF HUMAN LIFE. The audience is amused by the story and will pay attention to the point or MORAL.

The farm represents Russian society after the Revolution. Its animals personify different social groups and the way they used or abused their opportunities to make a new start. Compared with the variations among animals, human beings do not look very different from each other.

Characteristics of a FABLE:

- 1.) light-hearted humor
- 2.) full of comedy and laughter
- 3.) removed from reality to avoid bitterness
- 4.) assigns human qualities to animals
- 5.) author must have a genuine love of animals
- 6.) purpose of the fable is to tell a lesson (moral)

An **ALLEGORY** is a story in which there is a one-to-one correspondence between characters and events and a deeper level of meaning.

There is a plot and an underlying meaning that the plot conveys.

Example: The relationship between Animal Farm and the Russian Revolution.

Satire: a literary work holding up human vices and follies to ridicule or scorn. This literary work pokes fun at human antics. In Animal Farm, the satire is that there cannot be a utopian society where everyone is exactly equal.

Dystopia: A futuristic, imagined universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through corporate, bureaucratic, technological, moral, or totalitarian control. Dystopias, through an exaggerated worst-case scenario, make a criticism about a current trend, societal norm, or political system.

Characteristics of a Dystopian Society

- **Propaganda is used to control the citizens of society.**
- **Information, independent thought, and freedom are restricted.**
- **A figurehead or concept is worshipped by the citizens of the society.**
- **Citizens are perceived to be under constant surveillance.**
- **Citizens have a fear of the outside world.**
- **Citizens live in a dehumanized state.**
- **The natural world is banished and distrusted.**
- **Citizens conform to uniform expectations. Individuality and dissent are bad.**
- **The society is an illusion of a perfect utopian world.**

Types of Dystopian Controls

Most dystopian works present a world in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through one or more of the following types of controls:

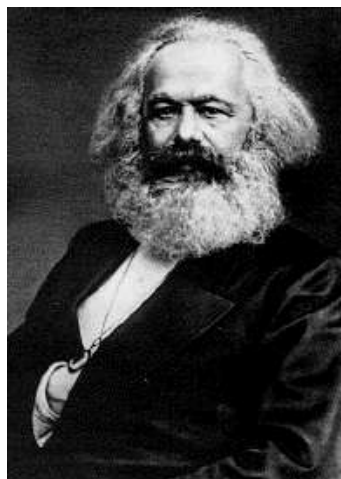
- **Corporate control: One or more large corporations control society through products, advertising, and/or the media. Examples include *Minority Report* and *Running Man*.**
- **Bureaucratic control: Society is controlled by a mindless bureaucracy through a tangle of red tape, relentless regulations, and incompetent government officials. Examples in film include *Brazil*.**
- **Technological control: Society is controlled by technology—through computers, robots, and/or scientific means. Examples include *The Matrix*, *The Terminator*, and *I, Robot*.**
- **Philosophical/religious control: Society is controlled by philosophical or religious ideology often enforced through a dictatorship or theocratic government.**

The Dystopian Protagonist

- **often feels trapped and is struggling to escape.**
- **questions the existing social and political systems.**
- **believes or feels that something is terribly wrong with the society in which he or she lives.**
- **helps the audience recognize the negative aspects of the dystopian world through his or her perspective.**

Tsar Nicholas:
Old government
Russian Ruler before Stalin before WWI
and brought Russia into the Great War.
Overthrown and murdered by the
Bolsheviks during Russian Revolution of
1917

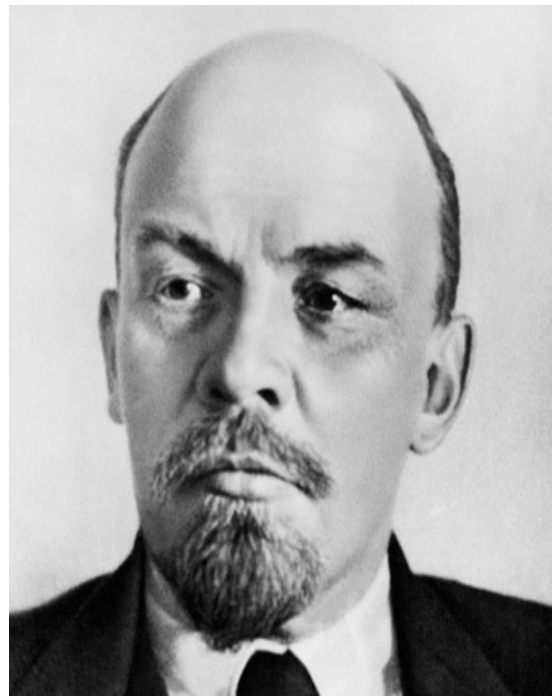
Karl Marx: 1818-1883: He became more popular after his death. He was a philosopher, social scientist, historian and revolutionary and the most influential socialist thinker in the 19th century.



Click on picture for link on Marx and information.

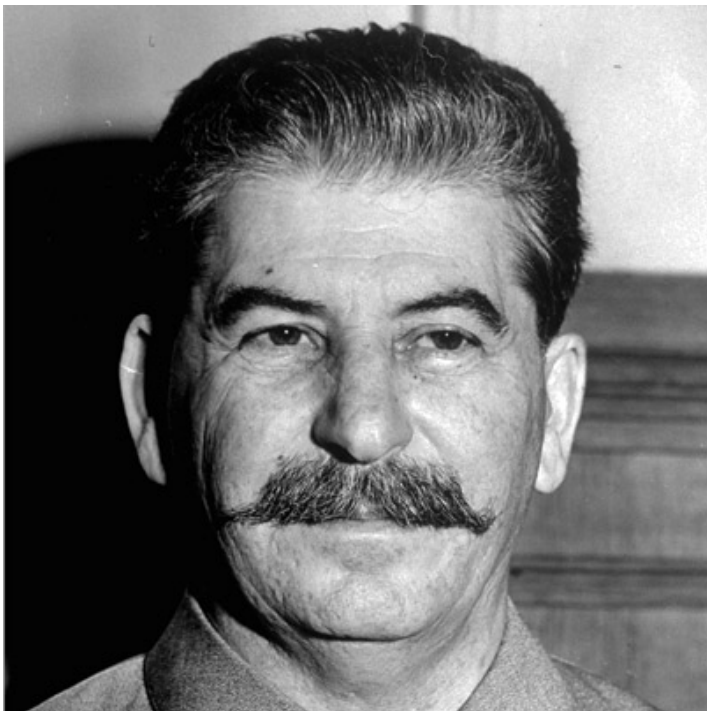
- He was revered by his Russian citizens
- Founded the Russian Communist Party
- Led the Bolshevik Revolution and architect of the Soviet State.
- Uncompromising radical
- Came to power after Tsar Nicholas

Vladimir Lenin:



[Click on picture for video link and biography](#)

Joseph Stalin:



[Click on picture link for short video](#)

Born on December 18, 1879, in Gori, Georgia, Joseph Stalin rose to power as General Secretary of the Communist Party, becoming a Soviet dictator upon Vladimir Lenin's death. Stalin forced rapid industrialization and the collectivization of agricultural land, resulting in millions dying from famine while others were sent to camps. His Red Army helped defeat Nazi Germany during WW II.



The Bolsheviks: A political party led by Vladimir Lenin who launched a nearly bloodless coup d'etat against the provisional government of Russia. The Bolsheviks and their allies occupied government buildings and other strategic locations in Petrograd, and soon formed a new government with Lenin as leader. He became the dictator of the first Marxist state in the world. His government made peace with Germany, nationalized industry and distributed land, which led to the establishment of the USSR in 1922.

The Mensheviks: Formed the minority of the Socialist Democrat Party when it split in 1903. Lenin took the Bolsheviks. The Mensheviks wanted to make their movement less elitist (upper class) than the Bolsheviks in the belief that it would attract the support of the undereducated workers, peasants and serfs. Remember, power in Russia was just getting over being measured by the number of serfs and land owned. Russia was not industrialized. Its first leader was Julius Martov.

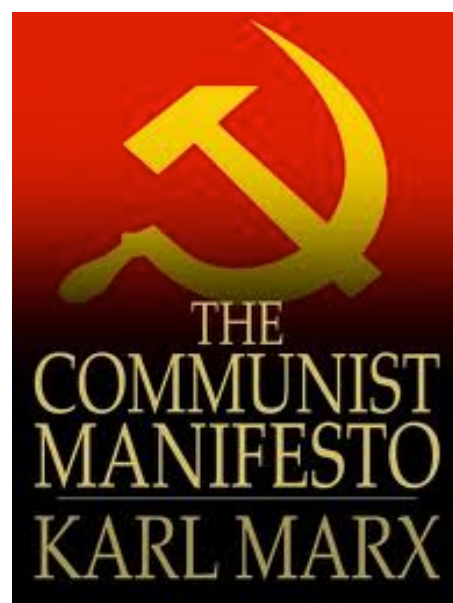
- Mensheviks were less disciplined in their approach for their failure in Russian history.
- This more open approach initially got the Mensheviks more support, along with such slogans as "eight hours work, eight hours play, 8 hours sleep and eight bob pay."

Russian Revolution of 1905:

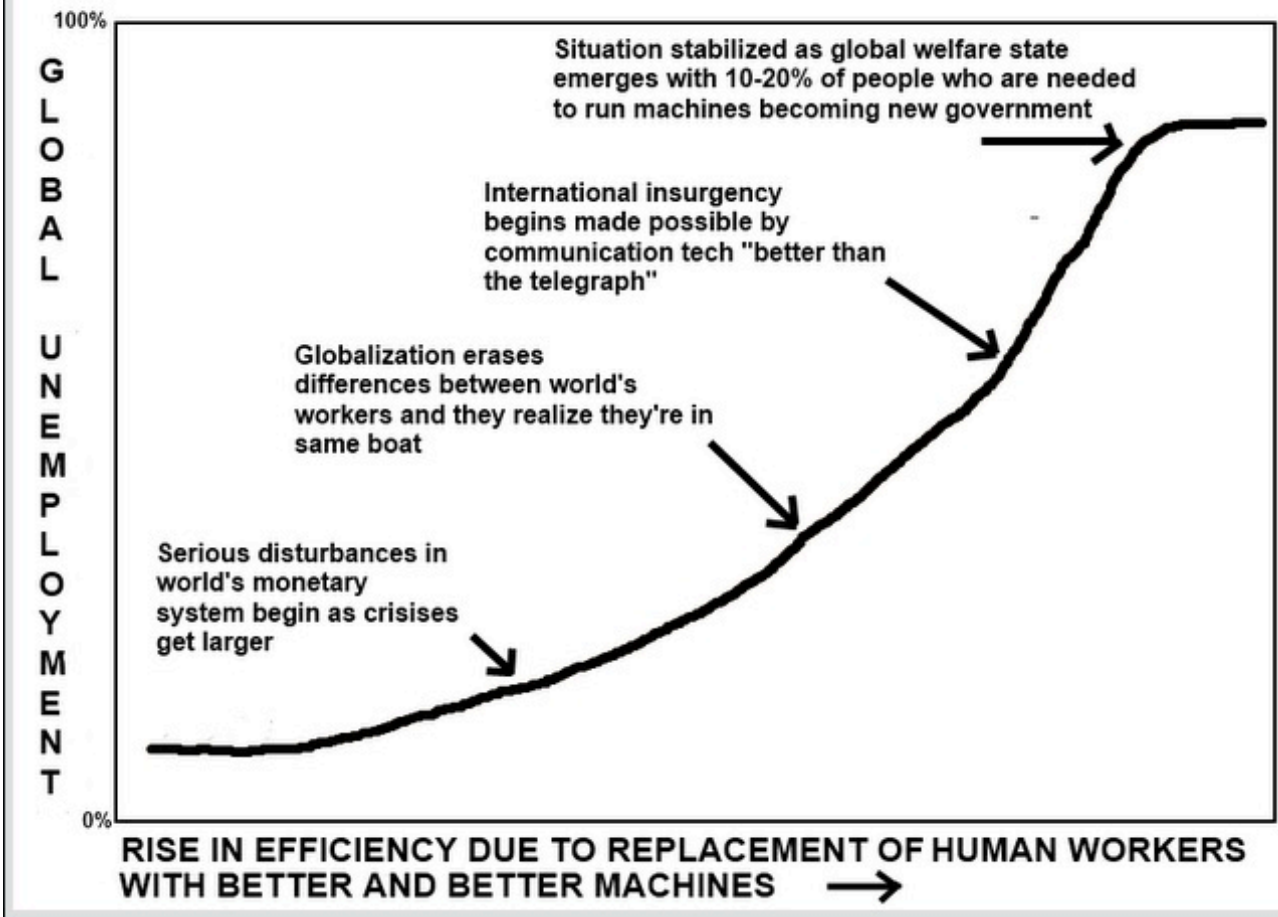
1904 was a bad year for Russian workers. Prices rose and wages declined by 20% and working conditions were harsh. 110,000 workers in St. Petersburg went on strike. Georgie Gapon, a priest who formed a trade union, appealed to Tsar Nicholas to reduce work hours, increase wages, and improve working conditions. When the procession reached Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, it was attacked by police and Cossacks. Over 100 workers were killed and 300 wounded, This was known as Bloody Sunday. It led to 1905 Revolution. Nicholas' Chief Minister told him to make concessions. He agreed and published October Manifesto. This granted freedom of conscience, speech, meeting and association. He also promised that in the future people would not be imprisoned without trial. He formed a plan called the Duma. The plan was denounced by revolutionaries. In 1905, Trotsky and the rest of his executive committee of St. Petersburg Soviet were arrested. Nicolas rejected plans of the Duma. Nicholas kept shutting them down.

Communism 101:

In 1847, Karl Marx was asked to draw up a plan for a group called the Communist league in order to unite the working classes of Europe. Marx wrote the Communist Manifesto, describing a workers' revolt, followed by a kind of paradise where every person would work according to their ability and receive according to their need. The result would be worldwide economic equality.



COMMUNIST MANIFESTO SUMMARY IN A GRAPH



Russian Revolution of 1917:

March 11, 1917: the Duma ignored the tsar's order to dissolve itself, while fires in the city broke out that very night. Meanwhile, the men of the Volhynian guard regiment began killing their officers.

March 15. Czar Nicholas II abdicates the throne.

March 22: Nicholas II arrested at army headquarters and imprisoned at Tsarkoe Selo, the famous royal palace of Catherine the Great.

March 22: The U.S.A. was the first government to recognize the new Provisional Government.

April 16: Lenin returns from Switzerland, delivers "April Theses" speech (April 17).

May 18. The Foreign Minister Miliukov and War Minister Guchkov both were forced to resign.

May 17: Prince Lvov's reorganizes Provisional Government: Alexander Kerensky named Minister of War and the Navy; other socialists also given cabinet positions.

July: Lenin's Bolsheviks attempt to seize power, fail; Lenin flees to Finland. Thousands of Bolsheviks jailed; Kerensky is appointed Prime Minister of the Provisional Government.

July 30: Gen. Kornilov is named Commander of Russian Army by Kerensky.

September: Kornilov leads troops in march on Petrograd (St. Petersburg); fearing revolt, Kerensky releases and arms Bolsheviks.

November 6: Bolsheviks seize power in Petrograd (St. Petersburg), declare socialist state to have begun.

January 1918: Constituent Assembly meeting is disrupted, ended by Bolsheviks.

March 1918: Treaty of Brest-Litovsk is signed with Germany, ending the war, and allowing Russian Bolsheviks to turn to the task of establishing the new order within a territory substantially smaller than the pre-Revolutionary Russian Empire.

July 1918: former Czar Nicholas II, Czarina and whole family were killed at Ekaterinenburg in the Urals.