***Animal Farm* Name:**

**Background Information Date:**

**DIRECTIONS: Annotate the following passages. Choose the 5 most importants facts you annotated and list them on the back.**

Fed up with the mistreatments of Farmer Jones, the animals of Animal Farm form a revolution against all humans in the hope to create their own Utopian society--a perfect civilization characterized by hard work and the fruits of their labor. Before their dream becomes a reality, the pigs of the farm, Snowball, Squealer, and Napoleon, usurp all power, relying on the other animals’ ignorance and visions of “Animalism,” their political system. The animals also readily believe the distorted information, propaganda, and false facts given by the pigs. The animals could even be considered complicit in the corruption of their ideal society by their failure to question the pigs’ authority. Some animals realize what is happening but do not speak. Those who speak out against the atrocities are killed.

Although the novel is enjoyable to read, it is also equally disturbing when one considers the gravity of its historical connections. George Orwell had a purpose in writing *Animal Farm*, and it was certainly not solely to entertain. Although *Animal Farm* is a novel, it portrays real-life events. Even though the exact number is not known, it is said that possibly 17 million Russians died as a result of the Russian Revolution and the events leading up to it. Why did this happen? How could anyone let such a tragedy occur with millions of people losing their lives? It can happen very easily when power and corruption collide. George Orwell’s message and warning is vital to a society who wishes to move forward without the loss of freedom and life.

At first, no one wanted to publish *Animal Farm*. During World War II, the Soviet Union was a major ally to Great Britain and a force in the defeat of the Nazis, so many were reluctant to criticize the Soviet Union at the time. Perhaps people did not want to face the realities it brought to light, as Orwell explains: “If publishers and editors exert themselves to keep certain topics out of print, it is not because they are frightened of prosecution but because they are frightened of public opinion. In this country intellectual cowardice is the worst enemy a writer or journalist has to face, and that fact does not seem to me to have had the discussion it deserves” (Orwell, “The Freedom of the Press”). In May of 1945, *Animal Farm* was published, and Orwell’s message may be heard. The question is: *Who will hear it?*

**PROMPT: On the back and in your own words, explain what the following statements are saying. Then decide whether you agree or disagree with the statement and why.**

1. “Speaking the Truth in times of universal deceit is a revolutionary act.” (George Orwell)
2. “If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.” (George Orwell)