Mr. Jones, owner of Manor Farm, lurched with a ring of light from his lantern dancing from side to side, towards his house, kicked off his boots at the back door, poured himself a glass of beer and made his way up to bed, where his wife was already snoring.

As soon as the light in the bedroom went out there was a stirring and a fluttering all through the farm buildings. Word had gone round during the day that old Major, the prize pig, had had a strange dream the previous night and wished to communicate it to the other animals.

It had been agreed that they should all meet in the big barn as soon as Mr. Jones was safely out of the way. Old Major was so highly regarded on the farm that everyone was quite ready to lose an hour’s sleep to hear what he had to say.

At one end of the barn, on a raised platform, Old Major was already settled on his bed of straw, under a lantern which hung from a beam. He was twelve years old and had lately grown rather stout. He was still a majestic-looking pig, with a wise and benevolent appearance.

Before long the other animals began to arrive and make themselves comfortable. First came three dogs and then the pigs, who settled down in the straw immediately in front of the platform. The hens perched themselves on the window-sills, the pigeons fluttered up to the rafters, the sheep and cows lay down behind the pigs and began to chew the cud.

The two horses came in together, walking very slowly and setting down their vast hairy hoofs with great care should there be some small animal hidden in the straw.

• lesson notes

Eric Arthur Blair was born on 25 June 1903 and is known by his pen name George Orwell. He was an English novelist and his work is marked by awareness of social injustice, opposition to totalitarianism and commitment to democratic socialism. He is ranked as one of the most influential English writers of the 20th century and as one of the most important chroniclers of English culture of his generation.

Animal Farm is a novel by George Orwell published in 1945.

According to Orwell, the book is a political satire of the events leading up to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Stalin era in the Soviet Union. However, it can be applied to most dictatorships that are built upon a cult of personality and enforced by a reign of repression and terror. It was in Time magazine’s top 100 books.
Boxer, the bigger of the two horses, was an enormous beast [a large, four-footed mammal], nearly eighteen hands high [See Note 6], as strong as any two ordinary horses put together, was not of first-rate intelligence, but he was respected for his tremendous powers of work. When Old Major saw the animals had all made themselves comfortable and were waiting attentively, he cleared his throat and began:

"Comrades, you have heard already about the strange dream I had last night. But I will come to the dream later. I have something else to say first. I do not think, comrades, that I shall be with you for many months longer, and before I die, I feel it my duty to pass on to you such wisdom as I have acquired [get as one’s own].

"I have had a long life and have had much time for thought as I lay alone in my stall [See Note 7]. I think I understand the nature of life on this earth as well as any animal now living. Now, comrades, what is the nature of this life of ours?

"Let’s face it, our lives are miserable, laborious [See Note 8] and short. We are born, we are given just so much food as we need to survive and those of us who are capable of it are forced to work to the limits of our strength.

"The very instant that our usefulness has come to an end we are slaughtered [the killing of cattle, sheep,
etc. for food] with hideous cruelty [See Note 9]. No animal in England knows the meaning of happiness or leisure [freedom from work] after he is a year old. No animal in England is free. The life of an animal is misery and slavery [Note 10]. That, comrades, is the plain truth.

“But is this simply part of the order of nature? Is it because this land of ours is so poor that it cannot afford a decent life to those who live on it? No, comrades, a thousand times, no! The soil of England is fertile, its climate is good, it is capable of affording food in abundance [plentiful supply] to an enormously greater number of animals than now inhabit it.

“All of us could live in comfort and dignity [self-respect or appreciation of others] almost beyond our imagination. So why then do we continue in this miserable condition? Because nearly the whole of the produce of our labour is stolen from us by human beings.

“There, comrades, is the answer to all our problems. It is summed up in a single word—Man. Man is the only real enemy we have. Remove Man from the scene [the place where events occur], and the root cause [main reason] of hunger and overwork is abolished for ever.

“Man is the only creature that consumes [used for themselves] without producing. He does not give milk, he does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough [See Note 11], he cannot run fast enough to catch rabbits. Yet he is lord of all the animals. He sets them to work, he gives back to them the bare minimum [the very least] that will prevent them from starving and the rest he keeps for himself.

“Our labour tills [prepare the land for crops] the soil, our dung [animal excrement] fertilises it [to make productive], and yet there is not one of us that owns anything of it. You cows that I see before me, how much milk have you given during this last year? And what has happened to that milk which should have

- lesson notes

Note 9: Hideous means repulsive or very ugly. Cruelty is to cause bodily harm or mental suffering.

Note 10: Slavery is a system where people are treated as property and can be bought and sold. Slaves can be held from the time of their capture, purchase or birth and deprived of the right to leave, refuse to work or demand compensation.

Note 11: A plough is a large farming implement with one or more blades, drawn by animals and used for cutting furrows—long narrow trenches—in the soil to prepare for the planting of seeds.
been giving to your calves? Every drop of it has gone
down the throats of our enemies. And you hens, how
many eggs have you laid in this last year and how
many of those eggs ever hatched into chickens?

“The rest have all gone to market to bring in money
for Mr. Jones and his men. And you, horses, where are
your four foals [young horses] who should have been
the support and pleasure of your old age? Each of
them was sold at a year old—you will never see one
of them again. In return for your foals and all your
labour in the fields, what have you ever had except
your bare rations [small amounts of food] and a stall?

“And even the miserable lives we lead are not
allowed to reach their natural span. For myself I do
not grumble [complain], for I am one of the lucky
ones. I am twelve years old and have had over four
hundred children. Such is the natural life of a pig. But
no animal escapes the cruel knife [being slaughtered]
in the end.

“You young pigs sitting in front of me, every one of
you will scream at the end of your lives when you are
slaughtered and sold within a year. To that horror we
all must come—cows, pigs, hens, sheep, everyone.
Even the horses and the dogs have no better fate
[something that unavoidably befalls a person, fortune].
“You, Boxer, the very day that those great muscles of yours lose their power, Mr. Jones will sell you to the knacker, who will cut your throat and boil you down for the foxhounds [dogs used in fox hunting, an English sport in which humans follow foxhounds to kill a fox].

“As for you dogs, when you grow old and toothless, Mr. Jones will tie a brick around your necks and drown you in the nearest pond. Is it not crystal clear [absolutely clear, as a diamond], then, comrades, that all the evils of this life of ours spring [start] from the tyranny [abuse of authority] of human beings? Only by getting rid of Man and the produce of our labour and we would be our own.

“Almost overnight we could become rich and free. What then must we do? Why, work night and day for the overthrow [to defeat from a position of power] of the human race. That is my message to you, comrades: Rebellion. I do not know when the Rebellion will come. It might be in a week or in a hundred years, but I know, as surely as I see this straw beneath my feet, that sooner or later justice will be done.

“Fix your eyes on that, comrades, throughout the short remainder of your lives. And, above all, pass on this message of mine to those who come after you [children and grandchildren], so that future generations shall carry on the struggle until we are victorious [act of defeating an enemy in a battle]. And remember, comrades, your resolution [formal intention] must never falter [to hesitate in action]. No argument must lead you astray [go off the correct path].

“Never listen when they tell you that Man and the animals have a common interest, that prosperity [success, good fortune] is shared. It is all lies. Man serves the interests of no creature except himself. And among us animals let there be perfect unity, perfect comradeship [friendship with common aims] in the struggle. All men are enemies. Animals are comrades.”

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**Lesson Analysis**

**Boxer**

Boxer is the strongest animal on the farm and as strong as any two ordinary horses put together. Although he was not of first-rate intelligence, he was respected for his steadiness of character and tremendous powers of work.

These are great qualities for a horse, but not such great qualities for a revolutionary. He’s a hard worker and a brave fighter, but Old Major warns him that that he is disposable: “the very day that those great muscles of yours lose their power, Mr. Jones will send you to the knacker, who will cut your throat and boil you down for the fox-hounds”.

Boxer worries about the farm, but he’s not smart enough to think things out on his own. Instead of thinking for himself, he has decided to be loyal to the Rebellion.
Questions on the story (try and give answers of at least 10 words)

Question 1: Do you believe that animals lives are lives are miserable, laborious and short for the benefit of humans and, if you do, what would you do about it?
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___________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________

Question 2: Do you think it is ethical for humans to have farm animals that go to market to bring them money? If not, what would be more humane?
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Question 3: Old Major says the animals will rebel because all humans are evil. Do you believe in this story that this is true and, if so, why?
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___________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________

Question 4: What impact had Old Major’s speech on the animals and what new outlook on life are they likely to have?
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___________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________

Question 5: How do you think the Rebellion will come about?
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___________________________________________________________________________________________________