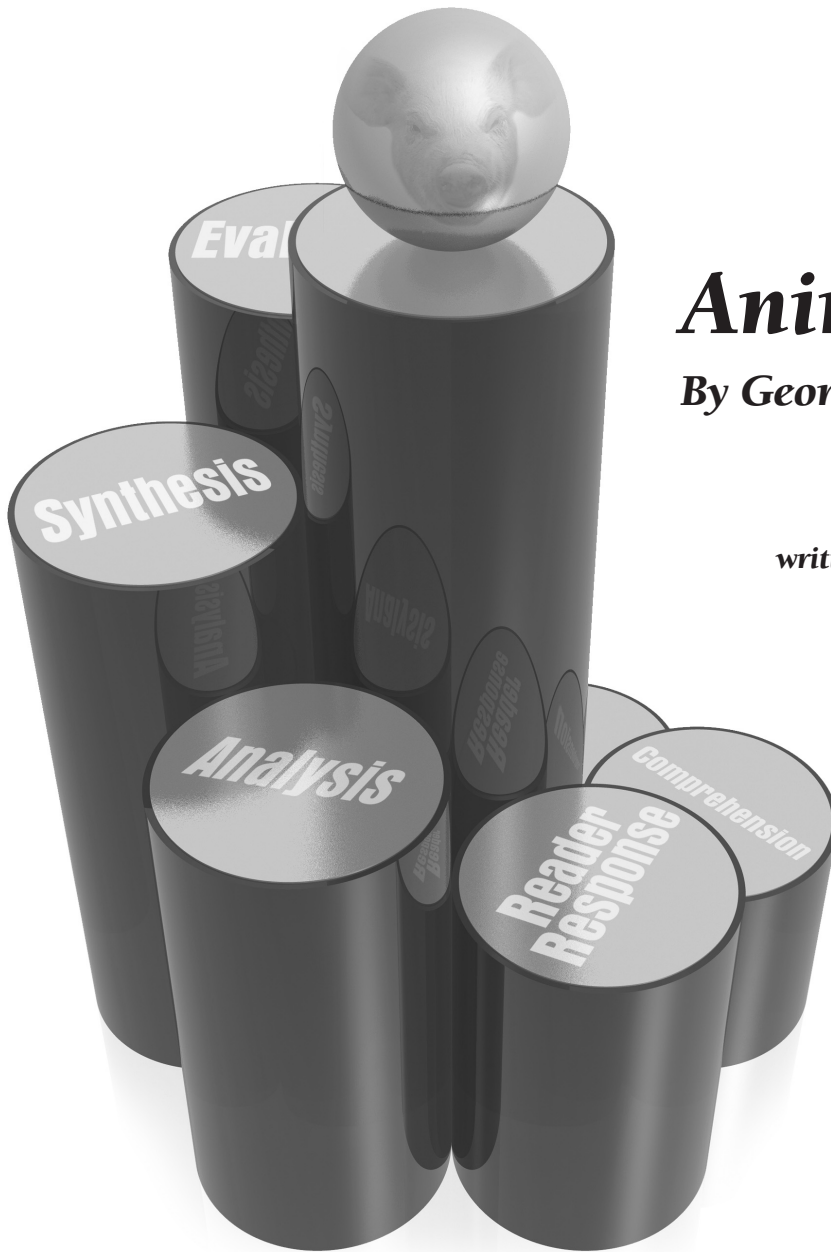


Using  
Bloom's Taxonomy to  
Explore Literature

# Levels of Understanding



## *Animal Farm*

*By George Orwell*

*written by Rhonda Carwell*



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Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN: 978-1-935467-91-5 • Item No. 308453



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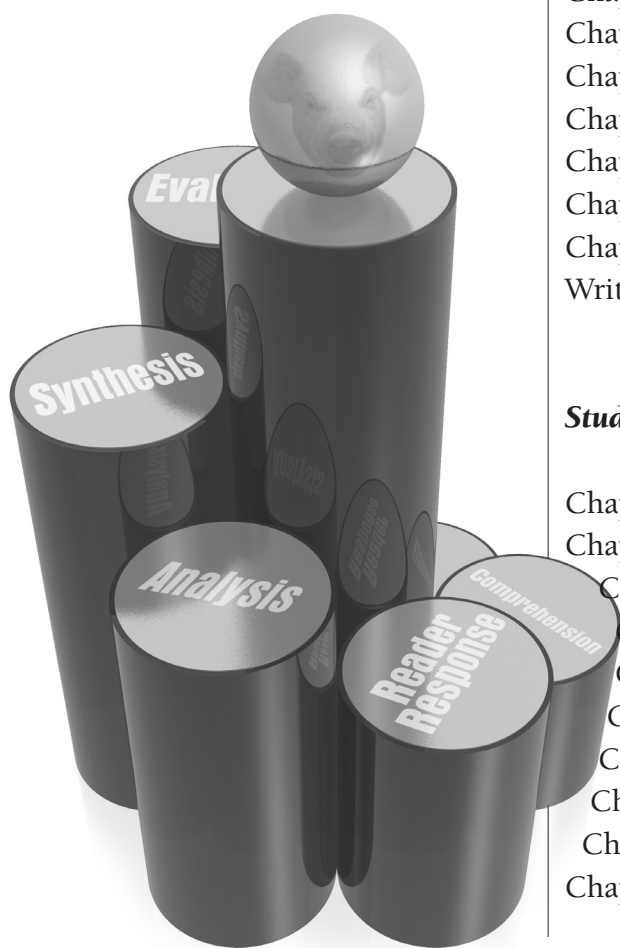
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## Introduction to Levels of Understanding

FOR MANY STUDENTS, studying literature is like being lost in an alien universe, filled with hidden symbols, structures, and meanings that only a scholar can uncover. Without a teacher's direction, students lack the skills and confidence to evaluate a work of literature on their own, and instead, will frequently turn to resources such as the Internet for guidance. As a result, they assume another writer's views instead of developing their own.

*Levels of Understanding* breaks down complex questions students will encounter into smaller parts, showing the steps a critical reader should take in order to develop a sound evaluation of a text. Each section of the guide contains five types of questions representative of Bloom's learning domains—starting with the most basic and foundational skill, knowledge and comprehension, and gradually building to the highest skill, evaluation. All the way, reluctant students are provided with the scaffolding they need to advance from one level of understanding to the next.

The five types of questions, again, representative of Bloom's domains, are as follows:

- **Comprehension**—will ask the most basic questions to ascertain the students' fundamental understanding of the text: plot facts, character identification, etc.
- **Reader Response**—will ask the students to “respond” to the text by relating it to personal experience or by presenting an opinion on a character or event.
- **Analysis**—will require students to study how various techniques and literary or theatrical devices (diction, symbolism, imagery, metaphors, asides, soliloquies etc.) function in the text. Analysis questions do not ask the student to merely identify or define a literary, theatrical, or rhetorical device.
- **Synthesis**—will bridge the gap between the analysis and evaluation questions, requiring students to look at other scenes in the text and draw conclusions about themes, motifs, or a writer's style. Often, a synthesis question will require the student to draw on prior knowledge—what has been learned in class or through research—and/or information from sources other than the literary title being studied in order to arrive at a satisfactory answer.
- **Evaluation**—will ask the student to make a qualitative judgment on the text and determine whether a particular aspect of it is effective or ineffective.

Other books may list Bloom's taxonomy, define the terms, and offer a general example or two. *Levels of Understanding*, however, provides the teacher with the title-specific questions to allow you to effectively bring Bloom into your classroom.

In addition, unlike other available products that claim to address Bloom's “higher order thinking skills,” *Levels of Understanding* does not teach students how to answer questions about a particular text, but instead, helps them develop skills to evaluate literature critically and without guidance. These are skills that will not only help students prepare for standardized tests like the Advanced Placement Language and Literature exams, the SATs, and the ACTs, but will also give students the self-assurance to develop and articulate a personal view—a skill that will be highly advantageous to them in college.

This product, however, is not geared toward upper-level students only, but is a versatile guide that can be used for students of all ability levels—remedial through honors. The teacher may customize the product to fit the class's objectives and goals, determining which questions the students will answer. Additionally, the guide is entirely reproducible, and each major division begins on a new page, so you may use *Levels of Understanding* for the whole work of literature or only a specific section. ♡





## How to Use this Unit

**E**ACH *Levels of Understanding: Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Explore Literature* unit is intended to be a deep and rich component of your literature program, whether your goal is to prepare your students for a large-scale assessment like the AP Literature exam or to challenge your students to read carefully and to think deeply about what they have read.

The questions in this guide are designed to be flexible and meet your needs. They can be used as

- homework questions when students read the text independently.
- in-class reading check questions and “bell-ringer” journal entries.
- class discussion questions and prompts.
- focus questions for pre-writing and essay planning.
- review and study questions for assessment.

While the Teacher's Guide contains an answer key, you will find that the higher-order questions (especially synthesis and evaluation) have model answers that represent more than one possible response. It would be inappropriate to penalize a student whose well-reasoned and supportable answer did not match the “correct” answer in the guide.

For this reason, we strongly recommend that you view the questions in this guide as learning activities and not as assessment activities.

Many of your students are likely to find the higher domains new and perhaps intimidating. Others might be alarmed at having to support their reader-response reactions and their evaluations with an accurate comprehension of the text. The questions in this guide should act as both scaffolding and safety net, guiding your students through a new reading and thinking process and allowing them to practice without fear of “failure.”

The writing prompts, however, provide rich assessment and evaluation opportunities. Every prompt is designed to invite your students to operate in one of the higher order domains, thus giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their ability, and giving you the opportunity to evaluate their progress.

Whether you use *Levels of Understanding: Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Explore Literature* as the core of your literature curriculum or as a supplement, the guide and writing prompts are designed to help your students attain a deep understanding of the works they read. Ideally, they will gain the type of understanding demanded by Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and most state standards, including the Common Core State Standards of the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association. 🍷







## Introduction to *Animal Farm*

### Author Biography

“Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.”

– George Orwell, 1984

THE WORK ERIC BLAIR, who achieved literary fame under the *nom de plume* George Orwell, is characterized by the wit and cleverness with which he attacks social injustice and the dangers of all forms of totalitarian government.

Orwell was born into what he described as a “lower upper middle class family.” He was an indifferent student, but his parents were fiercely determined to see their son educated. He remained in school until he was to enter University. Lacking the money to continue his formal education, Orwell used some family connections and joined the Indian Imperial Police. While serving as an officer, Orwell began to see the ill effects of colonialism on indigenous peoples. His ideas about people’s right to govern themselves began to form. After a serious illness, Orwell resigned from the police and declared his intent to become a writer. Back in England, he went on “exploratory expeditions,” during which he witnessed the squalid conditions of the poor in London.

He began to achieve a reputation as a writer while also teaching at a boys school, and later, at college. Another illness ended his academic career, and he worked in a bookstore where he continued his examination of the social and economic conditions of workers in England.

Orwell followed the events of the Spanish Civil War closely, eventually deciding that he needed to fight on the Republican side of the Revolution. While in Spain, he aligned himself with the Workers Party for Marxist Unification to support the fight against fascism. Orwell did see some actual

fighting in his military service in Spain but was shot in the throat and forced to resign. Eventually, pro-Soviet communists in Spain declared POUM a Trotskyist organization, opposed to the ideas of Communism and Socialism. Many of the organization’s leaders, including Orwell, were forced into hiding. He wrote *Animal Farm* between 1943 and 1944, remembering the Stalin-like Communist purges he had escaped in Spain.

Orwell was an admitted socialist; he fought in Spain for the socialist cause. Unlike many socialists, however, when the horrors of Stalin’s reign in Russia came to light, he did not abandon Socialism but the Soviet Union. Considering Lenin and Stalin to be mere dictators, he began to write and speak against totalitarianism. His views eventually developed into an anarchistic theory, believing that all government was evil and that the punishments for crime nearly always did more harm than the crime itself.

As a writer, Orwell recognized the power of his work stating, “For some years past I have managed to make the capitalist class pay me several pounds a week for writing books against capitalism. But I do not delude myself that this state of affairs is going to last forever ... the only regime, which in the long run, will dare to permit freedom of speech is a socialist regime. If Fascism triumphs, I am finished as a writer—that is to say, finished in my only effective capacity. That of itself would be sufficient reason for joining a Socialist party.”

In writing *Animal Farm*, Orwell did not intend to parody the Communist Revolution in Russia or to warn his world against the dangers of Socialism or Communism. Instead, it was his intent to expose the dangers of absolute power and the dangerous effects of ignorance and absolute trust in those who make the rules.

Ultimately, he is warning against the dangers of not questioning the government in power. 🐷

## Publication History of *Animal Farm*

WHILE THE SECOND WORLD WAR was raging in Europe, Orwell found it impossible to find a publisher for the book he had titled *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story* because it was feared the book’s publication would endanger the tenuous alliance between Britain and the United States and the Soviet Union. Because the Soviet Union was one of the allies fighting against Nazi Germany anti-Soviet literature was essentially taboo in every publishing house Orwell approached. This included his regular publisher, Gollancz. Faber and Faber, on whose board the poet T. S. Eliot sat, also rejected it.

In a July 13, 1944 letter to Orwell, Eliot praised the novel

as a “distinguished piece of writing” that was “very skillfully handled.” However, Eliot continued, he and the other directors had “no conviction” that the view of Communism espoused in *Animal Farm* was “the right point of view from which to criticize the political situation at the present time.” In other words, Eliot continued, the directors did not have the “conviction that this is the thing that needs saying at this moment.” Expressing his own disagreement with Orwell’s “Trotskyite” view, Eliot argued, “your pigs are ... the best qualified to run the farm—in fact, there couldn’t have been an *Animal Farm* at all without them: so that what was needed ... was not more Communism but more public-spirited pigs.”

Even the British Ministry of Information became involved in blocking the novel's publication.

In an essay entitled "Freedom of the Press," originally written to be a preface to the first published edition of *Animal Farm*, Orwell relates his experience with one unnamed publisher that initially accepted the novel and then rejected it on the urging of someone in the British Ministry of Information. He quotes a letter from that publisher:

I mentioned the reaction I had had from an important official in the Ministry of Information with regard to *Animal Farm*. I must confess that this expression of opinion has given me seriously to think ... I can see now that it might be regarded as something which it was highly ill-advised to publish at the present time. If the fable were addressed generally to dictators

and dictatorships at large then publication would be all right, but the fable does follow, as I see now, so completely the progress of the Russian Soviets and their two dictators, that it can apply only to Russia, to the exclusion of the other dictatorships. Another thing: it would be less offensive if the predominant caste in the fable were not pigs. I think the choice of pigs as the ruling caste will no doubt give offence to many people, and particularly to anyone who is a bit touchy, as undoubtedly the Russians are.

The person who is believed to have been the "important official" alluded to in this letter was later found to be a Soviet spy. *Animal Farm* was finally published in August of 1945 and met with immediate and lasting success. 🍷

## Genre

**A**NIMAL FARM IS A FABLE, an allegorical tale that uses anthropomorphized animals to teach a moral lesson. Perhaps the best known western fables are contained in *Aesop's Fables*, attributed to Aesop, a supposed slave in ancient Greece. Most American children grow up learning one or more of these fables that have been reproduced, reinterpreted, and recast in countless children's book, cartoons, and movies:

- The Ant and the Grasshopper tells the story of the grasshopper who plays all summer while the ants store food. He comes to regret his lack of prudence with the arrival of winter.
- The Lion and the Mouse involves a mouse who gnaws through ropes in order to free a lion who had earlier spared his life.
- The Wind and the Sun is a tale in which the two wager who can more quickly strip a traveler of his cloak. The harder the wind tries to blow off the cloak, the more tightly the traveler clutches it to himself; the warmth of the shining sun, however, causes the traveler to remove the cloak voluntarily.
- The Fox and the Grapes: in which a fox determines that a bunch of grapes too high off the ground for him to eat must be sour anyway.

All of these stories teach lessons about industry versus laziness, appreciating the contributions of every member of society, the power of persuasion over force, the tendency to denigrate that which we cannot have, and so on.

The moral lesson of *Animal Farm* clearly has to do with the dangers of placing one's full trust and investing complete authority in a single entity, a totalitarian government. The less-intelligent animals, while fully adopting the principles of animalism, naively believe that those whom they allow to rule them will truly act for the public benefit and not in their own self-interest. Of course, the selfish pigs serve only their own ends and become every bit as oppressive as the former regime of Farmer Jones.

One benefit of the fable is that one can ostensibly hide the true meaning of the story behind the allegory. As Orwell himself found with his difficulty in securing publication for this novel, the subject he was addressing—and the view he was proposing—were considered too dangerous to deal with openly. Taken literally, however, as a story about animals who take over a farm, the feared responses to the novel seem silly.

Part of Orwell's problem with publication, however, was not just the moral of the fable, but the fact that he emphasized the allegorical elements by establishing a clear correlation between the characters and events of *Animal Farm* and persons and events in the Russian Revolution. Thus, while Orwell could protest that the novel criticized totalitarianism in general, it was apparent that his true target was Soviet totalitarianism. 🍷

## Allegorical Correlations in *Animal Farm*

Those who have some knowledge of the persons and events of the Russian Communist Revolution are best able to see the correspondence between this specific historical event and Orwell's novel. The following timeline and chart are provided to help you appreciate the significant correlation between the two—the correlation that hindered the publication of the novel for more than a year.

### Russian Revolution—A Brief Outline

**1848:** Karl Marx writes his *Communist Manifesto*

**1894:** Tsar Alexander III of Russia dies; Nicholas II assumes the throne at the age of 26. His temperament and upbringing make him uniquely unprepared for his duties.

**1895:** Vladimir Lenin, a lawyer with strong Socialist convictions is arrested for his planning of and participation in a number of strikes and proto-revolutionary activities.

**1897:** Lenin is sentenced to a three-year exile in Siberia.

**1898:** Several small Russian socialist/Marxist groups unite into the Russian Socialist Democratic Labor Party. Nineteen-year-old Leon Trotsky abandons his study of mathematics to work toward a workers' rebellion in Russia.

**1901 – 1905:** Persecution of Jews intensifies, resulting in an order for all Jews to convert to the Russian Orthodox religion or be expelled from Russia. The advent of the industrial revolution creates a new class of urban poor without even the means of growing their own food. In addition to the Russian Socialist Democratic Labor Party, the populist Socialist-Revolutionary Party forms. The Russian Socialist Democratic Labor Party eventually splits into the Bolshevik and Menshevik parties.

A young Joseph Stalin joins the Bolsheviks and becomes a full-time operative, inciting strikes and organizing paramilitary units. He is exiled numerous times to Siberia but always escapes.

**1904:** Russo-Japanese war begins. Tsar Nicholas II involves himself deeply in war efforts, ignoring the state of affairs in the capital.

**1905:**

**January 22:** Bloody Sunday: Hungry and impoverished workers, led by Russian Orthodox priest George Gapon, peaceably approach the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg; with a petition for the Tsar. Demonstrators are fired on by police, 100 workers are killed, and the demonstration's leaders are seized. The unrest continues, as the people

believe the Tsar has abandoned them.

**August:** Unrest continues; strikes continue; Tsar Nicholas II creates what is believed to be a consultative assembly of the people (Duma); revolutionaries criticize it for being too weak.

**August:** Russo-Japanese war ends in Russian defeat.

**October:** Nicholas II issues the "October Manifesto," granting more civil liberties and giving more power to the Duma. He refuses, however, to concede rights of autocracy.

**December:** Moscow Uprising: rebels try to take the city through armed struggle but it fails; Tsar issues orders for severe military reprisals to crush dissent.

**1906:**

**April:** A new constitution, *Fundamental Laws of Russia*, is enacted on April 23.

**July:** The first Duma under the new constitution is deemed too radical by Tsar and disbanded.

**September:** Government orders use of *any* means to maintain public order and political parties in Russia are threatened by the Tsar.

**1907:**

**June:** Second Duma also fails; still deemed too radical.

**November:** Third Duma simply does as it is told by Tsar. People turn from democratic principles to favor radical change.

Lenin is exiled; flees to Finland and then Switzerland. Trotsky is exiled to Siberia; also flees the country.

**1912:** Fourth Duma is elected. Soon the government and Duma are in dissent.

**1912 – 1916:** Public outcry arises for the removal of Rasputin from the court; however, the mystic and healer's influence on the imperial family continues.

**1914:** Germany declares war on Russia following Russia's mobilization to defend its borders with Austria.

**August – November:** World War I is characterized by heavy losses and defeats, shortages of food and ammunition.

**August:** St. Petersburg is renamed Petrograd to sound more Russian rather than German and bolster patriotism.

**1916:** War effort continues to be characterized by shortages and poor leadership; soldiers desert; Tsar and government blamed for incompetence

**December:** Rasputin is murdered; Tsar is warned that the military will not defend him against a revolution.

**1917:** Labor strikes continue across Russia; Duma reconvenes and attacks the government about food shortages.

**February:** International Women's Day: demonstrators (mostly women and striking workers) are joined by bread demonstrators. Revolutionary banners and slogans appear.

**The February Revolution:** Strikes and violence in Petrograd increase. Nicholas orders the use of military force, but the troops eventually desert, siding with the rioters. The Duma refuses to disband and forms a Provisional Committee to govern. The Tsar is unable to return to Petrograd.

**March:** Tsar Nicholas II is forced to abdicate the throne for himself and his son. The imperial family is imprisoned. The effectiveness of the Provisional Government is hampered by war.

**April:** Lenin returns to Russia and dominates the Bolshevik party.

**May:** Trotsky returns from exile.

**June:** First All-Russian Congress of Soviets is deeply divided; parties involved include Menshevik, SR, and Bolsheviks (pro-peace).

**July:** Trotsky merges his supporters with Bolsheviks; revolt against the Provisional Government unsuccessful; Trotsky arrested, Lenin escapes to Finland.

**September:** Lenin and Trotsky are released from prison; Bolsheviks have majority in ruling committees and elect Trotsky chairman.

**October/November: October Revolution:** Bolsheviks wrest control from the Provisional Government. This is a much more deliberate and planned revolution than the February Revolution

**November:** The Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia is issued. All ranks and titles of nobility are abolished. Official peace negotiations to end World War I begin.

Resistance to Bolshevik rule erupts in civil war.

**December:** Cheka (All Russian Extraordinary Commission for the Struggle Against Counter-Revolution and Sabotage) is created to squash all resistance to Bolshevik rule; it eventually claims the right to arrest and execute people without question.

Leon Trotsky emerges as second only to Lenin in the Bolshevik party.

**1918:**

**January:** Russia is declared a Soviet Republic. Previous ruling classes are prohibited from holding power. All "power" is given to workers and soldiers

**February:** Red Army founded to counter anti-Bolshevik forces. Stalin uses fear and intimidation against rebelling peasants and supporters of the White (anti-Bolshevik) Army.

**May:** On direct orders from Lenin, the Imperial family, the Romanovs, are assassinated in the basement of the house in which they were imprisoned in Yekaterinburg.

**1922:** Lenin suffers a stroke, forcing him into semi-retirement; tries to warn government of the need for Stalin's removal but his testament remains a secret.

**1924:** Lenin dies; Stalin assumes more power; denounces Trotsky and his ideas to oppose his rule.

**1925:** Trotsky forced to resign from military posts.

**1926:** Trotsky is expelled from the executive committee of the Communist Party.

**1927:** Trotsky is expelled from Communist Party.

**1928:** Trotsky is exiled to Kazakhstan then Turkey.

**1934:** The Great Terror by Stalin begins; people in opposition to his rule are either exiled or executed. Through the years, he will use torture to coerce confessions of "enemies to the people."

**1939:** Stalin enters a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany. He attempts to make alliances with the Allies, believing they will defeat Germany in World War II.

**1945:** Allies rush to take Berlin, while Stalin lobbies for eastern Germany to fall within the "Soviet Sphere of Influence."

**August:** *Animal Farm* is published. 🍷

*Levels of Understanding: Animal Farm • Introduction*

Historical Figure/Entity	Key Facts	<i>Animal Farm</i> Correlation
Karl Marx	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• German philosopher, political economist, historian, political theorist, and communist revolutionary</li> <li>• wrote the Communist Manifesto (1848); stated, “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.”</li> <li>• believed Socialism had to replace Capitalism and would lead to a stateless, classless society; pure Communism would emerge following a “dictatorship of the proletariat”</li> <li>• felt the structural contradictions in Capitalism would lead to its demise; it was built on a foundation of workers who would be worked to death, destroying the basis of the capitalist ideal</li> <li>• believed the Communist state would be built on the ruins of present state, which would need to be abolished 1917</li> <li>• Marx’s beliefs helped shape the victory of the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution of 1917.</li> </ul>	old Major
Tsar Nicholas II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the last ruling Tsar of Russia</li> <li>• assumed rule at 26 following the death of his father, Alexander III</li> <li>• a stubborn ruler, unwilling to give up his autocratic rule despite being advised to do so; angry at the reforms that were suggested by the peasants</li> <li>• eventually allowed the populace to have some say in government through the formation of the Duma, a legislative representation of the people; however, he restricted the people’s rights in order to preserve his autocratic principles</li> <li>• People were angered by the apparent influence of the family’s mystic advisor, Gregori Rasputin, but Nicholas refused to make him leave.</li> <li>• mobilized troops for World War I despite advice not to do so; insisting he be with his troops on the front lines, he left his wife, Alexandra, still under the influence of Rasputin, in charge.</li> <li>• WWI took men from farms, and the economy suffered.</li> <li>• Soaring prices and hard winters create food shortages and widespread hunger.</li> <li>• In 1917, riots erupt in Petrograd (St. Petersburg). Nicholas calls in the army to subdue the riots, but soldiers abandon their posts and join the rioters.</li> <li>• Nicholas II is forced to abdicate the throne; Imperial family is imprisoned; the Tsar, his wife, son, four daughters, the family doctor, Tsar’s valet, an empress’s lady in waiting, and the family cook are all executed</li> </ul>	Farmer Jones

Levels of Understanding: *Animal Farm* • Introduction

Historical Figure/Entity	Key Facts	<i>Animal Farm</i> Correlation
Vladimir Lenin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communist politician who led the October Revolution</li> <li>• ordered a Decree on Land, transferring ownership of estates and lands to the Peasants' Soviets</li> <li>• worked to withdraw Russia from World War I</li> <li>• moved the capital from Petrograd to Moscow</li> <li>• established free health care and free education programs</li> <li>• established the Cheka, a secret police force, to defend the Russian Revolution; forces non-Bolshevik Soviet groups to disband</li> <li>• believed that Communism needed a world revolution to survive</li> </ul>	Snowball
Leon Trotsky	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• second in command under Lenin in the October Revolution</li> <li>• helped with start of Pravda, a social democratic newspaper aimed at workers</li> <li>• led unsuccessful attempts to oppose the rise of Stalin and his policies</li> <li>• His actions in opposition to Stalin led to his removal from power, his banishment from the Communist Party, and his exile from the Soviet Union; Stalin used GPU (secret police) to discredit him.</li> <li>• His ideas were the basis of a new school of thought, Trotskyism, which was Marxist in nature but in direct opposition to Stalinism.</li> <li>• eventually murdered in his home in Mexico by Stalinist agents</li> </ul>	Snowball



Historical Figure/Entity	Key Facts	<i>Animal Farm</i> Correlation
Joseph Stalin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• along with Lenin, plotted the successful overthrow of the Provisional Government by the Bolsheviks</li> <li>• used influence on military, fear, and intimidation to force submission of anti-Bolshevik White Army</li> <li>• eventually criticized by Lenin for rudeness and excessive political ambition ; Lenind would suggest his removal from power</li> <li>• assumed leadership of Soviet Union following Lenin's death</li> <li>• he pushed for rapid industrialization and control of economy</li> <li>• increased scope of power of secret police and intelligence agencies; saw nothing wrong with the use of espionage, propaganda, and government sanctioned violence</li> <li>• used secret police to assassinate long-time rival Leon Trotsky</li> <li>• assumed elevated titles for himself (e.g. "Brilliant Genius of Humanity"; "Gardener of Human Happiness"); had towns and cities renamed for him; also known as "Papa Stalin" or "Little Father of the Peoples"</li> <li>• rewrote history to give himself a more significant role in the revolution; eventually, official historical accounts would credit the success of the revolution to two people: Stalin and Lenin</li> <li>• used the "Great Purge" to rid the state of all dissidence, executing an estimated 700,000 people</li> <li>• His government restricted the consumption of Soviet citizens so money could flow back into industrialization. Hoped to establish trade with other nations.</li> <li>• embraced the Marxist notion that religion was "an opiate that needed to be removed in order to construct the ideal communist society"</li> <li>• believed that ideal communist state could be established in one country, not through world revolution</li> <li>• signed a non- aggression pact with Hitler at start of World War II; pact immediately broken by Hitler</li> </ul>	Napoleon
Russian Orthodox Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tsarist government had granted the church numerous privileges</li> <li>• Bolsheviks established separation of church and state; eventually Stalin would work to abolish all religious practices in Russia</li> <li>• Soviet Union believed the church to be counter revolutionary</li> <li>• many believers and priests were tortured or sent to prison camps</li> <li>• under Stalin, religious schools closed and religious publications prohibited</li> <li>• a state-controlled church is eventually revived to support Stalin's war efforts against Germany</li> </ul>	Moses, the raven

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**Levels of Understanding:**  
*Using Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains  
to explore George Orwell's Animal Farm*

# Teacher's Guide

## **Animal Farm**

### CHAPTER 1

#### **Comprehension**

**1. Why are all the farm animals willing to listen to Old Major?**

*Major has status among the animals because he had been in and won a number of competitions. He is old for a pig, and although rather large, still maintains a majestic appearance. His age allows the animals to regard him as wise, and he is described as benevolent in nature.*

**2. What attributes does Major possess that make him a worthy advisor to the animals for the future?**

*Major is old for a pig, having served twelve years and thus is wise and considered kind in his regard for others.*

**3. In what way does Boxer command respect despite being described as “somewhat stupid”?**

*Boxer is described as a large horse and as strong as two horses together. He has a strong work ethic and is highly regarded by the others because of this and his steadiness of character.*

**4. What term does Major use to address the animals and unite them?**

*Major uses the term “Comrade” when addressing the animals. This term is used collectively to unite them.*

**5. What does Major tell the farm animals in his speech?**

*Major gathers the animals with the intent of relaying a dream to them that he had. Rather than do this, he relates to the animals his belief about their present situation and a possible future for the animals. Major reminds the animals of the suffering they endure daily with no benefit for their labors. He explains that Man alone benefits from the strife of the animals and provides them with only the promise of a horrific death at the end of their service. He speaks of a better time when the animals could work together and overcome their enemy for the betterment of all animals everywhere. Furthermore, he establishes rules to guide the animals in their behavior in their new, post-rebellion society.*

**6. What rules does Major establish to be followed by all animals following the rebellion from man's rule?**

*The guidelines for the post rebellion period provide that no animal must adopt the vices of man. No animal should ever live in a house, sleep in a bed, or wear clothes. They must not drink alcohol or smoke tobacco. And never should an animal deal in money or trade.*

#### **Reader Response**

**1. Is Mr. Jones a true enemy to the animals on the farm? Can he be interpreted to represent all of humanity? Why or why not?**

*Mr. Jones does not treat his animals well. He works them tirelessly and is reported to mercilessly terminate their lives once they had outlived their usefulness. When the noise of the meeting and the animals' singing reaches him in the house, he fires a gun at the barn without regard to whom the bullets may hit. It seems that his actions would provide adequate evidence that he is an enemy to the animals. To the animals, Jones is a symbol of all humans because he is their tormentor and abuser. The animals,*



in Jones's mind, do not possess feelings or desires of their own. Jones is the farmer and the animals are the workers and are treated like animals are generally treated. This dynamic of farmer and animal is universal.

It may be argued, however, that the only facts the reader is privy to concerning Mr. Jones are his drunkenness at the beginning and his shots at the end of the chapter. The other evidence against him comes from Major. Therefore, some students may argue that it is impossible to establish Jones as the enemy at this point in the novel. As for his being a symbol for all of humanity, it would be unjust to conclude that the actions of one man could be globally applied to all. Although the dynamic is universal, the manner in which the animals are treated is not.

### **2. How is the arrangement of the animals as they gather in the barn significant?**

Most of the animals tend to group themselves with animals of their own species. Clover is the only animal who appears to care about others, trying to shield the ducklings from injury. It might be significant that the dogs enter first, then the pigs, and they place themselves closest to the leader of the group, Major. This might indicate their importance in the hierarchy of animals.

### **3. Which animals seem most worthy of admiration? Why? Who seem least worthy? Why?**

Boxer and Clover, the two horses, appear to have the most integrity. As they enter the barn, they acknowledge their size in relation to the other animals and take care when stepping not to injure any other animals. Clover protects the ducklings and both animals allow the cat to curl up between them for warmth. Mollie, the pretty mare who pulled Mr. Jones's trap, and the cat appear to be the least likeable. Mollie prances and is described as "flirting her white mane, hoping to draw attention to the red ribbons it was plaited with." From the very beginning she seems preoccupied with herself and her looks and to care little for anything else. The cat is the last animal to enter and looks for warmth, not the best place to hear what Major has to say. Once the cat settles between Clover and Boxer, she then, "purred contentedly throughout Major's speech without listening to a word of what he was saying."

### **4. Will Old Major's call for a vote on whether to include wild animals, such as the rats, as comrades be a unifying practice or a dividing one? Explain the reasons behind your answer.**

Allowing members of a society to have a say in the rules and expectations of their society would seem to be a unifying activity. When all citizens have a voice, they are more invested and will therefore try harder to make their ventures successful.

However, voting may also become a dividing practice for the animals. When a vote is taken, most likely not every member will agree with the others. In some cases, depending on the personalities of the members, voting could lead to bitterness, particularly for the loser of the vote. This in turn can lead to anger and attempts to rally others to a particular cause, thus serving to divide the society members.

### **5. What ideas, emotions, or associations do you attach to the word "Comrade"? What does Old Major's use of this word suggest about how the plot of this novel is likely to develop?**

"Comrade" is a term that is associated with Communism. Its denotation means friend or ally and Major uses it correctly in addressing the animals. However, its use by the Bolsheviks and by the Party after the Communist Revolution has given it a negative connotation in free and capitalistic societies. Old Major's use of this word suggests that the animals' rebellion will follow the course of the Communist Revolution and result in a totalitarian regime.

## **Analysis**

### **1. What evidence is provided throughout the chapter to support the idea that *Animal Farm* is going to prove to be an allegory? What suggests the exact nature of the allegory?**

The animals behave in ways that are characteristic of humans. They talk, think, discuss, rationalize, hope, and desire for change. This leads one to believe that the story is not going to be about life on any typical farm.

Clues to the nature of the allegory include the fact that the animals sit in their own animal groups, suggesting some sort of class system: the elimination of social classes was supposedly one of the goals of Communism. Also, the personified animals complain about their lot and discuss notions of fairness, justice, exploitation, and tyranny.

This first meeting could, of course, call to mind the reasons behind the Russian Revolution, providing a cause for which to break free from the tyranny of the farmer, representative of the Bourgeoisie. Major addresses the group as "Comrades," clearly establishing the novel's connection to Communist Russia. Major provides the ideas and the impetus for the rebellion, but pro-

vides no instructions for how or when to begin it, and no long-term plan for what to do afterwards. Clearly, the novel might be developing into an allegory about the Russian Revolution and the formation of the totalitarian socialist regime.

**2. Examine Major's speech carefully. Which words and phrases serve to emphasize his goal to sow the seeds of revolution? In what way do these words galvanize the animals into action?**

Major begins by pointing out the negative aspects of the animals' lives to which most of the animals can easily relate. He starts by pointing out that, "...our lives are miserable, laborious, and short." He also points out that animals' lives are full of "misery and slavery" and cites examples to emphasize his point. He emphasizes that the fruit of their labors is stolen from them, and he provides a common enemy—man—to unite against. "Stolen" indicates that the taking of their work is done without permission or consent and thus emphasizes the heinous nature of man in his treatment of the animals. Major describes the end of their lives as a "horror [to which] we all must come" and provides specific examples for each of the group of animals as to how and why they meet their end. All of his words serve to justify his attitude towards man and further villainize man to the animals who cannot reason on their own. His use of the word "comrades," "we," and "our" serves to unify the animals to a common purpose. By not singling any one animal out, his goal of unifying the animals towards a revolution may be achieved.

**3. What does the sentence, "Even the stupidest of them had already picked up the tune and a few of the words, and as for the clever ones, such as the pigs and dogs, they had the entire song by heart within a few minutes," imply about the animals in general?**

Major teaches the song "The Beasts of England" as a unifying device for the animals. With the words "stupidest of them," it is implied that all the animals are stupid, except the pigs and dogs who are intelligent because they learn all the words quickly. The pigs and the dogs are placed above all the other animals once again, except this time it is their intelligence which is used to distinguish them from the collective group of animals.

**4. What possible future events or developments might be foreshadowed in the descriptions of the animals and their behavior?**

The pigs and the dogs assume a higher status by seating themselves closer to Major than all the other animals. Their intelligence is shown in their ability to learn faster than the other animals. No other animal is distinguished except Boxer and the donkey, Benjamin, who are set apart from the other animals because of their characters rather than their intelligence. This separation of the pigs and dogs from the rest of the animals suggests that they may remain apart—possibly "above"—throughout the story despite Major's admonition.

## Synthesis

**1. What knowledge of history and world events would George Orwell assume his readers had in order to understand fully Major's message and the animal characters found in *Animal Farm*?**

The allegory, suggesting events and conditions leading to the Communist Revolution and a supposed implementation of Karl Marx's theories, is clear if one knows the basic tenets of Communism and the ideas of Karl Marx. The correlation between Major and Marx becomes apparent as Major completes his speech. Orwell would have to assume that the reader had some knowledge of Communism, especially the totalitarian socialist regime in the Soviet Union and how it came about.

**2. How can the ideas expressed in Major's speech be compared to the ideas of Communism?**

Karl Marx wrote that the bourgeoisie would always use its economic and political power to advance its own interests and never willingly give up any power for the benefit of the masses (the proletariat) or for the "common good." Thus, according to Marx, social violence was inevitable, the only means by which the oppressed majority would be able to gain and maintain the rights to which they were entitled and had been denied. The proletariat would eventually rebel against the oppressive bourgeoisie, overthrow them, and establish a classless society in which all citizens contributed to the common good and benefited from the fruits of their labors. Major also enlightens the animals to the troubles faced in their lives: hunger, oppression, no benefit from their labor, continued cruelty and hardship with no relief in sight. He offers a solution for the animals—rebellion. This rebellion, he promises, will allow the animals to form a Marxist society in which they will work together and benefit from their own labor. Major, like Marx, offers a solution and a promise of a better life if the animals could overthrow their oppressors. Major, like Marx, offers a glimpse of a better future but provides no real plan to make it happen, only assurances that it should and most likely would eventually happen.

**3. What does the treatment of the rats by the animals of the farm suggest about both their nature and the probable success of the a revolution?**

The animals on the farm are taught to believe that four legs, or two legs and two wings, are good and two legs are bad. With that logic, rats, rabbits, and many non-domesticated animals should be considered “good.” However, the farm animals see the rats as beneath them, mere prey for the domesticated animals such as the dogs and the cat. Even when given the directive to unify toward a common goal and against a common enemy, the animals themselves devolve into classes, the formerly oppressed becoming the new oppressors. The Revolution appears doomed to failure. There will always be a bourgeoisie and a proletariat.

**Evaluation****1. Is Old Major an effective leader? Why or why not?**

By the end of the first chapter, it is unclear whether or not the animals will stage their revolution. However, by the end of the chapter, the animals seem unified in understanding their hardships and their desire to benefit from their own labors. Major is the animal who was able to get the animals all together for his speech. He is able to identify a common enemy and common goal for the animals. Major's effectiveness becomes apparent when the animals join together to sing. At the moment of the song, it seems obvious that the animals are united in their cause.

The issue of whether to include wild animals, however, suggests that even Old Major will prove to be a flawed and ineffective leader, unable to be strongly consistent in his own philosophy.

**2. How successful has Orwell been so far in establishing a stratified society of animals? Why?**

Major makes no indication that he intended the pigs and dogs to form a separate class from the rest of the animals, although he actually sets himself apart from the other animals by indicating that he has had a long, fruitful life with many children and relative comfort. Orwell's description of the groupings of the animals at Major's speech, their willing separation into groups according to species, the observation of some animals being more stupid than others all suggest a natural tendency to develop classes. Orwell also depicts Major reclined in comfort on a platform above the others, with the pigs and dogs deliberately taking spots close to the “leader” or most respected member of the farm. Finally, Boxer's description as somewhat stupid yet respected for his work ethic, suggests another natural separateness from other animals. These descriptions and behavior clearly illustrate the stratified society in which the animals exist.

**3. Is Orwell's use of anthropomorphism effective? In what ways?**

Orwell's use of animals allows him the reader to understand the actual class differences in a way that is easily understood and simple. If humans were used to establish the conflict between classes, the examples may have been too complicated, particularly for one who is unfamiliar with the ideas of Communism. In the conflict between the animals and Mr. Jones, the animals are understandable, sympathetic, and believable. Finally, Orwell's use of species to represent classes is an effective way to illustrate that, Marxist idealism aside, classes are natural and inevitable.

# Animal Farm

## CHAPTER 2

### Comprehension

#### 1. Why do the pigs become organizers of the Revolution?

The pigs are universally recognized as the cleverest of the animals, so they naturally begin to organize the others.

#### 2. What is Animalism?

Animalism is the philosophical and political system the pigs create by organizing Major's message into specific principles and rules for the animals of the farm to follow.

#### 3. Why don't all of the animals support the ideas of Animalism?

Animalism is not universally accepted on the farm, nor do all of the animals believe in or see the need for a revolution. Some of the animals feel that Mr. Jones—or “Master” as, they call him—is the only person who can feed them. Others feel that it does not matter what happens after they are dead, since the rebellion is not likely to happen in their lives. Still others decide that the rebellion will happen regardless of their contributions, so why does it matter whether or not they work toward it?

#### 4. What is the ultimate impetus for the rebellion?

Even before the beginning of the novel, Mr. Jones had begun to drink excessively and neglect the animals. His farm became overridden with weeds, and the buildings fell into disrepair. Having no supervision and no accountability, the workers did only the barest minimum, not even bothering to feed the animals. Finally, the animals rebel out of necessity. They fight for food and out of anger for being abused for so long.

#### 5. Who seizes control of farm by assuming leadership? How?

The two pigs, Napoleon and Snowball, assume leadership by leading the animals through the farmhouse, declaring it a museum, and painting the principles of Animalism, or the Seven Commandments, on the wall.

### Reader Response

#### 1. Are the pigs the best leaders for the Revolution? Why or why not?

**Yes:** The pigs have already been described as clever in comparison to the other animals. They demonstrate their cleverness in their ability to read and write. Also, the pigs are related by blood to the most revered of all the animals. It was a boar who provided the principles of the Revolution and the post-Revolution society, and thus, it seems logical that the leaders of the Revolution would be of the same species or bloodline. The pigs also seem the most dedicated to the rebellion and the ideals of Animalism. They spend their time arguing with the other animals about their beliefs, working tirelessly to reverse the effects of Moses, and answer the animals' questions in a way that would convert the animals their cause.

**No:** It could reasonably be argued that the pigs are trying too hard to force Animalism on the others. Their answers to the other animals' questions can be interpreted as demeaning (i.e., asking Mollie, “Can you not understand that liberty is worth more than ribbons?”). Their actions can be seen as controlling and unilateral: throwing the ribbons onto the fire, declaring the farmhouse a museum, deciding what to do with the milk, ignoring the hens' reminders of how Farmer Jones used to treat them, giving orders to the animals in general. These actions, if interpreted in this manner, would lead one to conclude that the pigs, while clever and capable, are not necessarily to be trusted.

#### 2. Is it reasonable to assume there will always be some members of a society who will not support the ideas of the majority? Why or not?

The majority, in this instance, are the animals who want to rebel in order to establish a better life. Yet, some of the animals still favor the old ways or have their own thoughts about the rebellion. As in human societies, the animals are individual thinkers. There are those who choose to think for themselves, and those who decide to follow because they are unwilling or unable to make decisions for themselves. It is reasonable, therefore to believe that there will be some who do not agree with the majority.

**3. Did Mr. Jones deserve to be overthrown? Why or why not?**

**Yes:** Mr. Jones is described as a harsh master, beating his animals and ending their lives in terrible ways. Right before the rebellion occurred, Mr. Jones's cruel nature increased when he began drinking more heavily and neglecting the animals and the farm. Someone needed to stop Mr. Jones and since the animals are the victims of his neglect, they are the most logical ones to try to end his tyranny.

**No:** Some students may sympathize with Jones, suggesting that his drinking and negligence of the farm might have indicated problems of his own. Also, there are students who might insist that Jones, being human, might not realize that his farm animals are feeling, sentient creatures.

**4. What gives Moses credibility with the animals despite their dislike of him?**

The animals need something to believe in. They want to believe that they have something to look forward to at the ends of their lives, particularly when those lives have been spent in endless toil for no reward. If there is to be no reward on earth, there must be reward beyond earth. Moses is the messenger of that hope. Although he seems to be more in league with the humans, he delivers to the animals exactly what they want to hear, thus making it easier for them to believe him.

**5. What ideas, emotions, or associations do you attach to the word “Comrade”? What does Old Major’s use of this word suggest about how the plot of this novel is likely to develop?**

“Comrade” is a term that is associated with Communism. Its denotation means friend or ally and Major uses it correctly in addressing the animals. However, its use by the Bolsheviks and by the Party after the Communist Revolution has given it a negative connotation in free and capitalistic societies. Old Major’s use of this word suggests that the animals’ rebellion will follow the course of the Communist Revolution and result in a totalitarian regime.

## Analysis

**1. How does Orwell illustrate the differences between pigs and suggest the role each will play in the post-Revolution society?**

Orwell uses both physical descriptions and observations of behavior in order to describe the pigs who emerge as the leaders. These descriptions emphasize their appearance and their communication ability but provide no real evidence of their leadership abilities. Napoleon’s size and forcefulness are commented on; he is described as “fierce-looking” and is known for “getting his own way. Snowball’s description highlights more intellect than appearance. Both descriptions are brief with the merest glimpse of their true integrity as leaders. Describing Squealer, Orwell provides an in-depth look at the “small fat pig.” He possesses “round cheeks, twinkling eyes, nimble movements, and a shrill voice.” Squealer’s more detailed description, illustrating his persuasive nature and vivacious movements, lend credence to his ability to sway others to his ideas. Although Napoleon and Snowball may be the brawn and the ideas pre- and post-rebellion, Squealer is the voice that persuades the others to follow the dictates of the leaders of the Revolution.

**2. How do Mollie’s treats and the now-abandoned farmhouse assume symbolic significance in this chapter? How do these symbols help to define the various characters?**

Ribbons, sugar, and the farmhouse become symbolic of the bourgeoisie, or upper class of society, within this chapter. Following the success of the rebellion, the animals are able to tour the farmhouse and observe the excesses that had been enjoyed by their oppressor, Mr. Jones. The efforts of their labor and the human’s greed were exemplified by the furnishings and decorations in the house. The animals collectively decide that because of the horrific visual reminders of their former exploitation, the farmhouse will no longer be used, but preserved as a museum. For the animals it is an example of the bourgeoisie and its excess from which they have escaped.

Sugar and ribbons are the pony, Mollie’s, chief concerns in discussions about the post-rebellion farm. Mollie is interested to know whether these luxuries—prizes given to her for pleasing her oppressors—will be available to her in the future. She is not at all satisfied by the realization that her special status—and all of its trappings—is gone. Snowball’s attempts to rationalize that Mollie’s “rewards” were actually signs of servitude, the frivolous ways by which Jones endeared himself to his pony. The ribbons, in fact, are destroyed in the fire, along with the whips and other tools of suppression used by the previous ruling class, Mr. Jones.

Mollie’s distress at losing the symbols of her status—luxuries that the harder-working animals never enjoyed—clearly suggests that she will be a malcontent in the new society.



**3. What might the disappearance of the milk foreshadow?**

The cows have not been milked in some time, and their discomfort becomes apparent. The pigs provide the solution by milking the cows using their trotters, which were more suitable to the task than the hoofs of the other animals. This illustrates the pigs' ability to take charge and make decisions. However, Napoleon's additional step, sending the animals out to the fields, while the milk is yet to be distributed to the hungry animals, suggests an inappropriate indifference and secrecy. The milk disappears while the animals are at work. It is implied that Napoleon has done something with the milk himself and has kept whatever proceeds he has gained for himself. It appears that, by profiting from the labor of others, Napoleon has already begun to emulate the ruling class he has so recently expelled, a clear betrayal of the ideals of their new post-Revolution society. We might suspect that at least Napoleon, if not all the pigs, may ultimately betray their fellow animals and the ideals of the Revolution.

**4. Between Napoleon and Snowball, which of the pigs appears to be the strongest leader of the animals? Why?**

Although Snowball is described as the most inventive and has learned to read and write better than any other, he does not show the fight necessary to get the animals to respond. Napoleon provides extra food to the animals as a reward or celebratory prize. He is also the one who gives the orders to fetch paints for Snowball and orders the animals to the fields to harvest following the milking of the cows. Although Snowball has the ideas and the words to support the ideas, Napoleon appears to be the stronger leader because he acts rather than just talks.

## Synthesis

**1. How has Orwell prepared the reader for the roles that Clover and Boxer assume in the early days of the Revolution?**

During Major's speech, Clover protected other animals, and Boxer was described as having a strong work ethic that the other animals admired. Once the rebellion occurs, Boxer and Clover accept without question the beliefs of Animalism and what was taught to them by the pigs. They in turn support the new leaders by translating into simple language, the teachings of the pigs so that others may understand as well. All of these behaviors are to be expected from animals who have a good work ethic, despite having a cruel leader to work them (Mr. Jones).

**2. What role in the allegory does the raven, Moses, begin to assume in this chapter? What is the basis of this interpretation?**

In the allegory of *Animal Farm*, Moses is a representation of the church in general or, more specifically, the Russian Orthodox Church. The raven's preaching about "Sugarcandy Mountain," clearly alludes to the church's assurance of Heaven to those who bear patiently with the trials and conditions of their earthly lives. He does no work and produces nothing to contribute to the animals' common good, so the animals hate him. They nevertheless believe his words and the pigs work to weaken the impact of his lies. The raven's closeness to Farmer Jones and the fact that Jones rewarded him with food treats suggests that Moses, like Mollie, enjoys privileged status. By not appearing at Old Major's speech in Chapter 1, he has already shown that he does not support the idea of revolution. His continued preaching and unwillingness to work clearly suggest he will not assimilate himself into the post-Revolution society.

Like Moses, the Russian Orthodox Church enjoyed many privileges before the Russian Revolution. Fearful of losing its status in a revolution, the Church preached that the peasants were to be patient in their misery, that they should be satisfied with their God-ordained status, and that they would receive their reward in heaven. The peasants eventually came to distrust the Church as part of the problem. The new society, according to Marx, would have to do away with the Church—with organized religion altogether.

**3. In what ways do the Seven Commandments echo Major's speech and begin to solidify the pigs' position in the new order of government? In what way does Orwell establish the Commandments' significance to the story?**

By summarizing the principles of Old Major's speech into a specific number of rules, the pigs have begun to erase the importance of Major to the animal's beliefs. Instead, the animals can rely on the pigs for guidance. Orwell has the pigs paint the commandments on the wall, illustrating their importance to the animals because now they are manifested in the physical realm not just products of what the animals are capable of remembering and placing their own interpretation on.

**4. In what ways does this story of the animals and their rebellion against Farmer Jones parallel the circumstances and events of the Russian Revolution?**

In the beginning of the book, Jones is presented as indifferent to the wellbeing of his animals. His care is minimal, and he chooses to drink rather than attend to his farm and the workers who care for the animals. Over time, this indifference leads to shortages of food for the animals. They continue to work and see the fruits of their labors taken from them by the farmer, yet

their own living conditions deteriorate until, out of desperation, they break into the food bins. Mr. Jones responds with violence, attacking the animals with whips and beating them back, thus causing a full-scale revolution in which Jones is driven out and the farm is taken over by the animals.

Jones's actions mirror those of Tsar Nicholas II before the Russian Revolution. The Tsar was also kept isolated from the people and had no idea of their true poverty. When, out of desperation, the starving peasants rebelled to force Nicholas II to listen to their grievances and pleas for reform, Nicholas at first met their pleas with indifference. He attempted to pacify them without providing any real solutions to their suffering. Eventually, he resorted to violence to subdue the rebelling peasants, thus igniting the full Russian Revolution.

## Evaluation

### 1. How essential is Moses's role in this novel?

**Essential:** Although not specifically essential to the plot itself, Moses is important in supporting Orwell's allegory. No account of the Russian Revolution would be accurate or authentic without including the role of the Church in both pre- and post-Revolution society.

**Non-essential:** Since many critics insist—and Orwell would probably agree—that Orwell is not writing about the Russian Revolution specifically but about revolution, tyranny, and totalitarianism in general (using the Russian Revolution merely as his model and example), he could make the same point about the evils of monarchy and totalitarianism without involving the Church since, ultimately, the Church had such a small role.

### 2. How successful an allegory is *Animal Farm* so far?

**Successful:** All of the elements of allegory are present: the indifferent and ineffective ruling class, the oppressed underclass, the aged idealist, the naive followers, and the self-interested leadership of the Revolution. The plot follows the events of the Russian Revolution closely enough: the February/March Revolution that began as a demand for bread, the October Revolution, and the rise to power of Lenin (and possibly Stalin). To those who have even a cursory knowledge of the Russian Revolution, the allegorical purpose of *Animal Farm* is clear.

**Not successful:** While all of the elements and events of the Russian Revolution might be present, and the animal tale clearly points to an allegorical interpretation, the specifics of the Russian Revolution are replicated too closely for a reader to apply a more general interpretation. Thus, the novel is clearly an allegory about the Russian Revolution, and it fails as a broader allegory about totalitarianism.

# Animal Farm

## CHAPTER 3

### Comprehension

**1. What is the role of the pigs on the farm? How does their role distinguish them from the other animals?**

The pigs serve in a supervisory capacity on the farm, leading the animals to work as they see fit. They do no hard labor on the farm.

**2. What benefits of the freedom do the animals quickly realize?**

The animals continue to work hard on the farm, but now they are happy in their labors. They are well fed, and they believe the food to be all the better because it is produced through their own efforts and not distributed grudgingly. Most everyone works. There are no quarrels, no jealousy, and no one steals. On Sundays, the animals do not work and are able to sleep longer. All animals are given a voice in the management of the farm, and everyone benefits from the farm's production.

**3. In what ways does Boxer become the most admired worker of Animal Farm?**

Boxer works with a dedication that surpasses even his dedication to the previous farm. He works all day, volunteers for work, and chooses for his chores the hardest work. He adopts the motto, "I will work harder." Many of the farm's accomplishments are the result of Boxer's determination and might.

**4. What key differences between Napoleon's and Snowball's theories about the operation of the farm become apparent?**

Napoleon and Snowball never agree when resolutions are brought before the body of animals to vote on. Snowball believes the animals need to improve themselves by organizing into committees which would benefit both their species and the farm collectively. He believes in educating the masses as a means to improve the total society. Even those who cannot be highly educated, he believes, can be raised in status.

While Snowball's interest lies in continuing to improve the lives of the adult animals, Napoleon focuses on the young. He takes the puppies to be "educated." He seems to have secret plans and goals and is not overtly interested in the actual well being of the animals.

**5. By what methods do the pigs begin to manipulate the other animals?**

When the animals begin to notice and complain about the behavior of the pigs, Squealer becomes the pigs' propagandist, defending their actions and decisions—in this chapter, specifically regarding the pigs' hoarding of milk and apples. Squealer uses his intellect to argue, relying on the other animals' inability to read and ferret out the truth on their own. As a last measure, Squealer threatens the animals with a return to the old oppressive society if, because of the animals' discontent, the Revolution fails.

### Reader Response

**1. Is the phrase "worthless parasitical human beings" an accurate description or an exaggeration?**

Up to this point in the novel, humans have been portrayed as parasitical. The excess observed in the farmhouse—purchased with the proceeds from the animals' labors—points to the fact that the humans are indeed parasites, feeding off the labors of the animals. However, the statement that the humans are worthless is an exaggeration. Humans do have capabilities that the animals do not readily admit to. One is the use of the tools that make the labor of the animals less difficult.

**2. Are the pigs being just in their management of the farm and their treatment of the other animals? Why or why not?**

**Yes:** The pigs are smarter than the other animals; thus, they are the natural leaders of the Revolution and architects of the new society. Because they can do what the other animals cannot, they are right to expect privileges that the other animals do not enjoy.

**No:** The Revolution is supposed to be about equality, each making his contribution to the society and enjoying its benefits. One of the animals' complaints about farmer Jones was that he profited from products he did not help to create. Now, the pigs are doing essentially the same thing. In addition, the pigs prey on the other animals' ignorance. As long as the animals remain



uneducated and ignorant, they will always be dependent on the pigs' explanation of the rightness and wrongness of how things are working. Finally, the pigs stoop to propaganda—fear tactics—when they threaten the animals with the return of Farmer Jones and his oppressive regime if the animals express any discontent.

### 3. Is the new *Animal Farm* a significant improvement over Jones's farm? Why or why not?

**Yes:** The animals have food, a sense of freedom, and a sense that they are profiting from their own work.

**No:** Not all of the animals contribute to the work of the society, nor do they all enjoy the fruits of their labors. For example, Mollie continues to rise later than the others and abandons work sooner on the pretext of an injured hoof. The cat, too, has a way of disappearing during work time and reappearing for food. The pigs award themselves benefits the other animals do not enjoy under false pretenses. The meetings at which the animals are supposedly able to voice opinions are ironic in that the pigs are the only ones to present any resolutions because no one else has anything to present. Of course, all of the pigs' resolutions serve the pigs' best interests. Thus, the animals still exist under a ruling class that does not really seem to have the animals' best interests at heart.

## Analysis

### 1. How does Orwell create humor and irony in his portrayal of the governing of *Animal Farm*?

There are a few sources of humor in the weekly meetings. First, of course, is the mild, ironic humor in the fact that, although these meetings are “democratic,” the less intelligent and uneducated animals never have any ideas to contribute, thus providing an opportunity for the pigs to form a separate ruling class. There is additional humor in the fact that the pigs cannot agree among themselves. Their disagreements devolve to the level of petty squabbling—ludicrous for the intelligent, privileged pigs.

### 2. What future development is clearly suggested by Snowball and Napoleon's constant disagreement? How is there an ominous undercurrent in the apparent humor of their squabbling?

Snowball and Napoleon are in such constant and public disagreement, Orwell is clearly laying the foundation for the ultimate parting of their ways. The ominous undercurrent is, of course, that while Snowball has always represented the true well being of the animals and the farm, he has also shown himself to be the weaker of the two leaders. Napoleon, the apparently stronger of the two, has already shown himself to be motivated by self-interest and to operate secretly. In a contest between the two leaders, Napoleon would most likely emerge triumphant. In Snowball's defeat would also be the defeat of the animals' common good.

### 3. What key themes are illustrated by the birds' objection to, and Squealer's explanation of, the shortening of the commandments? What role does language use play in the pigs' manipulation of the animals?

First and foremost, the act of shortening the commandments itself illustrates the tendency of the ruling class to patronize and act “on the behalf of” those they govern rather than helping the governed improve their own situations and develop the ability to govern themselves.

Second, the shortened commandments do not provide a truly accurate translation of the original, and the birds' objection is legitimate. It is indeed possible that Squealer did intend “legs” to be interpreted as “means of propulsion;” it is also possible, however, that he meant nothing of the sort and formulated the justification he offers the birds only to pacify them. In either case, the shortening of the commandment illustrates the danger of allowing an individual in a supposed democracy to act unilaterally without the knowledge or approval of his or her colleagues. Dissent is introduced into the society, and the potential for future abuse is created.

Clearly, Orwell is also illustrating the importance of education in establishing and maintaining a democracy. If the animals had been able to read and understand the law for themselves, they would not have needed any simplification.

The use of language is also a key issue in this episode. The birds have a legitimate objection in that the shortened commandment literally says, “two legs bad,” and they have only two legs. Their pacification relies on a spurious interpretation of “legs” that even they do not understand. Snowball may be sincere in his explanation, but he does nonetheless confuse the animals with his use of language so that they “agree to” something they do not understand. There are two language issues here: the new commandment is not a literally accurate representation of the original; the pacification of the birds relies on an interpretation that is so spurious as to be almost ingenuous.

Thus, the ruling class not only patronizes those they govern; it ultimately abuses language—almost to the point of lying—to confuse the governed into an unknowing submission.

**4. How does the reader know that Squealer is lying in order to validate the pigs' decision to take the apples and the milk for themselves? What rhetorical devices or techniques of propaganda does he use to deflect the animals' concerns?**

Actually, Squealer lies when he claims that the pigs specifically need the apples to enhance their brainpower. In answering the animals' objections to being deprived of the benefits of their work, he uses *procatalepsis* (preempting the opponent's objection and thus defusing it). In this case, he knows the animals will condemn the pigs' actions as selfish and contrary to the principles of Animalism, so he turns those accusations back on the animals themselves. More than merely turning the argument around, however, he turns the *procatalepsis* into an emotional appeal, preying on the animals' patriotism (their love of *Animal Farm*) and creating a sense of guilt for their selfishness in not willingly sacrificing their hard-won benefits for the sake of the "great good" (the pigs' selfishness).

## Synthesis

**1. How does Boxer embody the ideals of the Revolution and the principles of Animalism as first spoken of by Major and then developed further by the pigs? What characteristics does Boxer possess that make him a commodity for the pigs?**

Boxer wholeheartedly accepts the maxim that all men are enemies and all animals are comrades. He has been faithful and worked body and soul for the overthrow of man and the betterment of animals everywhere, starting with *Animal Farm*. Boxer believes in the characters who establish themselves as leaders. He recognizes his inability to think and rationalize for himself, so he must trust in those who know better than him to lead him in the direction that he needs. Thus, Boxer uses what he does have—his strength—to support the ideas of the farm by doing all that he can. The pigs recognize Boxer's value to the farm and their control of the farm. Boxer is strong, unable to think for himself, and incredibly naive and idealistic. He is also trusted and admired by the others, so he is the perfect unwitting pawn of the manipulative and exploitative pigs.

**2. Compare and contrast the characters of Boxer and Benjamin following the rebellion. What is suggested by Benjamin's passivity?**

Boxer is the horse who accepts without question the word of those in power, works tirelessly, and strives to always work harder, despite working to his maximum every day. He does not question the word of those who lead him but accepts that the leaders are smarter and equally committed to Animalism. He acknowledges his weaknesses, does not brag about his strengths. He is the model citizen.

Benjamin, on the other hand, works, but he does only what is expected, never volunteering for anything extra. He expresses neither support for, nor opposition to, the new regime, insisting only, "Donkeys live a long time. None of you have ever seen a dead donkey." He is, perhaps, suggesting that he has seen governments come and go, so he will not invest himself too much in the current one.

## Evaluation

**1. By now it is fairly clear to the reader that this animal story is an allegory about the Communist Revolution in Russia. Assuming that interpretation, how effective is Orwell's portrayal of the pigs' use of propaganda in furthering his allegorical theme?**

Most students will probably evaluate Orwell's portrayal of Soviet propaganda highly. After all, the pigs' arguments make sense—on the surface—and the animals' stupidity and willingness to trust their leaders make for plausible reasons not to question what the pigs say and do.

On the other hand, some students may rightfully question the extent to which the other animals accept things that, objectively, they themselves know to be untrue. Are/were the people of Russia really that ignorant or uneducated? Were/are they really as docile and trusting as, say, Boxer?

# Animal Farm

## CHAPTER 4

### Comprehension

#### 1. Identify and describe Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick.

Mr. Frederick is a neighboring farmer who runs a smaller, but well-managed farm called Pinchfield. He is considered very tough. Mr. Pilkington is the other neighboring farmer whose farm is larger, but is generally neglected and in disrepair. Mr. Pilkington prefers a life of leisure: fishing and hunting rather than maintaining the upkeep on his farm. The two farmers dislike each other and generally do not agree.

#### 2. How do Pilkington and Frederick attempt to control the spread of news about the success of Animal Farm?

The farmers attempt to refute the gossip that the animals on Animal Farm are achieving success in their endeavors, managing the farm and the animals in a way that would be attractive to other animals on other, traditional farms. The farmers attempt to spread lies about the animals, about hardship, starvation, fighting, abuse and torture—all of which are the consequences of going against nature. Their stories about what is happening on Animal Farm become increasingly more disturbing as they realize that the success is spreading rapidly and their own lies are not quelling the idea of rebellion in the minds of their own animals.

#### 3. When and why does Mr. Jones reappear in the story?

Mr. Jones reappears in the taproom of Willingdon, seeking the help of other farmers through his tales of the injustice of losing the farm to the animals. He reappears at this point to gather forces to fight back against the rebels who now control his farm.

#### 4. What honors are bestowed on the animals who fought bravely in the Battle of Cowshed?

It is a unanimous decision to create the honor of “Animal Hero, First Class” for Boxer and Snowball and “Animal Hero, Second Class” for the sheep who had been killed in battle.

### Reader Response

#### 1. Which of the two farmers would the animals prefer, Pilkington or Frederick? Why?

Mr. Pilkington is a gentleman farmer who spends his leisure time fishing or hunting. His farm is in disrepair, with encroaching hedges and woodland, worn out pastures, and neglected buildings. Mr. Frederick's farm is in better shape, but he is a tough man who drives hard bargains. It could be argued that Mr. Frederick's farm would be preferable because it is in better condition, and the animals are probably better taken care of. However, if Mr. Frederick is tough in maintaining his farm, he is probably tough in maintaining the animals who are his livelihood. He might, therefore, work his animals harshly and cruelly. Although conditions of the farm are better, the animals would not want to be abused as they were in the past. Mr. Pilkington, with his leisurely ways and gentle manner, might be preferable to Frederick's.

Mr. Pilkington's farm, however, seems too much like the old Manor Farm, which they had just escaped.

#### 2. Are the farmers justified in their fear of Animal Farm?

Major's whole purpose was to sow the seeds of dissatisfaction and inspire a revolt that would bring about a different world for animals everywhere. Animal Farm is a success. The animals have cast off human control and are successfully managing their needs without human assistance. They have also developed the means to send the message out to other animals in the hopes of sparking revolutions around the world. The animals on other farms are listening and have a connection through similar circumstances. The spread in popularity of the Beasts of England, and the knowledge that the animals are having success indicates that the farmers should indeed be afraid.

Some students, however, may argue that the farmers need not worry if they are fair and just to their animals and manage their farms well.

**3. What do Boxer's feelings over the presumably dead stable boy suggest about him?**

Although Boxer was committed to defending his beloved *Animal Farm* at all costs, he accepted the commandment not to kill another animal, which he believes includes all living things. Thus, he had no desire to kill. His remorse at the boy's apparent death shows an integrity and a compassion that no other animal has shown. Combined with his proven work ethic, Boxer emerges as a truly admirable character.

**4. Is Snowball's role in the battle sufficient to establish him as the better leader over Napoleon? Why or why not?**

Snowball is an effective leader in the Battle of the Cowshed. His attacks are planned and thought out. He utilizes the unique strengths of each animal to defend the farm. He is quick thinking and brave, attacking Mr. Jones himself and suffering injuries as a result. Snowball takes charge, and the animals obey him. Napoleon has no specific objective in the battle. His contribution is not mentioned at all. Snowball has clearly established himself as more worthy of leading *Animal Farm* to future success than Napoleon.

However, it could be argued that this one success is no indication of how Snowball will lead on a day-to-day basis. His plans to this point have largely been unsuccessful. His ideas for committees have failed. Although he was a great leader during the battle, his actions had to be quick when his survival and that of the farm are at stake. When the stakes are not as high, Snowball may not be as effective.

**5. Is Boxer's reaction to the stable boy surprising to the reader? Why or why not? What does it suggest about his future contributions to protecting the farm?**

Boxer has demonstrated his dedication to the principles of Animalism and to helping the farm be successful. His strength is apparent in his work, and he is greatly admired for his strength. The attacking farmers fear him when they see him kick the stable boy. Once Boxer realizes what he has done, after the men have retreated, he seems surprised that the boy is lying in the mud. He does not want to be blamed for the boy's death. It seems that Boxer does not realize how strong he really is or how fragile the humans are. Since Boxer has been so dedicated to the cause of Animalism, it seems surprising that his actions would cause him any remorse at all. Once the battle is over, his gentleness resurfaces as he paws at the stable boy and tears up at the thought of having taken a life. This reaction, his compassion, might suggest a dulling of his devotion to the cause and an unwillingness to kill for it in the future.

On the other hand, Boxer's reaction to the stable boy's death may not be surprising. Boxer and Clover had already established themselves as caring and compassionate at the first meeting to hear Major speak. They looked out for the ducklings, making sure they were unharmed, and allowed the cat to curl between them for their warmth. His compassion for the boy and heart-break over his culpability may be unsurprising to the reader.

## Analysis

**1. What do the pigeons represent in the allegory? Why are they important?**

The pigeons represent the propaganda that was spread around the world to help garner support for Communism. They carried positive news of the farm and taught the song of the Revolution to the neighboring animals. The pigeons are important because they keep the word about the farm positive so that other animals will support them and possibly act against their own human oppressors. The pigeons assist in contradicting the lies being told by the humans about *Animal Farm*. Major felt that the Revolution needed to be spread world wide to bring about the downfall of the tyranny of man. In order to do that, the message needs to continue to be spread, and the pigeons are a means to do so.

**2. What evidence of leadership is displayed during the Battle of the Cowshed? Who appears as the strongest leader of the animals? Why?**

During the battle, Snowball leads the charge against the aggressors, Mr. Jones and his supporters. Snowball's skill at planning for the farm is evident when he is able to organize the farm animals according to their strengths. Snowball is quick and decisive, and his knowledge of the enemy and his preparation for this eventual battle are apparent. Finally, Snowball leads by example, remaining in the fray, attacking Jones himself, and receiving battle scars for his efforts.

On the other hand, Napoleon is not mentioned at all during the battle. He is not involved in the planning, and there is no mention of his role in the fighting.

Clearly, then, Snowball is the natural-born, and rightful, leader of the Revolution and the resultant new society.

**3. In what ways is the success of the Battle of the Cowshed more important to the pigs than to the animals collectively?**

Collectively, the animals do indeed benefit from winning the battle. They have no desire to return to the abusive neglect they endured under Jones's indifference. In that sense, they do have a stake in maintaining control. However, the animals have no real plan for the future of *Animal Farm*. They have relinquished all management and planning to the pigs and trust their leaders to make decisions for them. The pigs, however, have a great deal to gain from maintaining *Animal Farm* free from humans. Man is the only real threat there is to their control of the farm. It is, therefore, the pigs who profit the most from maintaining the new status quo in which they have the power.

**Synthesis****1. In what ways do the events before, during, and after the Battle of the Cowshed mirror or suggest the events of the Russian Revolution and the spread of Communism?**

Early in the era of Communism in the Soviet Union, both Communism and Socialism were attractive economic theories in most of Europe and even in the United States. The pigs, clearly representative of the Communist party, desire not only to “reform” *Animal Farm*, but to reform the world. Ideologically, in order to prove Communism's effectiveness, the Soviet Union had to be free from outside influence—all of the citizens had to support the common goal, and no dissention could be allowed. One effective way to reduce the possibility of outside influence would be to convert neighboring nations to the communist ideology. This could best be done by surreptitiously convincing the people of these other nations of their oppressed nature and inciting revolution.

The pigeons mirror the Soviet propaganda machine, infiltrating other nations' political systems and proclaiming the utter success of Animalism. The farmers, of course, represent the traditional, established economic and political power structures who fear the success of the animals' revolution and wish to suppress the spread of Animalism.

The events of the Battle for the Cowshed mirror Leo Trotsky and others' conviction that Communism's ultimate success could be achieved only by its spread around the world. The most effective way to convince others of the rightness of Communism was to display the success of the post-Revolution Soviet Union, the abundance of goods produced, the quality of life, and the freedoms enjoyed equally by all citizens. Fearing what came to be known as the “Domino Effect,” a suspicion that, if one nation “fell” to the ideals of Communism, others would similarly fall until, like a line of dominoes in which the first one is knocked down. Thus, like the farmers, these nations—Korea, China, Vietnam—fought to prevent becoming Communist, while western nations, especially the United States, fought to prevent the ideology's spread.

**2. In what ways are the initial battle for control of *Animal Farm* and the Battle of the Cowshed different? What accounts for those differences?**

The battle for control of the farm was an impulsive and unplanned act. The initiating force for the rebellion was the growing resentment about the growing neglect and abuse at the hands of Mr. Jones and the farm hands. The animals had no plans for a future beyond this violent outburst; the consequences of a successful revolution were not considered. Mr. Jones and the farm hands' role was purely defensive and executed in surprise. There was no planning or forethought on either side of this battle.

The Battle of the Cowshed, however, is a planned and intentional battle. It is in the animal's successful defense of their farm that Old Major's dreams have been realized. The animals now have a sense of what their future could be, and they appreciate the ways in which their lives have improved since they have been liberated from Jones's oppression.

The animals' motivation in the Battle of the Cowshed is no longer anger. In the Battle for the Cowshed, the animals use their own strengths to their advantage and take advantage of their neighbors' weaknesses. Having won the farm, largely by accident, the animals are now intentionally determined to defend it. As the animals were indeed exploited and oppressed by Jones and his hands, the success of both the initial battle and the Battle of the Cowshed can be interpreted as positive outcomes.

Likewise, for the humans, the Battle of the Cowshed is planned and intentional; the humans' goal is to stop the spread of Animalism. Insofar as Jones and the other farmers are portrayed as exploitative and oppressive, their desire to take back the farm and establish the old regime could be seen as a negative turn of events.

## Evaluation

### 1. How effective has Orwell been in setting up the removal of Snowball from the farm?

**Effective:** *The tension between Napoleon and Snowball has been apparent and intensifying since the early days of the post-Revolution period. And, while Snowball has acted openly and for the apparent general welfare of the farm, Napoleon has been shown to work secretly, often with unclear or questionable motives. When the dogs appear to attack Snowball, the reader is forced to remember that, in Chapter 2, it was Napoleon who took the puppies and hid them away to handle their “education” personally. While Snowball has been more effective at innovation and inspiration, Napoleon has been more politically astute and has been able to garner support for himself behind the scenes. Thus, while the event of the dogs in this chapter might be unexpected, it is not really surprising. The reader has been prepared for this eventuality from the beginning of the Revolution.*

**Ineffective:** *The attack of the dogs seems to come out of nowhere. All along, Snowball has seemed to be the one garnering the support of the animals themselves, the one working for their benefit, and this attack does not seem like an inevitable and logical next step in the sequence of events.*



# Animal Farm

## CHAPTER 5

### Comprehension

#### 1. How does Napoleon react to Snowball's ideas for the future of the farm?

While Napoleon does not openly combat Snowball's ideas, he is passive-aggressive in his resistance. He uses the sheep to interrupt Snowball's eloquent speeches and operates clandestinely to discredit Snowball. When everyone admires the windmill plans, Napoleon remains silent and then secretly urinates on the plans.

#### 2. Who is the only animal to not take sides in the windmill debate? Why?

Benjamin is the only animal who does not take a side in the windmill debate. His pessimism is apparent in his disapproval of both pigs, choosing to believe neither Napoleon nor Snowball and stating that life will continue to be as it always has.

#### 3. How does the dogs' behavior suggest a strong similarity between Napoleon and Mr. Jones?

Following the dogs' attack on Snowball, the narrator observes that the dogs stay close to Napoleon and wag their tails at him, in much the same way they had behaved towards Mr. Jones. Napoleon has, apparently, become their new "master."

#### 4. How does Napoleon dissuade opposition to his views?

Following Snowball's retreat, Napoleon assumes the position of sole leader of the farm. When some of the pigs attempt to protest Napoleon's decree abolishing debate at meetings, the dogs growl menacingly, reminding the animals of the recent terror of Snowball's banishment.

### Reader Response

#### 1. Is Mollie's behavior a surprise? Why or why not?

Mollie's behavior in leaving the farm is not a surprise. Before the rebellion, she was one of the most pampered animals on the farm. Although she did not openly protest the rebellion or its consequences, she did question the loss of her own creature comforts. She never whole-heartedly accepted the arguments about animal equality and servitude to humans. She never worked as hard as the other animals and found ways to start late and leave early. She was even found standing at the drinking pool admiring her reflection in the water. While touring the farmhouse, she was the only animal who was enticed by the display of "human decadence" rather than view the farmhouse as its contents as the display of the tyranny from which the animals had escaped. Also, following Clover's confrontation, Clover investigates and discovers that Mollie has sugar and ribbons hidden under the straw in her stall. In light of this, it was not surprising that Mollie would choose to return to humans who would support her vain, spoiled nature.

However, some students might argue that they are indeed surprised by Mollie's actions. Although she did voice some concerns about the rebellion and its consequences, she did not speak out against anything that happened. Her reaction to the fighting (running and hiding in the stable) were from fear and not from support of the human aggressors. Mollie apparently participated in the destruction of all things human after the battle: whips, halters, and ribbons were all thrown into the fire. Although Mollie did try to escape work and did resent giving up her luxuries, some students may still see the potential for Mollie to eventually come to appreciate the benefits of the Revolution.

#### 2. Which pig is correct in his approach to the defense of the farm? Why?

While Napoleon takes a more militant stance, wishing to procure firearms, Snowball believes the best defense is to incite rebellions on neighboring farms and thus insulate Animal Farm from attack.

It can be argued that Napoleon is correct, as using firearms against invaders is an easy solution. Letting it be known among the neighboring farms that Animal Farm was armed, could also prevent even the attempt at an attack. Maintaining an arsenal, however, is effective only if the animals are well trained and trustworthy.

Snowball's idea is a more peaceful alternative. If the animals are not armed, they will never be able to use the weapons against each other. Also, knowledge that Animal Farm is armed might actually incite a preemptive attack, as the neighboring farms might fear being invaded by Animal Farm and decide to strike first.

## Analysis

### 1. How does Orwell reveal Mollie's deception when she is confronted by Clover?

Clover takes it upon herself to confront Mollie about the rumors. Although Clover delicately broaches the subject, asking why Mollie would be interacting with a man from Pilkington's farm, and suggesting she will believe Mollie if the pony will tell the truth, Mollie's replies are clipped denials punctuated with exclamations. Mollie begins to prance and move about, suggesting that she feels trapped and may be lying. She is never able to look at Clover in the face, and she evades the discussion rather than give Clover a simple and definitive answer.

### 2. How does Orwell build tension through this chapter?

After informing the reader of the disappearance of Mollie, Orwell launches into the disagreements that occur between the Napoleon and Snowball. He implies an expectation that the two will disagree only for the sake of disagreeing and that they disagree over everything. Their debates are described as "violent," and it is suggested that both of the pigs have their supporters. Thus, the tension grows from personal to factional. Napoleon's urinating on the windmill plans is almost a climactic action, an overtly offensive act. As Snowball, however, realizes his victory in the windmill debate, his imagination spins out of control, and he whips up a frenzy of support for his seemingly endless plans for improvement. The list of innovations continues building the tension to a crescendo when Napoleon calls the dogs with his strange whimper.

### 3. What might the dogs' behavior foreshadow?

Orwell describes the dogs' behavior toward Napoleon in terms very similar to the obedience they showed to Mr. Jones. The dogs stay close to Napoleon and wag their tails in supplication. This behavior clearly suggests that Napoleon is assuming the role that had previously been Mr. Jones's. Thus, Napoleon's possible rise a position of tyrannical power is foreshadowed.

### 4. In what way is the analogy to the Russian Revolution strengthened through the government policies enacted by Napoleon?

During the Russian Revolution, when Stalin came to power following the death of Lenin, he banished the main opponent to his dictatorship, Leo Trotsky. Napoleon's actions mirror Stalin's. Once Snowball is gone, Napoleon is able to take action that previously would have been the cause of debate. Napoleon abolishes the Sunday morning meetings which had been the forum in which the animals were able to discuss their concerns and provide input into the running of the farm. This act enables Napoleon to become the singular decision making power of the farm.

## Synthesis

### 1. How does Orwell prepare the reader for Mollie's actions?

From the beginning of the novel, Mollie is portrayed as a vain, privileged animal, who questions the necessity of the rebellion, especially if it means surrendering the creature comforts she was given by her former "oppressor." Her questions about the Rebellion are not about how to create a society based on the principles laid out by Old Major but whether or not she will still receive the privileges she is used to. Her interest is self-motivated rather than selfless. Immediately following the rebellion, Mollie is awed by the beauty of Mrs. Jones's ribbons rather than disgusted by the luxuries Mrs. Jones enjoyed at the expense of the animals. She disappears during the Battle of the Cowshed, she shirks her duty to work, arriving late and leaving early, but she never forgets her portion of food. Mollie's actions indicate her unwillingness to participate in a classless society since she sees herself as above the other animals. Thus, her defection is not surprising.

### 2. Whose plan for defense would be more appealing to a Marxist? Why?

The writings of Karl Marx indicated his belief that the way to build a revolution and bring about change was in garnering support for the ideals of Communism. It was important to build a following to support Communism so that it would grow and eventually take root around the world. True Communism would be achieved only in a classless society, which would mean other countries would need to adopt those policies as well. Thus, Snowball's idea of stirring the rebellion on other farms would most likely meet with a Marxist's approval.



**3. How is the description of Napoleon's examination of Snowball's plans for the windmill consistent with earlier descriptions of his character?**

*Napoleon is described in early chapters as a "fierce-looking Berkshire boar" who is "not much of a talker, but with a reputation for getting his own way." Like his "solution" to the problem of the excess milk, his urinating on the plans without comment, expresses his contempt, not only for Snowball, but for the other animals as well. His wordless criticism is very much in keeping with what Orwell has told the reader about Napoleon.*

**4. What clues have been given up to this point to predict Napoleon's turning the dogs on Snowball?**

*Napoleon and Snowball emerged as the leaders, quickly following the death of Old Major. Each was described with traits that opposed—or complemented—the other. Napoleon was fierce but not a talker, while Snowball is vivacious but not as impressive. Even in early debates, the animals noticed that although both pigs had ideas, they rarely agreed. The tension between the two intensified, and it became clear that one would have to acquiesce to the other. Then, Snowball becomes a hero, in a battle in which Napoleon arguably took no part. As Snowball seems to be emerging as the leader, Napoleon remains silent, but with a strong will, and with the dogs to enforce that will. Snowball's openness and Napoleon's secrecy are the strongest clues that, ultimately, Napoleon will prevail over Snowball.*

# Animal Farm

## CHAPTER 6

### Comprehension

**1. What argument does Squealer make to quell the animals' unrest?**

*Squealer appeals to the animals' sense of duty and fairness with many arguments designed to convince them of the pigs' "selflessness." Ultimately he employs fear propaganda by making Mr. Jones's imminent return seem possible.*

**2. What changes in work are enacted with Napoleon's assumption of leadership?**

*The animals work even harder for the farm under Napoleon. There is now a sixty-hour work week, and there is "voluntary" work on Sundays. Any animal that does not "volunteer," however, has his or her rations reduced.*

**3. How does Napoleon propose to purchase supplies the animals cannot produce on their own?**

*Napoleon decrees that the farm will engage in trade with neighboring farms. They will first trade a portion of the year's wheat crop and possibly sell eggs if more money is needed.*

**4. How do the humans display their admiration of Animal Farm?**

*The humans begin to see that Animal Farm is a success and start to call it Animal Farm rather than Manor Farm, as they did immediately following the rebellion. They also stop supporting Mr. Jones and commiserating with him on the loss of his farm.*

**5. How is Napoleon referred to within Chapter 6?**

*The pigs, and therefore all of the animals, drop the title of "Comrade" and adopt the title of "Leader" for Napoleon.*

**6. Where do the pigs move to on the farm? How do they justify this their move?**

*Once Napoleon establishes contact with humans for the purpose of trade, the pigs move into the farmhouse. They insist that a "Leader" should not reside in a mere sty. Eventually, the pigs also begin to sleep in the beds.*

### Reader Response

**1. Is Boxer wise or foolish to work so tirelessly for the ideas of Animalism and display blind faith in his leaders?**

*Given the recent establishment of Napoleon's dictatorship and use of force to banish Snowball, any animal who does not fear for his place on the farm is foolish. Boxer has been established as one of the more stupid animals. By accepting his weaknesses focusing on his strengths, Boxer embraces the spirit of Animalism and sets an example for the other, disgruntled and disillusioned, animals. He is wise to see beyond his own current discomfort to the future good that he is helping to accomplish.*

*On the other hand, Napoleon has already demonstrated his penchant for dishonesty and the use of force to eliminate all opposition. It is foolish, first of all, for Boxer not to realize that his physical strength and naivety are being exploited to advance the pigs'—especially Napoleon's—interests. Second, he is foolish not to suspect that, as he begins to eclipse Napoleon's hero-status, Napoleon will want to somehow dispose of him.*

**2. Does Napoleon's idea to sell the eggs make sense? Why or why not?**

*Napoleon knows that the farm has to do something to obtain the necessities the animals are not able to produce. He also needs a commodity that is in demand by the people who can provide those goods to the farm. Also, eggs will provide a quicker return than waiting for a crop to grow, mature, and harvest. In this sense, selling the eggs would be the most logical solution to the problem.*

*However, it can be argued that by selling the eggs, Napoleon is becoming more tyrannical and unsympathetic to the animals and their feelings. He is proposing, after all, to sell the offspring of a member of the farming population, which could be seen as murder. This act could endanger his rule by inciting rebellion, since this act is contrary to the original principles of Animalism.*

**3. What kind of man is the solicitor, Mr. Whympers? How do you know?**

Mr. Whympers is a suspicious character because he is the human who agrees to work with the animals when other humans have been unwilling to even acknowledge the new farm. Mr. Whympers is cunning and seems motivated by no values or ideals other than to make money.

**4. Whose actions towards the workers on *Animal Farm* are worse, the humans' or the pigs'?**

Mr. Jones and the other humans' actions were deplorable. The animals were whipped, worked hard, given little reward for their efforts, and starved. The pigs do nothing to physically abuse the animals. The success of the farm is dependent on the animals' work, so the fact of requiring hard work alone does not suggest that the pigs are worse than the humans.

However, the pigs are animals. They themselves suffered the humans' abuse, and they were supposed to be part of the solution—helping to liberate the animals. That they have become the oppressors themselves could make some students feel they are worse than the humans.

## Analysis

**1. Where is the dramatic irony in the opening paragraph of this chapter? How does this irony foreshadow future plot development?**

Although the animals' work is compared to that of slaves, they are described at the beginning of the chapter as happy in the knowledge that they are working for themselves and not to support "a pack of idle, thieving human beings." This statement is ironic because the reader realizes that the pigs have already become as "idle" and "thieving" as Mr. Jones ever was. This observation clearly foreshadows the continued emergence of the pigs as oppressors in Jones's stead.

**2. What is suggested by the use of the word "Leader" as opposed to "Comrade"?**

"Comrade," although used to support the allegory of the Russian Revolution, means a friend, or a person who supports a common goal. "Leader" implies a superior status above others in a community. Although the word "leader" does not have negative connotations, it does suggest that society under Napoleon's rule is stratified and classes still exist.

**3. What does the windmill symbolize for the working-class animals? How does its fall contribute to the development of plot and theme?**

In the beginning, the windmill symbolizes the animals' hopes for their future. It is a plan, a project to which they can all contribute and from which they will all benefit. They imagine that, when it is complete, the functioning windmill will be proof positive to the neighboring farms that the animals can indeed survive—even thrive—independent of humans.

The windmill's fall, therefore, suggests their ultimate failure.

The building of the windmill and its fall are key elements of rising action and a reversal in the plot. The animals' willingness to sacrifice their energy to the windmill's construction and then their utter disappointment at its collapse present a perfect opportunity for Napoleon's manipulation and further oppression. He corrals the animals' collective grief into anger as he creates Snowball as a scapegoat. He can also, finally, exert complete control, taking advantage of the animals' willingness to rebuild.

**4. What propaganda technique does Napoleon use to discredit Snowball, even after Snowball's expulsion from the farm? What makes this technique especially effective?**

Napoleon creates a villain of Snowball. Snowball becomes the scapegoat for the windmill's failure. The technique is especially effective because Snowball is not able to defend himself.

# Animal Farm

## CHAPTER 7

### Comprehension

**1. How do conditions on the farm begin to change at the beginning of this chapter?**

*It is a bitter cold winter, and the animals toil to complete their usual work as well as work on rebuilding the destroyed windmill. Food becomes scarcer and scarcer, and the animals suffer from hunger.*

**2. Who is a bigger inspiration to the animals than Squealer? Why?**

*Boxer and Clover are the only two animals who seem not to lose heart. While Squealer is nothing more than the messenger of the pigs' propaganda, Boxer inspires by his example and his refrain, "I will work harder!"*

**3. How does Napoleon fool the outside world about conditions on the farm?**

*Napoleon knows that the appearance of success of Animal Farm is vital to the continuation of his rule. Therefore, he makes the animals fill the food bins almost to the brim with sand covering only the top with food, thus giving the appearance of an abundance of food. He strategically places some sheep within Whymper's hearing to relay the idea that rations have been increased. He also limits contact with Whymper so the truth may remain undiscovered.*

**4. What methods does Napoleon employ to establish and maintain his control over the animals?**

*Napoleon continues using Snowball as the scapegoat for everything that goes wrong on the farm. He also uses fear and intimidation. The dogs attack four of the pigs during an assembly in the yard and Napoleon coerces false testimonies about their complicity with Snowball to destroy the windmill. The pigs are terrified to do anything but agree with Napoleon and, as a result, are killed on the spot. This ruse of public confessions and executions continues until all of the animals are afraid to attract Napoleon's attention or invoke his enmity.*

**5. How does Boxer deal with his growing suspicion of what is really happening on the farm?**

*Boxer feels uncomfortable, but since he cannot rationalize the cause of his discomfort, he does the only thing he is capable of; he vows to work even harder.*

### Reader Response

**1. Which of the two theories proposed about the windmill is more likely to be true? Why?**

*The humans begin to spread the idea that the windmill fell because of the animals' miscalculation of the thickness of the supporting walls. The animals insist that the pigs, whom they believe to be infallible, could not have made such a miscalculation. It is less challenging to their ideology to blame Snowball for the destruction. The windmill fell, however, during a windstorm, which would strongly suggest structural weakness rather than sabotage.*

**2. Why would the dogs attack Boxer? What may this imply about Napoleon and the other pigs?**

*It would appear that the dogs attack Boxer because of the bloodlust from the original attack on the four pigs. It would be easy to assume that they cannot control themselves and fling themselves on the nearest beast. However, the fact that the dogs drag the pigs to Napoleon's feet suggests that, even in their bloodlust, they are controlled by Napoleon. The fact that it is Boxer whom they attack suggests that Boxer might have been a target. Perhaps Boxer's strength and the admiration of the animals motivated Napoleon to attempt to remove Boxer. The pigs have apparently miscalculated again, however, and Boxer is able to use his strength to escape. Boxer does not suspect the pigs' involvement, as is evidenced by his deference to Napoleon when he lets the captured dog go.*

**Analysis****1. What role does dramatic irony play in the advancement of Orwell's theme?**

Although all of the troubles on the farm—missing keys, broken eggs, stolen corn—have been attributed to Snowball, the reader clearly suspects that the pigs are the most likely culprits. The reader knows that Napoleon is using Snowball as a scapegoat to unite the animals against a common enemy, but the animals, for the most part, do not even suspect duplicity on the pigs' part.

**2. How do the rising plot events in this chapter suggest the approaching climax?**

Each of the incidents in this chapter intensifies the growing conflict between the emerging dictator, Napoleon, and the oppressed workers, the other animals. As climactic as the fall of the windmill seemed, it made no real change in the animals' attitude, and they simply redoubled their efforts to rebuild it. In this chapter, however, their labor is complicated by food shortages they have not experienced before. The failure of Animal Farm is an actual possibility, and the animals knowingly participate in the deception of the outside world.

Napoleon's suggestion to sell the eggs is the clearest and most severe contradiction of Old Major's original philosophy. At this point, Napoleon is acting exactly like the humans they drove out of the farm.

The hens' protest is not put down only by rhetoric, propaganda, and the threat of violence, Napoleon takes direct action that results in the actual deaths of his "fellow" animals.

The discrepancies between Squealer's accounts of the farm's history and the truth are becoming so apparent that even the animals are beginning to admit that they seem to remember things differently.

Finally, Napoleon sheds all appearances of justice and unleashes his version of the Stalinist purges. There is no subtlety to the roles of the dogs as thugs, and both animals and reader witness the intimidation and slaughter of innocent scapegoats.

Every abuse of Napoleon's that has been, up till now, subtle, inferred by the reader, or presented with the possibility of multiple interpretations is now blatant. The situation for the animals cannot get much worse before the plot takes one direction—the animals stage another revolution—or the other—their spirits are broken.

**3. What is ironic about Squealer's "inability" to share the documents that incriminate Snowball? How does this lie contribute to the rapidly rising action of this chapter?**

Immediately after the Revolution, it was primarily Snowball who advocated that the animals be educated so that they would not be susceptible to indoctrination and manipulation. Now, just as Snowball had tried to prevent, the pigs are using the animals' illiteracy against them, in exactly the way Snowball feared. It is doubly ironic that the pigs are exploiting the animals' ignorance to incriminate Snowball, who was their strongest advocate.

**4. How does Orwell use Boxer to represent his view of the typical Soviet citizen?**

Boxer's motto all along has been, "I will work harder." He has always placed his full trust and confidence in Napoleon. Now, however, even he must admit to difficulty in reconciling how he remembers the history of the farm with what Napoleon and Squealer are claiming. If the intellectually slowest of all the animals is beginning to have doubts, the others must have them as well. However, Boxer is also a good citizen, and the best way he can think of to reconcile his doubts with the claims of the leaders is to conclude that he must be wrong. If Napoleon says it, it must be so.

**5. For what probable purpose does Orwell end this chapter with Clover's tearful reflections about the current state of their Revolution?**

While the behavior of the pigs has been disturbing all along, and have been especially troubling in this chapter, the reader is not invited to construct an emotional response until this point. The reader has, all along, known the pigs to be rising as a new ruling class and the animals to be sinking under an even heavier yoke than before, but this event is the first in which the reader actually witnesses—and shares—the animals' pain and discouragement.

## Synthesis

### 1. What parallels between characters and events in the novel and persons and events in the Russian Revolution are clearly revealed in this chapter?

Napoleon emerges as a clear representation of Stalin to Snowball's Trotsky. In both instances, the two leaders vie for power—both arguing for different ends to the Revolution and advocating different means. Stalin eventually succeeded in driving Trotsky from the Soviet Union, just as Napoleon has driven Snowball from the farm. After Trotsky's exile, he became Stalin's scapegoat, the cause of every problem experienced by the Soviet people. After Snowball's exile, he too is blamed for everything that goes wrong on *Animal Farm*—from the collapse of the windmill to the loss of the keys and the broken eggs. Probably the strongest parallel, however, is between Stalin's "purges" of all dissidence and Napoleon's slaughter of innocent animals from whom he has extracted false confessions.

The overall conditions on *Animal Farm* also clearly parallel the conditions of Soviet Russia under Stalin's rule.

Stalin knew that the Soviet Union's production and quality of life was not equal to those of the industrialized nations of the West. Just as the humans believe the animals to be incapable of governing themselves, Soviet Russia had a reputation for poor management. Under Stalin's first Five-Year Plan, millions of Russians perished from famine. Stalin's plan for agriculture was largely a disaster. Yet, the Soviets were determined to show to the world a thriving nation with a happy population. Napoleon acts in the same way, attempting to trick the human community into believing that all is well on *Animal Farm* when in fact the animals are starving. To admit that the animals are hungry would be to admit that Napoleon is a poor leader, whose incompetence would make the farm an easy target for human takeover. Allowing any sign of failure to be seen would damage any future trade and relations he hoped to build with the human community.

### 2. How does the pigs' banning of the song, "The Beasts of England" fully establish Napoleon's power over the farm? What is the significance of this event to the structure of the plot?

From the beginning of the novel, "The Beasts of England" has been used to inspire the animals and give them a sense of empowerment. It was a song that reminded them that they were oppressed, and galvanized them to take action against their oppressors. By now banning the song, Napoleon has removed a powerful means by which the animals might eventually realize the truth about their status and again feel empowered to take action.

The episode in which the animals begin to sing the song and then are given a new song to sing mirrors the scene at the beginning of the book in which Old Major taught the animals their revolutionary anthem. Now, however, the song being taught to them is enervating rather than energizing. On the one hand, the animals are essentially right back where they started. On the other, however, they may actually be worse off than they were before the Revolution.

## Evaluation

### 1. In his responses to criticism of his novel, Orwell insisted that *Animal Farm* was not an allegory of the Russian Revolution specifically, but a warning about the dangers of totalitarian governments in general. To what extent is Orwell successful in communicating this general warning? Why or why not?

Most students will probably agree with the critics that the novel is much more readily interpreted as almost a parody of the Russian Revolution and the formation of the Soviet Union. The parallels between the key players—especially Old Major, Napoleon, and Snowball, and Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky—are not only fairly obvious, but limited exclusively to persons involved in the Russian Revolution. Other factors, too—like the church's support of the aristocracy, which parallels the raven Moses' attempts to prevent the original rebellion—the almost immediate emergence of a new dictatorship from the leadership of the Revolution, and so on—are unique to Russia and are not necessarily elements of totalitarianism in general.

Some students may argue, however, that the essential similarities among all totalitarian governments—that they are oppressive and abusive—are strong enough that the Russian Revolution can easily be interpreted as a representative of every such Revolution. These students will probably insist that Orwell's use of the Soviet Union as an example to illustrate his point does not negate the overall point.

**2. How effective is the episode that closes this chapter in evoking reader sympathy for the working animals? Is it appropriate for Orwell to appeal to the reader's emotions at this point in the novel?**

**Effective:** Clover's surveying the farm and reflecting on what has happened to the ideals of the Revolution is an effective and emotional pause in the action of the story. We are clearly near the climax as she cannot rise too much higher than the fact that Napoleon has actually turned on the other animals—including other pigs—and that the animal most deserving of Animal Farm's gratitude and respect has been attacked. After such intense action, this reflective pause helps the reader process everything. Clover's tears and the animals' reprising their anthem helps the reader to recall the initial ideals of and hopes for the Revolution.

**Not effective:** The action has been intensifying, and this pause is more an interruption than an interlude. Clover is not thinking anything the reader doesn't already realize, and the reprise of "The Beasts of England" is too sentimental to be truly emotional—much more bathos than pathos.

**Appropriate:** Just as it is appropriate to pause in the action to reflect back on the original ideals of the Revolution, it is appropriate for Orwell to play a little with the reader's emotions. Ultimately, Orwell's disapproval of totalitarianism will not be all that powerful if it remains only an intellectual reaction. In order to completely sway his reader, he must create an emotional impact—sympathy for the animals. It is a necessary and appropriate device.

**Not appropriate:** Since the scene adds nothing to the reader's understanding, appealing to the reader's emotions is a cheap shot. Ironically, Orwell criticizes a government's use of propaganda to manipulate its citizens, and yet he stoops almost to the level of propaganda in this overly sentimental episode.



# Animal Farm

## CHAPTER 8

### Comprehension

**1. What two Commandments are altered in this chapter? How do these revisions promote the pigs' interests?**

The Commandment that read, "No animal shall kill any other animal" has been revised to, "No animal shall kill any other animal without cause." Likewise, the Commandment that once read, "No animal shall drink alcohol" becomes "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess." As was the case with all of the previous revisions, these accommodate violations of the original Commandments that have already been committed by the pigs. Also, the animals still do not fully suspect that the pigs are deceiving them, so they assume they simply remembered the Commandments wrong and that they always read as they were changed to read.

**2. What is the animals' response to discovering Squealer almost in the act of revising the Commandments?**

The animals really have no response other than to conclude that their memories were to blame for their not realizing the actual wording of the Commandments.

**3. How is the destruction of the windmill in this chapter different from its destruction in Chapter 6?**

In Chapter 6, the windmill's destruction was a natural result of poor planning on the part of the animals. Distressing as it was, the animals learned from it, and the possibility to rebuild was evident. This destruction is at the hands of humans in an act of combat. The destruction is so total that rebuilding will be difficult—if not impossible.

### Reader Response

**1. What do you make of the fact that the animals still seem oblivious or indifferent to the pigs' obvious abuses and deceptions?**

Most students will admit to being puzzled by the animals' refusal or inability to grasp what the pigs are doing to them. These students may not be able to offer any rationale for such behavior.

Others may suggest that the animals may simply be tired, and to hold the pigs accountable would be just one more struggle.

Students may also suggest that the animals' disillusionment and sense of betrayal are too strong for them to acknowledge. Students may argue that the animals are simply in denial or are repressing their anger, etc.

Accept all answers that attempt to articulate some sympathy with the animals' plight, even if the student admits to being puzzled by the animals' apparent apathy.

**2. Do you think *Animal Farm* is likely to succeed or fail by the end of the novel? Why?**

Some students may predict the farm will succeed because the animals never seem to fully lose spirit or give up. Others may predict the farm's failure because of the pigs' duplicity and selfishness and the animals' stupidity.

### Analysis

**1. What do the several instances of irony in this chapter contribute to the overall meaning of the novel?**

There are several instances of irony in this chapter that all emphasize the point that the masses are fickle, easily swayed, and slow to act in their own behalf. The wording of the Commandments continues to change, and the animals are vaguely aware of this, but they blame their memories rather than realize that they are being manipulated. They allow Napoleon to switch sides numerous times in his negotiations with Pilkington and Frederick, and they willingly believe his propaganda and adjust their sympathies to lie with whomever Napoleon favors. Their own empty stomachs and aching backs should tell them that their lives



are not better now than they were before the Revolution, but they listen passively to Squealer's statistics, and they willingly learn Minimus's poem. Every ironic turn of events in this chapter adds another example of the mass's inability to think or act for itself or in its own interest.

## 2. In what ways is Minimus's poem a parody?

On the surface, Minimus's poem is structured like a patriotic paean, but its lyric is an ironic blend of high and poetic language and common, even coarse, phrasing: "Friend of the fatherless! Fountain of happiness!" is followed by "Lord of the swill-bucket!" In the poet's attempt to write a formal hymn, he is inconsistent in his attempts to use the "formal" language of an important work of literature; ("Thou are the giver of ..." compared to the later, correct, "Thou watchest over all.") The final sentiment—that the poet's child should praise Napoleon with his "first squeak" (as opposed to "first breath" or "earliest utterance," etc.)—is cheapened by the child's being called a "sucking-pig" and his size being compared to a "pint bottle" or a "rolling pin." The juxtaposition of high and low, poetic and coarse, and the sheer fact that the poem of praise has been written by a pig to celebrate the life and achievements of another pig make it virtually impossible to read this poem as anything but a parody of the type of hyperbolic, overly sentimental verbiage written to advance the reputations of those who have no substance behind their reputations.

## 3. Why is Mr. Frederick's swindling of Napoleon significant to the theme of the novel?

Whether the theme has to do with Communism specifically or totalitarianism in general, Orwell is clearly making a statement about the aptitude and efficacy of such a government. Napoleon was clever enough to work his way to power on *Animal Farm*, and he obviously believed himself to be on an intellectual par with the other farms' leaders. The fact is, however, either because Napoleon was himself inferior or because he did not allow input from advisors or the population, he was not able to conduct successful negotiations and carry out a satisfactory business transaction. His ineptitude put the entire farm and all of the animals at risk.

# Synthesis

## 1. Compare Napoleon's leadership to Snowball's during The Battle of the Cowshed. How was Napoleon inadequate as a military leader and strategist?

Prior to *The Battle of the Cowshed*, Snowball had anticipated a human attack, so he prepared by reading a book about Julius Caesar's campaigns and planning an appropriate defense before the actual threat materialized. Snowball had anticipated the moves of the farmers and planned accordingly. He led the charge against Jones and received battle scars from the encounter. Snowball remained in control and calm, executing his plans perfectly and met with great success.

Napoleon, on the other hand, approaches Frederick's attack in a very different manner. Although rumors had already been spreading that Frederick might attack, it is not until after the discovery of the bank-note forgery is revealed that Napoleon actually begins to plan; this is almost too late. When the battle begins, the unprepared animals are forced to retreat. Napoleon is at a loss. Even after the animals finally do begin to defend themselves, it is not Napoleon who leads the charge. He remains safely in the rear, directing operations. When the outcome appears bleak, Napoleon retreats even farther and waits for help to come from elsewhere. He is pessimistic, afraid, and unable even to rally the animals and prevent the destruction of the windmill.

It is also significant that, while Snowball was injured in his face—obviously advancing with his soldiers—Napoleon's only injury is to the tip of his tail—clearly running away. In short, for all of his stern demeanor and imposing presence, Napoleon is unintelligent and cowardly compared to Snowball.

## 2. What is Benjamin's role in the allegory? What is Orwell suggesting when he describes Benjamin as having "an air almost of amusement" during the battle and later "nodding with a knowing air" when they discover Squealer?

Benjamin is one of the more interesting, yet least noticed, animals on the farm. He is more intelligent than he is given credit for. Although he is obstinate and does only what is required, he is more able than he lets on. He can read, but he does not. He stays neutral in debates. He comments little on the state of the farm's affairs. Yet, his actions are louder than words. His "air of amusement" suggests that he fully expected the humans to attack and destroy the windmill. His "knowing air" when they find Squealer in the barn suggests that he has known about the pigs' abuses all along. The reader has been told only that Benjamin is an "old donkey" and that no one has seen a dead donkey before. With his age have come experience and insight. As a result, there are few surprises for Benjamin. In the beginning of the novel, he could not be enthusiastic about the Revolution because he had seen such efforts fail before. Now, he cannot be overly alarmed because he knows that this state of affairs will also pass away eventually.

**3. How is the battle in this chapter similar to the other two battles in the novel? How is it different?**

The battle is similar in that it pits animal against human, and the animals are victorious. All of the battles are fought on Animal Farm, so in all of them, the animals have been in the position of defending their home.

This battle is different because it is better planned on the part of the humans who now have a plan to demoralize the animals and take back the farm. It is also different in that it is the most difficult victory for the animals. Without effective leadership, the animals cannot present an effective defense, and they almost lose. They also suffer an incredible loss in the destruction of the second windmill.

**Evaluation****1. How successfully has Orwell maintained reader sympathy for the animals? Why?**

**Successful:** The situation for the animals gets steadily worse. They are exhausted from overwork, starved from food shortages, abused by those who would call themselves the animals' liberators, and disheartened by the destruction of their hard-won progress.

**Unsuccessful:** The animals have been too trusting of the pigs and too slow to suspect what it really going on. It is difficult to continue to sympathize with characters who are so incredibly slow or stupid.

**2. How effective a climax is the second destruction of the windmill? Why?**

**Effective:** The second destruction of the windmill is climactic because it revisits an earlier motif with increased stakes and increased consequences. Not only is the windmill an important symbol for the animals, this one is all the more valuable because the animals overcame the despair of the first destruction in order to build it. Now, their despair is even stronger. This loss is more severe also because the destruction is more total. The stones themselves have been pulverized, and the animals must truly start from the absolute beginning. Although, on the surface, this is a repetitive event—the animals struggle to build a windmill, and it gets knocked down—but it is a more intense iteration of this motif. Finally, with this event, and the animals' response to it, the outcome of the novel is determined (making it the climactic event) and needs only to play out.

**Ineffective:** The destruction of the windmill is repetitive and predictable.

# Animal Farm

## CHAPTER 9

### Comprehension

**1. What happens to Boxer?**

Boxer grows ill, probably terminally ill. Since he is no longer able to work and, therefore, of no more use to Animal Farm, a horse slaughterer and glue-maker arrives to take him away.

**2. What is the most likely source of the money for the pigs' whiskey at the end of the chapter?**

The pigs most likely used the money they received by selling Boxer to the horse slaughterer for their whiskey.

**3. When Orwell tells the reader, "Meanwhile life was hard. The winter was as cold as the last one had been, and food was even shorter ... There were many more mouths to feed now," whose births have increased the number of animals to be fed while resources continue to dwindle?**

There are more pigs, as four sows have given birth to a total of 31 new piglets.

**4. Why do the animals continue to struggle, and their lives continue to worsen, while the pigs continue to thrive?**

The animals have been convinced that, even though the quality of their lives is actually less, they are better off because they are toiling "for themselves" and not for the benefit of humans.

**5. Who returns to Animal Farm? What was his allegorical significance earlier in the novel?**

Moses, the raven, returns. He represents the Russian Church.

### Reader Response

**1. Does the treatment of Boxer alter your feeling toward Napoleon and the other pigs? Why or why not?**

Some students may feel that selling the dying Boxer is just one more example of the pigs' despicability. The students may already dislike the pigs to the extent that their dislike cannot really intensify.

Others, however, may have developed a sympathy and admiration for Boxer so that to learn that this is how the pigs treat the one who had been the society's most ardent supporter intensifies the readers' disgust.

Some may have been willing to understand or justify the pigs' actions up to this point, but the pigs' treatment of Boxer may be the final straw.

### Analysis

**1. Discuss the ways in which Boxer's death and its aftermath are ironic?**

There are several ironies in the death of Boxer.

- He falls ill while working on the windmill, having returned to work after a long and painful recuperation from a wound he received in the final battle.
- Throughout the post-Revolution period, Boxer has been the hardest worker, the most inspirational animal, and the most ardent defender of Napoleon and his alleged infallibility.
- Boxer dies still believing in the promises of the Revolution—that, if he recovers from this illness—he will be allowed to retire to the pasture that had once been promised.

- One would expect Boxer to be hailed as a hero of the society for which he worked so hard and sacrificed so much. Instead, he receives a short elegy, an alleged laurel wreath, and becomes the occasion for the pigs' drunken revels.
- While the animals, and the reader, should be able to be satisfied with the idea that Boxer has finally attained some kind of rest, he is still exploited by the pigs, who find a way to benefit even from his corpse.
- The pigs should be grateful to Boxer, not continue to find new ways to exploit him and profit from him.

## 2. List and explain several examples of verbal irony in this chapter.

- "... in those days they had been slaves and now they were free, and that made all the difference..." The "difference," of course is purely hypothetical because the animals are, in truth, no better off than they were before the Revolution. They must convince themselves that they are better off in some abstract, meaningless, way.
- "... if there were hardships to be borne, they were partly offset by the fact that life nowadays had a greater dignity than it had had before." The "dignity" turns out to be nothing more than Napoleon's self-promotion and the application of a level of pomp to mask the actual misery of the animals' lives.
- "Napoleon had commanded that once a week there should be held something called a Spontaneous Demonstration, the object of which was to celebrate the struggles and triumphs of Animal Farm." "Spontaneous" demonstrations cannot be scheduled. The order in which the animals line up for their parade clearly suggests a class system, an absolute contradiction to the principles of Animalism.
- "... it became necessary to elect a President. There was only one candidate, Napoleon, who was elected unanimously." "President," of course is a euphemism for "dictator," and there is no surprise that the only candidate should be elected "unanimously."
- "... the word went round that from somewhere or other the pigs had acquired the money to buy themselves another case of whisky." It should be clear to the animals, as it is clear to the reader, that the money for the whiskey came from the sale of Boxer to the slaughterer. In the end, the Revolution's greatest supporter was sold as scrap to give the pigs' a night of drunkenness.

## 3. List and explain some of the blatant inconsistencies and obvious lies in Napoleon and the other pigs' claims.

The most obvious, of course, is the claim that the animals' lives are better than before the Revolution when they are, of course, worse off.

There is also the claim that Napoleon himself paid for Boxer's final hospitalization and the medicine he supposedly received. The farm has long been short of cash, and as it is a communist society, no one is supposed to have anything more than anyone else, so it is actually impossible that Napoleon would have had private money with which to pay Boxer's expenses.

The establishment of Animal Farm as a "republic" and the election of its "president" are blatant misrepresentations. Nothing had changed either in the governance of the farm or in the lives of the animals, and an election in which there is only one candidate is a sham.

## 4. What is the structural purpose of this chapter? How do you know?

Most likely, the destruction of the second windmill in the previous chapter was the climax of the novel. In this chapter, there is a good deal of summary, and the focus is on the death and disposal of Boxer. Napoleon's election as president, his institution of pomp as a means of self-promotion, even his sale of Boxer do not necessarily advance or intensify the conflict or advance the plot of *Animal Farm's* devolution from its initial promise. Thus, this chapter is most likely the beginning of the falling action, leading to the denouement that will most likely come in Chapter 10.

## Synthesis

### 1. How did Karl Marx describe the role of religion in a society? What is the significance of the return of Moses, the raven, at this point in the novel? What is ironic about this return?

Marx dismissed religion as the “opiate of the people.” Under the rule of Farmer Jones, Moses helped to assuage the dissatisfaction of the animals by promising them a “heavenly” reward (Sugarcandy Mountain) if they bore patiently with their trials on the farm. The Revolution promised a “Sugarcandy life” on the farm. When that better life did not arrive, the leaders of the Revolution promised a pleasant retirement in the pasture. Now, as the first generation of *Animal Farm* is reaching the age when they should be allowed to retire, Moses arrives, again promising a better life on Sugarcandy Mountain. Ironically, the pigs publicly denounce Moses, but they allow him to spread his tale because they now realize that, as long as the animals are pacified by the promise of a better life at some point in the future, they will patiently endure with little chance of rebelling.

### 2. Again, the issue of raising money to purchase goods that the farm cannot produce arises. How is this instance similar to the previous one (Chapter 6)? How is it different?

The two incidents are similar in that there are the admissions that *Animal Farm* cannot be completely self-sustaining, that there are goods the farm cannot produce, and there is a need to trade with the world beyond the farm. They are also similar in that it is the pigs, especially Napoleon, who identify the need and prescribe the solution: The animals will part with some of the fruits of their labors for the common benefit of them all.

The key difference between the two instances, however, is that the first time, the goods that needed to be purchased included oil, nails, string, dog biscuits, iron for horseshoes, and other items that were true needs and would truly benefit everyone on the farm. The “necessary” goods to be purchased now, however, are luxury items—not needs—and are for the enjoyment of the pigs alone.

## Evaluation

### 1. Is the conversation between Boxer and Clover right before Boxer is taken away an example of *pathos* or *bathos*? Why?

**Pathos:** Boxer has been established as one of the primary and most sympathetic characters. He has clearly been the most inspirational, if the most naive, in his unflinching work for the cause and his undying loyalty to Napoleon. While the reader has long been aware of Napoleon's duplicity and Boxer's naivety, this naivety has been more an endearing than alienating quality. Boxer's simple trust that he will actually be allowed to retire to the pasture, and his almost comic desire to learn the rest of the alphabet, are therefore poignant reminders that there is virtually nothing in the reality of *Animal Farm* that was promised to the animals at the start of the Revolution.

**Bathos:** Boxer's naivety and the pigs' duplicity has already been clearly established, and the reader already suspects that Boxer's illness and probable death will simply be the occasion for additional abuse on the part of the pigs. The dramatic irony in Boxer's belief that he will retire to the pasture and improve his mind is too obvious and overly sentimental.

### 2. There is one chapter yet to come in Orwell's animal fable. Does he need a final chapter, or could he have effectively ended his novel with Boxer's death? Why?

**Final chapter:** While Boxer's death and the pigs' most offensive abuse might be an effective end to a story about the Russian Revolution, Orwell has argued that he intended this novel to be more about the dangers of totalitarian governments in general than about any one specific government. If this is truly his intent, there must be at least one more chapter in which the reader learns the long-term results of the Revolution, how generations of animals who did not suffer under Farmer Jones and struggle to establish an animal utopia are faring. Are the current problems with *Animal Farm* due to Napoleon's leadership alone, and might the promise of the Revolution still be fulfilled; or has the reader truly witnessed the ousting of one oppressive regime, only to see another established in its place?

**No final chapter:** Orwell's point is clear: The Revolution is a failure in that the animals who fought to liberate themselves from oppression are still oppressed. The new regime is, in many ways, even worse than the old, and with the passing of time and the deaths of the original participants, Napoleon's lies will become institutionalized, inscribed in the farm's official history. Any information Orwell might provide in a final chapter will be redundant.

**Animal Farm**

## CHAPTER 10

**Comprehension****1. Who are the only remaining participants of the original rebellion against Mr. Jones?**

*Clover, Benjamin, Moses, and some of the pigs are the only ones left who can remember what the farm was like before the rebellion.*

**2. What has happened to the animals who have reached retirement age?**

*The animals who have reached retirement age continue to work as before. The idea that a corner of the pasture would be set aside as a grazing area for retired animals has long since been discarded.*

**3. How have the principles of Animalism and memories of the rebellion been passed on to the new generations?**

*The older animals left on the farm pass on what they remember about Animalism and the history of the rebellion by word of mouth.*

**4. Who are the only groups who seem to have grown richer through the years?**

*Only the dogs and the pigs seem to have prospered from the success of Animal Farm.*

**5. What final act of the pigs does Clover witness that terrifies her?**

*In the yard, Clover sees Squealer walking on his hind legs. Eventually, all of the pigs come out of the farmhouse walking on two legs. Napoleon is the last, wielding a whip in his trotter.*

**6. What transpires between the pigs and the visiting farmers at the end of the novel? What final change does Napoleon make to the animals' hard-won, communist Animal Farm? What puzzling and ominous observation do the animals make of the pigs and the humans?**

*The pigs are visited by the neighboring farmers for a tour and a celebration of new business relations between Animal Farm and the surrounding farms. Mr. Pilkington praises the pigs for running their farm in a more disciplined and orderly fashion than when Mr. Jones was in control.*

*Napoleon decides that the farm should be called by its "proper" name, Manor Farm*

*While the humans and the pigs are celebrating the pigs' triumph, the watching animals find they can no longer distinguish the pigs from the humans.*

**Reader Response****1. In what ways can the rebellion be viewed as both a success and a failure?**

**Success:** *Animal Farm has grown in population and in acreage. New buildings have been added, and an additional windmill is being built. The animals are still in control of the farm; in fact, Animal Farm remains the only farm controlled by animals.*

**Failure:** *The pigs have subverted just about all of Old Major's ideals—the ideals on which the Revolution was founded—for their own gain. The Revolution was supposed to make all animals equal, but the pigs and dogs clearly enjoy a higher standard of living than do the other animals. The animals work just as hard as they did before the Revolution, if not harder; the only difference is that their labor now supports the pigs and dogs instead of the humans. Ultimately, the Revolution has replaced one group of oppressors—the humans—with another—the pigs.*

**2. Predict what will happen to Animal Farm in the future. Be certain to ground your predictions in an understanding of both the evolution of Animal Farm in the novel and the history of the Soviet Union from its founding.**

*Answers must be reasonable extensions of the plot with, perhaps, some awareness of the eventual conditions and events that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.*

*Some of the clues laid in the novel on which reasonable predictions about the farm can be developed are:*



- Benjamin's attitude of having seen it all before. Eventually a new generation of animals will rebel against the oppression of the pigs, but out of that revolution a new oppressor-class will arise ... and so on.
- The humans have already shown themselves to be untrustworthy in their dealings with the animals, so it is quite likely that there will be another act of betrayal and another attack on the farm by the humans.
- The process by which, at the end of the novel, the pigs have become indistinguishable from the humans has been gradual, and the animals have, for the most part not noticed each discrete step. This evolution will continue until the animalist (communist) *Animal Farm* (again called *Manor Farm*) will become indistinguishable from the neighboring farms (essentially capitalistic).
- The pigs have already shown themselves to be inept governors and economic leaders. *Animal Farm* might be prosperous right now, but there will again come disasters, wars, hard winters, crop failures, etc. Eventually, the ineptitude of the pigs will cause *Animal Farm* to collapse from within.

## Analysis

### 1. What does the revelation of the pigs walking on two legs accomplish? Why has Orwell saved this action for last?

The First Commandment, "Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy," is the only Commandment that has not been violated by the pigs. It also seemed the least likely to be violated because an animal's walking on two legs would actually go against nature. The wording of this Commandment is also important. It is not an admonition not to walk on two legs; it is an identification of the enemy.

By having his pigs begin to walk on two legs, Orwell accomplishes the final and strongest condemnation of the Russian Revolution. The leaders of the Revolution—the Communist Party—violated every single one of its stated principles. They violated the rules of Nature in their assumption of power. Orwell has saved this action for last because it is more than merely another violation of the Commandments; by walking on two legs, the pigs have violated the first commandment and have identified themselves as the enemies of the other animals, and, thus of the original Revolution.

### 2. How has Orwell used anthropomorphism, not only to craft an animal fable, but to criticize elements of pre-Revolution Russia and to condemn the totalitarian government that arose after the Revolution?

Of course, anthropomorphism is a necessary element in an animal fable, so it is no shock that *Animal Farm* will be populated with intelligent, talking animals who take on human characteristics. But Orwell takes anthropomorphism to another level in symbolic qualities that govern his choice of animals. Before the Revolution, the choice of a carrion-eating raven—a bird long associated with death, bad omens, and the underworld—to represent the Russian Church is very telling. That it is pigs—animals that, though they are commonly recognized as intelligent, are also considered unclean and are commonly used in similes to suggest gluttony, decadence, filth, and laziness—who represent the new post-Revolution ruling class is also no mistake or coincidence on Orwell's part.

### 3. Which of the pigs does Pilkington most resemble? What is Orwell's purpose in suggesting this resemblance?

When Pilkington speaks at the meeting, he places the struggles between *Animal Farm* and the human farms in a different context. He claims that the animosity that existed between the farms was a result of a misunderstanding, which is clearly a misrepresentation of the facts: the humans were right in thinking that the animals were fomenting revolution. Pilkington's tendency to revise history to suit his current purposes should remind students of Squealer.

## Synthesis

### 1. Compare the reality of *Animal Farm* in Chapter 10 to the principles of Animalism as first proposed by Old Major in Chapter 1.

The reality in Chapter 10 is that the pigs have complete and total control of the farm and its workers. The pigs and dogs alone are benefiting from profits to which they do not contribute. All decisions are made by those in power with no input from the members who will bear the brunt of those decisions. By the end of the novel, the pigs even drop the pretense that they care

what the animals think about what they do. Classes still exist, and there is no true equality. Every one of Old Major's principles has been violated, and the leaders of the post-Revolution society have clearly identified themselves as the enemies of the animals whose liberators they were supposed to have been.

**2. Trace the progress of events and the development of issues from the beginning of the novel that lead to the ultimate culmination that Orwell provides in this chapter. Do NOT merely summarize the plot.**

The steps of the Revolution and the development of the post-Revolution society that make the conclusion of the novel almost inevitable include:

- the inability of the majority of the animals to fully comprehend Old Major's concerns and ideas;
- the premature and unexpected nature of the Revolution itself;
- the lack of any plan for how to operate the farm once the immediate objective of the Revolution is accomplished;
- the inability of the majority of the animals to learn to read;
- the pigs' "simplifying" the Seven Commandments when writing them on the wall of the barn and the animals' acceptance of the pigs' version;
- the animals' lack of participation in *Animal Farm*'s meetings and the relative passivity with which they accept the pigs' increasing power in the meetings;
- Napoleon's unilateral decisions and the fact that no one questions them: the missing milk, the taking of the puppies, etc.
- the pigs' increasing violation—and subsequent altering—of the Seven Commandments;
  - conducting business with humans
  - moving into the farmhouse
  - drinking the whiskey
  - killing other animals in Napoleon's purge
  - walking upright
  - and so on
- the animals' acceptance of the pigs' abuses, changes to the Commandments, and propaganda;
- the animals' constant adherence to the principles of Animalism and their dedication to *Animal Farm*
  - three battles to win and defend the farm
  - building and rebuilding the windmill
  - and so on

Each of the pigs' abuses and the animals' continued passivity clearly indicate the direction that the novel is taking and how the culmination is likely to play out.

## Evaluation

**1. Rather than narrating the events that transpire from the end of Chapter 9 to the “present time,” Orwell chooses to make Chapter 10 essentially a summary of the years that have passed since Boxer’s death. Is this a satisfying way to end the novel, or is the summation of several years’ development something of a letdown? Why?**

**Satisfying:** The repulsive treatment of Boxer’s body is the final abuse that needs to be portrayed in narrative detail. To continue the plot through the several years between Boxer’s death and the “present” when the novel ends would simply add pages of falling action and denouement without adding anything substantive to the novel.

**Letdown:** The novel has been a stirring narrative in which the reader has been invited to become emotionally as well as intellectually involved with the characters and their plight. Chapter 10 reads as if Orwell knew he was finished with his real story and was in a hurry to wrap things up. It is a recap, not a part of the novel, and should have been presented as an afterword.

**2. How effective is the end of the novel, in which the pigs and the humans at the celebration become indistinguishable from one another?**

**Effective:** Anthropomorphism has been the key device in the construction of this animal fable. Allegorically, the animals have all along represented the oppressed, with whom the reader was to sympathize, and the humans have represented the oppressors, the enemy. There could be no better way, then, for Orwell to establish that the pigs have indeed become as bad as Farmer Jones had ever been than to have this newly risen oppressor-class become human themselves.

**Ineffective:** All along, the novel has been an animal fable. The animals have all portrayed some human characteristics, but some of the problems they have encountered have been the result of their being animals. Without hands with thumbs, they were not able to milk the cows, and they had to figure out how to use human tools. That they were able to adapt and how they adapted have been elements in the conflict. For the pigs to suddenly become human violates the rules Orwell has established for the world of his novel.

**Levels of Understanding:**

Using Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains  
to explore George Orwell's *Animal Farm*

# Writing Prompts

**Chapter 1: Analysis, Synthesis**

In a well-organized and supported essay, discuss the extent to which *Animal Farm* is established as an allegorical fable in this first chapter. Analyze the techniques Orwell uses to convey the allegorical nature of the novel.

**Chapter 2: Reader Response, Analysis**

The writing of the Seven Commandments on the wall of the barn is ostensibly a means of formalizing the principles and communicating them in an understandable manner to the animals. Write a well-reasoned and supported essay in which you argue whether or not the painting of the Commandments is likely to prove an effective means of meeting the action's goals.

**Chapter 3: Analysis, Synthesis**

Drawing from the entire novel up to this point for your support, analyze the relationship that Orwell suggests in *Animal Farm* between leadership and privilege. Do not merely provide a summary of the plot.

**Chapter 4: Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation**

Choose either Snowball, Boxer, or Mollie and write a thoughtful, well-supported essay in which you compare his or her role and character before and after the Battle of the Cowshed. Be certain to use specific illustrations from the text to support your thesis.

**Chapter 5: Analysis, Synthesis**

Consider Napoleon's and Snowball's respective characters and roles in the *Animal Farm* society. Write a well-reasoned and supported essay in which you predict what the frequent and intensifying conflicts between the two pigs might foreshadow for future plot and theme development. Be certain to support all of your speculations with evidence from the text.

**Chapter 6: Analysis, Synthesis**

Write a thorough, well-reasoned, and supported essay in which you analyze the role of propaganda in the success of the pigs' assuming and maintaining power on *Animal Farm*.

**Chapter 7: Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation**

Progressively through the novel, the pigs take on human characteristics, evidenced in their behavior, lifestyle,

and even eventually their appearance. Write a well-supported essay in which you analyze Orwell's purpose in incorporating this metamorphosis in his portrayal of the pigs' rise to power. Include an examination of the necessity and effectiveness of this device.

**Chapter 8: Reader Response, Analysis**

Much is revealed about the pigs through their behavior towards others and descriptions of their lifestyle. However, the fact that the working animals accept the pigs' edicts and behavior and do nothing to express disapproval or dissent says something about them. In an organized essay, examine the workers in light of their reactions to the events that affect their lives. Use the text to support your thesis.

**Chapter 9: Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluate**

Irony, especially verbal irony, tends to be one of George Orwell's most common literary devices. Examine the text up to this point and note the incidences of irony, the types of irony used, and the apparent purpose of the irony in each incidence. Then write a well-reasoned and supported essay in which you analyze the overall contribution of irony to the overall impact of *Animal Farm*. To what extent does Orwell's use of irony enhance the novel's emotional and intellectual effect on the reader?

**Chapter 10: Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation**

Write a thoughtful, well-organized essay in which you analyze *Animal Farm* as an allegorical animal fable. Do not merely provide a list of characters, events, and allegorical correspondences. Pay special attention to the effectiveness of the allegory in presenting and supporting Orwell's views to his reader.

**Whole Book Writing Prompt**

George Orwell's allegorical novel, *Animal Farm*, can be read as a satirical commentary on the political environment of the times in which it was written. Write a thorough and well-supported essay in which you infer Orwell's views about the key issues portrayed in the novel: Socialism, totalitarian governments, and the means by which oppressors rise to power. 🐷



**Levels of Understanding:**  
*Using Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains  
to explore George Orwell's*

# *Animal Farm*

## CHAPTER 1

### Comprehension

1. Why are all the farm animals willing to listen to Old Major?

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2. What attributes does Major possess that make him a worthy advisor to the animals for the future?

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3. In what way does Boxer command respect despite being described as “somewhat stupid”?

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4. What term does Major use to address the animals and unite them?

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5. What does Major tell the farm animals in his speech?

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6. What rules does Major establish to be followed by all animals following the rebellion from man's rule?

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**Reader Response**

**1. Is Mr. Jones a true enemy to the animals on the farm? Can he be interpreted to represent all of humanity? Why or why not?**

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**2. How is the arrangement of the animals as they gather in the barn significant?**

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**3. Which animals seem most worthy of admiration? Why? Who seem least worthy? Why?**

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**4. Will Old Major's call for a vote on whether to include wild animals, such as the rats, as comrades be a unifying practice or a dividing one? Explain the reasons behind your answer.**

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**5. What ideas, emotions, or associations do you attach to the word "Comrade"? What does Old Major's use of this word suggest about how the plot of this novel is likely to develop?**

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4. What possible future events or developments might be foreshadowed in the descriptions of the animals and their behavior?

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**Synthesis**

1. What knowledge of history and world events would George Orwell assume his readers had in order to understand fully Major's message and the animal characters found in *Animal Farm*?

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2. How can the ideas expressed in Major's speech be compared to the ideas of Communism?

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# *Animal Farm*

## CHAPTER 2

### Comprehension

1. Why do the pigs become organizers of the Revolution?

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2. What is Animalism?

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3. Why don't all of the animals support the ideas of Animalism?

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4. What is the ultimate impetus for the rebellion?

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5. Who seizes control of farm by assuming leadership? How?

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### Reader Response

1. Are the pigs the best leaders for the Revolution? Why or why not?

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# *Animal Farm*

## CHAPTER 3

### Comprehension

1. What is the role of the pigs on the farm? How does their role distinguish them from the other animals?

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2. What benefits of the freedom do the animals quickly realize?

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3. In what ways does Boxer become the most admired worker of Animal Farm?

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4. What key differences between Napoleon's and Snowball's theories about the operation of the farm become apparent?

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5. By what methods do the pigs begin to manipulate the other animals?

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### Reader Response

1. Is the phrase "worthless parasitical human beings" an accurate description or an exaggeration?

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3. What key themes are illustrated by the birds' objection to, and Squealer's explanation of, the shortening of the commandments? What role does language use play in the pigs' manipulation of the animals?

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4. How does the reader know that Squealer is lying in order to validate the pigs' decision to take the apples and the milk for themselves? What rhetorical devices or techniques of propaganda does he use to deflect the animals' concerns?

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## Synthesis

1. How does Boxer embody the ideals of the Revolution and the principles of Animalism as first spoken of by Major and then developed further by the pigs? What characteristics does Boxer possess that make him a commodity for the pigs?

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**Evaluation**

**1. By now it is fairly clear to the reader that this animal story is an allegory about the Communist Revolution in Russia. Assuming that interpretation, how effective is Orwell's portrayal of the pigs' use of propaganda in furthering his allegorical theme?**

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***Animal Farm***

## CHAPTER 4

**Comprehension**

1. Identify and describe Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick.

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2. How do Pilkington and Frederick attempt to control the spread of news about the success of Animal Farm?

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3. When and why does Mr. Jones reappear in the story?

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4. What honors are bestowed on the animals who fought bravely in the Battle of Cowshed?

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**Reader Response**

1. Which of the two farmers would the animals prefer, Pilkington or Frederick? Why?

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2. Are the farmers justified in their fear of Animal Farm?

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3. What do Boxer's feelings over the presumably dead stable boy suggest about him?

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4. Is Snowball's role in the battle sufficient to establish him as the better leader over Napoleon? Why or why not?

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5. Is Boxer's reaction to the stable boy surprising to the reader? Why or why not? What does it suggest about his future contributions to protecting the farm?

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### **Analysis**

1. What do the pigeons represent in the allegory? Why are they important?

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2. What evidence of leadership is displayed during the Battle of the Cowshed? Who appears as the strongest leader of the animals? Why?

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3. In what ways is the success of the Battle of the Cowshed more important to the pigs than to the animals collectively?

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**Synthesis**

1. In what ways do the events before, during, and after the Battle of the Cowshed mirror or suggest the events of the Russian Revolution and the spread of Communism?

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2. In what ways are the initial battle for control of Animal Farm and the Battle of the Cowshed different? What accounts for those differences?

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**Evaluation**

1. How effective has Orwell been in setting up the removal of Snowball from the farm?

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***Animal Farm***

## CHAPTER 5

**Comprehension**

1. How does Napoleon react to Snowball's ideas for the future of the farm?

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2. Who is the only animal to not take sides in the windmill debate? Why?

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3. How does the dogs' behavior suggest a strong similarity between Napoleon and Mr. Jones?

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4. How does Napoleon dissuade opposition to his views?

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**Reader Response**

1. Is Mollie's behavior a surprise? Why or why not?

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2. Which pig is correct in his approach to the defense of the farm? Why?

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**Analysis**

1. How does Orwell reveal Mollie's deception when she is confronted by Clover?

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2. How does Orwell build tension through this chapter?

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3. What might the dogs' behavior foreshadow?

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4. In what way is the analogy to the Russian Revolution strengthened through the government policies enacted by Napoleon?

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## Synthesis

1. How does Orwell prepare the reader for Mollie's actions?

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2. Whose plan for defense would be more appealing to a Marxist? Why?

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3. How is the description of Napoleon's examination of Snowball's plans for the windmill consistent with earlier descriptions of his character?

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4. What clues have been given up to this point to predict Napoleon's turning the dogs on Snowball?

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***Animal Farm***

## CHAPTER 6

**Comprehension**

1. What argument does Squealer make to quell the animals' unrest?

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2. What changes in work are enacted with Napoleon's assumption of leadership?

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3. How does Napoleon propose to purchase supplies the animals cannot produce on their own?

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4. How do the humans display their admiration of Animal Farm?

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5. How is Napoleon referred to within Chapter 6?

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6. Where do the pigs move to on the farm? How do they justify this their move?

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**Reader Response**

1. Is Boxer wise or foolish to work so tirelessly for the ideas of Animalism and display blind faith in his leaders?

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2. Does Napoleon’s idea to sell the eggs make sense? Why or why not?

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3. What kind of man is the solicitor, Mr. Whymper? How do you know?

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4. Whose actions towards the workers on Animal Farm are worse, the humans’ or the pigs’?

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**Analysis**

1. Where is the dramatic irony in the opening paragraph of this chapter? How does this irony foreshadow future plot development?

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2. What is suggested by the use of the word “Leader” as opposed to “Comrade”?

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3. What does the windmill symbolize for the working-class animals? How does its fall contribute to the development of plot and theme?

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4. What propaganda technique does Napoleon use to discredit Snowball, even after Snowball's expulsion from the farm? What makes this technique especially effective?

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***Animal Farm***

## CHAPTER 7

**Comprehension**

1. How do conditions on the farm begin to change at the beginning of this chapter?

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2. Who is a bigger inspiration to the animals than Squealer? Why?

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3. How does Napoleon fool the outside world about conditions on the farm?

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4. What methods does Napoleon employ to establish and maintain his control over the animals?

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5. How does Boxer deal with his growing suspicion of what is really happening on the farm?

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**Reader Response**

1. Which of the two theories proposed about the windmill is more likely to be true? Why?

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2. Why would the dogs attack Boxer? What may this imply about Napoleon and the other pigs?

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**Analysis**

1. What role does dramatic irony play in the advancement of Orwell's theme?

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2. How do the rising plot events in this chapter suggest the approaching climax?

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**3. What is ironic about Squealer’s “inability” to share the documents that incriminate Snowball? How does this lie contribute to the rapidly rising action of this chapter?**

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**4. How does Orwell use Boxer to represent his view of the typical Soviet citizen?**

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**5. For what probable purpose does Orwell end this chapter with Clover’s tearful reflections about the current state of their Revolution?**

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**Evaluation**

1. In his responses to criticism of his novel, Orwell insisted that *Animal Farm* was not an allegory of the Russian Revolution specifically, but a warning about the dangers of totalitarian governments in general. To what extent is Orwell successful in communicating this general warning? Why or why not?

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2. How effective is the episode that closes this chapter in evoking reader sympathy for the working animals? Is it appropriate for Orwell to appeal to the reader's emotions at this point in the novel?

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***Animal Farm***

## CHAPTER 8

**Comprehension**

1. What two Commandments are altered in this chapter? How do these revisions promote the pigs' interests?

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2. What is the animals' response to discovering Squealer almost in the act of revising the Commandments?

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3. How is the destruction of the windmill in this chapter different from its destruction in Chapter 6?

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**Reader Response**

1. What do you make of the fact that the animals still seem oblivious or indifferent to the pigs' obvious abuses and deceptions?

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2. Do you think *Animal Farm* is likely to succeed or fail by the end of the novel? Why?

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## Synthesis

**1. Compare Napoleon's leadership to Snowball's during The Battle of the Cowshed. How was Napoleon inadequate as a military leader and strategist?**

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**2. What is Benjamin's role in the allegory? What is Orwell suggesting when he describes Benjamin as having "an air almost of amusement" during the battle and later "nodding with a knowing air" when they discover Squealer?**

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**3. How is the battle in this chapter similar to the other two battles in the novel? How is it different?**

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**Evaluation**

1. How successfully has Orwell maintained reader sympathy for the animals? Why?

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2. How effective a climax is the second destruction of the windmill? Why?

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***Animal Farm***

## CHAPTER 9

**Comprehension**

1. What happens to Boxer?

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2. What is the most likely source of the money for the pigs' whiskey at the end of the chapter?

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3. When Orwell tells the reader, "Meanwhile life was hard. The winter was as cold as the last one had been, and food was even shorter ... There were many more mouths to feed now," whose births have increased the number of animals to be fed while resources continue to dwindle?

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4. Why do the animals continue to struggle, and their lives continue to worsen, while the pigs continue to thrive?

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5. Who returns to Animal Farm? What was his allegorical significance earlier in the novel?

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**Reader Response**

1. Does the treatment of Boxer alter your feeling toward Napoleon and the other pigs? Why or why not?

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**Analysis**

1. Discuss the ways in which Boxer's death and its aftermath are ironic?

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2. List and explain several examples of verbal irony in this chapter.

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3. List and explain some of the blatant inconsistencies and obvious lies in Napoleon and the other pigs' claims.

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4. What is the structural purpose of this chapter? How do you know?

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## Synthesis

1. How did Karl Marx describe the role of religion in a society? What is the significance of the return of Moses, the raven, at this point in the novel? What is ironic about this return?

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2. Again, the issue of raising money to purchase goods that the farm cannot produce arises. How is this instance similar to the previous one (Chapter 6)? How is it different?

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***Animal Farm***

## CHAPTER 10

**Comprehension**

1. Who are the only remaining participants of the original rebellion against Mr. Jones?

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2. What has happened to the animals who have reached retirement age?

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3. How have the principles of Animalism and memories of the rebellion been passed on to the new generations?

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4. Who are the only groups who seem to have grown richer through the years?

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5. What final act of the pigs does Clover witness that terrifies her?

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6. What transpires between the pigs and the visiting farmers at the end of the novel? What final change does Napoleon make to the animals' hard-won, communist Animal Farm? What puzzling and ominous observation do the animals make of the pigs and the humans?

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3. Which of the pigs does Pilkington most resemble? What is Orwell's purpose in suggesting this resemblance?

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## Synthesis

1. Compare the reality of *Animal Farm* in Chapter 10 to the principles of Animalism as first proposed by Old Major in Chapter 1.

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2. Trace the progress of events and the development of issues from the beginning of the novel that lead to the ultimate culmination that Orwell provides in this chapter. Do NOT merely summarize the plot.

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**Evaluation**

**1. Rather than narrating the events that transpire from the end of Chapter 9 to the “present time,” Orwell chooses to make Chapter 10 essentially a summary of the years that have passed since Boxer’s death. Is this a satisfying way to end the novel, or is the summation of several years’ development something of a letdown? Why?**

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**2. How effective is the end of the novel, in which the pigs and the humans at the celebration become indistinguishable from one another?**

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