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Study Guide

for

Animal Farm

by George Orwell



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Meet George Orwell



Liberty is telling people what they do not want to hear.

—George Orwell

In the years since the publication of *Animal Farm* and *1984*, both of which conjure visions of modern government's dangerous power, critics have studied and analyzed George Orwell's personal life. Orwell was a man who had a reputation for standing apart and even making a virtue of his detachment. This "outsider" position often led him to oppose the crowd.

Orwell began life as Eric Arthur Blair (George Orwell was a pen name he adopted later for its "manly, English, country-sounding ring.") He spent his early years in India as a lonely boy who liked to make up stories and talk with imaginary companions. He began to "write" before he even knew how, dictating poems to his mother, and perhaps saw this outlet as an alternative to the human relationships he found so difficult. Refuge in words and ideas became increasingly important when Orwell's parents sent him, at age eight, to boarding school in England.

Later, instead of going on to university, he decided to take a job in Burma with the Indian Imperial Police. Orwell wrote about this experience in *Burmese Days* (1934) and in the essay "Shooting an Elephant." At odds with British

colonial rule, Orwell said he "theoretically—and secretly, of course . . . was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British."

Returning to England to recover from a bout of the chronic lung illness that plagued him all his life, Orwell began his writing career in earnest. Over the next two decades, he wrote newspaper columns, novels, essays, and radio broadcasts, most of which grew out of his own personal experience.

Orwell's beliefs about politics were affected by his experiences fighting in the Spanish Civil War. He viewed socialists, communists, and fascists as repressive and self-serving. Orwell patriotically supported England during World War II, but remained skeptical of governments and their willingness to forsake ideals in favor of power.

With each book or essay, Orwell solidified his role as the outsider willing to question any group's ideology. Orwell spoke his mind with *Animal Farm*, in which he criticized the Soviet Union despite its role as a World War II ally of Great Britain. At first, no one would publish the novel, but when *Animal Farm* finally appeared in 1945 it was a success. It was later adapted both as an animated film and as a play.

In explaining how he came to write *Animal Farm*, Orwell says he once saw a little boy whipping a horse:

It struck me that if only such animals became aware of their strength we should have no power over them, and that men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the [worker].

Orwell said it was the first book in which he consciously tried to blend artistic and political goals. Orwell's final novel, *1984*, continued that effort with a grim portrayal of a world totally under government control.

Orwell pursued his writing career faithfully, although it was not always easy. In his final days he made the statement, "Writing . . . is a horrible, exhausting struggle . . . One would never undertake such a thing if one were not driven . . ."

Introducing the Novel

Animal Farm is written on many levels. It is already a children's story in its own right. . . . [It] is also a lament for the fate of revolutions and the hopes contained in them. It is a moving comment on man's constant compromise with the truth.

—John Atkins, *George Orwell*

On the publication of *Animal Farm* in 1945, George Orwell discovered with horror that booksellers were placing his novel on children's shelves. According to his housekeeper, he began traveling from bookstore to bookstore requesting that the book be shelved with adult works. This dual identity—as children's story and adult satire—has stayed with Orwell's novel for more than fifty years.

Animal Farm tells the story of Farmer Jones's animals who rise up in rebellion and take over the farm. Tired of being exploited solely for human gain, the animals—who have human characteristics such as the power of speech—vow to create a new and more just society.

Though the novel reads like a fairy story, and Orwell subtitles it as just that, it is also a satire containing a message about world politics and especially the former Soviet Union in particular. Since the Bolshevik revolutions of the early 1900s, the former Soviet Union had captured the attention of the world with its socialist experiment. Stalin's form of government had some supporters in Britain and the United States, but Orwell was against this system.

In a **satire**, the writer attacks a serious issue by presenting it in a ridiculous light or otherwise poking fun at it. Orwell uses satire to expose what he saw as the myth of Soviet socialism. Thus, the novel tells a story that people of all ages can understand, but it also tells us a second story—that of the real-life Revolution. Many critics have matched in great detail the story's characters to historical persons—for example, linking the power struggle between Napoleon and Snowball to the historical feuding between Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky for control of the Soviet Union. Critics

also believe that Old Major represents Karl Marx, who dies before realizing his dream. Other comparisons include Moses as the Russian Orthodox church, Boxer and Clover as workers, the sheep as the general public, Squealer as Stalin's government news agency, the dogs as Stalin's military police, and Farmer Jones as Czar Nicholas II. The farm's neighbors, Pilkington and Frederick, are said to represent Great Britain and Germany, while Mollie suggests the old Russian aristocracy, which resists change.

A tremendous success when published, *Animal Farm* has since become part of school curriculums and popular literary culture. Readers and critics alike have enjoyed its imaginative premise and the engaging charm of its animal characters. Orwell's straightforward language draws readers into the farm's world, while the witty underlying satire invites serious analysis. In *George Orwell: A Personal Memoir*, T. R. Fyvel writes:

[Orwell] turned the domestic animals on the farm into immediately recognizable and memorable and sometimes lovable characters.

Animal Farm is more than a fairy story. It is a commentary on the the relevance of independent thought, truth, and justice.

THE TIME AND PLACE

An **allegory** is a narrative that can be read on more than one level. Critics often consider *Animal Farm* to be an allegory of the Russian Revolution. In the early 1900s, Russia's Czar Nicholas II faced an increasingly discontented populace. Freed from feudal serfdom in 1861, many Russian peasants were struggling to survive under an oppressive government. By 1917, amidst the tremendous suffering of World War I, a revolution began. In two major battles, the Czar's government was overthrown and replaced by the Bolshevik leadership of Vladimir Lenin. When Lenin died in 1924, his former colleagues Leon Trotsky, hero of the early Revolution, and Joseph Stalin, head of the Communist Party, struggled for power. Stalin won the battle, and he deported Trotsky into permanent exile.

Once in power, Stalin began, with despotic urgency and exalted nationalism, to move the Soviet Union into the modern industrial age. His government seized land in order to create collective farms. Stalin's Five Year Plan was an attempt to modernize Soviet industry. To counter resistance

(many peasants refused to give up their land), Stalin used vicious military tactics. Rigged trials led to executions of an estimated 20 million government officials and ordinary citizens. The government controlled the flow and content of information to the people, and all but outlawed churches.

Did You Know?

Orwell initially struggled to find a publisher for *Animal Farm*. Many liberal intellectuals in Europe admired the Soviet experiment with socialism. They believed socialism would produce a society in which everyone—workers and employers—was equal, and in which there were no upper, middle, or lower classes. In Orwell's words "they want[ed] to believe that, somewhere, a really Socialist country does actually exist." Also, British publishers were hesitant to publicly criticize their Soviet allies as World War II came to a close. The book was published in 1945, after Germany surrendered.

Orwell believed that the basis for society was human decency and common sense, which conflicted with the ideals for society that were prevalent at the time: socialism, capitalism, communism, and fascism, to name a few. As an individualist who believed that his own experiences should guide his philosophy, he was often at odds with these popular ideas. He believed that governments were encroaching on the individual's freedom of choice, love of family, and tolerance for others. He emphasized honesty, individuality, and the welfare of society throughout his writings.

Before You Read

Animal Farm Chapters 1–4

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Why do you think revolutions occur? What circumstances would lead people to overthrow the daily political and economical structure of their lives?

List It

With a partner, identify two or three revolutions that occurred more than ten years ago. What circumstances, if any, do these revolutions have in common? What sorts of goals were the revolutionaries seeking to accomplish? In retrospect were the revolutions successful?

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out about farm animals who decide that revolution is the necessary course.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

Many of the ideals behind the Soviet revolution were based on the writings and teachings of Karl Marx. A German intellectual who lived in the mid-1800s, Marx believed that societies are divided into two segments, a working class and an owner class. The working class creates all the products, while the owner class enjoys all the benefits of these products. This class division leads to inequality and oppression of the working class. Marx's objective was to create a classless society in which the work is shared by all for the benefit of all, and he believed revolution was the way to achieve this goal.

In leading workers toward revolution, Marx used slogans like "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs." He also urged people to give up their religion, which he believed gave them false hope for a better life in heaven. The character of Old Major in *Animal Farm* is sometimes interpreted as a representation of Karl Marx. Major's speech in the novel's opening chapter reflects many Marxist ideas, from the opening "Comrades," a typical form of address in the former Soviet Union, to the revolutionary song he teaches the other animals.

Character Types

A **fable** is a narration intended to enforce a useful truth. Fables have two important characteristics. First, they teach a moral or lesson. In *Animal Farm*, the moral involves Orwell's views about Soviet politics. Second, the characters are most frequently animals. These animal characters often function as a satiric device to point out the follies of humankind. Though Old Major, Snowball, and Napoleon may represent Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky, and Joseph Stalin, many of the story characters are much more general. Some animals are grouped together as a single character—"the sheep," "the hens," and "the dogs." Orwell also capitalizes on the traits generally associated with particular animals, such as sheep as followers and dogs as loyal.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

cannibalism [kan'ə bə liz'əm] *n.* practice of eating one's own kind

cryptic [krip'tik] *adj.* intended to be mysterious or obscure

gambol [gam'bəl] *v.* to skip about in play

ignominious [ig'nə min'ē əs] *adj.* shameful; dishonorable

indefatigable [in'di fat'ə gə bəl] *adj.* untiring

parasitical [par'ə sit'i kəl] *adj.* like a parasite; gaining benefits from a host it injures

Active Reading

Animal Farm Chapters 1–4

The major characters in *Animal Farm* are introduced in the first four chapters. As you read, think about the purpose of each of Orwell's characters. Complete the chart by noting details that describe each character or by listing key actions.

Character	Characteristics / Actions / Purpose
Old Major	gets the revolution started; inspires hope for real change

Responding

Animal Farm Chapters 1–4

Personal Response

What is your reaction to the animals' revolution?

Do you sympathize with the animals' complaints and goals? Why or why not?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. Describe how the Rebellion takes place. How does the animals' behavior during the Rebellion suggest both human and animal characteristics?

2. How do the pigs gain the rights to the cow's milk? Why do the other animals allow this to occur? What does this event suggest about the power hierarchy on the farm?

3. How does the original vision of Animalism become the slogan "Four legs bad, two legs good"? In your opinion, do the animals want rules with simple language? What kind of language do the pigs use?

Responding

Animal Farm Chapters 1–4

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. What technique does Orwell use to cast doubt on the likelihood of a successful revolution?

5. Characterize Snowball as a leader. Do you think his reaction to the stable-boy's death is the appropriate reaction to have during a revolution?

Literature and Writing

Battle Log

The animals recognize the Battle of the Cowshed as a pivotal moment in the Revolution. What effects did the battle have on the animals, individually and as a group? On your own paper, write a short battle log describing the events and evaluating the animals' behavior. Share your battle log with a partner and compare your evaluations of the events and the effects on the animals.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

While addressing a serious topic on one level, the plot of *Animal Farm*, when taken literally, is also hilariously funny. Divide Chapters 1 through 4 among the members of your group. Identify passages or scenes you find especially funny. Briefly role-play these scenes and then discuss how Orwell creates humor. Present one or two of your scenes to the rest of the class.

Music Connection

Write a revolutionary song like *Beasts of England*. Choose one of the revolutions you identified in the **Focus Activity** on page 12. Learn a little more about the surrounding historical events, then build an analysis of the rebels' emotions. Set your song to original music or to that of a popular song. If possible, record or perform the song for the class.

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Before You Read

Animal Farm Chapters 5–7

FOCUS ACTIVITY

How would you feel if the rules for correct behavior kept changing?

Discuss

In a small group, discuss some methods people have for persuading others to follow particular rules of behavior. Consider ways in which this persuasion relies on bias and manipulation of information.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how Napoleon persuades the other animals to follow his rules.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

One of Orwell's concerns about the Soviet state was that it used language to distort historical events. After Stalin bullied Leon Trotsky out of the country, he systematically removed any trace of Trotsky from Soviet history—took him out of photographs, censored his papers, and so on. He also used *Pravda*, his news agency, to control the information people received. In Chapters 5 through 7, Orwell repeatedly calls readers' attention to both Napoleon's manipulation of information and the animals' willingness to believe him.

Power Struggle

In Chapters 5 through 7, the battle for power between Snowball and Napoleon comes to its climax. In Soviet history, a similar battle raged between two very different men, Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin. Stalin exercised power through regulations and rules. As its leader, he controlled the Communist Party bureaucracy. Trotsky had proven himself a masterful military strategist and inspirational leader during the Russian Civil War. He wanted to limit government power. The two also disagreed about how to industrialize and whether to focus on Soviet or worldwide socialism. Stalin took control in 1925—control he kept largely through tactics of terror.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

canvas [kənˈvəs] *v.* to request support

coccidiosis [kɒk siˈdē ɔˈsɪs] *n.* parasitic disease

dynamo [dīˈnə mō] *n.* electric generator

embolden [em bɔldˈən] *v.* to instill with courage

malignity [mə ligˈnə tē] *n.* an example of evil behavior

manoeuvre [mə nɔvˈvər] (U.S.: maneuver) *n.* strategy to gain a particular aim

perpendicularity [pɜrˈpən dik yə larˈə tē] *n.* the state of being perpendicular, or at right angles, to a specified plane

superintendence [sɔvˈprin tenˈdɛns] *n.* the act of directing

Active Reading

Animal Farm Chapters 5-7

Orwell's characters and narrator use language to communicate hidden agendas. Sometimes Orwell hints that language should be carefully questioned, other times it's up to the reader to notice. As you read Chapters 5 through 7, complete the chart below by filling in some examples of manipulative communication. Then state what you think the language really means. Use as many boxes as you need. You may paraphrase the passages from the text.

The Words

What They Really Mean

In future all questions relating to the working of the farm would be settled by a special committee of pigs presided over by himself.

Napoleon is going to make all the decisions from now on.

Responding

Animal Farm Chapters 5–7

Personal Response

What was your reaction to Snowball's expulsion from Animal Farm?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. What happens to Snowball during the meeting about the windmill? What events in Soviet history does this scene suggest?

2. Identify three ways that Napoleon tries to solidify his leadership position on the farm. How does the process of decision-making on the farm change under Napoleon's leadership?

3. Why do the executions take place? What message do these events send to the animals about their role in a future society?

Responding

Animal Farm Chapters 5–7

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. How does Orwell compare *Animal Farm* under Napoleon’s leadership, to its exploited state under Farmer Jones’s rule? What attitude about totalitarian government do you think Orwell conveys?

5. Do you think it’s fair that those who are more educated or more skilled—like the pigs in *Animal Farm*—have more influence in decision making? Consider how decisions are made in your community, state, or in the nation.

Literature and Writing

Political Speech

What do you think of the way Napoleon runs the farm? Would you support his leadership? Imagine you are a newcomer to the farm. Write a political speech advocating either support or opposition to Napoleon’s views and methods.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

Each time the animals question Napoleon’s interpretation of the farm rules, Squealer suggests they’ve misunderstood those rules. Recall the discussion you had for the **Focus Activity** on page 16. Within your group, trace the changes Napoleon makes to the rules as he goes along. Identify and discuss the animals’ reactions to the changes.

Learning for Life

Governments, like businesses, need to convey a particular image to their citizens and to other nations in the world. They use public relations experts to craft that image and communicate it through electronic and print media, word of mouth, and specific policies. Play the role of a public relations planner and analyze how Napoleon might best present the farm to its neighbors. Write a list of ideas and be prepared to present them orally to the rest of the class. You might consider including visual elements in your presentation, such as charts and graphs, or illustrations.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

Animal Farm Chapters 8–10

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Do you think revolution is worth the upheaval and damage it inevitably causes? Can it bring about real and lasting change? Why or why not?

Debate It

With a partner, identify and discuss factors that a government can modify (such as policies) and those that it cannot (such as climate conditions). Consider also whether there are elements to the human condition so basic that no revolution can change them.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out the ultimate consequences of the animals' revolution.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

Orwell pokes fun at the animals' revolution throughout the novel by revealing to readers information that the characters do not know or acknowledge. This is called using **irony**. Though *Animal Farm* is narrated from the point of view of the lower animals, who appear to grasp very little of the power struggles and political jostling, readers can clearly sense Orwell's commentary on the events. In the final chapters, Orwell's heightened use of irony brings the story to a dramatic and unsettling conclusion that clearly spells out the author's concerns about Soviet socialism.

Allies and Enemies

Napoleon wants the farm to have greater contact with the outside world. Joseph Stalin had similar visions for the Soviet Union. During the 1930s, he was torn between allying himself with Western capitalist nations or with Adolf Hitler's fascist German government. The Soviet propaganda machine defiled each "enemy" in turn as Stalin shifted allegiances. In 1939 Stalin pledged himself to Hitler by signing a "non-aggression pact." Hitler broke his promise and invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. The Soviets then became allies with the West. At first, Hitler had great success against Stalin's less modern armies. Ultimately, the Soviet army turned the tide with the Battle of Stalingrad, though the city was nearly destroyed and thousands of Soviets killed.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

beatifically [bē'ə tīf'ə kəl lē] *adv.* in a manner suggesting bliss

demeanor [di mē'nər] *n.* outward manner

deputation [dep'yə tā'shən] *n.* a group appointed to represent others

devotees [dev'ə tēz'] *n.* ardent followers

inebriates [i nē'brē its] *n.* those who are habitually drunk

interment [in tur'mənt] *n.* the act of burial

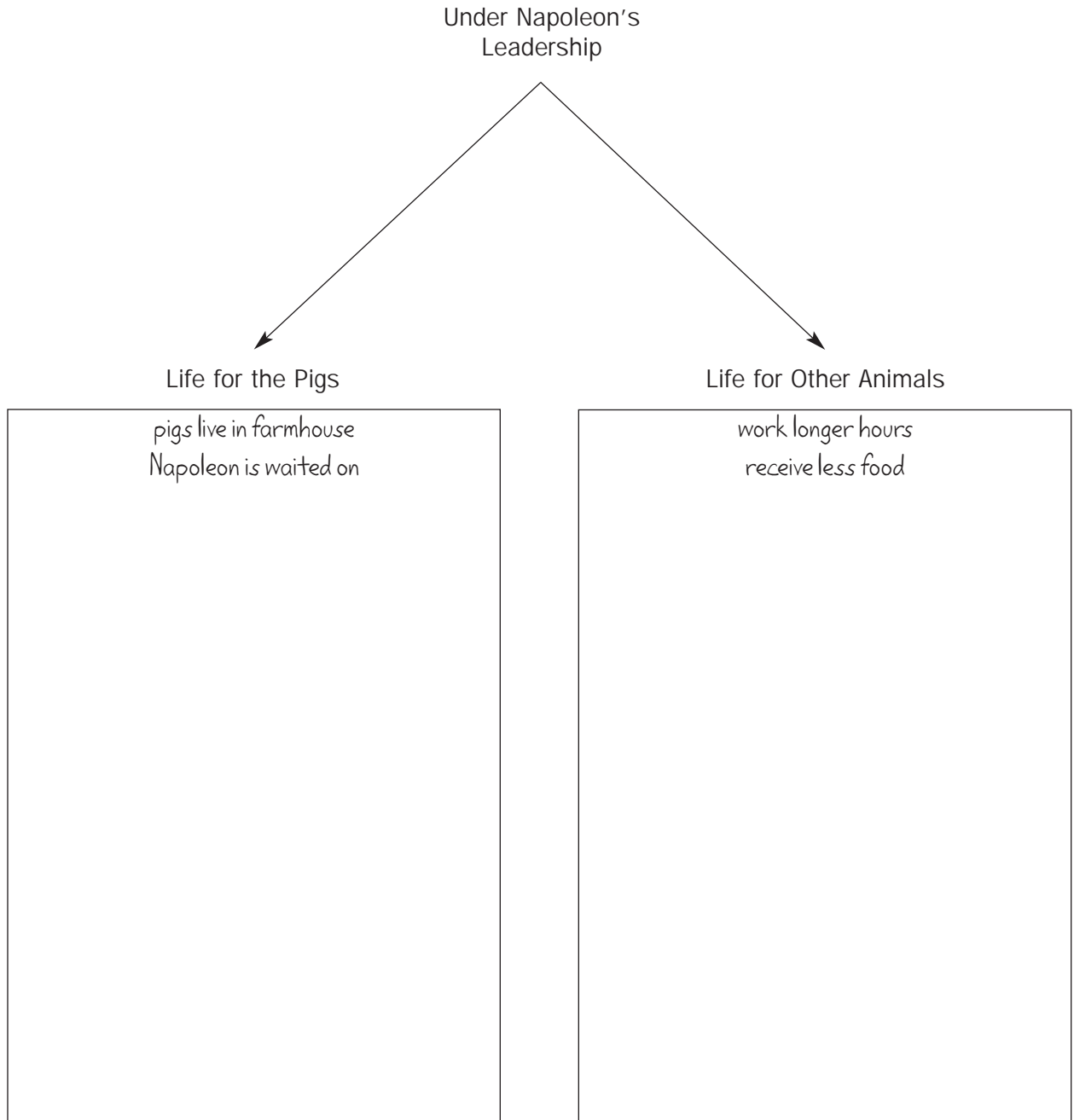
machinations [mak'ə nā'shəns] *n.* scheming actions

taciturn [tas'ə turn'] *adj.* not inclined to talking

Active Reading

Animal Farm Chapters 8–10

As Napoleon takes over leadership of the farm, a new social and political structure emerges. This restructuring leads to many changes in power and privilege among the animals. As you read, use the diagram below to record and compare the living conditions of the pigs with the living conditions of the other animals.



Responding

Animal Farm Chapters 8–10

Personal Response

What is your reaction to the novel's ending? For example, do you find it uplifting, depressing, cynical? Explain.

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. What dealings does Napoleon have with Frederick and Pilkington? How does the battle over the windmill affect the animals? What events from Soviet history is Orwell highlighting?

2. What happens to Boxer and how do the other animals learn of his fate? How do they come to a final conclusion about these events?

3. What changes are made to the Fifth and Sixth Commandments? How is the entire list of Commandments ultimately refashioned? What point is Orwell making about the role of communication in Soviet society?

Responding

Animal Farm Chapters 8–10

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. In Chapter 10 the pigs begin to walk on two legs. In your opinion is this evolution a sign of progress? Explain.

5. Some critics believe that, at the end of the book, Orwell suggests that the pigs and human political leaders are interchangeable. Do you think most government rulers are interchangeable? How might power change those who have it? Explain.

Literature and Writing

Feature Article

Analyze the descriptions of Napoleon’s physical and behavioral characteristics found in Chapters 9 and 10. On a separate sheet of paper, use these details to write a profile of Napoleon for *Animal Farm*’s local newspaper.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

The animals’ initial revolution has faded into the official legend written by Squealer. What if the animals had the same knowledge and insight that you as a reader have? With your groups, identify places in Chapters 8 through 10 where this knowledge might change the course of events. Then predict what might have happened had the animals possessed such knowledge.

Social Studies Connection

Do you think the animals’ lives have changed significantly from the beginning of the book to the end? Think back to the **Focus Activity** on page 20, and consider how much revolution changes people’s everyday lives. Then use the Internet, media articles, and organizations such as Amnesty International or the Red Cross to gather information about people who live in nations that have undergone revolution. Focus your research on how people’s daily lives have changed. Present your findings in a written or oral report.

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Responding

Animal Farm

Personal Response

Animal Farm contains many extremely effective scenes. Some are humorous or witty, others are bitterly ironic or pessimistic. Which scene did you find most memorable and effective? Why?

Writing About the Novel

Orwell's writing is infused with messages and morals. Which ones did you recognize? How would you define Orwell's main point? On a separate sheet of paper, paraphrase and explain *Animal Farm*'s key moral or morals. Support your explanation with specific examples, motifs, and plot elements from the novel.



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The Last Word

Matthew Arnold

Before You Read

Focus Question

How would you define the word *persevere*? How would you define the word *acquiesce*? In what situations might it be important to persevere? When might it be wiser to acquiesce?

Background

Although Matthew Arnold lived and wrote approximately seventy-five years before George Orwell, his apprehension about the place of religion and politics in society paralleled that of Orwell. The question of how to live a full and enjoyable life in a modern industrial society greatly concerned Arnold and permeated his poems and essays during the 1860s. Arnold viewed his world as dominated by leaders who were not so much wicked as they were ignorant, narrow-minded, and dull. Arnold's poetry has been noted for its sense of lonely isolation, melancholy, and for a longing for serenity he can not seem to find.

Responding to the Reading

1. What advice does the speaker give to those who want to engage in social criticism or reform in order to make significant changes in society? Does he believe in persevering or acquiescing in the face of opposition?

2. What do you think the speaker means when he says that "Geese are swans, and swans are geese"? Use other images and examples from the poem to support your answer.

3. **Making Connections** In your opinion, would Arnold and Orwell have agreed about the possibility of successful social revolution? Is Arnold's purpose in writing "The Last Word" the same as or different from Orwell's purpose in writing *Animal Farm*? Use elements of both the poem and the novel to support your answers. How do these writers' thoughts compare with your own? Explain your answer.

Creative Writing

A **haiku** is a form of Japanese poetry that states, in three lines of five, seven, and five syllables, a picture designed to arouse a distinct emotion or a specific insight into a topic or idea. Choose either *Animal Farm* or "The Last Word" and compose a haiku that reflects your understanding of the author's ideas. Share your haiku with the class.

The Freedom of the Press

George Orwell

Before You Read

Focus Question

What exactly is censorship? How does a government typically exercise its power of censorship? How might this power be misused?

Background

George Orwell was an observant and outspoken writer. He wrote about injustice both as a novelist and as a journalist. This reading is Orwell's proposed but, until recently, unpublished preface to the original 1945 edition of *Animal Farm*.

Responding to the Reading

1. According to Orwell, what is the worst enemy a journalist has to face in England? Why do you think he believes this?

2. Orwell writes, "freedom, as Rosa Luxemburg said, is 'freedom for the other fellow.' " What do you think this means?

3. **Making Connections** How does reading Orwell's preface affect your interpretation of *Animal Farm*?

Debate

The regulation of information has long been a subject of controversy. Organize a debate on a subject of censorship—for example, the placement of warning labels on CDs containing explicit lyrics. How is the appropriateness of such censorship determined? What about labeling music on the radio, on television, or on the Internet? Do we as a society have a responsibility to censor music for children? Try to make each person respond to what the other says. Your debate should equally address both sides of the issue.

from Leaves from a Russian Diary— and Thirty Years After Pitirim A. Sorokin

Before You Read

Focus Question

Which personal freedoms are most important to you and why? How would you react if any of your personal freedoms were taken away?

Background

Pitirim A. Sorokin, born in Russia in 1889, was an important figure in sociology. Sorokin boldly wrote of the Russian Revolution from the perspective of a person who lived through it. This passage from his diary paints a vivid picture of the persecution to which people were subjected, including the mass starvation in Russia that occurred in 1921 and claimed many lives. What Sorokin witnessed and experienced gives context to the oppression and starvation experienced by the animals in Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

Responding to the Reading

1. Why did buying “the little one could afford” give people “the most intense happiness”?

2. Which of the oppressive conditions described by Sorokin do you also see in *Animal Farm*?

3. **Making Connections** What advice do you think Sorokin would give the animals for dealing with the oppression in *Animal Farm*? Support your answers with examples from the reading.

Literature Groups

In the winter of 1921, many Russians were cold and hungry. They were isolated from the rest of the world by their government and the vast geography of Russia. When the Nazis dominated Europe in the 1930s and early 1940s, many Jews and Germans were similarly isolated by their government and the people around them. How can one group of people, such as the Nazis and Stalin's communists, totally dominate a society? Could something similar happen in the United States today? Why or why not? Discuss your answer in your group.

Inquisitive Nature Wins Swine Credit for Smarts

from *USA Today*

Before You Read

Focus Question

What, in your opinion, makes an animal appear intelligent?

Background

The pigs in *Animal Farm* show their cleverness by leading—and misleading—the other animals. However, most people probably do not think of pigs when they think of “animal intelligence.” This article examines a pig’s IQ.

Responding to the Reading

1. What kind of roles can pigs be trained to perform? What kinds of abilities do they have?

2. According to the article, what do we mean when we say “animal intelligence”?

3. **Making Connections** In your opinion, are the pigs in *Animal Farm* more intelligent than all the other animals? What qualities enabled them to lead the others? Give examples from the novel to support your answer.

Learning for Life

In the reading, veterinarian Thomas Burken says, “pigs are smart, I think smarter than sometimes people give them credit for.” Why do you think people might not give pigs credit for being smart? What qualities are usually associated with pigs? Gather information about the use of pigs as farm animals and as pets. Do farmers ever raise pigs for more than the food they provide? What encourages people to choose a pig for a pet?

from Aesop's Fables

adapted by Jack Zipes

Before You Read

Focus Question

What, in your opinion, is effective about using animal characters in a selection to convey a moral lesson or a useful truth about humans?

Background

Although many attempts were made to confirm that Aesop was a real person, the likelihood is that he was a legendary figure invented to identify a certain type of fable. The collection of fables attributed to Aesop were written down about the first century A.D.

Responding to the Reading

1. *Animal Farm* has sometimes been called a fable. Do you think "fable" is the best term to describe *Animal Farm*? Why or why not?

2. What is the moral lesson or useful truth in each fable? How does the choice of animals in each fable help to convey the larger truth?

3. **Making Connections** Why do you think Orwell chose to use animals as the characters for his story?

Creative Writing

Rewrite one of these fables using a modern setting. Revise the roles of the characters, and incorporate modern technology and situations.
