

level
B1.1

READING ACTIVITY 1/5



ANIMAL FARM

INTRODUCTION

Animal Farm (1945), by the great British writer George Orwell, is one of the great masterpieces of the 20th century. It is a political allegory. The novel is about a group of animals at Manor Farm that decide to rebel against their master, Mr Jones, and govern themselves in order to achieve freedom and happiness. But will this really happen? The novel is a bitter criticism of all totalitarian systems, and is a passionate attack on the corruption, the greed, the selfishness and the indifference that prevent the human condition from improving.

READING ACTIVITY

Part 1 – Read the excerpt and then do the activities below.

Old Major is a very old, smart male pig—a boar. He decides to tell the animals with this passionate speech what he thinks about Man, and their living condition on the farm.

Old Major raised his voice and said, ‘And last of all, no animal escapes the cruel knife at the end! Oh, what horror! We are sent to the slaughterhouse¹ when we are no longer useful! And when dogs become old and useless, Jones ties a stone around their necks and drowns them in the lake!’ Sounds of complaint were heard in the big barn.

‘Comrades,² listen!’ cried Old Major, raising his trotter. ‘If we get rid of Man, the product of our work will be our own! And we will become rich and free! My message to you is Rebellion! I don’t know when the Rebellion will come, but sooner or later it will happen!’

‘And remember, never listen when they tell you that Man and animals have a common interest. It is a big lie! Man’s only interest is himself! Whatever goes on two legs is an enemy. Whatever goes on four legs, or has wings, is a friend. All animals are brothers and all animals are equal.’

At this moment all the animals cried out in agreement and there was great excitement in the big barn.

‘Now, comrades,’ said Old Major, ‘I will tell you about my dream last night. When I was a little pig my mother and the other pigs sang an old song. Last night it came back to me in my dream. It’s called “Beasts of England”. My voice is old and not very musical, but I’ll sing it to you.’

(from Chapter One)

1 **slaughterhouse** : the place where animals are killed for their meat.

2 **comrade** : a friend, especially one that you shared a difficult situation with.



level
B1.1

READING ACTIVITY

2/5



1. Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1. Animals that were no longer useful were drowned in the lake. T F
- 2. Old Major said that without Man the animals could become rich and free. T F
- 3. Old Major told the animals that the rebellion was going to happen tomorrow. T F
- 4. Man and animals never had a common interest. T F
- 5. Whatever goes on four legs or has wings is an enemy. T F
- 6. Old Major dreamt about an old song last night, but he couldn't sing it because his voice was old. T F

QUICK QUIZ!

2. Complete the table with the correct form of the noun or adjective.

NOUN	ADJECTIVE
1. freedom
2.	friendly
3. equality
4.	cruel
5. music



level
B1.1

READING ACTIVITY

3/5



Part 2 – Read the excerpt and then do the activities below.

Three nights later, Old Major died peacefully in his sleep. His body was buried in the garden. This happened early in March and during the next three months there was a lot of secret activity on the farm. The animals didn't know when the rebellion could take place, but they wanted to prepare for it.

As the pigs were the smartest animals, they had the job of teaching and organizing the others. Two young boars named Napoleon and Snowball were the leaders. Napoleon was a large, tough boar with a strong character. He didn't talk a lot and he usually did everything he wanted to do. Snowball was livelier than Napoleon and he was a big talker.

There were several other young pigs on the farm. Squealer was a small fat pig with round cheeks, bright eyes and a high voice. He was a brilliant talker and was always able to convince others. The three of them created the principles of Animalism, a complete set of ideas from old Major's teachings.

Several nights a week, when Mr Jones was asleep, Napoleon, Snowball and Squealer held secret meetings in the big barn. They wanted to teach the principles of Animalism to the others, but it wasn't easy. They found that some of the animals were quite stupid.

(from Chapter Two)



level
B1.1

READING ACTIVITY

4/5



ODD ONE OUT!

3A. Underline the word that does not belong to the group.

- 1. peaceful calm gentle violent
- 2. secret well-known popular public
- 3. smart brilliant stupid clever
- 4. quiet sleepy lively dull
- 5. principles rules laws ideas

3B. Complete the sentences with the odd words.

- 1. It was difficult to teach some of the animals because they were
- 2. The young pigs had lots of interesting
- 3. Luckily the animals were friendly and not
- 4. When Mr Jones was asleep, they animals had meetings.
- 5. Snowball was a very young pig.

QUICK VIDEO QUIZ!

4. Watch the video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQAQbVS_2pE&t=12s).

Then match the words with their meaning.

- 1. to slaughter
 - 2. rebellion
 - 3. tactics
 - 4. discipline
 - 5. to starve
 - 6. commandment
- a. to suffer and sometimes die because you have no food.
 - b. strict training; orderly standards of behaviour
 - c. to kill animals and sell their meat
 - d. an important rule
 - e. a violent organized action by a large group of people who want to change a social system
 - f. clever methods used to achieve something you want

