

Welcome to Manor Farm... I Mean Animal Farm!

Get ready to dive into one of the most powerful short novels ever written! George Orwell's *Animal Farm* isn't just a story about talking animals; it's a brilliant critique of power, politics, and revolution.

Materials Needed:

- Copy of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*
- Notebook or paper
- Pen or pencil
- Optional: Access to internet for historical context research

What's the Big Idea? Allegory & Satire

Animal Farm works on two levels. On the surface, it's about animals overthrowing their human farmer. But underneath, it's an **allegory**. An allegory is a story where characters, settings, and events represent abstract ideas or real-world people and events. In this case, it parallels the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalinism.

Orwell also uses **satire** – using humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues. He's poking fun at serious things to make a powerful point.

Activity 1: Who's Who and What's What?

As you read (or after reading chapters 1-4), start connecting the dots. In your notebook, create two columns. In the left column, list these characters/groups/ideas from the book. In the right column, try to figure out who or what they represent from the Russian Revolution. Discuss your ideas.

- Mr. Jones
- Old Major
- Snowball
- Napoleon
- Squealer
- Boxer
- The Dogs
- Animalism
- The Farmhouse
- The Windmill

Think: Old Major gives a speech about revolution, like Karl Marx or Vladimir Lenin. Napoleon and Snowball fight for power, like Stalin and Trotsky. Squealer spreads propaganda. Boxer represents the hardworking, loyal working class.

Activity 2: Spotting the Satire

Orwell is masterful at using simple animal situations to mock complex political realities. Find examples in the text where Orwell uses satire. Look for:

- **Irony:** When things are the opposite of what they seem (e.g., the pigs becoming like the humans they overthrew).
- **Exaggeration:** Overstating something for effect (e.g., Squealer's ridiculous explanations).
- **Ridicule:** Making something seem silly or absurd (e.g., the sheep constantly bleating slogans).

Write down 2-3 examples of satire and explain what Orwell is criticizing.

Activity 3: Unpacking the Themes

Animal Farm explores big ideas. Discuss these themes:

- **The Corruption of Power:** How does power change the pigs, especially Napoleon? Remember the famous line: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."
- **Propaganda and Deception:** How does Squealer manipulate the other animals with language? Why do they believe him?
- **Social Classes:** How does the division between the pigs and other animals develop? Is the new society really 'equal'?
- **Ignorance vs. Education:** Why is it significant that only the pigs learn to read and write well?

Wrap-up: Quick Write

Choose one character (Napoleon, Snowball, Boxer, or Squealer). Write a short paragraph explaining their role in the allegory and what Orwell might be saying about history or human nature through them. Use specific examples from the book to support your points. Have fun exploring this incredible book!