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# CHAPTER 1 - OLD MAJOR'S DREAM

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1

Manor Farm is badly run by Mr. Jones, its drunken owner. One night, after he has staggered up to bed Old Major, an old prize boar, highly respected among the other animals on the Farm, gives a speech in which he describes the lives of the animals as “miserable, laborious and short.” He tells them that the land could support them all and that the cause of their misery is man’s greed. It is man who steals what they produce and when animals become unproductive they are cruelly slaughtered. Man is the only enemy of the animals and Major argues that if they got rid of man the animals would become free and be able to live comfortable lives. He urges the animals to revolt but warns them against adopting the same ways as man once they have gained their freedom. He tells them that all animals are equal and ends by telling them of his dream in which he heard the song ‘Beasts of England’ which described the ideal society. The animals are excited by the vision of a possible future that this provides and they sing it over and over again. Eventually the noise wakes Mr. Jones who gets up and fires his shotgun at the barn wall mistakenly thinking that a fox is on the prowl. This quickly brings the meeting to an end.

## Points to Note

1. Think about the viewpoint that Orwell is telling the story from. Although the story is being told impersonally do we see things from a particular point of view? If so, whose?
2. What are some of the possible consequences of the story being told in this way? Think about: how it presents the humans; how it presents the animals; the effect it has on what happens later in the novel.
3. Find some specific examples from the first chapter that shows how Orwell establishes this sense of viewpoint.
4. Make notes on the characters (animal and human) that you are introduced to in this opening chapter and say how you think Orwell presents them. What traits does he give to the animals? Do you believe in them? Find two or three examples of the following: points where Orwell describes animals or their actions in a way that is faithful to animal behaviour; points that indicate to us that we are expected to believe that animals talk and think like human beings.
5. What view of life does Old Major present and what is his vision of the future? What impression does the song ‘Beasts of England’ create in your mind? What is the importance of Old Major’s vision to the novel as a whole?
6. What kind of picture is presented of Farmer Jones? Why do you think Orwell creates this kind of image of him?

## CHAPTER 2 - THE REBELLION

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2

Old Major dies soon after the meeting but his speech has inspired the animals to prepare for rebellion. For three months secret preparations and discussions take place. It is clear that the pigs are the most intelligent of the animals and of these, three pigs, Snowball, Napoleon and Squealer play a leading role in developing Old Major's ideas into a system that they call Animalism and in teaching the system to the other animals. At first, though, not all the animals are attracted by their ideas and Moses the Raven makes their task of persuasion more difficult as he spreads ideas about Sugarcandy Mountain, a kind of heaven where, according to him, all animals go when they die. The pigs continue to work hard at persuading others to their views, though, and regular meetings are held in the barn.

While all this is going on Jones's management of the farm has become even worse and one day he forgets altogether to feed the animals. In the end, the animals, driven by hunger, break into the storehouse and feed themselves. Jones and his labourers beat them and drive them back but this only serves to bring the crisis to a head and they fight back and drive all the humans from the farm.

The animals then set about destroying all the things to do with man, the harness, collars, whips and so forth. They enter the farmhouse and are amazed at its luxury (to them) and it is decided that no-one should ever live in it. The pigs, who by this time have learned to read and write change the name from Manor Farm to Animal Farm. They also write the Seven Commandments, by which all animals are expected to live, on the wall of the barn. It is harvest time now and Snowball persuades the animals to work together to get the harvest in. Before they do so, though, Napoleon takes away the cow's milk for himself and the other pigs to drink.

### Points to Note

1. Make a note of the differences between the animals and the way they think and act, their temperaments and views of life. In particular note the characteristics of: Snowball, Napoleon, Mollie, Boxer and Clover, Squealer, Benjamin.
2. Why do the other animals accept the pigs as their leaders?
3. Although on one level Orwell's satire presents a parallel with Marxism it could apply to any set of idealistic principles. What are the weaknesses in the system that are becoming apparent at this early stage?
4. Make a careful note of the Seven Commandments. With the exception of the last one they are all based on the belief that man is evil. What are the dangers in these Commandments?
5. What ominous note do you detect at the end of the chapter?

## CHAPTER 3 - THE PIGS TAKE OVER

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3

Harvest time arrives and the animals bring in a bumper crop. They work with a tremendous enthusiasm that was absent when they had been working for humans. No animals steal anything for themselves. The pigs take charge and organise the others but they do no physical work themselves. Boxer works extremely hard putting in a tremendous amount of effort.

Throughout the Summer the animals work happily and have their daily lives organised by the pigs and Sunday is deemed the day of rest. A flag is made for Animal Farm consisting of an old green tablecloth with white hoof and horn painted on it and this is raised every Sunday after the animals' weekly meeting. Snowball and Napoleon have emerged as the leaders but they rarely agree with one another. Snowball sets up various animal committees and the most successful of these is the one which teaches animals to read and write. Napoleon, though, takes charge of educating the young and he takes a litter of puppies away from their mother and raises them in a loft. The pigs now keep for themselves not only all the milk but also the apple crop as well, despite some protests from the other animals.

### Points to Note

1. How does Orwell show the lot of the animals in this chapter?
2. Why are Mollie and Benjamin discontent?
3. Make notes on the differences in attitude between Napoleon and Snowball. In what ways is a struggle for power beginning here?
4. What is your impression of the animals' response to their changed condition and the 'democratic' rights they now seem to have?
5. Do you find anything ominous in Napoleon taking the puppies?
6. What are your thoughts about the following: the struggle for power after the death of a great leader; Snowball's simplification of the Seven Commandments to "Four legs good, two legs bad"; the response of the sheep to this slogan.
7. What are your feelings about the strengths and weaknesses of: a) Snowball and b) Napoleon by the end of the chapter? Do you think Orwell seems to imply that one of them would make a better leader than the other?
8. What is Squealer's role in all this?

## CHAPTER 4 - BATTLE OF THE COWSHED

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# 4

Pigeons are sent out by Snowball and Napoleon to spread the word to animals on neighbouring farms about Animalism and to let them know about the Rebellion. Initially the neighbouring farmers had not paid much attention to what had happened at Manor Farm but now they begin to worry about their own animals becoming rebellious. This causes the nearest neighbours, Pilkington of Foxwood Farm and Frederick of Pinchfield Farm to spread false rumours about the terrible things that are happening on Animal Farm.

After some time Jones enlists the help of his neighbours to launch an attack to try to re-capture Animal Farm. This attack leads to the Battle of the Cowshed in which the animals fiercely defend the farm and beat off their attackers. The animals hold a victory celebration and Snowball and Boxer are awarded medals.

### Points to Note

1. Make notes on how both sides make use of propaganda at the beginning of the chapter.
2. What do you think about the response of the neighbouring farmers to the rebellion?
3. Why do you think their attack on the farm fails? Notice here how one of Orwell's criticisms throughout the book is the way in which both individuals and nations tend to use others' misfortunes to their own advantage rather than work together to achieve common goals.
4. How does the animals' strategy contrast with that of the humans?
5. Make notes on what happens at the Battle of the Cowshed. Pay particular attention to Snowball's role and bear this in mind for what happens later.
6. What small details have you found effective in this chapter in making the events convincing?

## CHAPTER 5 - BANISHMENT OF SNOWBALL

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# 5

By January the good days have disappeared and the farm has fallen on hard times. It is too cold to work and so the pigs spend their time planning the work programme for the coming season. The rivalry between Napoleon and Snowball becomes more and more marked though. This reaches its climax over the building of a windmill to produce electricity to heat and power the farm. The scheme is Snowball's idea but Napoleon says that it will not work. A meeting of the animals is called but just at the point where it looks as if Snowball is about to convince the others to go along with his plan Napoleon calls in nine extremely fierce large dogs. They are the pups that he raised himself and are now his personal bodyguards. The dogs chase Snowball from the farm and the other animals are afraid to intervene.

Napoleon immediately assumes command and abolishes all democratic discussion and takes personal charge of running the farm. Napoleon's dogs make sure that there are no objections. Three weeks later Napoleon announces plans that the windmill is to be built and word is put out that in actual fact the whole idea had been Napoleon's in the first place and had been stolen by Snowball.

### Points to Note

1. How do the rival leaders act in the debate over the windmill?
2. The fact that Napoleon uses the dogs that he raised from pups to enforce his will seems to suggest that he had been planning to oust Snowball for some time. How do you respond to him seizing power? What kind of tactics does he use?
3. What role does Squealer play in all this?
4. What signs of the establishing of a dictatorship do you find in this chapter?
5. What do you think Orwell is satirizing here? Think about the following areas: the way Napoleon seized power; the response of the animals; the new slogan "Napoleon is always right"; the dogs.

# CHAPTER 6 - THE BUILDING AND DESTRUCTION OF THE WINDMILL

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The new society moves into its second year and the animals are working hard. A sixty hour week and Sunday afternoon working (although this is supposedly voluntary) is introduced. As an added incentive to volunteer any animal who does not work will have his or her rations cut. Building the windmill is a huge task and the animals toil with difficulty in quarrying stone and all the while Boxer is the mainstay of their efforts.

It is found that various things are needed that cannot be provided on the farm itself so Napoleon announces that they must begin trading with humans in order to obtain them. Some of the animals protest about this because they remember agreeing to have nothing whatsoever to do with human beings. Squealer settles them down though, putting the idea of such a ban down to more of Snowball's lies.

It seems that the humans are willing to trade and business is conducted through an agent. At this point the pigs move into the farmhouse, Squealer again giving a rational explanation for this. The Commandments are altered slightly too. The autumn brings a poor harvest and still the animals struggle to complete building work on the windmill. However, a violent storm in November causes the half-finished building to collapse.

## Points to Note

1. How is Napoleon's rule affecting the other animals on the farm?
2. What does Squealer have to say in this chapter?
3. Which is the only animal that might realise the truth of the animal's situation?
4. Why do you think that Napoleon is keen to see the windmill built?
5. In what ways are a) the farmhouse and b) the windmill used as symbols in the novel?
6. Why is Snowball blamed for everything?

# CHAPTER 7 - WINTER DIFFICULTIES AND THE TRIAL

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The bad winter weather leads to a food shortage and work on the windmill stops temporarily. The animals keep up the appearance of plenty to the outside world but they soon find it necessary to buy grain. This is to be paid for by selling hens' eggs. They are told that they must provide four hundred a week and they rebel at this. In response, Napoleon has them starved into submission but in the process nine of them die.

A few days later Napoleon orders all the animals to assemble and tells them that there are spies and enemy agents amongst them. His dogs then seize four of the pigs who confess to being in league with Snowball and as working as agents for Jones. The dogs tear their throats out and then attack Boxer but with his strength he easily beats them off. Other confessions follow and many animals are executed.

After this the other animals are filled with fear and sadness that their ideal society has gone wrong. Boxer believes that the animals themselves are to blame and that they can only improve the situation by working harder. Clover however, has a rather different view.

## Points to Note

1. Note Napoleon's actions here - like Stalin in the Russia of the 1930s he makes his 'subjects' suffer. Why does he need this purge and what effect does it have?
2. What is the animals' response to the purge?
3. What is the function of his 'bodyguard' of dogs?
4. Contrast the reactions of Boxer and Clover to these events.
5. What do you find ironical in what is now happening on Animal Farm compared to the animals' dreams before the rebellion?

## CHAPTER 8 - NAPOLEON THE LEADER; THE BATTLE OF THE WINDMILL

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As the events of the previous chapter begin to sink in the animals start to question the killings recalling the Commandment that which forbids one animal to kill another. However, when they go to read the Commandment on the wall to their surprise they find that it says "... without cause" at the end of the sentence. Napoleon himself becomes a more and more remote figure and the other animals rarely see him. He has private rooms in the farmhouse and is given various special titles.

The building of the windmill is finally completed and some devious dealings go on with two local farmers. However, when one of them, Frederick, finds out he has been paid in counterfeit money he and his men launch an armed attack on Animal Farm. They blow up the windmill with dynamite which incenses the animals and they drive the men back, although many of the animals are killed and more wounded. The battle is named the Battle of the Windmill and the animals celebrate.

Later it is found that the Commandment forbidding drinking has been changed too.

### Points to Note

1. Why does Napoleon distance himself from the other animals? In what way was his behaviour typical of a dictator?
2. How do you assess the contribution that a) Boxer and b) Napoleon make to the Battle of the Windmill?
3. Make careful notes on Napoleon's dealings with Frederick and Pilkington. What is the purpose of his lying and double-dealing here?
4. List the ways in which propaganda is used in this chapter. Why do you think the discrediting of Snowball continues so long after he has gone?
5. What do you make of the altering of the Commandments?

# CHAPTER 9 - THE DISAPPEARANCE OF EQUALITY AND FREEDOM

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Boxer had been injured in the battle and his recovery is slow as he is growing older. Even so he tries to continue to work hard on the re-building of the windmill. His objective is to get as much of the windmill finished as he can before he retires. The winter is very harsh and all the animals have to survive on very reduced rations, except for the pigs and dogs who eat well.

Demonstrations are arranged involving processions, speeches and flags and these are designed to help take the animals' minds off their harsh life. In addition, Animal Farm is declared a Republic and Napoleon, as the sole candidate, is elected its President. In the Summer, Moses the Raven, who has not been seen since the rebellion reappears and starts telling the animals about Sugarcandy Mountain once again. This is an attractive idea to many of the animals considering the hard lives that they now lead. More propaganda against Snowball is produced by Squealer.

Boxer recovers but works so hard that he becomes ill. The pigs say they will send him to the vet and so he looks forward to recovering and enjoying a leisurely retirement. When the van arrives though it takes him to the slaughterhouse but the pigs inform the animals that he has died in the hospital and has been buried with full honours. Benjamin knows the truth, though, because he could read the words on the van, and he tells the others.

## Points to Note

1. How does Napoleon tighten his grip on the animals in this chapter?
2. How is the illusion that the Rebellion has really improved the animals' lot perpetuated?
3. Make notes on the following: why Moses is allowed to return and what function he performs?; the purpose of the celebrations and processions; the ways in which history is being distorted.
4. How do you respond to Boxer's plight in this chapter? In what ways is the manner of his end ironical?

## CHAPTER 10 - THE FINAL CHANGE

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Several years have passed and although many have died Napoleon, Squealer, Clover, Benjamin and Moses remain.

Although the farm is successful none of the animals have been allowed to retire - Clover, for example, is two years beyond her retirement age. The Windmill has been finished and yet the lives of the animals are little different to what they were before the Rebellion.

Life for the pigs is very different, though. They have taken to walking on their hind legs and carry whips, enjoying human luxuries, adopt human clothes and so forth. The alteration of the Commandment which read "All animals are equal" sums up the situation completely - it now reads "All animals are equal but some are more equal than others."

In the final scene of the novel the transformation of the pigs is complete - looking through the window of the farmhouse where the pigs are entertaining their human neighbours the animals find it impossible to tell the difference between the two.

### Points to Note

1. Draw a chart to show the development of the plot - the Rise and Fall of Animal Farm.
2. Draw up a table listing the ways in which the pigs change and note the symbolic importance of each.
3. Make a list of the original Commandments and then the changed ones. Explain how each change came about and its significance in the story.

# CHARACTERISATION

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## Old Major

The whole idea of the revolution springs from Old Major (Orwell's satirical portrayal of Marx/Lenin) - this is the vision of the future but it is left to others to implement his philosophies. As the springboard for the revolution, then, although his part in the novel is small his role is important. Here are some ideas why:

He introduces the principles of the Rebellion and starts the philosophy of Animalism. What are its principles?

He forms a contrast with Napoleon. Make a note of the ways in which he contrasts with Napoleon.

He also forms a contrast with Snowball. How?

Through presenting his ideas Orwell shows how far the Rebellion falls short of these.

Compare the principles of the Rebellion with its actual results.

## Napoleon and Snowball

Think carefully about the characters of Napoleon and Snowball.

Draw up a table showing the differences and similarities between them and for each point give a piece of evidence from the text to support your ideas.

Now think about Napoleon and his actions throughout the novel. Draw a flow chart to show the key stages in Napoleon repressing the animals and developing his stranglehold of power on Animal Farm.

# CHARACTERISATION

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## Boxer and Clover

Make a list of the key characteristics of Boxer.

What is Napoleon's attitude towards him (remember that Napoleon's dogs attack him during the first purge but he is too strong for them).

It is worth noting that his ultimate fate is exactly that which Old Major told him he would suffer if he did not rebel against Jones. In the novel he can be seen as representing the hard-working common people who believe in the ideology of the revolution and who are betrayed by it. In many ways his fate can be likened to that suffered by many ordinary, decent-minded workers under a dictatorial regime.

In many ways Clover plays a similar role in the novel to Boxer. Make notes on her character and the part she plays in the novel.

## Benjamin

Benjamin the bad-tempered and cynical donkey is the sceptic of the Rebellion and has no faith in it. As it turns out, he is right.

Make a list of his comments and observations about the Rebellion and show how accurate they turn out to be.

How do you feel about Benjamin? (Don't forget his attitude towards Boxer).

## Mollie

Mollie is described as "the foolish, pretty white mare". Do you think she is foolish?

Make a list of her characteristics and make a note of how you see her role in the novel.

# CHARACTERISATION

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Moses the Raven

Moses the Raven offers a kind of religion to the animals in getting them to believe in Sugarcandy Mountain.

Note the following points about him:

He follows Jones from the farm.

His reappearance after Napoleon comes to power.

The fact that the pigs tolerate him.

His role as a spy and 'tale-teller'.

His cleverness.

Bearing these points in mind write about the role of Moses in the novel.

Squealer

Squealer is a master of propaganda and it is his role to use his skills to justify Napoleon's many reversals and to project a favourable image of him.

Make a list of Squealer's various pieces of propaganda and note down its purpose and how effective it is in achieving its objective.

The Humans

Make notes on the roles played in the novel by the following characters:

Jones, Frederick, Pilkington, Whymper.

# REVISION QUESTIONS

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1. Compare and contrast the characters of Napoleon and Snowball.
2. Why does the Rebellion fail in terms of bringing about an ideal society for the majority of the animals?
3. Compare and contrast the characters of Boxer and Mollie.
4. Write about the role and function of Squealer in *Animal Farm*.
5. Choose TWO episodes from the novel that you find particularly effective and write about the ways in which Orwell presents his material.
6. How effective do you find *Animal Farm* as satire? Refer to specific details from the text to support your ideas.
7. Examine Napoleon's dealings with humans. How does he conduct his affairs and why does he handle things in the way he does?
8. Compare the Battle of the Cowshed with the Battle of the Windmill and discuss the importance of each to the storyline.
9. Discuss the methods used by Napoleon and the pigs to ensure that there is no dissent amongst the animals.
10. What is your response to the ending of the novel? Do you find this an effective conclusion and what message does it leave?