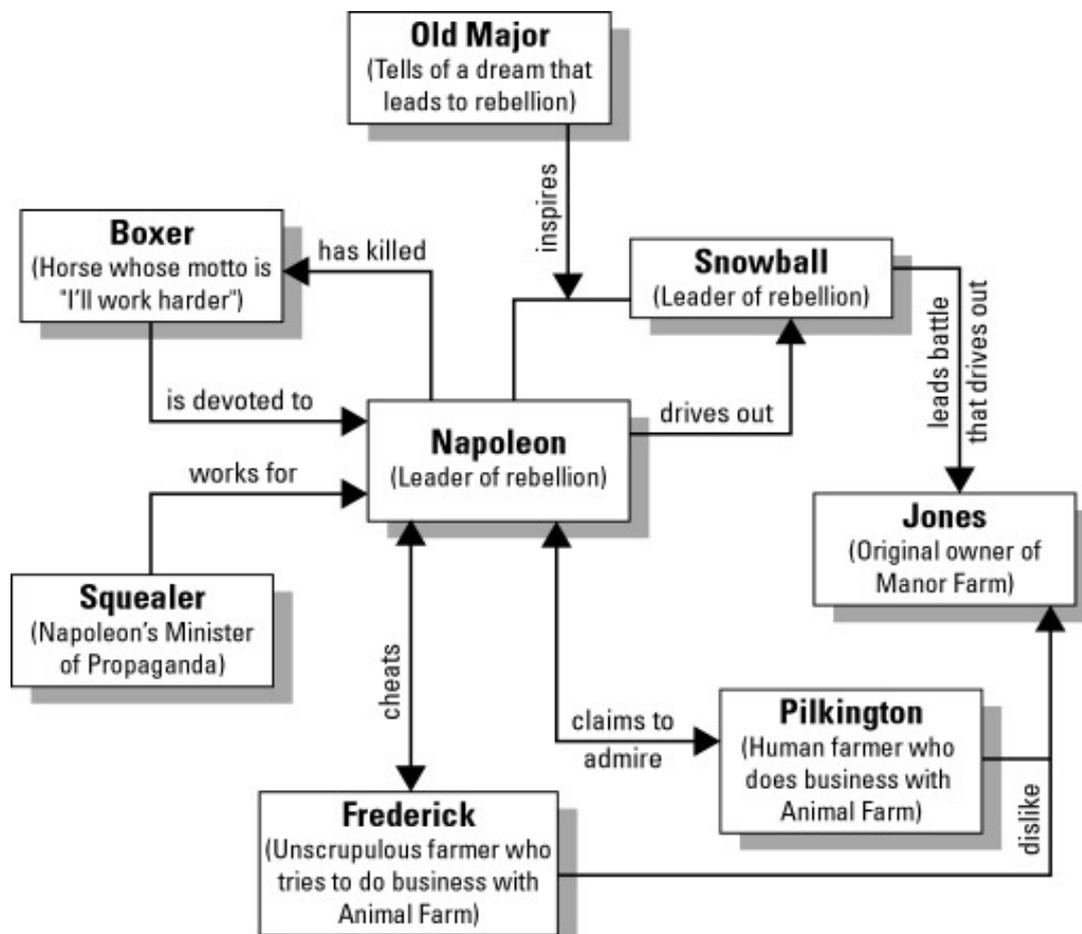
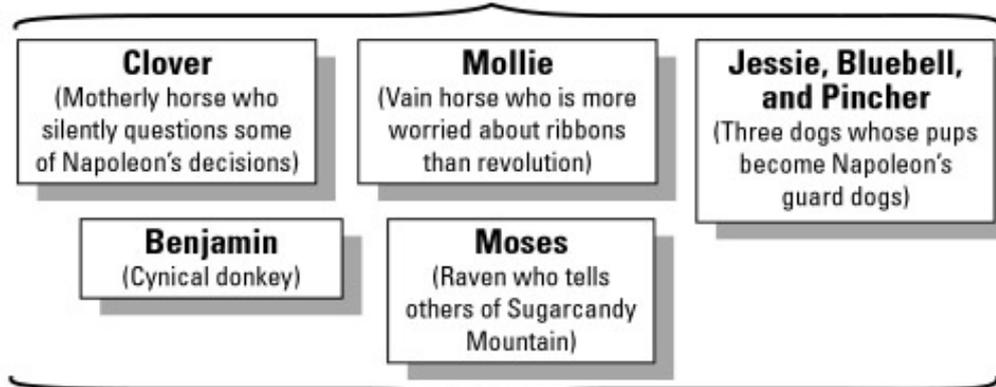


Animal Farm – the basics



Other animals on the Animal Farm



Animal Farm – the basics

FULL TITLE	<i>Animal Farm: A Fairy Story</i>
AUTHOR	George Orwell (pseudonym of Eric Arthur Blair)
GENRE	Dystopian animal fable; satire; allegory; political roman à clef (French for “novel with a key”—a thinly veiled exposé of factual persons or events)
FIRST PUBLISHED	1946
NARRATOR	<i>Animal Farm</i> is the only work by Orwell in which the author does not appear conspicuously as a narrator or major character; it is the least overtly personal of all of his writings. The anonymous narrator of the story is almost a nonentity, notable for no individual idiosyncrasies or biases.
POINT OF VIEW	The story is told from the point of view of the common animals of Animal Farm, though it refers to them in the third person plural as “they.”
TO NE	For the most part, the tone of the novel is objective, stating external facts and rarely digressing into philosophical meditations. The mixture of this tone with the outrageous trajectory of the plot, however, steepens the story in an ever-mounting irony.
TENSE	Past
SETTING (TIME)	As is the case with most fables, <i>Animal Farm</i> is set in an unspecified time period (a dystopia) and is largely free from historical references that would allow the reader to date the action precisely. It is fair to assume, however, that Orwell means the fable to be contemporaneous with the object of its satire, the Russian Revolution (1917–1945). It is important to remember that this period represented the recent past and present at the time of writing and that Orwell understands the significance of the story’s action to be immediate and ongoing rather than historical.
SETTING (PLACE)	An imaginary farm in England
PROTAGONIST	There is no clear central character in the novel, but Napoleon, the dictatorial pig, is the figure who drives and ties together most of the action.
MAJOR CONFLICT	There are a number of conflicts in <i>Animal Farm</i> —the animals versus Mr. Jones, Snowball versus Napoleon, the common animals versus the pigs, Animal Farm versus the neighboring humans—but all of them are expressions of the underlying tension between the exploited and exploiting classes and between the lofty ideals and harsh realities of socialism.
RISING ACTION	The animals throw off their human oppressors and establish a socialist state called Animal Farm; the pigs, being the most intelligent animals in the group, take control of the planning and government of the farm; Snowball and Napoleon engage in ideological disputes and compete for power.
CLIMAX	In Chapter V, Napoleon runs Snowball off the farm with his trained pack of dogs and declares that the power to make decisions for the farm will be exercised solely by the pigs.
FALLING ACTION	Squealer emerges to justify Napoleon’s actions with skillful but duplicitous reinterpretations of Animalist principles; Napoleon continues to consolidate his power, eliminating his enemies and reinforcing his status as supreme leader; the common animals continue to obey the pigs, hoping for a better future.

Animal Farm – the basics

Animal Farm is an *allegory*, which is a story in which concrete and specific characters and situations stand for other characters and situations so as to make a point about them. The main action of *Animal Farm* stands for the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the early years of the Soviet Union. Animalism is really communism. Manor Farm is allegorical of Russia, and the farmer Mr. Jones is the Russian Czar. Old Major stands for either Karl Marx or Vladimir Lenin, and the pig named Snowball represents the intellectual revolutionary Leon Trotsky. Napoleon stands for Stalin, while the dogs are his secret police. The horse Boxer stands in for the proletariat, or working class.

The Animals

Major An old boar whose speech about the evils perpetrated by humans rouses the animals into rebelling. His philosophy concerning the tyranny of Man is named Animalism by his followers. He also teaches the song "Beasts of England" to the animals.

Snowball A boar who becomes one of the rebellion's most valuable leaders. After drawing complicated plans for the construction of a windmill, he is chased off of the farm forever by Napoleon's dogs and thereafter used as a scapegoat for the animals' troubles.

Napoleon A boar who, with Snowball, leads the rebellion against Jones. After the rebellion's success, he systematically begins to control all aspects of the farm until he is an undisputed tyrant.

Squealer A porker pig who becomes Napoleon's mouthpiece. Throughout the novel, he displays his ability to manipulate the animals' thoughts through the use of hollow yet convincing rhetoric.

Boxer A dedicated but dimwitted horse who aids in the building of the windmill but is sold to a glue-boiler after collapsing from exhaustion.

Mollie A vain horse who prefers ribbons and sugar over ideas and rebellion. She is eventually lured off the farm with promises of a comfortable life.

Clover A motherly horse who silently questions some of Napoleon's decisions and tries to help Boxer after his collapse.

Benjamin A cynical, pessimistic donkey who continually undercuts the animals' enthusiasm with his cryptic remark, "Donkeys live a long time."

Moses A tame raven and sometimes-pet of Jones who tells the animals stories about a paradise called Sugarcandy Mountain.

Bluebell, Jessie, and Pincher Three dogs. The nine puppies born between Jessie and Bluebell are taken by Napoleon and raised to be his guard dogs.

The Humans

Mr. Jones The often-drunk owner of Manor Farm, later expelled from his land by his own animals. He dies in an inebriated home after abandoning his hopes to reclaim his farm.

Mrs. Jones Jones' wife, who flees from the farm when the animals rebel.

Mr. Whymper A solicitor hired by Napoleon to act as an intermediary in Animal Farm's trading with neighboring farms.

Mr. Pilkington The owner of Foxwood, a neighboring and neglected farm. He eventually sells some of his land to Napoleon and, in the novel's final scene, toasts to Napoleon's success.

Jones; Mr. Frederick An enemy of Pilkington and owner of Pinchfield, another neighboring farm. Known for "driving hard bargains," Frederick swindles Napoleon by buying timber from him with counterfeit money. He later tries to attack and seize Animal Farm but is defeated.

Animal Farm – the basics

One night, all the animals at Mr. Jones' Manor Farm assemble in a barn to hear old Major, a pig, describe a dream he had about a world where all animals live free from the tyranny of their human masters. Old Major dies soon after the meeting, but the animals — inspired by his philosophy of Animalism — plot a rebellion against Jones. Two pigs, Snowball and Napoleon, prove themselves important figures and planners of this dangerous enterprise. When Jones forgets to feed the animals, the revolution occurs, and Jones and his men are chased off the farm. Manor Farm is renamed Animal Farm, and the Seven Commandments of Animalism are painted on the barn wall.

Initially, the rebellion is a success: The animals complete the harvest and meet every Sunday to debate farm policy. The pigs, because of their intelligence, become the supervisors of the farm. Napoleon, however, proves to be a power-hungry leader who steals the cows' milk and a number of apples to feed himself and the other pigs. He also enlists the services of Squealer, a pig with the ability to persuade the other animals that the pigs are always moral and correct in their decisions.

Later that fall, Jones and his men return to Animal Farm and attempt to retake it. Thanks to the tactics of Snowball, the animals defeat Jones in what thereafter becomes known as The Battle of the Cowshed. Winter arrives, and Mollie, a vain horse concerned only with ribbons and sugar, is lured off the farm by another human. Snowball begins drawing plans for a windmill, which will provide electricity and thereby give the animals more leisure time, but Napoleon vehemently opposes such a plan on the grounds that building the windmill will allow them less time for producing food. On the Sunday that the pigs offer the windmill to the animals for a vote, Napoleon summons a pack of ferocious dogs, who chase Snowball off the farm forever. Napoleon announces that there will be no further debates; he also tells them that the windmill will be built after all and lies that it was his own idea, stolen by Snowball. For the rest of the novel, Napoleon uses Snowball as a scapegoat on whom he blames all of the animals' hardships.

Much of the next year is spent building the windmill. Boxer, an incredibly strong horse, proves himself to be the most valuable animal in this endeavor. Jones, meanwhile, forsakes the farm and moves to another part of the county. Contrary to the principles of Animalism, Napoleon hires a solicitor and begins trading with neighboring farms. When a storm topples the half-finished windmill, Napoleon predictably blames Snowball and orders the animals to begin rebuilding it.

Napoleon's lust for power increases to the point where he becomes a totalitarian dictator, forcing "confessions" from innocent animals and having the dogs kill them in front of the entire farm. He and the pigs move into Jones' house and begin sleeping in beds (which Squealer excuses with his brand of twisted logic). The animals receive less and less food, while the pigs grow fatter. After the windmill is completed in August, Napoleon sells a pile of timber to Jones; Frederick, a neighboring farmer who pays for it with forged banknotes. Frederick and his men attack the farm and explode the windmill but are eventually defeated. As more of the Seven Commandments of Animalism are broken by the pigs, the language of the Commandments is revised: For example, after the pigs become drunk one night, the Commandment, "No animals shall drink alcohol" is changed to, "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess."

Boxer again offers his strength to help build a new windmill, but when he collapses, exhausted, Napoleon sells the devoted horse to a knacker (a glue-boiler). Squealer tells the indignant animals that Boxer was actually taken to a veterinarian and died a peaceful death in a hospital — a tale the animals believe.

Years pass and Animal Farm expands its boundaries after Napoleon purchases two fields from another neighboring farmer, Pilkington. Life for all the animals (except the pigs) is harsh. Eventually, the pigs begin walking on their hind legs and take on many other qualities of their former human oppressors. The Seven Commandments are reduced to a single law: "All Animals Are Equal / But Some Are More Equal Than Others." The novel ends with Pilkington sharing drinks with the pigs in Jones' house. Napoleon changes the name of the farm back to Manor Farm and

Animal Farm – the basics

quarrels with Pilkington during a card game in which both of them try to play the ace of spades. As other animals watch the scene from outside the window, they cannot tell the pigs from the humans.