Introduction to Animal Farm: The Political Background
George Orwell—the author

- Born in India in 1903
- Name was originally Eric Blair
- Experienced many social inequalities
  - due to Indian and British class system
  - Intelligent but poor
- Worked as an officer in the Indian Imperial Police
  - Due to guilt and discomfort, quit and moved to Europe
  - Lived and worked among the lower class
- Joined the military in Spain to fight in their Civil War
- Wrote *Animal Farm* during World War II
  - “to fuse political purpose with artistic purpose into one whole”
- Suffered from tuberculosis and died in 1950 after finishing *1984*
Capitalism

- An economic system characterized by:
  - Private or corporate ownership of resources and means of production
  - Prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a free market

- Goal is to use profits to expand business thus creating more jobs and wealth

- Distribution of profits is determined by owners
  - Often results in the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer
Socialism

- The means of production, distribution and exchange are mostly owned by the state, and used, in theory, on behalf of the people.

- Belief that capitalism is unfair because it concentrates wealth in a few hands and doesn’t protect the overall welfare of the majority.

- Therefore, the state redistributes the wealth of society in a more equitable way, according to the judgment of the legislator.
Communism

- A system of government characterized by:
  - collective ownership of property (both material and intellectual)
  - organization of labor for the advantage of all members
  - Goal of erasing inequalities in the possession of property, by distributing all wealth equally to all

- “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.”
Totalitarianism

- A form of government with a strong central rule that attempts to control individuals by means of violence or repression.
- The government pursues a specific goal no matter the cost to others.
- Participation in government-approved organizations becomes required.
- Large-scale violence is often used to protect the government’s ideas and achieve its goals.
- Groups of individuals are singled out and blamed for the government’s troubles. They are persecuted or killed.
Political Changes in Russia

Capitalism
• Monarchy led by a Czar

Socialism
• Ideal goal of the Soviets who revolted to overthrow the Czar

Communism
• The actual form of government created in the Soviet Union

Totalitarianism
• The result of a dictator taking control