

GEORGE ORWELL'S *ANIMAL FARM*

Adapted by **Ian Wooldridge** | Directed by **May Adrales**
January 9 - February 11, 2017 | **Quadracci Powerhouse**

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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SUGGESTED TEACHING & CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- 1.) Mask Designs and Character Development
- 2.) Power and Democracy
- 3.) Cause and Effect: Voices in the Revolution

This Teacher's Guide is designed to be used in the classroom along with The Rep's Play Guide for *Animal Farm*. These are some suggested activities for your classroom. The Play Guide is available online at <https://www.milwaukee-rep.com/Tickets-Events/2017/10-Overview/Animal-Farm/Animal-Farm-PlayGuide/>

PRE-SHOW

MASK DESIGN: CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The costume and prop designers for *Animal Farm* created costume pieces for the different animal characters using building materials like burlap, leather, wire, light metals, and small hardware. The costume pieces aren't distracting, are easy to use, and supports the actor's physicality. Each piece is an amplified expression of an *Animal Farm* character's personality. Key animal traits can then be communicated non-verbally, eliminating the use of extraneous dialogue.

So many theatrical traditions rely on costume and prop pieces to support the storytelling process. The Peking (Beijing) Opera of China (Figure A) uses specific colors to represent emotion and personality traits like greed, anger, deception, or innocence. Ancient Greek theater used masks (Figure B.) to allow actors to change roles easily, using exaggerated facial features and expressions to distinguish gender, age, and social status.

ACTIVITY: First, choose a character description from below and design a mask/costume piece for that character on paper. Share the designs with the class, making sure to justify all design decisions.

Challenge: Build your mask/costume piece using found, inexpensive materials. Encourage students to incorporate any materials available in the classroom or at home.

Animal Farm Character Descriptions

Napoleon the Pig - leader of the rebellion, intelligent, militant

Squealer the Pig - Napoleon's right hand, persuasive, outspoken

Clover the Mare - kind-hearted, uneducated, curious but hesitant

Boxer the Horse - very strong, hardworking, loyal, uneducated

Old Major the Prize Boar - an elder on Animal Farm, sees a vision of equality for all animals, calls for Revolution

Mollie the Mare - vain, flighty

Old Benjamin the Donkey - oldest on the farm, stubborn, unchanging, resolved.

Moses the Raven - hopeful, spiritual, tame

Mr. Jones - owner of Manor Farm, a drunk, greedy, irresponsible



Figure A. <http://www.cnto.org.au/the-culture4-2/beijing-opera.html>



Figure B. <https://www.pinterest.com/craftytheatre/ancient-greek-and-roman-theatre/>

STUDENT TAKE-OVER: Power and Democracy

ACTIVITY: Read the *Animal Farm* summary on the next page aloud. Silently write the following on the board, or on paper: "You have 20 minutes to work together to design two cover images for *Animal Farm*. As a group you must choose one image to submit as the final design. You may now begin." Do not give them any other instructions, materials, or clarifications. Step in if the class becomes too rowdy, violent, or if bullying occurs, but do not offer any further assistance. If you have a larger class, split students into two groups.

Tip: Privately ask a few students to disagree with the group and be firm in their ideas during the activity. Observe the behavior of the group and pay close attention to how leaders are formed/chosen. This activity is purposefully vague in order to challenge their ability to work as a group, their problem-solving skills, and their resourcefulness. If some students choose not to participate, don't force them but mention it during the post-activity discussion.



Left to Right: Deborah Staples, Brade Bradshaw, Kelsey Rodriguez, Jonathan Gillard Daly, Stephanie Weeks, and Brendan Titley.
Photo by Michael Brosilow.

Summary: When the animals of Manor Farm drive out their abusive farmer, they take over running the farm for themselves. Their experiment in collective leadership succeeds—until the pigs step into the vacuum of power created by the farmer's expulsion, and betray the ideals of freedom and equality for all animals.

DISCUSSION:

- What was most difficult about this activity? Were you successful? How would you measure your success?
- Who was the leader of the activity? How was the leader given control of the classroom? Why did you allow them control and not someone else? Was there anyone not in a leadership role that should have been?
- Did the class become divided? If so, why did that divide occur? Did anyone not contribute to the group work? Why?
- How was democracy demonstrated in this activity? Was there any democracy at all, or did a smaller group make all the decisions?

REAL-WORLD CONNECTION: When a crisis or a problem occurs in a community, what members are the first to initiate and take action? What are the characteristics of a leader? What actions generate one's trust when in leadership? What events or beliefs divide community members? How does education affect one's ability to make effective decisions? How do you know true democracy has been achieved?

POST-SHOW

CAUSE AND EFFECT: Voices of the Revolution

Animal Farm is an allegory created in response to the Russian Revolution from 1917 to 1945. However, the self-described "fairy story" has become a timeless warning of the cyclical nature of power. We have often seen communities demand change. Subsequently new leadership and new systems are chosen, but then we see those trusted leaders use their power to control and for their own gain.

DISCUSSION:

- How would the story have been different had George Orwell chosen to use humans instead of animals?
- Did the ending surprise you? Were there moments that foreshadowed the ending? How should the *Animal Farm* revolution have ended?
- How was each character's status established in the farm? How did each character's level of literacy contribute to the events at Manor Farm?
- Who is to blame for the troubling events of *Animal Farm*? What could have been done to prevent the resulting events?
- What are some examples of abuse of power seen in *Animal Farm*?
- Was there a specific moment that a character could have made a different choice and prevented Napoleon from gaining power?

ACTIVITY: Consider how each character contributed to the events of *Animal Farm*. Brainstorm what choices the characters could have made to achieve an alternative outcome.

CAUSE AND EFFECT CHART

Character

Example: Mr. Jones

Napoleon the Pig
Squealer the Pig
Boxer the Horse
Clover the Mare
Old Major the Prize Boar
Old Benjamin the Donkey
Ensemble Animals

Role in the Revolution

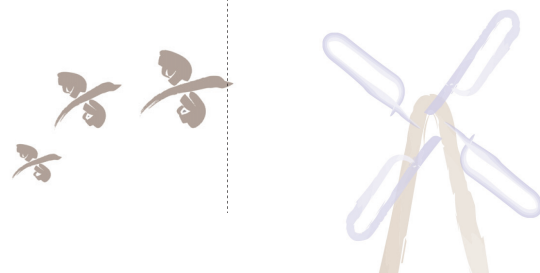
Owner of Manor Farm. His expulsion from Manor Farm was the first step to Revolution.

Alternate Choice

Jones could have treated his animals fairly, with respect and dignity.

New Outcome

Because of that respect, Manor Farm would have been a fairer, healthier place to live and work.



Stephanie Weeks. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

Allegory: a story, poem or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one.



MILWAUKEE REP EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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Common Core State Standards

SL 1,2,4,5 Comprehension and Collaboration, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
SL 8-12.1 Collaborative Discussion
SL 8-12 Point of View

National Core Arts Standards

C. 1-3 Generate, develop, complete
R. Perceive, Analyze, Interpret
C.10-11 Relate, Analyze, Interpret

CASEL Competencies

Social Skills, Responsible Decision-Making, Social Awareness

PROGRAMS IN THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT RECEIVE GENEROUS FUNDING FROM:

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