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Prestwick House

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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Chapter One

1. Old Major is highly respected and looked to for guidance by all the animals on Manor Farm. Write a paragraph describing a public figure you admire.
2. The animals reflect upon the significance of their lives. Take a moment to contemplate the purpose of human life. Create a diary entry giving your opinion about the meaning of life.
3. In his speech to the animals, Old Major states, “The life of an animal is misery and slavery.” Write a letter to your local SPCA discussing the problem of cruelty to animals and overpopulation. Do you believe they are being handled adequately, or do you feel more needs to be done?
4. Man is condemned as being the root of all the animals’ problems. Imagine you are in a debate with Old Major. Write a defense for mankind based upon Old Major’s accusations about us in *Animal Farm*. Be sure to include any advantages animals gain from being cared for by humans.
5. The animals anticipate a time of revolution against mankind. Write about a historical political revolution. What were the circumstances surrounding the event, and do you feel the revolt was justified?

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15. The seven commandments are created for all the animals to follow. Compose a list of ten rules you believe all people need to follow. Do not copy from the Ten Commandments, but you may rephrase them. How does your list differ from that of the animals? Across from each rule, write a short sentence that either provides a reason for that rule or gives a proper punishment for breaking it.

Chapter Three

16. The pigs supervise and the direct the work of other animals. Why do you suppose it is so easy for the pigs to assume control over the others? How does this relate to Joseph Stalin's reign?
17. The animals appreciate their food more because they produce it themselves. Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper discussing something you feel Americans take for granted. Are you included in this group?
18. Boxer receives more duties for being the most dedicated and hardest working animal on the farm. Describe a situation from a book, movie, or real life where someone is taken advantage of by being rewarded for good work with more responsibilities.
19. List at least three comparisons between *Animal Farm* and the Russian Revolution that you have found so far.

Chapter Seven

39. The animals begin to go hungry as food rations are cut. People, too, are suffering from life threatening dangers such as hunger. Compose a letter to the President of the United States explaining what you think should be done to help end hunger in this country and also globally.
40. The hens go on strike because they feel they are being treated unjustly. Recall a strike you heard about in real life, and write a paragraph describing it. What were the events leading to the strike? Do you feel a strike was necessary, or were there other ways to settle the matter?
41. Compose a letter to the editor of a local newspaper in which you discuss your opinion of labor unions. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a union for both the employee and the business?
42. The pigs claim Snowball is to blame for all the mischief on Animal Farm and, even though Snowball is not there, the animals believe he is guilty. Why do you suppose some people are easily persuaded? Do you know anyone who is gullible? Explain. Why, in your opinion, is it easy to blame someone who is not present?
43. The animals are frightened of Snowball's "invisible influence, pervading the air about them and menacing them with all kinds of dangers." Remember a time when you were younger and create a diary entry for the night that someone told you a story that frightened you.