

Chapter Seven
Literature Focus: Allegorical Characters

Many students are familiar with the different **genres**, or categories, of literature—fiction, nonfiction, poetry, autobiography, biography, plays, folk tales—to name a few. However, there are often many **subgenres** of literature within these genres. For example, under the broad genre of plays, there are the subgenres of comedy, tragedy, and history. Under the genre of mystery, there are the subgenres of thriller, detective, historical, romantic, and suspense.

Animal Farm falls under the genre of fiction and is considered a satirical **allegory**. In literature, an allegory is a symbolic story in which the characters and action are representations of a deeper message or meaning. Often, the characters in an allegory have a general personality which represents a type of person—or, as in the case of *Animal Farm*, a specific individual—and the underlying theme of the literature has a political, moral, social, or religious significance. *Animal Farm* is satirical in that by disguising the characters and action of the story, Orwell is exposing and humorously attacking current political and social issues of his time, with the hope of inspiring acknowledgement of the issues and provoking change.

Animal Farm is an allegory about the Russian Revolution of 1917 in which the Russian Czar, Nicholas II, was overthrown, and the world’s first Communist regime was established. In his novel, Orwell creates fictional characters (which happen to be cleverly disguised as animals), who represent the actual people surrounding the events of the Russian Revolution.

Directions: As you read *Animal Farm*, complete the chart below and on the next page with observations of the use of allegory throughout the story. An example has been done for you.

Real Person/Group	Fictional Character/ Concept	Similarities
<p>Karl Marx (1818-1883) wrote the Communist Manifesto and set ideas of revolution and the Communist ideal in motion.</p>	<p>Old Major</p>	<p>Old Major introduced the idea that “humans are bad” and set the Animal Farm revolution in motion. *Note: Similarities should be written in complete sentences and should provide at least one specific example from the novel!</p>
<p>Joseph Stalin (1897-1953) Communist leader of Russia from 1920-1953 after Vladimir Lenin. Known for his violent executions and persecution.</p>	<p>Napoleon</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Real Person/Group	Fictional Character/ Concept	Similarities
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<p>Leon Trotsky (1879-1940) differed from Stalin in Communist ideals; follower of Marxism. Expelled from the Communist Party by Stalin and his followers.</p>	<p>Snowball</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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<p>Propaganda department; worked to improve Stalin's image and promote his support.</p>	<p>Squealer</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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<p>Czar Nicholas II, (1868-1919) the last emperor of Russia. Ruled from 1894 until 1918, when he and his family were executed by the Bolsheviks. Often cruel and brutal to his subjects.</p>	<p>Mr. Jones</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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<p>Communism, a type of government based on the idea of communal ownership of property under government control.</p>	<p>Animalism</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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Dedicated supporters of Stalin; generally undereducated and highly naïve. Continue to work without question.

Boxer

Former aristocracy; moved away from Russia to continue to live their lavish lifestyle.

Mollie

The Communist Anthem “The Internationale.” Stalin replaced the anthem in 1944 with the “Hymn of the Soviet Union.”

“Beasts of England”

Stalin’s development of the People’s Commissars for Internal Affairs, which became **Russia’s Secret Police.**

The Dogs

Critics of political and social change.

Benjamin

Religion. Stalin used religious principles to promote work and avoid revolt.

Moses
