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Prestwick House
Literature
Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Animal Farm

by George Orwell

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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Animal Farm

Objectives

By the end of the Unit, the student will be able to:

1. identify the irony that arises from what the animals (and narrator) believe to be the truth and what the reader knows is the truth.
2. define satire, state what the objects of the satire are in the book, and discuss the ways in which the targets are ridiculed.
3. state how this story functions as a
 - *fable* – a story that has a moral, with animals representing human qualities;
 - *satire* – an attack on totalitarianism;
 - *allegory* – a symbolic representation of The Russian Revolution of 1917.
4. discuss Orwell's style, particularly the way he tells a very sad story in a light manner.
5. discuss Orwell's belief that language is perverted in society to serve political ends and provide examples to support answers.
6. identify, define and give examples of the following:
 - the big lie
 - scapegoating
 - rewriting history.
7. define three basic techniques of satire and give examples from the book for each.
 - parody
 - caricature
 - irony
8. write an essay explaining Orwell's point of view of capitalism, communism, and totalitarianism.
9. explain the term "cult of personality" and describe how it applies to the events in this story.
10. consider all that happens in the book, including Benjamin's comments, and discuss the points Orwell is making about the Russian revolution in particular and all revolutions in general.

Animal Farm

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Orwell is interested in how language is perverted to manipulate and control a population. Point out at least three examples of when this change in the meaning of words occurs in *Animal Farm*.
2. Tyrants will sometimes use one or more of the following techniques to manipulate their citizens: scapegoating, the big lie, rewriting history. State when or how these techniques were used by Napoleon and if possible relate them to other historical situations with which you are familiar.
3. Identify who or what group of people the animals are meant to represent. Support each answer:
 - The pigs
 - The dogs
 - The sheep
 - The horses, particularly Boxer
 - The raven
 - Old Major
 - Napoleon
 - Benjamin
 - Frederick
 - Pilkington
 - Snowball
4. Trace the political allegory in this book by listing the comment or events in the book and then relating each to a comment or incident in Russian history.
5. One of the biggest ironies in this book is the way in which Old Major's dream becomes prophetic. Reread that speech in Chapter One and identify which things come to pass.
6. Discuss the role of the narrator in this book and comment on how the narrator is the cause of the irony.
7. Fables usually end with a moral, a lesson to be learned. Write a moral for this story.
8. At times, this is a sad story because it is about dreams—dreams born and dreams dashed. Point out appropriate passages from the book that demonstrate how *Animal Farm* treats dreams.

Animal Farm

Chapter I

Vocabulary

cud – partly digested food
foal – colt
knacker – horse slaughterer
mangel-wurzel – beet
tush – tusk

1. The animals act as animals do (e.g., cows chewing their cuds); because they think and speak, they also seem to represent *types of humans*. What type of people do Boxer, Mollie, and the cat appear to represent?

- Boxer
- Mollie
- The cat

2. Keeping in mind the Russian revolution, whom do the animals collectively represent? Again thinking of the allegory, what person does Old Major represent?

3. Specifically, whom might Mr. Jones represent? More generally, whom might he represent?

6. What is “Animalism,” and what does it represent?

7. How does the revolution come about?

8. After Jones runs off, what image of the animals does the reader get?

9. Napoleon leads the animals back to the storage shed and serves everyone a double ration of corn. How did he become the one to pass out the food? Why do you suppose he gives the dogs two additional biscuits?

10. On what did the animals base the Seven Commandments?

11. The reader is told at the end of Chapter II that when the animals came back, “the milk had disappeared.” What happens to the milk? What is this a sign of?

12. From whose point of view is this story written?

Chapter VI

Vocabulary

arable – farmable
repose – rest
solicitor – an agent

1. What is ironic and unstated about the opening paragraph?

2. What two meanings could be given to the phrase in that paragraph, “the animals worked like slaves”?

3. How is Boxer portrayed? What do his efforts and his statements, “I will work harder” and “Napoleon is always right,” represent?

4. In what ways are the pigs abusing their leadership offices?

5. In what ways are the pigs beginning to behave like humans?

5. Although the pigs do not believe what Moses says, why do they allow him to return and even provide him with food?

6. Throughout the book, Benjamin has observed everything but neither approved nor disapproved of anything. What causes him to break into a gallop; then later to read? Remember, he said earlier that while he can read quite well, there is nothing worth reading.

7. Boxer's removal and demise are both poignant and filled with ironies. Why is it impossible for him to kick his way out of the van? Instead of the promised retirement, what awaits him? How were Old Major's comments to Boxer in Chapter One prophetic?

8. The final irony is that "somewhere or other" the pigs got money to buy themselves another case of whisky for the banquet to be held in Boxer's honor. Where was the money from?
