

Author & Illustrator ACADEMY

MICHAEL MORPURGO FIND THE SEED OF YOUR STORY:

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS



ANIMALS ON THE FARM

Before watching the video or reading the extract...

In *Jemima the Pig and the 127 Acorns* by Michael Morpurgo, we meet Jemima the pig, the undisputed queen of Wick Court Farm. But what other animals might you meet on a farm? Which animal would you like to meet? Create your own farm animal character and write a book title for a story about your chosen animal.

DISCUSS THE EXTRACT!

TAKEN FROM 'THE BEGINNING' – PAGES 11-20.

Before you get into the detail of the discussion get the group's initial responses to the extract – how did they feel about it? Are they keen to read more? Do they have any questions?

1. Who is Jemima? How does the narrator feel about Jemima?
2. What sort of personality does Jemima have? What do you predict might happen in this story?
3. What memories does the narrator have of Wick Court Farm?

FIND INSPIRATION

AFTER WATCHING THE VIDEO, DEVELOP MICHAELS'S IDEAS

INSPIRATION 1: THE SEED OF MY STORY

In the video, Michael Morpurgo describes how he takes inspiration from what is around him. His experiences of the outside world become 'the seeds' of his story.

- Like Michael suggests, use 'your ears and your eyes and your heart' to take in the world around you. Keep a diary, or go outside and write down or draw all of the things you see.
- Draw an outline of a seed in the middle of a sheet of paper. Inside that seed, write down your favourite thing from the world outside. Around your seed, note any other ideas that 'grow' from it.
- Then, try Michael's 'dream-time' technique. Without writing at all, just think about your seed. Weave ideas together in your head. Do you feel inspired?

INSPIRATION 2: A COLLECTION OF EVENTS

In the video, Michael Morpurgo describes how he 'collects' the events in his life. He likes to think of the people he's met and the places he's been to inspire his writing process.

- Take up Michael's challenge of writing down a few lines each day about the important things that happen to you. What do you notice as the weeks go by? Do your lines become something like a story?
- Michael describes how these lines will become a collection of events that you can use as inspiration. As he says in the video, simply let the ideas flow, don't worry about mistakes. Just write, write, write!
- When you feel confident, read your lines aloud as if you're telling your best friend.

CREATIVE CHALLENGE FROM MICHAEL MORPURGO

Michael describes how his memories play an important part in his writing process. They help to inspire his stories. Create a Memory Jar of your own in which you write down and store all of your favourite memories. Choose one of these memories to think about using Michael's 'dream-time' technique. You don't need to write anything down, just see where your thoughts take you. Do you get any ideas for a new story?