

## Down on the farm

As the name suggests, the novel is set on a farm. The enclosed nature of a farm makes it a good analogy to a country with borders and neighbouring countries. At the beginning, when Mr Jones is in charge it is called Manor Farm suggesting aristocracy. It is re-named Animal Farm after the revolution. This is similar to Russia becoming the Soviet Union in 1922.



## Task 1

Work in pairs and draw a map of Animal Farm as it is described in the book. You should include the features mentioned in the novel, such as the barn, the cowshed, the hill where the windmill is built, the farmhouse, the well, the pond, the harness room, the various fields, the quarry etc. You should include the adjoining borders of Pilkington and Frederick.

Next make a list of the events in the book. Your work on plot and structure will be useful here. Compare your list with other groups. Give each event a number.

Use your list and put the number of each event on the corresponding location on your map. What do you notice about the use of the setting?

## Task 2

The setting of the farm allows Orwell to show how a sense of pride and community is fostered, even when the animals are being deluded and mistreated. Look at the events below and explain how each one contributes to this sense of 'nationality'.

- the use of songs, flags and parades
- the awarding of medals and commendations and other 'rewards'
- the rumours spread about Snowball and the executions of 'traitors'
- the building of community projects and the constant stream of 'facts and figures' showing improvements
- the way that none of the animals leave the farm (or never return, if they do).

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Orwell once described what gave him the idea of setting his book on a farm:

‘... I saw a little boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge carthorse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn. 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.’



## Task 3

Work with a partner to answer the questions below:

- Why do the animals rise up against Mr Jones and drive him from the farm?
- Boxer shows he is able to stand up against the dogs and the pigs. Why doesn't he do it?
- When the animals are successful at the Battle of the Windmill, it shows that they have the collective strength to stand against tyranny. Why don't they make a stand against the pigs?
- Benjamin seems well aware of what is likely to happen. Why do you think he doesn't warn the other animals?

Use your answers above to write two paragraphs about the setting in the novel.

Your first paragraph should compare the farm to the Soviet Union. Orwell intended his setting to reflect any country where the working class (proletariat) was being unfairly treated by the ruling class, so you could include this idea as well.

Your second paragraph should show how the setting of the farm and the relationships between the animals relate to the workers' seeming inability to overthrow the new ruling class when it too begins to treat the workers unfairly.