



Fantastic Mr Fox

by Roald Dahl

1970 Puffin (81 pages)

NOVEL STUDY

Fantastic Mr Fox, by Roald Dahl

SUMMARY

This novel follows Mr. Fox who is in the habit of stealing food for himself and his family from three nearby farmers: chickens from Boggis, ducks and geese from Bunce, and turkeys from Bean. All three of the farmers are nasty, rude and mean and want to stop Mr Fox by any means necessary. The story details the exploits of Mr Fox, his family, and friends as they try to outwit the farmers and keep themselves fed. There are many topics which can be explored around the themes of feelings, decision making, goal setting, consequences and the value of friendship.

The book has 18 chapters, each between 4-8 pages long.

CHARACTER REVIEW

Mr Fox
Mrs Fox
The small foxes
Boggis
Bunce
Bean

SEL THEMES IN THE BOOK

- Friendship
- Goal setting and Problem Solving
- Feelings review: excited, worried, scared/afraid, proud, smug, sorry, anger, misery, embarrassment, horror, sad, happy, nervous

STUDY QUESTIONS

Chapter 1 and 2

- **Why did Mr. Fox steal food from the farmers?** *Mr. Fox stole food from the farmers to eat and to feed Mrs Fox and his family.*
- **Which phrases on p. 8 tells you that the farmers were angry with Mr. Fox?**
 - *“Dang and blast that lousy beast!” cried Boggis.*
 - *“I’d like to rip his guts out!” said Bunce.*
 - *“He must be killed!” cried Bean.*
- **Were these chapters making you like the fox or the farmers most? What makes you think this?** *In these chapters, the author makes the reader like Mr. Fox most because, even though Mr. Fox steals from the farmers, he does it to feed his family and is described as clever. Whereas, the farmers are described as nasty and appear greedy.*
- **What do you think about the way the author talks about the farmers? Do you think you would talk about someone in that way? Think about school values/rule and the golden rule (treat others the way you would like to be treated).**

Activity

- **Literacy Activity –Write a note to Mr. Fox to warn him about the farmers’ plan. Suggest how to keep the family of foxes safe using the Control Signals.**

Chapter 3

- **Why was Mr Fox going out?** *To get ducks to eat for his family.*
- **How did he feel about going out? Why?** *Confident, he had never been caught before and he could always smell the farmers.*
- **What were his checks before he left the family hole?** *Creeping out bit by bit and sniffing*
- **Why did Mr Fox have such a detailed plan before he went out of the hole?** *He know what the CONSEQUENCES could be if he didn’t check and got caught.*
- **How do you think Mr Fox felt when he saw the gun?** *Terrified, scared, surprised, shocked, horrified...*

Chapter 4

- **How do you think Mr Fox felt when he realised he had lost his tail?** *Upset, sad*
- **How do you think Mrs Fox felt?** *She tried to comfort Mr Fox but she probably also felt sad*
- **What can we learn from Chapter 4 about the relationship between Mr and Mrs Fox?** *They love each other and are very caring*
- **How does Mrs Fox feel about the farmers coming - why?** *Panicked and terrified because she thing they are going to kill her children*
- **What does Mrs Fox say about Mr Fox after the family have been digging to get away from the farmers?** *That he is fantastic.*
- **How do you think Mr Fox feels about this compliment? What type of compliment did Mrs Fox give him?** *Review the 4 types of compliments, something you have, something you do, the way you look, the type of person you are. Mrs Fox complimented Mr Fox because of the things he does – he saved them all. Mr Fox probably felt happy and proud.*

Chapters 5 and 6

- **Explore the feelings involved by everyone in these chapters**

Mr Fox	Mrs Fox	Small foxes	Boggis	Bunce	Bean
Confused	Terrified/scared	Terrified/scared	Tired	Tired	Tired
Panic	Tired	Tired	Cross/angry	Cross/angry	Cross/angry
Tired	Hungry	Hungry	Excited	Excited	Excited
Hungry			Happy	Happy	Happy
			Furious	Furious	Furious

- Find evidence in the chapters for each of the feelings.
- Are the feelings comfortable or uncomfortable? What caused the feelings to change?

Chapters 7 and 8

- **Problem-Solving Activity** – Mr Fox and the farmers are faced with a huge problem (below). In co-operative learning groups, identify the problem (pick one of the 2 below), how Mr Fox/the farmers/and others would be feeling, decide on a goal for Mr Fox or the Farmers, think of 3 possible solutions, think about the consequences of each one, choose the best solution and make a plan that you think Mr Fox or the Farmers should try out. Role-play this in your group.
 - **Problem 1:** The Fox family is hungry. They have been digging a big hole down into the earth all day and night. The mean farmers are using their evil machines to dig them out. How else can Mr. Fox get his family some food?
 - **Problem 2:** Mr. Fox has been giving the 3 farmers a headache. How else can they get Mr. Fox and his family to come out of the hole?

Chapter 9

- **Mr Fox and the family have to make a new plan in these chapters to overcome an obstacle (the family is trapped). How did Mr Fox come up with the plan?** *He came up with the plan by sitting quietly with his eyes closed.*
- **Why do you think he sat quietly with his eyes closed?** *So that he was calm and he could think clearly.*
- **Mr Fox calls the small foxes ‘undefeated’ – what does this mean?** *not having suffered a defeat*
- **What does Mr Fox mean when he says this about the small foxes?** *He means that they haven’t given up, they have kept going even though things are very hard, they are persisting*
- **Can you think of a time when you have kept going even though things have been hard?**

Chapters 10 and 11

- **Why did the author choose the verbs ‘jumping’ and ‘running’ to describe the little foxes when they heard the plan?** *It shows the little foxes are excited.*
- **How does page 40 create a feeling of excitement?** *The characters are described as dancing, jumping and cheering and the author has used a lot of exclamation marks.*
- **How was Mr Fox different from chapter 9 to chapter 10?** *He was very quiet and worried in chapter 9 because he couldn’t think of a way to escape. In chapter 10 he was full of excitement as he thought of a plan and it worked.*

Chapters 12 and 13

- **The farmers have trapped the fox family. What does this mean for the other woodland creatures?** They are also trapped
- **How do you think the other creatures feel about this? Can you find evidence?** *Angry – “I know it’s your fault” said Badger furiously*
- **Is it fair that the other creatures are affected by Mr Fox’s actions?** *Discuss*

- **What does Mr Fox do to support the other creatures?** *He offers to share the chickens he has, he is generous*

Chapters 14 and 15

- **Why did Badger have doubts about taking the food?** *He thought it was stealing*
- **Do Badger and Fox have different points of view about breaking into Bean's Cider Cellar?** *Yes – Badger thinks it is not ok and Fox thinks it is*
- **What does it mean to persuade someone?** *Convince someone that you are correct*
- **Have you ever had to persuade someone – maybe to stay up a little later at home, to go on a trip somewhere, or to buy something they really want?**
- **Was it right that Mr Fox tried to persuade Badger to agree with him?**
- **What might have happened if Badger had not been persuaded?**
- **Stealing is never OK - Discuss**

Chapters 16, 17 and 18

- **Which phrase on page 72 means Rat is not polite?** *“He has bad manners”*
- **Describe Badger and Fox's mood after they steal the cider** *Excited, jubilant, ecstatic*
- **How do you know they feel this way?** *They were singing funny songs and there are lots of exclamation marks used*
- **Why is sharing with friends important?** *It makes everyone feel happy, some people might have less than us*
- **Boggis, Bunce and Bean are still sitting in the rain waiting on Mr Fox, do you think they are having a good time, what sentence tells you?** *No, “water was trickling down the necks of the three men and into their shoes”*
- **Do you think the farmers are friends?** *Discuss*
- **Is there any advice we could give the farmers? Have a look at the letter below from Bean:**

I need help. I'm really lonely. I've been working hard all Autumn harvesting apples so I'm totally exhausted too. I've had a great harvest and can't wait to make homemade cider but the only problem is, I haven't got anyone to share it with. There are farmers nearby that I work with sometimes, but they're idiots. They don't even share a brain between them. My wife is mean and doesn't listen to me. I don't go into the village because I can see people avoiding me everywhere I go. Anyway, I don't need to. I have all the cider I can drink at home.

How will I ever meet someone I can trust, that I can relax and share a joke with?

Any advice would help, Bean.



- **What is Bean's problem?**
- **What could he do to change this?**
- **How do people like to be treated?**
- **What could he say to his wife?**
- **Are there other things he could do?**
- **What is the most important message for him?**