Animal Farm Study Guide Questions

Questions with ** require research and are extra credit. Answer other questions to the best of your ability. Long answers that don’t fit the space may be listed by chapter on a separate sheet of paper.

Chapter 1

Vocabulary

- tush—tusk
- cud—partially digested food
- foal—colt
- knacker—horse slaughterer
- mangel-wurzel—beet

1. The animals act as animals do (ex. cows chew their cuds). Because they think and speak, they also seem to represent types of humans. What types of people do these animals represent?
   - Boxer
   - Mollie
   - The cat

2. Keeping in mind the Russian Revolution, whom do the animals collectively represent? Thinking of the allegory, what person does Old Major represent?

3. Specifically in Russia’s history, whom might Mr. Jones represent? In general power struggles, whom might he represent?

4. When Old Major addresses the animals, what emotions is Orwell trying to arouse in the reader?

5. Why do you suppose Orwell has this microcosm (miniature fictional world) set in England, rather than Russia? Why might he name the human farmer “Mr. Jones”?

6. While Orwell is making fun of revolutionary rhetoric, which truth in the speech seems sincere?

7. Early in the story how considerate are the animals, who represent the exploited masses) to each other?

8. The revolutionary rhetoric has stirred and united them. What is the first sign of potential disunity?

9. Old Major warns the animals that they must always be hostile to Man and his ways. Specifically, what are man’s evil ways?

10. As they sing the song “Beasts of England,” what is the mood in the barn?

11. Some critics see Old Major’s speech as a parody that makes fun of overblown revolutionary rhetoric. How can a parody mock something while still being deadly serious?

12. The sentiments expressed in the song may represent Orwell’s feelings, but how does the tune go? Is there meaning to his tune choice?
Chapter II

Vocabulary

vivacious - lively  scullery - kitchen
stove - kicked  unalterable - unchangeable
ecstasy - great joy  gamboled - frisked

1. Old Major dies, but his dream has awakened all the animals. Whose job is it to lead and organize the animals? Why them?

2. If there is a classless society which strives to treat everyone the same, why do the pigs take the lead?

3. Within the ranks of the pigs, which three are predominant? Why?

4. What is suggested about Sugarcandy Mountain? What does the name of the raven suggest?

5. If Mr. Jones represents the state, who is the raven, Moses, meant to represent? What is implied about the relationship between the two?

6. What is “Animalism,” and what does it represent?

7. How does revolution come about?

8. After Jones runs off, what image of the animals does the reader get?

9. Napoleon leads the animals back to the storage shed and serves everyone a double ration of corn. How did he become the one to pass out the food? Why do you suppose he gives the dogs two additional biscuits?

10. On what did the animals base the Seven Commandments?

11. The reader is told at the end of Chapter 2 that when the animals came back, “the milk had disappeared.” What does this mean?

12. From whose point of view is this story written?

Chapter III

Vocabulary

acute - sharp  chaff - wasted part
dockerel - rooster  cryptic - mysterious
paddock - small fenced in field  indefatigable - untiring

1. We are told “the pigs were so clever that they could think of a way round every difficulty.” Apparently it is because of their cleverness that they do not do physical work, but supervise others. Yet, in terms of the business of farming, who understands it better than anyone else does, even better than Jones?
2. Orwell suggests that the pigs are the most clever. What is ironic about their cleverness and work?

3. In the early days of the revolution, what is the mood? What is Boxer’s attitude?

4. What happens on Sundays?

5. Since all the animals can vote, why are the pigs in charge of saying what is to be done and when?

6. What is the result of all the committees that Snowball starts?

7. For the more stupid animals, what slogan does Snowball invent that contains the essential principles of Animalism?

8. In this context, whom do the sheep represent in their bleating of this slogan?

9. Napoleon is very interested in the education of the young. But of all the baby animals, why might he select the nine puppies to educate on his own?

10. How does Squealer justify the pigs’ appropriation of the milk and apples for themselves?

11. We are told that Napoleon and Snowball disagree on just about everything. What, however, is the one thing on which they are in full agreement at the end of this chapter?

12. How does Snowball convince the animals to let the pigs have control over the milk and apples?

Chapter IV
Vocabulary

ignominious – dishonorable
impromptu – without preparation

1. How do the people who live next to Animal Farm feel about the revolution?

2. **In allegorical interpretations, the neighbor Frederick is said to represent Germany, and Pilkington is said to represent the allies, especially Britain. From your knowledge of Russian history, what allegorical interpretation would you give to the raid by Jones, Frederick, and Pilkington?**

3. The pigs generally do not come off too well in this story, yet Snowball is shown as being exceptionally brave. Why do you suppose Orwell portrays him so positively?

4. After the battle, why is Boxer upset? What does Snowball tell him?

5. What implication may be drawn from these two points of view?

6. **What aspects of human militarism are mocked toward the end of this chapter?**
Chapter V

Vocabulary

- pretext – excuse
- gaiters – a covering for a shoe
- silage – food for animals
- maxim – a saying
- blithely – without concern
- pPublican – a tax collector
- sordid – dirty, foul
- disinterred – dug up

1. What happened to Mollie?

2. Why have the pigs become a central committee that does all the planning? Explain the irony of this decision making.

3. What use has Napoleon made of the sheep?

4. What is Snowball’s dream for the windmill? What is Napoleon’s thinking about the windmill?

5. A second major point of disagreement between the two is the defense of the farm. What point of view does each have?

6. ** From your knowledge of Russian history, point out how these two points of view, on the windmill and on the defense of the farm, represents Stalin’s and Trotsky’s arguments.

7. How does this argument between Napoleon and Snowball end?

8. Where do the dogs come from, and how do they act around Napoleon?

9. The dogs in this allegory are used to represent what?

10. What does Napoleon do to put an end to any opposition?

11. In the classic style of a tyrant, how does Napoleon, through Squealer, rewrite history?

12. What two things convince the animals of the truth of Squealer’s pronouncements?

13. What offhand comment does Orwell make at the end of the chapter that conveys both innocence and craftiness?

Chapter VI

Vocabulary

- Arable—farmable
- Repose—rest
- Solicitor—an agent

1. What is ironic and unstated about the opening paragraph?

2. What two meanings could be given to the phrase that “the animals worked like slaves”?
3. How is Boxer portrayed? What do his efforts and his statements “I will work harder” and “Napoleon is always right” represent?

4. In what ways are the pigs abusing their leadership roles?

5. In what ways are the pigs beginning to behave like humans?

6. Why are the other animals becoming uneasy?

7. What is Squealer’s task at this point?

8. How do the pigs justify the fact that they are now sleeping in beds?

9. Why does the author never comment on the injustices and lies, but only presents them to the reader?

10. How does Napoleon use the propaganda technique of “the big lie”? 

**Chapter VII**

**Vocabulary**

- clamps—brick enclosure
- capitulated—gave up
- stupified—astonished
- spinney—woods

- infanticide—baby-killing
- pervading—filling
- countenance—facial expression
- gilded—golden colored

1. How does Napoleon, who is not seen in public often, deal with the hen’s rebellion?

2. Why did the hens rebel?

3. What is ironic about this situation?

4. What else is Snowball blamed for?

5. Boxer at first objects to the idea that Snowball’s behavior at the Battle of the Cowshed is treachery. Squealer breaks down his resistance to the propaganda when he says that Napoleon has declared that it is so. What is Boxer’s response?

6. What comment about human nature might Orwell be making in this exchange between Comrade Napoleon and Boxer?

7. What is suggested by the “very ugly look” Squealer gives Boxer?

8. **The bloody scene in front of the farmhouse comes next. How might the confessions or killings relate to Russia in the 1930s?**

9. **When the blood-letting ends, what do the animals do? How do they feel?**

10. As they look down on the farm, what are Clover’s thoughts?
11. Why does Squealer say “Beasts of England” is no longer appropriate? What is sung in its place?

Chapter VIII
Vocabulary
retinue—a group that serves and accompanies  skulking—concealing
beatifically—with complete happiness  wistful—wishful
unscathed—unharmed  lamentation—sorrow

1. How do the pigs “alter reality” to handle the food crisis?

2. By this point what trappings of a typical dictator has Napoleon assumed?

3. **Napoleon’s constantly shifting allegiances between Frederick and Pilkington represent Stalin’s dealings with Germany and the Allies in the late 1930s. For Russia, how did those dealings end in 1939?**

4. Hitler signed a non-aggression pact with Russia, but he went back on the pact and invaded Russia. How is this represented in the book?

5. What enables the animals to defeat Frederick’s armed forces?

6. How do the animals react after the battle? What does Napoleon do?

7. Why does Squealer report that Napoleon is dying?

8. The narrator begins the next-to-last paragraph: “About this time there occurred a strange incident which hardly anyone was able to understand.” What was this incident?

9. A few days later which commandment had the animals “remembered wrong”?

10. Which animal makes the connection between Squealer’s acts and the commandments?

11. As the chapter opens, why did Benjamin refuse Clover’s request to read the Sixth Commandment?

12. Considering all his actions, how would you describe Benjamin’s role in the story?

Chapter IX
Vocabulary
Poultice—healing mixture  superannuated—advanced age
Contemptuously— despisingly  stratagem—idea
Demeanor—behavior

1. Boxer’s death does not have a counterpart in Russian history. In a general sense though, what does his death represent?

2. How does Squealer once again use language to mask reality?
3. What are some signs that life on the farm is becoming unequal?

4. While the farm prospers, life is harder and harder for the animals. The narrator says if life was hard, it was “partly offset by the fact that life nowadays had a greater dignity than it had had before.” What was it that gave this “dignity”?

5. Although the pigs do not believe what Moses says, why do they allow him to return and even provide him with food?

6. Throughout the book Benjamin has observed everything but neither approves nor disapproves of anything. What causes him to break into a gallop, then later to read? Remember, he said earlier that while he can read quite well, there is nothing worth reading.

7. Boxer’s removal and demise are both poignant and filled with ironies. Why is it impossible for him to kick his way out of the van? Instead of the promised retirement, what awaits him? How were Old Major’s comments to Boxer in chapter 1 prophetic?

8. The final irony is that “somewhere or other” the pigs got money to buy themselves another case of whiskey for the banquet to be held in Boxer’s honor. Where was the money from?

Chapter X

Vocabulary

Taciturn—reluctant to talk  filial—like a child
Haughty—grand  eminent—important
Incumbent—necessary  bon mot—a joke
Dregs—sediment in wine

1. The farm has prospered, but who are the only creatures who have benefited?

2. After their fashion, the pigs do work. What is their work, and where does it end up?

3. The animals are cold and hungry, but what do they still have?

4. Throughout the novel, there are hints about Benjamin’s philosophy of life, but finally he tells it to the reader. Locate the passage.

5. Do you think Benjamin’s philosophy is really Orwell’s philosophy? Explain your answer.

6. If it does represent Orwell’s thoughts, what comment is he making about revolution?

7. List some of the ways the pigs are becoming more like humans throughout this chapter.