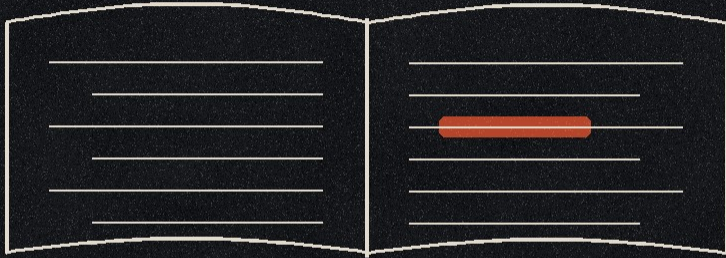




Modern Text: Animal Farm

Plot and context, characters, themes, Orwell's methods, and the whole-text essay with no extract

5 SUBTOPICS · 4 LESSONS OF ABOUT 60 MINUTES





How does a fair revolution end with a dictator?

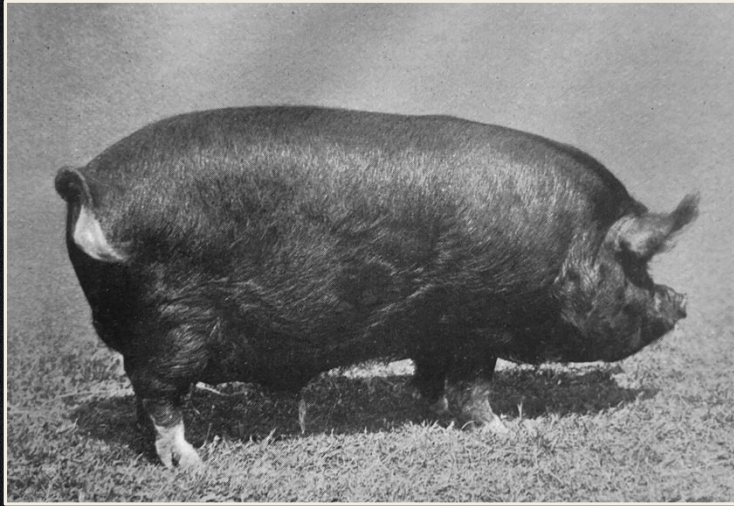


FIG 1 A Berkshire boar, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1911
(public domain)

The animals drive out the farmer and write their first law:

“All animals are equal” (Chapter 2)

Their leader becomes

“a large, rather fierce-looking Berkshire boar” (Chapter 2)

How does a revolution for equality end with a pig ruling like a man?



By the end of this section you can...

01

PLOT AND ALLEGORY

Know the story and the history of the Russian Revolution behind it.

02

CHARACTERS AND THEMES

Track the pigs' rise and the animals' fall, with key quotations.

03

METHODS

Explain allegory, satire, narrative voice and the changing commandments.

04

THE ESSAY

Plan and write a whole-text answer with no extract, with AO1 to AO4.

Follows the AQA GCSE English Literature specification (8702), Paper 2 Section A (modern texts).



Paper 2, Section A: the modern text

THE CHOICE

Two questions on Animal Farm: answer one of them.

NO EXTRACT

Nothing is printed: every quotation must come from memory.

THE MARKS

30 marks, plus 4 for spelling, punctuation and grammar (AO4).

PAPER 2

Also on the paper: Power and Conflict poetry and unseen poetry (Topics 6 and 7).

A01

Your response: a clear argument with quotations

A02

Orwell's methods: language, form and structure

A03

Context: the Russian Revolution and Orwell's purpose

A04

Spelling, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary

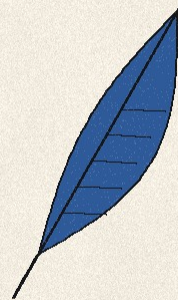
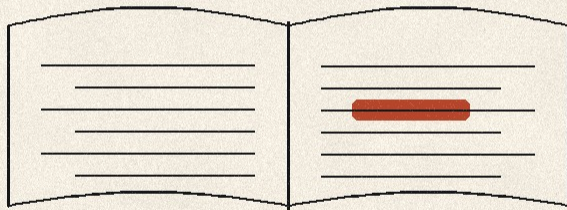


PART 1 OF 4

Plot and context

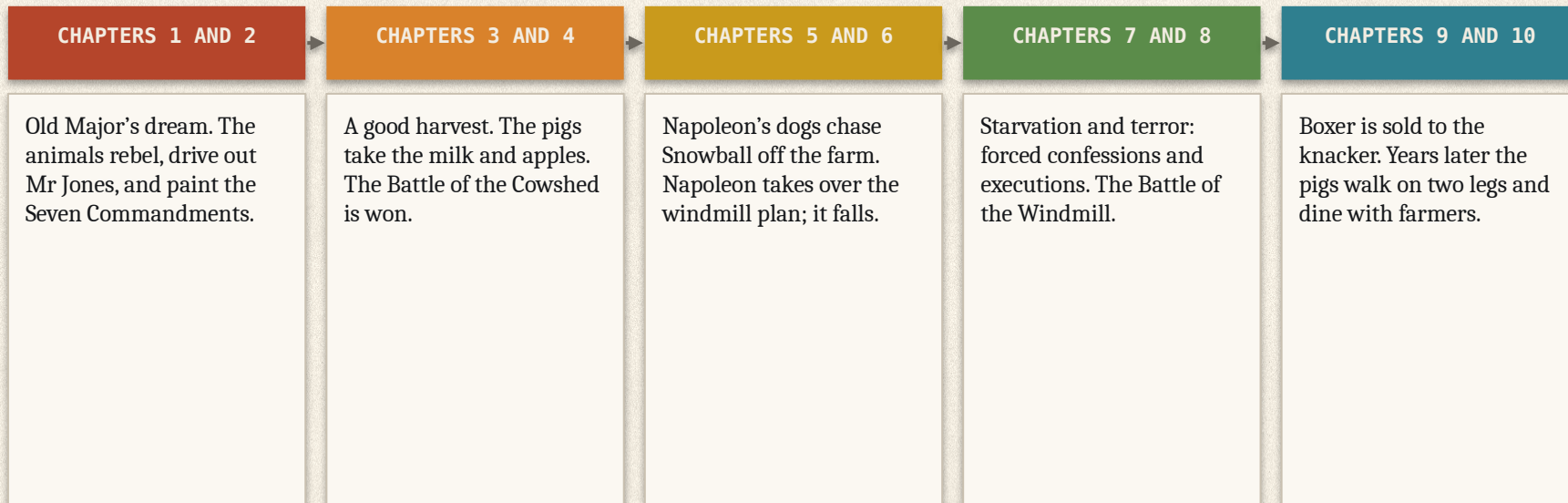
The story in ten chapters, and the history it retells.

01 PLOT AND CONTEXT





The story in ten chapters



Shape: circular. The farm begins and ends under a cruel master; only the master has changed.





Context (A03)

1917

The Russian Revolution overthrew the Tsar. Its leaders promised equality for workers.

STALIN

After Lenin died, Stalin drove out his rival Trotsky and ruled through fear, propaganda and purges.

WRITTEN

Orwell wrote the book in 1943 to 1944, while the Soviet Union was Britain's wartime ally; publishers were wary.

PUBLISHED

1945, subtitled A Fairy Story.

ORWELL

A democratic socialist: he supported equality but hated dictatorship of any kind.





Who stands for whom

ON THE FARM

Old Major

Mr Jones

Napoleon

Snowball

Squealer

Boxer

Moses the raven

IN RUSSIAN HISTORY

Marx and Lenin

Tsar Nicholas II

Stalin

Trotsky

propaganda

the working class

the Church

BATTLE OF THE COWSHED

The civil war after 1917.

THE WINDMILL

Stalin's Five-Year Plans.

THE CONFESSIONS

Stalin's purges and show trials.



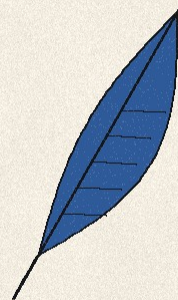
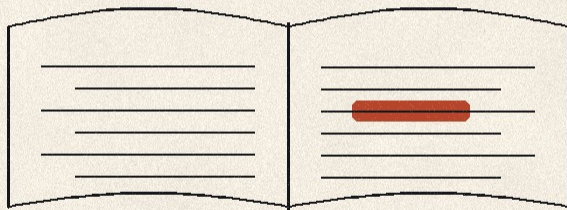


PART 2 OF 4

Characters

The rulers, the workers, and the ones who stay silent.

02 CHARACTERS





Napoleon

From quiet pig to dictator

CHAPTER 2	"a large, rather fierce-looking Berkshire boar" (Chapter 2)
CHAPTER 5	"Tactics, comrades, tactics!" (Chapter 5)
CHAPTER 7	"the air was heavy with the smell of blood" (Chapter 7)
CHAPTER 8	"Father of All Animals" (Chapter 8)
CHAPTER 10	"from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which" (Chapter 10)

CHAPTER 2	quiet power
CHAPTER 5	cunning (via Squealer)
CHAPTER 7	terror
CHAPTER 8	worshipped
CHAPTER 10	a tyrant like Jones

FIG 2 Napoleon's rise, chapter by chapter (drawn)





Snowball and Squealer

SNOWBALL

“Snowball was a more vivacious pig than Napoleon” (Chapter 2)

“liberty is worth more than ribbons” (Chapter 2)

Driven out in Chapter 5, then blamed for every disaster.

SQUEALER

“he could turn black into white” (Chapter 2)

“It is for YOUR sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples”
(Chapter 3)

“Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?” (Chapter 5)

The pair: Snowball is an idealist with plans; Squealer is the voice of power, twisting words so the animals doubt their own memories.





Boxer, Benjamin and the rest

QUOTATION

“I will work harder” (Chapter 3)

BOXER (CHAPTER 3)

WHAT IT SHOWS

Loyal, strong, trusting: the exploited worker.

“Napoleon is always right” (Chapter 5)

BOXER (CHAPTER 5)

His second motto: blind faith in the leader.

“Donkeys live a long time. None of you has ever seen a dead donkey” (Chapter 3)

BENJAMIN (CHAPTER 3)

Cynical and clever, but he does nothing.

“Man is the only creature that consumes without producing” (Chapter 1)

OLD MAJOR (CHAPTER 1)

The idea that starts the revolution.





A model paragraph, with its AOs

Orwell presents Boxer as loyal but tragically trusting. His motto, “I will work harder”, is short and repeated, like a slogan he has absorbed without question, so his strength becomes a tool for the pigs. As an allegory of the Russian working class, who laboured for a revolution that later betrayed them, Boxer’s sale to the knacker shows Orwell’s anger at how ordinary people are used by those in power.

A01

clear argument

A02

method: repetition, explained

A03

context linked to this moment

A04

accurate, precise writing



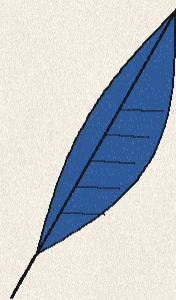
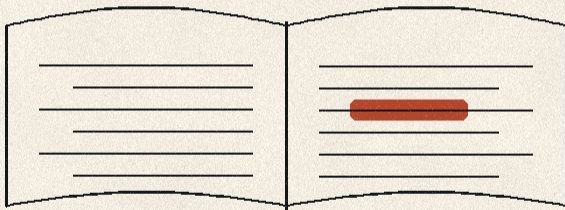


PART 3 OF 4

Themes

Power and corruption, language and propaganda, equality and class, and ignorance.

03 THEMES





Power and corruption

QUOTATION

WHAT IT SHOWS

“It is for YOUR sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples” (Chapter 3)

SQUEALER (CHAPTER 3)

The first privilege, sold as a sacrifice.

“the air was heavy with the smell of blood” (Chapter 7)

NARRATOR (CHAPTER 7)

Power is kept by terror.

“Father of All Animals” (Chapter 8)

NAPOLEON’S TITLES (CHAPTER 8)

A cult of personality.

“He carried a whip in his trotter” (Chapter 10)

NARRATOR ON NAPOLEON (CHAPTER 10)

He has become the master he overthrew.





Language and propaganda

QUOTATION

“he could turn black into white” (Chapter 2)

NARRATOR ON SQUEALER (CHAPTER 2)

WHAT IT SHOWS

Words can make lies look true.

“Four legs good, two legs bad” (Chapter 3)

THE SHEEP (CHAPTER 3)

A slogan that drowns out debate.

“Four legs good, two legs BETTER!” (Chapter 10)

THE SHEEP (CHAPTER 10)

The same slogan, reversed.

“Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?” (Chapter 5)

SQUEALER (CHAPTER 5)

Fear of the past silences questions.





Equality and class

QUOTATION

WHAT IT SHOWS

“All animals are equal” (Chapter 2)

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT (CHAPTER 2)

The revolution’s founding promise.

“ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS” (Chapter 10)

THE WALL (CHAPTER 10)

A paradox: equality made meaningless.

“we have our lower classes” (Chapter 10)

MR PILKINGTON (CHAPTER 10)

The pigs and the farmers share a ruling class.

“No animal in England is free” (Chapter 1)

OLD MAJOR (CHAPTER 1)

Still true at the end.





Ignorance and education

QUOTATION

“I will work harder” (Chapter 3)

BOXER (CHAPTER 3)

WHAT IT SHOWS

Hard work without thought is exploited.

“Donkeys live a long time. None of you has ever seen a dead donkey” (Chapter 3)

BENJAMIN (CHAPTER 3)

Knowledge without action changes nothing.

“Napoleon is always right” (Chapter 5)

BOXER (CHAPTER 5)

Trust replaces thinking.

“Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy” (Chapter 2)

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT (CHAPTER 2)

The animals forget their own laws.





PART 4 OF 4

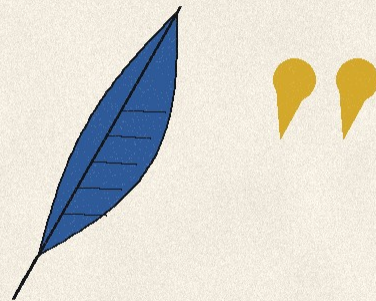
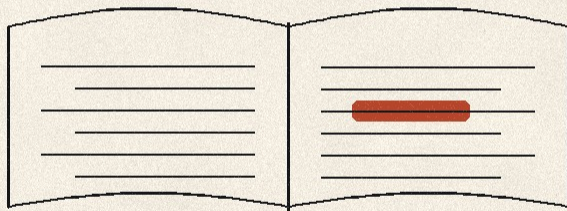
Methods and the essay

Allegory, satire, narrative voice, the changing commandments, and the essay without an extract.

04 ORWELL'S METHODS

05 WRITING WITHOUT AN EXTRACT

EX EXAM PRACTICE





Allegory, fable and satire

ALLEGORY AND FABLE

A simple animal story with a hidden political meaning. The subtitle, A Fairy Story, is ironic: there is no happy ending.

SATIRE

Mocking the powerful to expose them: the pigs sleeping in beds, drinking whisky and walking on two legs are absurd and damning.

The Spontaneous Demonstrations are ordered by Napoleon: the name itself is a joke.

In the exam: name the method and say what it does: the allegory makes Stalin's Russia easy to understand; the satire makes the pigs ridiculous as well as cruel.





The narrator who does not judge

QUOTATION

“These scenes of terror and slaughter were not what they had looked forward to” (Chapter 7)

NARRATOR (CHAPTER 7)

WHAT IT SHOWS

The animals' view, told plainly: understatement.

“No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets” (Chapter 6)

THE WALL (CHAPTER 6)

The narrator reports the change; the reader spots the lie.

“Napoleon is always right” (Chapter 5)

BOXER (CHAPTER 5)

The narrator lets us hear his trust and judge it.





The changing commandments

CHAPTER 2

"No animal shall sleep in a bed"



LATER

"No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets"
CHAPTER 6

"No animal shall drink alcohol"



"No animal shall drink alcohol TO EXCESS"
CHAPTER 8

"No animal shall kill any other animal"



"No animal shall kill any other animal WITHOUT CAUSE"
CHAPTER 8

"All animals are equal"



"ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS"
CHAPTER 10





No extract

The 45-minute answer

YOU CHOOSE Pick the moments yourself: aim for the whole text.

AN ARC Beginning, middle and end: how things change.

MEMORY Ten short quotations that fit many questions.

THE FOCUS Use the question's key word in every paragraph.

AO4 Four marks for accurate, varied writing.

2 MIN

Read both questions; choose the one you can prove best.

5 MIN

Plan 4 points: beginning, middle, end, and a big idea.

5 MIN

Jot one or two quotations for each point.

30 MIN

Write: open with an argument, follow the text in order.

3 MIN

Check spelling and punctuation (AO4).

FIG 3 A suggested timing (about 45 minutes for this question)





A planned answer: Squealer and power

Question: *How does Orwell use the character of Squealer to explore ideas about power?*

Argument: Squealer shows that power is kept by controlling language and memory, not just by force.

BEGINNING

"he could turn black into white" (Chapter 2): a gifted speaker. AO2: metaphor.

EARLY

"It is for YOUR sake" (Chapter 3): the first privilege, disguised as duty.

MIDDLE

"Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?" (Chapter 5): fear as a weapon. AO3: Soviet propaganda.

END

The changed commandments (Chapter 10): the record itself is rewritten. AO1: the big idea.





How did it end like this?

STEP BY STEP

Small privileges (milk, apples, beds) grow until the pigs have all the power.

WORDS AND FEAR

Squealer's lies and the dogs' violence stop anyone questioning.

SILENCE

Boxer trusts, Benjamin says nothing, and the others cannot read the wall.

The last line: “already it was impossible to say which was which”: the revolution has come full circle.





Common mistakes

✗ It is just a story about animals.

✓ It is an allegory of the Russian Revolution.

✗ Orwell was against equality.

✓ He attacked a betrayed revolution, not its ideals.

✗ Snowball is killed.

✓ He is driven out, then blamed for everything.

✗ Tactics, comrades! is Napoleon speaking.

✓ It is Squealer, defending Napoleon.

✗ A history essay earns the marks.

✓ Use context to explain Orwell's methods and ideas.

✗ No extract means no quotations.

✓ Learn short quotations from across the book.





Answer ONE question

1 How does Orwell present the character of Napoleon as a ruler who abuses his power?

[30 marks]
A04 [4 marks]

Write about: what happens • how Orwell presents it.

2 How does Orwell use the changing commandments to explore the betrayal of the revolution?

[30 marks]
A04 [4 marks]

Write about: what happens • how Orwell presents it.

Allow about 45 minutes. No extract. Closed book.





More practice titles

BOXER

How does Orwell use Boxer to explore the treatment of the working class?

LANGUAGE

How does Orwell present the power of language in Animal Farm?

SNOWBALL

How does Orwell present the conflict between Snowball and Napoleon?

HOPE

Does Orwell offer any hope in Animal Farm? Write about how he presents the animals' dreams.

Each: [30 marks] plus AO4 [4 marks].



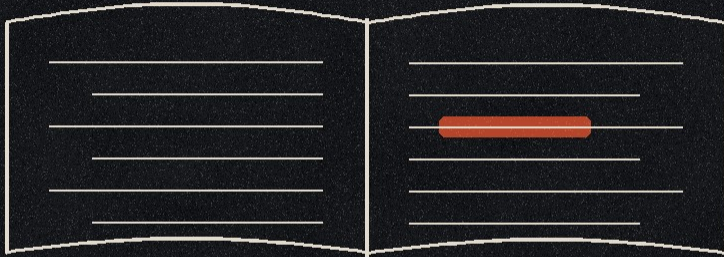
SECTION COMPLETE



Well done!

You can now explain the story and its allegory, track the pigs' rise and the animals' fall, quote on four themes, analyse Orwell's methods, and plan an essay without an extract.

Some animals are more equal than others: show how it happened.





Images used in this lesson

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