

Animal Farm – Core Knowledge

Context: (AO3)

- Based on the events of the **Russian Revolution** from 1917-1923
- A small minority of Russia's population were very **wealthy** whilst a large population experienced extreme **poverty**
- **Tsar Nicholas II** was forced to **abdicate** the throne and the **Communist Party** took control of Russia
- Orwell was a **socialist** and openly **criticised** capitalism and communism

Key themes: (AO1 and AO3)

- Corruptive nature of power
- Leadership
- Education
- Class Systems
- Politics



Key events: (AO1)

- The animals have been mistreated by Mr Jones for a long time. Old Major calls a meeting where he delivers a speech encouraging the animals to begin a revolution.
- The animals revolt and take over the farm. Mr Jones leaves.
- The animals are happy and content for a short time. The pigs lead the farm together. They set up Animalism.
- Napoleon takes control. Snowball is chased from the farm by trained dogs.
- Life for the animals is full of misery and cruelty under Napoleon's dictatorship. The 7 commandments of Animalism are manipulated.
- At the end, the animals cannot tell the difference between the pigs and the humans.

Key literary features: (AO2)



Feature	Definition	Example
Allegory	A narrative that has a hidden meaning (usually moral or political)	Animal Farm is an allegory of the Russian Revolution.
Cyclical narrative	A narrative that ends in the same way it begins.	In the opening of the novel, the animals suffer under the leadership of Mr Jones. By the end, they suffer under Napoleon's dictatorship
Fable	A story with a moral message.	The narrative provides a moral message about power.
Anthropomorphism	When animals are given human characteristics and/or form.	The animals all behave like humans: they speak, have class systems, read etc
Irony	When a situation is opposite to what we would expect.	It is ironic that the pigs wear clothes because they originally prevented the animals from doing this.
Juxtaposition/Contrast	When opposite ideas are placed together.	Snowball's leadership is juxtaposed with Napoleon's
Metaphor	When something is describes as if it was something else.	"Ribbons are a badge of slavery"
Motif	A recurring idea in a text.	Food and drink is a motif for the labour of the working class.
Symbolism	The use of words or symbols to represent bigger ideas.	Napoleon's whip is a symbol of his violence and tyranny.



Key characters (AO1)

Character	Description
Mr Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cruel owner of Manor Farm• Is forced off the farm when the animals revolt• Represents Tsar Nicholas II
Old Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A pig• Represents Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin• His speech inspires the animals to start the revolution
Snowball	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A pig• Represents Leon Trotsky• Described as a strong leader who is skilled in battle• Is driven off the farm by Napoleon
Napoleon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A pig• Represents Joseph Stalin• A cruel and tyrannical leader
Boxer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A horse• Represents the working class• A hard worker but uneducated
Squealer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A pig• Represents communist propaganda• Napoleon's 'mouthpiece'

Key Vocabulary (AO1)

Word	Definition
Propaganda	Biased and/or misleading information used to promote a political cause or point of view.
Dictatorship	A country or state that is ruled by a leader with absolute control (a dictator).
Rhetoric	Persuasive language.
Communism	A political system where all property and resources are owned and managed by the community. Everyone contributes according to their need and/or ability.
Socialism	A political system where property and resources are owned and managed by the government.
Revolution	A forced overthrowing of the government in favour of a new system.
Tyranny	A cruel and unreasonable rule.
The Proletariat	Working class people.
Exploitation	The act of using someone or something unfairly for your own advantage.

Paired Quotations:

Pairing	Analysis
<p>'All animals are equal'</p> <p>'All animals are equal, but some are more equal than other'</p>	<p>Animalism is established on the principle of equality.</p> <p>Contrastingly, the commandment is amended by the end of the novella to illustrate the abuse of logic and language that maintains the pigs' power. Their ambiguity allows them to manipulate the rules for their self-interests.</p>
<p>'Too drunk to remember to shut the pop hole'</p> <p>'Fill your glasses to the brim' + 'acquired the money to buy themselves another crate of whiskey'</p>	<p>Mr Jones' careless neglect of the animals represents the inadequate leadership of Tsar Nicholas II.</p> <p>By the end of the novella, the pigs replace the careless and abusive leadership of Mr Jones. The verb 'fill' demonstrates their luxurious lifestyle while the other animals suffer, which is reinforced by the adjective 'another', highlighting their limitless greed.</p>
<p>'He seized a gun [...] let fly a charge'</p> <p>'He carried a whip in his trotter. There was a deadly silence'.</p>	<p>The noun 'gun' symbolises the violent and tyrannical rule of Mr Jones, whilst the verb 'fly' creates a sense of recklessness and disregard for the welfare of the animals.</p> <p>By the end of the novella, Napoleon has replaced the tyrannical rule of the humans. Traditionally, 'whips' are used to control animals and are a symbol of slavery; Orwell uses the irony of a pig holding a 'whip' here to criticise the hypocrisy of Napoleon's – and allegorically Stalin's – leadership.</p>
<p>'Our lives are miserable, laborious, and short'</p> <p>'Their life, as far as they knew, was as it had always been [...] they were generally hungry'</p>	<p>Old Major's use of tripling here illustrates his talent for rhetoric, mirroring Lenin's speeches towards the beginning of the Russian Revolution. The eloquence of his language allows him to persuade the farm animals to instigate the revolution.</p> <p>By the end of the novella, nothing has changed for the animals. The cyclical nature of their suffering is used by Orwell to demonstrate the futility of the revolution.</p>
<p>'He could turn black into white'</p> <p>'It was also found that the stupider animals [...] were unable to learn the Seven Commandments by heart'.</p>	<p>Squealer uses language to justify the self-serving decision making of the pigs. His character represents the use of communist propaganda to conceal the truth during the Russian Revolution. The 'black and white' alludes to the way in which this spread through the newspapers.</p> <p>The lack of education of the 'lesser' animals enables the pigs to manipulate language in order to justify their abuse. The adjective 'stupider' conveys the ruthless superiority of the pigs.</p>
<p>'Man is the only real enemy we have'</p> <p>'Looked from pig to man, and from man to pig [...] it was impossible to say which was which'</p>	<p>Old Major's words demonstrate the collective belief of the animals at the beginning of the allegory, with the pronoun 'we' highlighting the equality between them. However, there is a sense of irony to his imperative; arguably, he tells the animals what to believe, indicating a level of control from the outset.</p> <p>This symbolises the idea that Mr Jones' violent rule has been replaced by the pigs at the end of the novella. The adjective 'impossible' conveys the loss of hope and defeat of the animals. This development from the beginning is used by Orwell to reveal the hypocrisy of communist rule.</p>