

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: Teri Shoemaker HS English Department

School: Olentangy High School

Book Title: *Animal Farm*

Genre: Historical Fiction--Allegory

Author: George Orwell

Publisher: Signet

Copyright: Most Recent 2004

Book Summary and Summary Citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

<https://www.amazon.com/Animal-Farm-George-Orwell/dp/0451526341>

George Orwell's timeless and timely allegorical novel—a scathing satire on a downtrodden society's blind march towards totalitarianism. *“All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.”*

A farm is taken over by its overworked, mistreated animals. With flaming idealism and stirring slogans, they set out to create a paradise of progress, justice, and equality. Thus the stage is set for one of the most telling satiric fables ever penned—a razor-edged fairy tale for grown-ups that records the evolution from revolution against tyranny to a totalitarianism just as terrible.

When *Animal Farm* was first published, Stalinist Russia was seen as its target. Today it is devastatingly clear that wherever and whenever freedom is attacked, under whatever banner, the cutting clarity and savage comedy of George Orwell's masterpiece have a meaning and message still ferociously fresh.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum blueprints and/or State standards.

- Draws parallels with fairy stories, fables, and allegories as a literary instrument
- Coincides with the study of the Russian Revolution to the Cold War in Eastern and Western Europe (being taught in the World History class)
- Offers excellent examples of the power of symbolism in storytelling
- Depicts both denotative and connotative meanings to relevant periods in history
- Helps students view revolution and war in a storybook manner that may help them understand concepts that otherwise might be beyond their maturity

- Allows students to draw parallels between real life historical events and figures and their metaphorical counterparts; EX: Boxer for the Proletariat; Old Major for Karl Marx
- Students can write analytical essays from topics discussed over this book as they draw conclusion about these characters

<https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/English-Language-Art/English-Language-Arts-Standards/ELA-Learning-Standards-2017-Section-508.pdf.aspx>

RL.9-10.2 Analyze literary text development. a. Determine a theme of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details. b. Provide an objective summary of the text that includes the theme and relevant story elements.

RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. RL.9-10.6 Analyze how a point of view, perspective, or cultural experience is reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

RI.9-10.7 Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

a. Establish a clear and thorough thesis to present an argument.

b. Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

c. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.

d. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W.9-10.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.9-10.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be “cut and pasted” (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form). Reviews should suggest an appropriate grade-level or grade-band.

Review #1

“Animal Farm remains our great satire on the darker face of modern history.”—Malcolm Bradbury

“As lucid as glass and quite as sharp...[Animal Farm] has the double meaning, the sharp edge, and the lucidity of Swift.”—Atlantic Monthly

“A wise, compassionate, and illuminating fable for our times.”—The New York Times

“Orwell has worked out his theme with a simplicity, a wit, and a dryness that are close to La Fontaine and Gay, and has written in a prose so plain and spare, so admirably proportioned to his purpose, that Animal Farm even seems very creditable if we compare it with Voltaire and Swift.”—Edmund Wilson, The New Yorker

“Orwell’s satire here is amply broad, cleverly conceived, and delightfully written.”—San Francisco Chronicle

“The book for everyone and Everyman, its brightness undimmed after fifty years.”—Ruth Rendell

Review #2

Nakul Dashora, oct. 21, 2018

It is still a keen area of debate whether Animal Farm remains relevant for readers of this generation, and I certainly believe it is. After reading the book, I found its themes and messages just as powerful, moving and relevant as they must have been seven decades ago...

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho

Document any potentially controversial content:

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/book-reviews/animal-farm>

Parents need to know that *Animal Farm* is a biting satire of totalitarianism, written in the wake of World War II and published amid the rise of Soviet Russia. Although it tells a fairly simple story of barnyard animals trying to manage themselves after rebelling against their masters, the novel demonstrates how easily good intentions can be subverted into tyranny.

Educational Value (5 dots)

George Orwell's novel, about totalitarianism in general and Stalinism in particular, is one of the most famous satires in the English language. It comments on Soviet Russia specifically and human folly in general.

Positive Messages (3 dots)

The main message of *Animal Farm* is pretty bleak, in essence, "Don't let this happen." Most of the animals mean well and want their farm to succeed, but none are a match for the treachery of their leaders.

Positive Role Models (3 dots)

Many of the characters in *Animal Farm* care about their community, but few are intellectually equipped to see how they are being exploited until it is too late. For example, Boxer the horse is steadfast in his support of the farm and pushes himself to great acts of strength for the good of all. But even he is unprepared for his ultimate fate once he is no longer needed.

Violence (4 dots)

The animals rebel against their human master and chase him from the farm. When Farmer Jones returns with his neighbors, the animals attack the intruders and inflict various bites and cuts on them. Later, the pigs use their guard dogs to keep order on the farm. Some animals are executed for crimes for which they have supposedly confessed. The violence in the novel is not described in detail, but its emotional implications might be upsetting to some readers.

Sex N/A

Language N/A

Consumerism N/A

Drinking, Drugs, and Smoking (3 dots)

Even though the use of alcohol is prohibited on the farm, the pigs eventually feel free to get drunk whenever the mood strikes them.

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated

Regular

At Risk

(Used in Honors Interdisciplinary English 9

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading Level of this Title (if applicable):

- Lexile measure : 1170L

Suggested Professional Literacy Review Sources:

School Library Journal
Horn Book
Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books
VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)
Library Journal
Book Links
Publisher's Weekly
Booklist
Kirkus Review
Wilson Library Catalog
English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)
The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)
Literature for Today's Young Adults

Signatures:

Teacher:	<i>Teri Shoemaker</i>	Date:	January, 2022
Department Head:	<i>Erin C...</i>	Date:	<i>1/7/22</i>
Building Administrator:	<i>[Signature]</i>	Date:	<i>1/25/22</i>
Curriculum Supervisor:	<i>[Signature]</i>	Date:	<i>1/28/22</i>

