

CliffsNotes.com® Conversation Starters for **ANIMAL FARM**

Compare the lives of the animals when they live under Jones and under Napoleon. In what ways has Napoleon proven himself a similar tyrant as Jones?

How does Mollie, who is one of the novel's minor characters, illuminate Orwell's major themes and issues? How does Moses?

Examine Orwell's tone when he describes the way the animals think of themselves under Napoleon's rule. How does Orwell's tone add to the novel's humor?

Having read *Animal Farm*, what kind of political system do you think Orwell would approve?

Closely examine old Major's speech to the animals in Chapter 1. How does he use language to persuade his listeners?

Why do you think Orwell names Jones' as he does? After all, Jones is a very common name. What are we supposed to make of this?

Major argues that the earth could be a paradise if the tyranny of Man was overthrown; he presents his fellow animals as victims of oppression and incapable of any wrongdoing. What's the major flaw in Major's thinking?

What do the names of the pigs chosen to lead the revolution — Snowball, Napoleon, and Squealer — reveal about their personalities?

How does Chapter 2's final episode involving the buckets of milk hint at the ruthlessness Napoleon will display as the novel progresses?

In Chapter 3, how does Squealer manage a great public-relations stunt by portraying the pigs as near-martyrs who only think of others and never themselves? What does he say about the milk and apples?

Why do Snowball's Animal Committees fail?

Reading Chapter 3, how do Snowball's and Napoleon's actions compare to each other? Why is Napoleon more successful than Snowball?

How does Orwell portray Boxer? What do you think of his motto, "I will work harder"?

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In Chapter 4, according to Frederick and Pilkington, the animals are “rebellng against the laws of nature.” What does “nature” in the context of this quote mean?

How does Boxer’s teary-eyed concern about the stable-lad’s possible death contrast to Snowball’s statements about war?

In Chapter 5, how do Snowball’s arguments for building a windmill contrast to Napoleon’s arguments against building it? What else do they argue about in this chapter? How do these arguments foreshadow the eventual breakdown of Animal Farm?

Benjamin does not endorse either Snowball or Napoleon. Some readers have inferred that Orwell speaks through Benjamin throughout the entire novel. Do you think so? Why or why not?

Why does Napoleon disinter Major’s skull? What does Napoleon hope to accomplish?

How does Squealer paint Napoleon’s crimes in Chapter 5 in a light that makes Napoleon more like a martyr than a dictator?

In Chapter 6, Napoleon is able to foster a sense of unity (where animals “volunteer”) using the threat of hunger. How? What are Napoleon’s methods for keeping the animals working and docile? What are the most effective ways that Napoleon strengthens his rule?

What does the destruction of the windmill symbolize?

At the end of Chapter 7, how do Boxer and Clover individually rationalize the terrible atmosphere of fear and death that now characterizes Animal Farm?

Why does Napoleon outlaw “Beasts of England”?

In Chapter 8, in what ways does Orwell stress Napoleon’s character shift from a dictator to a paranoid egomaniac?

What is Squealer’s logic in proving that the battle in which the windmill is destroyed in Chapter 8 is a victory for the animals? How does Boxer react?

Some people think that Boxer’s death in Chapter 9 marks him as the most pathetic of Orwell’s creations. Do you agree or disagree with that?

Why are the animals so glad to believe Squealer’s obvious lies about Boxer’s final moments in which Boxer supposedly praised both Animal Farm and Napoleon?

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Why does Orwell have so many years pass between the end of Chapter 9 and the beginning of Chapter 10?

What is the significance of the slogan, "ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL / BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS"? How does this slogan ultimately define the situation in Chapter 10?

Are you shocked at seeing Squealer walk on two legs, or were you expecting that? Why or why not?

What is implied in the changing of the farm's name back to Manor Farm?
