“Men can only be happy when they do not assume that the object of life is happiness.”
Real Name—Eric Arthur Blair

- Lived 1903-1950
- Born in India
- Moved to England as a small child
- His childhood dream: “From a very early age, perhaps the age of five or six, I knew that when I grew up I should be a writer.”
- His pen name: George “sounds solidly English” and Orwell is the name of “a river in Suffolk, England”
Orwell’s Education

- Attended expensive preparatory schools in England
- Grew up middle class surrounded by upper class students
- Felt inferior to upper class boys at school
Blair earned a scholarship to “the most costly and snobbish of the English Public Schools” Eton College where he attended between 1917 and 1921.
Life at Eton

• One of his teachers was Aldous Huxley – who taught him French
Life After School

- Served in Burma with the Indian Imperial Police
- During the next five years, he grew to love the Burmese and resent the oppression of Imperialism and decided to become a writer instead.
Orwell pictured in a passport photo during his Burma years.
In the first 6 months after his decision, Blair went on what he thought of as an expedition to the East End of London to become acquainted with the poor people of England.

As a base, he rented a room in Notting Hill. In the spring, he rented a room in a working-class district of Paris.
Career Path

- Chose to live in poverty
- Worked as a dishwasher
- Wrote *Down and Out in Paris and London*
- Exposed harsh working conditions of the poor
- Investigated England’s coal-mining industry
- Wrote *The Road to Wigan Pier*
- Exposed terrible conditions of the miners
Effects of These Jobs

• Grew to hate a “class system”
• Became a socialist
  – Socialism
    • All goods in a country are shared with others
    • No one has more than others
    • For example, “You have two cows. The government takes one and gives it to your neighbor.”
In July 1936 the Spanish Civil War broke, and Orwell went to Spain.

After his arrival in Barcelona, he joined the Unified Marxist Workers’ Party and served with them in action in January 1937.
Orwell’s Political Views

- He considered himself a democratic socialist and was critical of communism.
- He hated intellectuals, lying, cruelty, political authority, and totalitarianism.
- He strongly opposed Stalin and Hitler -- he was very outspoken during WWII.
To Make Ends Meet

- Writing wasn’t paying the bills
- Other jobs:
  1. Teacher
  2. Grocer
  3. Bookshop assistant
  4. BBC writer
- Fought in Spanish Civil War against communists
- Shot in the throat in battle
- Wrote about this war
- *Homage to Catalonia*
NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS
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This is to certify that
Mr. GEORGE ORWELL
of The Tribune

is a member of the T.P.
Branch of the National Union of Journalists.

Leslie R. Aldous Branch Sec.
(Address) 66. Priory Grove, N.C.
Personal Life

• In 1936 Blair and once student of J.R.R. Tolkien student Eileen O'Shaughnessy married.
• Diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1938.
• In 1944 they adopted a son Richard Horatio.
Personal Life Continued…

- Wife died in 1946
- Orwell entered a London hospital in September 1949 and the next month married Sonia Brownell (three months before his own death).
- He died in London on Jan. 21, 1950.
The year 1943 was an important one in Orwell's life for several reasons.

- His mother died in March.
- He left the BBC to become literary editor of the *Tribune*.
- The most important event occurred late that year, when he commenced the writing of *Animal Farm*.
- Orwell had completed this satire by February 1944.
Most Famous Works

- Animal Farm
- Published in 1945
- Wrote it “to expose [Joseph] Stalin’s perversion of socialism”
- Fusion of “political and artistic purpose”
- Immediate commercial success
- Quickly translated into many languages
Most Famous Works

- 1984
- Published in 1949
- His final novel
- Grim vision of future society
- “Big Brother” is watching/controlling all
- Considered a masterpiece
“During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act.”
~George Orwell
Final Years

• Suffered a tubercular hemorrhage (lung bleed)
• Died in 1950 at age of 46
“Writing a book is a long, exhausting struggle, like a long bout of some painful illness. One would never undertake such a thing if one were not driven by some demon whom one can neither resist or understand.”
George Orwell Review
Question #1

Eric Blair cast around for a pseudonym and finally landed on George Orwell, the surname being taken from an English

A. village  C. river
C. moor  D. pub
Question #2

When Orwell was a student at Eton, one of his teachers was

A. Aldous Huxley
B. H.G. Wells
C. E.M. Forster
D. Bertrand Russell
Question #3

Orwell’s first professional job was that of

A. civil servant in India
B. agricultural manager in Rhodesia
C. journalist in Spain
D. policeman in Burma
Down and Out in Paris and London, following Orwell’s experiences of “tramping” with the poor and homeless, includes the memorable section where he describes his time in Paris working as
A. dockhand
B. hospital orderly
C. dishwasher
D. lavatory attendant
Question #5

Orwell fought in the Spanish Civil War with the

A. International Brigades
B. Unified Marxist Workers’ Party
C. Independent Labor Party
D. Union of Communist Peoples
In France, *Animal Farm*’s publisher quietly changed the name of the pig Napoleon to

A. César  
B. Augustine  
C. Alexandre  
D. Anatole
What is George Orwell's real name?
A. Eric Cantona
B. Eric Blair
C. Eric Morecambe
D. Eric James
Question #8

Which war did Orwell fight in?
A. Spanish Civil War
B. Korean War
C. Irish Civil War
D. World War II
Question #9

Which School did George Orwell attend?

A. Oxford
B. Eton College
C. Charterhouse
D. Harrow School
On his deathbed in a London hospital Orwell married his second wife, the beautiful Sonia Brownell, whom many of his friends considered to be a gold-digger and collector of literary “stars.” She became extremely wealthy with the royalties of Orwell’s works and went on to

A. marry an Italian poet
B. edit a stylish literary journal
C. die a penniless drunk in Paris
D. be swindled of all her money by an English lord
Quotes

• In a time of universal deceit - telling the truth is a revolutionary act.
• War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength.
• Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.
• Freedom is the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.
International Talk Like A Pirate Day 2012