

Unmasking Manor Farm: An Allegorical Adventure into *Animal Farm*

Lesson Overview

Subject: English Literature / History / Social Studies

Target Audience: Homeschool, Classroom, or Independent Study (Grades 8-12)

Duration: 60-90 Minutes

Materials Needed

- A copy of *Animal Farm* by George Orwell
- Blank paper and colored markers/pencils
- Sticky notes
- "The Seven Commandments" worksheet (or a plain piece of paper)
- Access to a dictionary or thesaurus

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- **Define** and identify the characteristics of an *allegory* and a *satire*.
- **Analyze** how language is used as a tool for manipulation and power.
- **Connect** the fictional characters of the book to real-world historical figures and psychological archetypes.
- **Create** a piece of "propaganda" demonstrating an understanding of the book's themes.

1. Introduction: The Hook (10 Minutes)

The "New Rules" Scenario: Imagine that tomorrow, a new leader takes over your house (or classroom). They announce that from now on, everyone is equal. However, they slowly start adding "fine print" to the rules.

Example: "*No one shall eat snacks*" becomes "*No one shall eat snacks... without the leader's permission.*"

Discussion Questions:

- How would you feel as the rules started to change?
- Why might the leader change the rules slowly rather than all at once?
- **Transition:** This is exactly what happens in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. It's not just a story about talking pigs; it's a "fairy story" with a dark, real-world warning.

2. Body: Content and Practice (45-60 Minutes)

Part I: The "I Do" - Unpacking the Definitions

Explain that *Animal Farm* is two things at once:

1. **An Allegory:** A story where every character and event stands for something else (specifically the Russian Revolution).
2. **A Satire:** Using humor, irony, or exaggeration to criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in politics.

The Core Concept: George Orwell wanted to show how power can corrupt even the best intentions. He chose animals to make the complex political ideas easier to see and more "universal."

Part II: The "We Do" - The Squealer Spin-Doctoring

Language is power. Let's look at how the pigs use "The Seven Commandments" to control the farm.

Activity: The Commandment Shift

1. Write the original commandment: "*All animals are equal.*"
2. Discuss: What does this mean to the animals at the start?
3. Look at the end of the book: "*All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.*"
4. **Brainstorm:** Together, identify three ways the pigs "spun" the truth. (Example: Changing the memory of the Battle of the Cowshed to make Napoleon look like a hero).

Part III: The "You Do" - The Propaganda Project

The student will now become "Squealer," the pig responsible for propaganda.

Task: Create a propaganda poster or a 1-minute "radio announcement" to convince the other animals of one of the following:

- Why the pigs deserve all the milk and apples (for their "brainwork").
- Why Snowball (the exiled pig) was actually a secret traitor from the beginning.
- Why working 60 hours a week on the windmill is actually "a privilege."

Success Criteria: Your project must use at least two "persuasive techniques": *Fear* (threatening Jones's return), *Exaggerated Statistics*, or *Plain Folks Appeal* (pretending the pigs are suffering for the others).

3. Conclusion: Closure and Recap (10 Minutes)

Summary: Today, we unpacked the layers of *Animal Farm*. We saw that it isn't just a fable, but a warning about how language can be used to twist the truth and how power can turn "revolutionaries" into "tyrants."

The Final Reflection: Ask the student to answer the "Exit Ticket" question:

"In the end, the pigs become indistinguishable from the humans. What is Orwell trying to tell us about human nature?"

Adaptability & Differentiation

- **For Struggling Learners:** Use a "Character Matching" sheet where pictures of animals are matched with their real-world counterparts (e.g., Napoleon = Stalin, Boxer = The Working Class). Focus on the "Animalism" rules rather than complex political theory.
- **For Advanced Learners:** Research the "Tehran Conference" and analyze the final scene of the book as a specific critique of WWII-era geopolitics. Compare the "Seven Commandments" to real-world historical documents like the Bill of Rights.
- **Multi-Sensory Option:** Build a diorama of the farm using household items, labeling the "evolution" of different areas (the barn wall, the windmill, the farmhouse).

Assessment

- **Formative:** Observation of the "Commandment Shift" brainstorm and the student's ability to define allegory in their own words.
- **Summative:** The Propaganda Project. Evaluate based on the use of persuasive language and alignment with the book's themes.