

Animal Farm – The Rest of the Story

Guide students in exploring the plight of modern-day farm animals through a “reader’s theater” examination of George Orwell’s 1945 novella *Animal Farm*.

Lesson Objective: Students will review language and literary devices of the allegorical novella to determine the power of words and how they wield influence. Students will evaluate satirical interpretations using the text, personal experience, and knowledge of related literature and historical events.

Grades: 7-10

Time Required: Two to three weeks of standard class meeting

National Education Standards Taught:

Drama

NA-T.5-8.1 - Script Writing by the Creation of Improvisations and Scripted Scenes Based on Personal Experience and Heritage, Imagination, Literature, and History

NA-T.5-8.2 - Acting by Developing Basic Acting Skills to Portray Characters Who Interact Improvised and Scripted Scenes

NA-T.5-8.5 - Researching by Using Cultural and Historical Information to Support Improvised and Scripted Scenes

Social Studies

Civics: NSS-C.5-8.1 and NSS-C.9-12.1 Civic Life, Politics and Government

World History: NSS-WH.5-12.8 Era 8: Half-Century of Crisis and Achievement, 1900-1945

Language Arts

NL-ENG.K-12.1 Reading for Perspective

NL-ENG.K-12.2 Understanding the Human Experience

NL-ENG.K-12.3 Evaluation Strategies

NL-ENG.K-12.5 Communication Strategies

NL-ENG.K-12.6 Applying Knowledge

NL-ENG.K-12.7 Evaluating Data

NL-ENG.K-12.11 Participating in Society

Character Concepts: Acceptance, Fairness, Respecting Others

Materials Needed:

- Copies of *Animal Farm* for each student (The book is also available in its entirety at www.george-orwell.org.)
- George Orwell Biography sheet, one for each student (page 8)
- *Animal Farm* Chapter Worksheet, one copy per chapter for each student (page 9)
- *Animal Farm* Vocabulary sheet, one for each student (page 10)
- Poster board or rolls of bulletin board paper (for creation of class lists)
- Optional: Items to create a set, costumes, and props

Background on *Animal Farm*: *Animal Farm* is an **allegory** of the Russian Revolution of 1917. The book looks at how language can be used to influence and control people as well as the power of peer pressure and propaganda. This novel is also a fable, as the animals have been **personified**. (To read a summary of the chapters, visit <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/animalfarm>.)

Lesson Procedure

Opening Activity:

- 1) Before reading, ask students to think about the overarching question for the unit of study: How do words have power and how do words impact our thoughts and actions?
- 2) Review the different types of literary devices such as simile and metaphor to showcase how these devices give a visual image or impression to others. Example: “Your room is a pigsty.” This sentence gives the impression that pigs are dirty, when in fact pigs delineate certain parts of their quarters for sleeping, eating, and bathroom needs.
- 3) Ask students to brainstorm other phrases or stereotypes that may give a negative impression of animals or people. Create a class list and save these for future reference. You may wish to have students label each statement as far as type of speech or literary device. Ask students to refer back to or add to this list during the unit and note how Orwell uses these stereotypes in his work.
- 4) Introduce George Orwell and the book *Animal Farm*. You may choose to locate your own sources or use the George Orwell Biography (page 8). Pass out and review the *Animal Farm* Vocabulary sheet (page 10).

Lesson Body:

- 1) Provide each student with two Chapter Worksheets (page 9). Ask them to label one Chapter One and the other Chapter Two. Review the worksheet and the items that need to be filled out during and after reading.
- 2) Read chapters one and two with the class. You may choose to read the chapters aloud, silently, in a partner-read, or combination of the above.
- 3) After reading, allow students time to complete the Chapter One and Chapter Two worksheets. Review the worksheets and allow for questions.
- 4) Ask or provide students with the following:

Questions for Thought — Chapter One

- According to Major, what is the cause of the animals' problems?
- How is the arrangement of the animals at the first meeting foreshadowing of future events?
- What commandments does Major give the animals? How do these commandments show human vice? What do you think Orwell was trying to say about politics and government? How do the commandments relate to the ways that farm animals are treated in this country?
- The animals love the song “Beasts of England.” What is the message of the song? What imagery is present? Why do the animals like it so much that they memorize it on the spot? To what emotions and needs does it appeal? (Note: The author calls this song the “song of liberation.”)

Questions for Thought — Chapter Two

- After the death of Major, what becomes of the rebellion? What finally sets the rebellion in motion? What is the new movement called?
- After the rebellion, what do the animals do? What becomes of the house and its contents?

- Did any of the animals do anything to break any of the commandments? How might this foreshadow the future of the farm and animalism?
- How might the first two scenes depict the life of animals in Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs or factory farms)? If students are not familiar with CAFOs ask them to research these farms and how animals in CAFOs are treated. You may wish to create a T-Chart or Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting a small family farm with a CAFO. Students can add information as the book progresses.
- How have the stereotypes of certain animals impacted the character creation in the story? (At this point review the stereotype portion of the chapter worksheets and discuss how stereotypes impact treatment of both people and animals.)

5) Ask for student volunteers to complete a “reader’s theater” for chapter two. In a reader’s theater, students will create a script and act out the highlights of a chapter. Not every word from the chapter will be present. A sample reader’s theater script for chapter three can be found here: <http://authspot.com/short-stories/animal-farm-play-script/>. For more information on reader’s theater, including how to create scripts, visit author Aaron Shepard’s reader’s theater page at www.aaronshep.com/rt/Tips.html.

6) Introduce to the students that (for the remainder of the book) they will be creating and presenting dramatizations of selected scenes in a reader’s theater for the class and teaching selected chapters. Review with students that they will all be responsible for reading the book and completing a worksheet for each chapter, but each group will be assigned one chapter for which they will teach the Chapter Worksheet (page 9) and create a reader’s theater. Each group will perform their reader’s theater and review the chapter worksheet with the rest of the class on their assigned date.

7) Split the class into groups, with each group ideally containing five to six students. Assign each group a chapter (skipping chapters three and ten – those will be done as a class) and completion/presentation dates.

Discuss the typical roles and requirements in a dramatic performance:

- Narrator(s)
- Character(s)
- Voice Intonation
- Stage Directions
- Sound Effects
- Costumes and Props

Review the Reader’s Theater Evaluation Form at <http://users.humboldt.edu/floss/rt-eval.html>.

Along with the information in the chapter worksheet, ask each group to present the following information to the class (along with support from the text) on the day they present their play:

- Figurative language used in the chapter
- Stereotypes of animals and people portrayed
- How realistic the stereotypes are
- Description of the overall treatment of the animals. Is the treatment humane or inhumane? If inhumane, who is causing any inhumane treatment?

7) Pass out chapter worksheets for chapter three. Read and discuss chapter three as a group, modeling expected outcomes for future group work, highlighting any stereotypes in the material. Complete the questions for thought.

Question for Thought — Chapter Three

- How is Squealer able to convince the other animals to accept whatever Napoleon decides? How do large institutions use similar tactics in getting others to accept what they want them to believe? Have you ever

heard someone say that something was a “fact” but they had no point of reference? Can you think of any examples?

Optional Activities:

- Ask students to research health and nutrition information. Ask them to locate the funder for studies cited and ask them to discuss how these groups could have a vested interest in the outcome of the study.
- Ask students to locate video or print propaganda related to food and farm animals and write a paragraph concerning the type of propaganda and the truth in the advertising. Materials and paragraphs can be placed on a bulletin board throughout this unit of study.
- Provide examples of how the pigs begin to pull away from the other animals.
- How are the pigs using education for their own purposes? Is this how education should be viewed? Why or why not? What are the dangers in allowing one group or institution to control what is being learned? Look up the words *indoctrination* and *education*. How is indoctrination different than education?

8) Allow the groups to read and work through the book having set dates for group performance and worksheet presentation. As the groups present include the following Questions for Thought for each chapter:

Questions for Thought — Chapter Four

- Describe the Battle of Cowshed. One character is noticeably absent – who is this? Why do think this is the case?
- We will see the gun a few times in the story. What does the gun symbolize? What is the significance of the gun's placement at the foot of the flagpole?

Optional Activity: Ask students to create a televised news report covering the Battle of Cowshed.

Questions for Thought — Chapter Five

- Why does Mollie run away from the farm? How do her actions reflect the feelings of some humans in terms of hard work or controversy?
- Snowball and Napoleon have different attitudes and points of view concerning the windmill. Compare and contrast the two points of view in a Venn diagram.
- What happens to Snowball in this chapter? What changes does Napoleon make after Snowball is gone? How do the other animals react?
- The dogs begin to play a very different type of role in chapters four and five. How does their presence affect the other animals? Is the farm true socialism by the end of chapter five? Provide support for your answers.
- Compare the use of power and money by large businesses, corporations, and governments to Napoleon and how he is using the dogs.
- Prediction Question: How might Snowball have led *Animal Farm* if he had not been run off? Would things have been better or worse? Ask students to debate the issue or write a persuasive letter choosing one side to support with story and historical evidence.

Questions for Thought — Chapter Six

- Napoleon decides to trade with some of the local farms in this section of the book. What is his reasoning for this decision? How do the other animals react to the announcement? How does this new idea go against the commandments?
- What is the real reason the windmill gets destroyed? What are the animals told? Has history revealed any such cover ups? When people found out the truth what was the reaction?
- Snowball has departed the farm, but he is mentioned numerous times later in the book. Why does Napoleon reference him? How is his mention used to control the animals? (Note: Introduce the term “scapegoat.”)

Questions for Thought — Chapter Seven

This is a very emotionally stirring chapter as numerous animals are killed or die of starvation. Students may have many questions.

- Explain why some of the animals confess to being traitors. What happens to the traitors? How does this turn of events change the book? Would you consider this moment the climax of the story?
- The animals are no longer allowed to sing “Beasts of England.” Why do you think “Beasts of England” is banned? What song takes its place?
- Provide students with copies of “Comrade Napoleon” and “Beasts of England” (page 12). Ask students to compare and contrast the poems by finding the rhyme scheme as well as the meter. How does “Comrade Napoleon” ironically reflect his leadership?

(“Beasts of England” is made up of four-line stanzas (quatrains) with an A, B, C, B rhyme scheme. It is trochaic tetrameter (four stressed, unstressed feet per line). The word “beasts” is repeated frequently, and the whole song concerns the freeing of all beasts from man's tyranny.

The new song, “Comrade Napoleon,” is made up of three septets (7-line stanzas) with an A, A, B, C, C, C, B rhyme scheme. The lines, however, do not have any set meter. No two lines are the same.)

- History has seen many cultures use song as a means of spirituality or communication; can you think of or locate any examples?
- How is the farm in chapter seven very much like the farm at the beginning of the book? Do you feel this is a realistic representation of how farm animals are treated in Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) or factory farms? (You may wish to refer back to the T-Chart made in chapter two and show footage or photos of battery-cage hens. See humanesociety.org/issues/confinement_farm/facts/cage-free_vs_battery-cage.html for information on battery cage and free-range hens.

Questions for Thought — Chapter Eight

- Squealer presents production figures to the animals in this chapter. What purpose does this serve? Are the figures accurate? How does it make you feel to know that the animals are being lied to? Do you feel this happens in our society? Why or why not?
- What is happening to Boxer?

Questions for Thought — Chapter Nine

- Another battle takes place at the farm, this time between the humans and the farm animals. How is this battle different than the Battle of the Cowshed? What is the outcome? Do the injuries outweigh the declared “win”?
- Moses returns in this chapter and tells the animals about Sugarcandy Mountain. Why do you feel Napoleon allows Moses to return? How does his return serve a purpose?
- What happens to Boxer? How do the pigs trick the animals into accepting his death? Have you ever thought about the feelings of the animals as they are prepared for slaughter? How did this section impact you?

Questions for Thought — Chapter Ten

- How has the farm changed from the beginning of the book to the end? Has anything come full circle? Explain and cite examples from the book.
- Throughout the book, how have Napoleon and the other pigs used words to convince the animals that their social order is acceptable? Do any companies use words in their claims or advertising to persuade or convince the public that something is true? Provide examples.
- All seven commandments are erased in chapter ten. What is the new commandment? Has this been an unwritten commandment all through the book? How is this commandment true in society in regards to both humans and animals?

Note: The new commandment is “All Animals Are Equal, But Some Animals Are More Equal Than Others.” You may wish to hold a class discussion or debate concerning treatment of people and animals in our society and how what is acceptable to certain groups (such as animals raised for food) is not acceptable to others (such as companion animals).

- In the last few pages of the book the animals begin to see the truth of their situation. What are the final changes Napoleon makes? How do these changes symbolize the official power shift of the farm? Has history seen any similar situations? If yes, explain how this leader or group gained power.

Closure:

1) After each group has presented their reader’s theater and chapter worksheet, hold a class meeting to answer the following questions:

- Orwell uses many stereotypes in his book. Speculate on why he used these stereotypes. Is this fair to the animals? How could these stereotypes impact human treatment of animals?
- Answer the overarching question: What role does the written word play in *Animal Farm*? How do words have power and how do words impact our thoughts and actions?

Hint: Refer back to the group presentations and class charts. Literacy is a source of education and power and a way to spread propaganda. Some examples to consider are the Seven Commandments, the song “Beasts of England” and the poem “Comrade Napoleon,” the child’s book, the manuals, and the horse-slaughterer’s van.

- Many of the character names are symbolic. Ask students to choose one character and review how his or her name relates to their character development and personality.
- Create a list of times peer pressure is used or mentioned in the book. (Pay special attention to Boxer and the sheep.)

2) As a culminating activity, ask students to think about the song of liberation “Beasts of England” and the seven commandments. Ask them to think about what farm animals might really write or what laws and rules they might enact if they could. Have students, individually or in groups, create either a song of liberation or commandments and illustrate or produce a video for their work showing how each would be instituted, or create a three-dimensional model to go along with their piece. Ask each student to answer the following in relation to their song or commandments:

- How would these new rules impact the lives of farm animals?
- How might these be good rules to institute in everyday interactions with both people and animals?

Extension:

- 1) You may wish to create a theater set and costumes based on the novel. Each group can use the set and props in their reader’s theater.
- 2) Place the student-created songs of liberation and commandments in a public location along with information about Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs or factory farms) to help inform others about the plight of animals raised for food.
- 3) Help your school to go cage-free! Do the Friends for Hens project at www.humaneteen.org/?q=node/31 or contact us at youth@humane.org to find out more.

George Orwell Biography

George Orwell was the pen name of Eric Blair, a British novelist who focused his writings on political oppression. He wrote the manuscript for *Animal Farm* between 1943 and 1944 following his experiences during the Spanish Civil War as a way to speak out against corruption of government and elitist society.

In his own words, he explained that his experiences during the Spanish Civil War taught him “how easily totalitarian propaganda can control the opinion of enlightened people in democratic countries.” He used his writing to speak out against corruption of true **socialism** or socialist principles.

In a 1947 Ukrainian preface he described his inspiration and why he felt a farm was the ideal setting:

“...I saw a little boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge carthorse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn. 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 **proletariat**.”

For more on George Orwell, please visit:

<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/animalfarm/context.html>

<http://www.biography.com/articles/George-Orwell-9429833>

http://www.george-orwell.org/l_biography.html

Vocabulary

socialism - An economic system in which the production and distribution of goods are controlled substantially by the government rather than by private enterprise, and in which cooperation rather than competition guides economic activity. There are many varieties of socialism. Some socialists tolerate capitalism, as long as the government maintains the dominant influence over the economy; others insist on an abolition of private enterprise. All communists are socialists, but not all socialists are communists.

proletariat - the working class; the masses

(The American Heritage® New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition)



Animal Farm Chapter Worksheet

Chapter: _____

Pages: _____ - _____

Characters Present:

Setting:

Summary of Chapter:

Stereotypes Present:

Description of Stereotype: _____

Page: _____

Description of Stereotype: _____

Page: _____

Description of Stereotype: _____

Page: _____

Description of Stereotype: _____

Page: _____

(Continue list on reverse if necessary.)

Animal Farm Vocabulary

allegory - a story in which people, things, and happenings have a hidden or symbolic meaning

animalism - the doctrine that human beings are mere animals with no soul or spiritual quality

antagonist - a person who opposes or competes with the main character; adversary; opponent

ad lib - an unplanned speech or effect

climax - the high point of the action; the turning point in the plot

conflict - disagreement or opposition, as of interests or ideas of characters; in a play or story, when these disagreements reach their maximum tension

cue - a prearranged signal to enter or exit the stage or to begin or end an action, stage business, dialogue, light, sound or set changes. The cue may be the last few words of an actor's line, a sound effect or music, or a director's hand signal.

cut - stop the performance, or delete a portion of the script

dialogue - two or more speaking actors

dictator - a ruler with absolute power and authority, especially one who exercises it tyrannically

five stages of revolution:

preliminary unrest - first stage of a revolution: conditions exist that people find intolerable

defection of the intellectuals - second stage of revolution: thinkers don't support the establishment; leaders emerge

time of experimentation - third stage of revolution: new things have to be tried once the old order is thrown out

reign of terror - fourth stage of revolution: things become unsettled; violence erupts

new system - fifth stage of revolution: a new order evolves and the masses accept it; survival is essential

flashback - a scene depicting events that happened earlier

improvisation - a spontaneous creative process in which the performer simultaneously originates and performs his material; an immediate response with no preparation; an exercise in "thinking on your feet"

metaphor - a figure of speech in which a word or phrase ordinarily used for one thing is applied to another

monologue - a single speaking/vocalizing actor

narrator - the voice that fills in the details of the story by introducing scenes and revealing points of the story that cannot be made clear in other ways

plot - action of story that moves from opening situation through resolution

proletariat - the working class; the masses

propaganda - a promotion of ideas, doctrines, or practices to further one's own cause or to damage an opposing one

protagonist - the main character about which the story's action revolves

rebellion - an act or state of armed resistance to one's government or social system; a defiance of authority

revolution - overthrow of a government or social system by those governed, with another system or government taking its place

satire - the use of sarcasm, ridicule, or irony to expose, attack, or deride vices, follies, etc.

script - the written form of a stage play, screenplay, or broadcast

segue - (in radio) an abrupt transition: one segment ends, another begins

simile - figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another by use of like, as, etc.

socialism - an economic system in which the production and distribution of goods are controlled substantially by the government rather than by private enterprise, and in which cooperation rather than competition guides economic activity. There are many varieties of socialism. Some socialists tolerate capitalism, as long as the government maintains the dominant influence over the economy; others insist on an abolition of private enterprise. All communists are socialists, but not all socialists are communists.

tableau - a technique whereby a dramatic pose is struck by members of the cast to convey a mood or underscore a dramatic moment; commonly used to convey entire scenes as if they were living pictures.

text - the script that the actor performs

totalitarianism - method of government or state in which one group maintains complete control and bans all others

tyranny - oppressive and unjust government



Text of “Beasts of England” and “Comrade Napoleon”

“Beasts of England”

Excerpted from Chapter 1 of Animal Farm.

Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland,
Beasts of every land and clime,
Hearken to my joyful tidings
Of the golden future time.

Soon or late the day is coming,
Tyrant Man shall be o'erthrown,
And the fruitful fields of England
Shall be trod by beasts alone.

Rings shall vanish from our noses,
And the harness from our back,
Bit and spur shall rust forever,
Cruel whips no more shall crack.

Riches more than mind can picture,
Wheat and barley, oats and hay,
Clover, beans, and mangel-wurzels
Shall be ours upon that day.

Bright will shine the fields of England,
Purer shall its waters be,
Sweeter yet shall blow its breezes
On the day that sets us free.

For that day we all must labour,
Though we die before it break;
Cows and horses, geese and turkeys,
All must toil for freedom's sake.

Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland,
Beasts of every land and clime,
Hearken well and spread my tidings
Of the golden future time.

“Comrade Napoleon”

Excerpted from Chapter 8 of Animal Farm.

Friend of fatherless!
Fountain of happiness!
Lord of the swill-bucket! Oh, how my soul is on
Fire when I gaze at thy
Calm and commanding eye,
Like the sun in the sky,
Comrade Napoleon!

Thou art the giver of
All that thy creatures love,
Full belly twice a day, clean straw to roll upon;
Every beast great or small
Sleeps at peace in his stall,
Thou watchest over all,
Comrade Napoleon!

Had I a sucking-pig,
Ere he had grown as big
Even as a pint bottle or as a rolling-pin,
He should have learned to be
Faithful and true to thee,
Yes, his first squeak should be
"Comrade Napoleon!"