



ANIMAL FARM — STUDY GUIDE

1. Introduction

- **Author:** George Orwell
 - **Published:** 1945
 - **Genre:** Allegorical Novella / Political Satire
 - **Narrative Style:** Third-person, fable-like
 - **Setting:** Manor Farm, England
 - **Premise:** The animals overthrow their human farmer in hopes of creating an equal society, but their revolution is corrupted as the pigs seize power.
 - **Why it's studied:** Powerful exploration of dictatorship, propaganda, corruption, and the betrayal of ideals.
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2. Plot Summary

Overview

After Old Major inspires the animals to rebel against human oppression, they expel Mr Jones and establish Animal Farm. Led by pigs Napoleon and Snowball, the farm initially follows principles of equality — until one pig seizes absolute control.

Part-by-Part Summary

Beginning

- Old Major delivers a revolutionary speech urging rebellion.
- He dies, and the animals rise up against Mr Jones.
- The pigs become leaders; the principles of *Animalism* are established.

Middle

- Snowball and Napoleon compete for leadership.
- Snowball proposes building a windmill; Napoleon disagrees.
- Napoleon uses trained dogs to chase Snowball away and becomes dictator.
- Squealer rewrites commandments and spreads propaganda.
- The pigs exploit the others while pretending to work for the farm's good.

End

- Napoleon becomes indistinguishable from humans.
 - The commandments are replaced with:
 “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.”
 - The animals realise the rebellion has been betrayed.
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3. Setting & Context

Historical Context

- A direct allegory of the **Russian Revolution** and **Stalinist USSR**.
- Napoleon = Stalin, Snowball = Trotsky, Old Major = Marx/Lenin.
- The working animals represent the oppressed working class.

Social Context

- Explores how leaders manipulate language and fear.
- Shows dangers of propaganda and blind loyalty.

Atmosphere

- Begins hopeful, becomes dark and oppressive as leadership becomes tyrannical.
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4. Characters

Napoleon

- Power-hungry dictator
- Uses dogs as secret police
- Symbol of Stalin's tyranny
- Lies, manipulates, and rules through fear

Snowball

- Intelligent, idealistic, creative
- Represents Trotsky
- Focuses on education and progress
- Expelled by Napoleon

Squealer

- Master of propaganda
- Twists language to justify Napoleon's actions
- Exploits the animals' ignorance

Boxer

- Loyal workhorse
- Mottoes: "I will work harder" and "Napoleon is always right."
- Represents exploited working class
- Betrayed and sent to the knacker's

Old Major

- Visionary; inspires rebellion
- Symbol of Marx/Lenin
- Dies before the revolution

Clover

- Gentle and maternal
- Notices corruption but lacks power to challenge it

Benjamin

- Cynical donkey
- Understands what's happening but remains passive

The Dogs

- Napoleon's enforcers
- Represent secret police (NKVD)

5. Themes

Corruption of Power

Power concentrates in few hands; dictatorship emerges.
Napoleon betrays the revolution's ideals.

Propaganda & Language Manipulation

Squealer controls information, rewrites history, and confuses the animals.

Inequality & Exploitation

Despite promises of equality, animals end up worse off than under Jones.

Class & Control

Working animals labour endlessly while pigs profit.

Idealism vs Reality

Old Major's dream is noble but impossible under corrupt leadership.

Violence & Terror

The dogs enforce obedience through intimidation and murder.

6. Form, Structure & Language

Form

- Fable using animals to critique human politics
- Simple style masks complex political ideas

Structure

- Clear rise and fall
- Cyclical ending: farm returns effectively to human rule (pigs = humans)

Language

- Slogans, repetition, persuasive rhetoric
 - Irony throughout
 - Commandments changed gradually to reflect corruption
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7. Key Quotations

Rebellion & Hope

- “Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland...”
→ Revolutionary anthem full of hope.

Propaganda

- “Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?”
→ Squealer manipulating fear.

Exploitation

- “I will work harder.”
→ Boxer’s tragic loyalty.

Corruption of Ideals

- “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.”
→ Final betrayal of equality.

Transformation

- “It was impossible to say which was which.”
→ Pigs become identical to humans.

8. Symbolism & Motifs

The Windmill

- Manipulation of labour
- Symbol of false promises used to control workers

Animalism Commandments

- Reflect moral decay as they are changed

The Dogs

- State terror, intimidation

The Farmhouse

- Wealth and privilege reserved for leaders

Beasts of England

- Lost dream of equality
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9. Important Scenes

- Old Major's speech
 - The rebellion
 - Expulsion of Snowball
 - Execution of animals
 - Boxer's removal
 - Final scene with humans and pigs dining together
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10. Writer's Purpose

Orwell aims to:

- Expose the dangers of totalitarianism
 - Show how revolutions can be corrupted
 - Warn against propaganda and blind obedience
 - Highlight exploitation of working classes
 - Illustrate how language can control society
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11. Sample Essay Questions

- **Theme:** How does Orwell explore the corruption of power?
 - **Character:** Analyse the role of Squealer in controlling the animals.
 - **Setting:** How does the farm setting highlight inequality?
 - **Turning Point:** Discuss the significance of Snowball's expulsion.
 - **Symbolism:** Explain the symbolic importance of the windmill.
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12. Model PEA Paragraph

Point: Orwell uses Squealer to demonstrate how language can control society.

Evidence: Squealer insists, "Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?"

Analysis: By invoking fear, Squealer silences dissent and makes the animals accept exploitation. Orwell suggests propaganda works by exploiting emotion rather than logic.

13. Quick-Revision Checklist

- **Themes:** power, propaganda, inequality, betrayal, class
- **Key characters:** Napoleon, Snowball, Squealer, Boxer
- **Symbols:** windmill, commandments, dogs
- **Quotes:**
 - "I will work harder."
 - "Some animals are more equal..."
 - "Do you not want Jones back?"
- **Turning points:** Snowball's expulsion, executions, Boxer's removal

MINI-ESSAYS

Theme: Power and Corruption

Orwell's fable demonstrates how revolutionary ideals become corrupted when power is centralised. The animals' early unity—"all animals are equal"—quickly erodes as the pigs consolidate privilege. Snowball's expulsion marks the birth of authoritarianism: silencing dissent through force. Napoleon uses propaganda, fear, and revision of history to shape reality—Squealer's constant refrains turn lies into truths. The gradual rule changes, culminating in "all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others," expose how language becomes a tool of oppression. Boxer's tragedy shows the cost borne by the working class: loyalty exploited, labour drained, betrayal rewarded with slaughter. Orwell's warning is stark: tyranny thrives not just on brutality but on passivity, forgetting, and the slow normalisation of injustice.

Turning Point

A. Turning Point: Snowball's Expulsion

Napoleon's dogs terrorise dissent and inaugurate one-voice history. From that moment, commandments can be rewritten, labour increased, and enemies invented. The revolution dies not in argument but in silence.

B. Symbolism: Windmill, Commandments, Milk & Apples

- **Windmill:** misdirection of labour; hope leveraged into control.
- **Commandments:** plastic law; language as a tool to erase memory.
- **Milk & apples:** resource capture by elite; "brainwork" alibi.

C. Setting Analysis

A farm simplifies power relations to reveal political mechanisms. Fences keep out predators—and lock in subjects. Barn walls become the regime's interface.
