

Grade 8: Unit 5

Animal Farm: Whole Class Novel Seminars

Seminar 2: Whole Class Novel and Connected Text

Teacher Context

John Locke's "Second Treatise of Government," published in 1689, is a foundational document for post-Enlightenment democracies. It denounces the authority of a monarch or other autocracy, insisting that a proper government is responsive to the people and can be dismantled when the people feel it is no longer serving their interests ("social contract"). His writing influenced the English, American, and French Revolutions.

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars apply their understanding of the French and Russian Revolutions to the argument made by Major during the meeting at Old Manor. Scholars draw comparisons between Locke's "Second Treatise of Government" and *Animal Farm*, specifically examining the "state of nature" and warnings against tyranny and corruption. Finally, scholars synthesize the readings to infer that equality has been a common struggle in many societies.

Seminar 2:

***Animal Farm*: Chapter I (pages 3–14) and Excerpts from “Second Treatise of Government” by John Locke (pages 6-8, 87, 91-92, Digireads Publishing, 2017) (Nonfiction)**

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous Seminar to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous Seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Tell scholars that today, they will begin reading a timeless novel about the dangers of power. As they begin reading, they should think about the connection between Old Major’s speech and the French and Russian Revolutions that they read about last night.

Read and Discuss — 20 minutes

Read:

- **Read Aloud (10 minutes):** Excerpts from “Second Treatise of Government.”

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: What does John Locke argue is the “state of nature”? How does this compare to Major’s argument in *Animal Farm*? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class. Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
 - Why did Major call a meeting at Old Manor?
 - How does Chapter I connect to the readings about the French and Russian Revolutions?
- Extension: What do both John Locke and Major warn against?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Based on your homework readings and today’s readings, what has been a common struggle in societies? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Homework

- Read Excerpt from “The Dispossessed” by Ursula Le Guin (pages 101-110, Harper/Voyager, 2011).

Seminar 3: Whole Class Novel and Connected Text

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars analyze the quality of life at Animal Farm after the revolution by discussing the new laws and the ways animals are and are not equal. Scholars articulate differences between Snowball, Napoleon, and other characters on the farm. Finally, scholars examine the results of Lenin's control over Russia and use that to determine whether the rebellion at Animal Farm achieved its goals.

Seminar 3:

***Animal Farm*, Chapters II–III (pages 15–36) and Lenin's "Implementation of Leninism in Russia and the Changes Made" (Nonfiction)**

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous Seminar to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous Seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Get scholars excited for today's reading by telling them they will get to witness changes in life on Animal Farm as well as subsequent changes in Russia after the revolution.

Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes

Read:

- **Play Audiobook (Chapter 2, first 14 minutes, 47 seconds):** *Animal Farm*, Chapter II, pages 15–26.

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs. Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
 - What do the Seven Commandments guarantee for the residents of Animal Farm?
 - What does the phrase "unalterable law" indicate about the new leadership at Animal Farm?
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: In what ways are Mollie and Moses different from Boxer and Clover?

Read:

- **Read Aloud (10 minutes):** *Animal Farm*, Chapter III, pages 27–36.

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs. Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
 - How is life different on *Animal Farm* after the revolution?
 - On page 27, Orwell states, “The pigs did not actually work, but directed and supervised the others.” To what extent is this equal treatment of the animals?
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Orwell explains that “everyone worked according to his capacity” (page 29). Does this statement include the pigs? Why or why not?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- How equal are the residents of *Animal Farm* after the revolution? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-Up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 20 minutes

Independent Reading (15 minutes):

- “Lenin’s Implementation of Leninism in Russia”

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs. Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
 - How did Russia change as a result of Lenin’s control after the revolution?
 - What challenges did the new Russian government face?
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Overall, were Russians better off after the revolution? Why or why not?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Did the revolution on *Animal Farm* achieve its goals? Why or why not? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Homework

- Read *Animal Farm*: Chapter IV (pages 37–44) and Chapter V (pages 45–52, stop at “... him utter before.”), and “The Red Bow” by George Saunders.

Seminar 4: Whole Class Novel and Connected Text

Teacher Context

Ayn Rand was born in Russia and moved to the United States in 1926, fleeing the newly formed communist government. *We the Living* seeks to catalog what Rand saw as the individual loss of freedom under the collectivist policies of Joseph Stalin.

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars examine the ways in which Napoleon alters life on Animal Farm after ousting Snowball, including his use of Squealer to rewrite the history of the revolution. Scholars discuss Napoleon's response to the windmill and debate whether Snowball was responsible for it. Scholars analyze Ayn Rand's argument against communism and apply their understanding of "living for the state" to the residents of *Animal Farm*.

Seminar 4:

***Animal Farm*, Chapters V–VI (pages 52–71) and Excerpt from *We the Living* by Ayn Rand (pages 79-84, Signet, 2011) (Fiction)**

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous Seminar to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous Seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Get scholars excited for today's reading and discussion by telling them they will read about big changes on Animal Farm and a novelist's dissenting opinions about Communism.

Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes

Read:

- **Play Audiobook (Chapter 5, 10 minutes, 31 seconds to 18 minutes, 19 seconds):** *Animal Farm*, Chapter V, pages 52–58 (start at "At this there was a terrible baying . . .").

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How does Napoleon oust Snowball from the farm? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Why is rewriting history important to Napoleon in Chapter V? How does he do this?

Read:

- **Read Aloud (10 minutes):** *Animal Farm*, Chapter VI, pages 59–71.

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: How does Napoleon respond to the crumbled windmill? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Is Snowball responsible for the windmill? Why or why not?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- In what ways is Napoleon defying the Seven Commandments? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-Up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 20 minutes

Independent Reading (10 minutes): Excerpt from *We the Living*

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs. Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
 - What are the main differences between Kira and Andrei?
 - Why does Kira argue that the Communist belief that “man must live for the state” will turn “paradise into the most unspeakable hell”? (Lines 69–70)
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does Rand illustrate that postrevolution Russia isn’t prosperous for everyone?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- How are the residents of Animal Farm “living for the state”? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Seminar 5: Whole Class Novel and Connected Text

Teacher Context

In 1887, Lord Acton wrote a series of letters to Archbishop Mandell Creighton, challenging Creighton's account of the Spanish Inquisition, a time when Catholic popes and religious leaders were persecuting anyone who wasn't a "true Catholic." Creighton's history didn't document the crimes of the religious leaders, believing their authority made them worthy of exception.

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars analyze Napoleon's corruption by examining the ways he maintains control on Animal Farm. In particular, scholars analyze Napoleon's use of Mr. Whymper, his suppression of dissent through execution, and his use of Squealer's propaganda. Furthermore, scholars examine the arguments put forth by Lord Acton to better understand Napoleon's corruption.

Seminar 5:

***Animal Farm*, Chapters VII (pages 73–89) and Excerpt from “Letter to Archbishop Mandell Creighton” by Lord Acton (excerpt from Hanover College History Department) (Nonfiction)**

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous Seminar to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous Seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Get scholars excited by telling them they will find even more similarities between Stalin and Napoleon in today's reading and discussion.

Read and Discuss 1 — 40 minutes

Read:

- **Play Audiobook (Chapter 7, first 12 minutes, 19 seconds):** *Animal Farm*, Chapter VII, pages 73–82 (end after “... at this moment!”).

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs. Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
 - What does Napoleon's response to the hen protest on page 76 reveal about him as a leader?
 - Why is Snowball still being blamed for problems?
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does propaganda keep Napoleon in control?

Read:

- **Read Aloud (10 minutes):** *Animal Farm*, Chapter VII, pages 82–89 (start at “Four days later . . .”).

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs. Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
 - Why are certain animals being forced “to confess their crimes”? (page 83)
 - What does Clover mean when she thinks, “But still, it was not for this that she and all the other animals had hoped and toiled”? (page 87)
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does Orwell illustrate the changes in Napoleon throughout Chapter VII?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- How does Napoleon maintain his control over the other animals? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-Up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 15 minutes

Independent Reading (10 minutes):

- Excerpt from “Letter to Archbishop Mandell Creighton”

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: What are Creighton’s and Acton’s differing views on authority? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What does Lord Acton mean: “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority”? (Lines 51–53).

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Has Napoleon been corrupted by power? Why or why not? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Homework

- Read *Animal Farm*, Chapter VIII (pages 91–109).

Seminar 6: Whole Class Novel and Connected Texts

Teacher Context

Rafael Trujillo was a dictator of the Dominican Republic starting in 1930. While his regime is credited with making infrastructure improvements, he used secret police, censored the press, and eliminated his opponents. He used merengue as a national symbol, a form of music that appealed countrywide.

Karl Marx was a German philosopher who wrote the foundational principles of communism, believing that society would continue to see struggles between social classes until all were equal. He believed that this would come about through a series of revolutions and ultimately lead to a peaceful anarchy. In his writings, he also tackled topics prevalent in society. One such subject, religion, he viewed as a pacifying tool that kept poor and powerless people from seeing their lot in life and how to change it.

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars analyze the message of equality in Guthrie's song, comparing this message to the desires of the residents of *Animal Farm* and to what extent Napoleon maintains equality for all animals. Scholars examine Napoleon's use of propaganda and then determine Trujillo's merengue as a piece of propaganda. Scholars use their understanding of songs as propaganda to determine whether Napoleon's most effective tool for control is propaganda.

Seminar 6:

"This Land Is Your Land" by Woody Guthrie (Song) and "Era Gloriosa" by Rafael Trujillo (Song)

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous Seminar to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous Seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Get scholars excited for today's readings by telling them they will compare two songs written to influence the minds of others, one by an American folk singer and another by a Dominican dictator.

Read and Discuss 1 — 40 minutes

Read:

- **Play recording of "This Land Is Your Land"** while scholars follow along in their copy of the poem. (Note: Sung version is abridged.)

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs. Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
 - Based on Lines 32–36, what is Guthrie's message about equality?
 - What ideals do Woody Guthrie's song and the residents of *Animal Farm* share?

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:
 - How do the changing laws in *Animal Farm* reflect the importance of education?
 - Did the animals win the battle “thanks to the leadership of Comrade Napoleon”? (pages 105) Why or why not?
 - How does Orwell portray Squealer?
- Extension: How does Guthrie’s song compare to *Beasts of England*?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- To what extent does Napoleon maintain equality for residents of Animal Farm? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-Up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 15 minutes

Read:

- **Play recording of “Era Gloriosa”** while scholars follow along on their copy of the poem.

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs. Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
 - Lines 1–2 state, “It’s a glorious time to live in my country/In every way the people are happy.” What do these lines reveal about the song’s purpose?
 - What do Lines 11–14 reveal about the purpose of the song?
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does “Era Gloriosa” compare to “This Land Is Your Land”?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- What is the most effective tool Napoleon uses to control the animals? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Homework

- Read Excerpt from *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right* by Karl Marx (paragraphs 2-5), Excerpt from *Yocandra in the Paradise of Nada*, and “10 Surprises about Fidel Castro’s Extravagant Life.”

Seminar 7: Whole Class Novel and Connected Texts

Teacher Context

Fidel Castro ran a communist regime in Cuba for close to 60 years. While in power, his people suffered increasing isolation and poverty as the rest of the world cut ties with Cuba, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. Castro censored media and literature, even exiling writers who exposed the true conditions of life in his country.

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars analyze the conditions at Animal Farm and how they are affecting the morale of the residents. Furthermore, scholars determine the extent of equality on the farm and Squealer's lies about Boxer. Scholars draw connections between life on Animal Farm and life in Communist Cuba during the Special Period.

Seminar 7:

***Animal Farm*, Chapters IX (pages 111–126); Excerpt from *Yocandra in the Paradise of Nada* by Zoé Valdés (pages 15-17, Arcade Publishing, 2014) (Fiction); and “10 Surprises about Fidel Castro’s Extravagant Life” by Keith Flamer (Nonfiction)**

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous Seminar to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous Seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Get scholars excited for today's reading by telling them they will see the return of Moses the raven, experience the loss of a beloved character, and explore the effect of Communism on Cuba.

Read and Discuss — 35 minutes

Read:

- **Play Audiobook (Chapter 9, first 10 minutes, 49 seconds):** *Animal Farm*, Chapter IX, pages 111–119 (end after “... before he went on pension.”).

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs. Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
 - How equal are the animals on the farm?
 - How does life have “a greater dignity than it had had before”? (page 115)
 - Why does Moses the raven return?

- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Why do the pigs allow Moses “to remain on the farm, not working”? (page 118).

Read:

- **Read Aloud (10 minutes):** *Animal Farm*, Chapter IX, pages 119–126 (start at “Late one evening . . .”).

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs. Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
 - What happens to Boxer?
 - What arrives after Boxer has been sent away? Where can we infer the pigs got the money to pay for this?
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does Orwell ensure we know Squealer is lying?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- How does Boxer’s death represent a betrayal to the values of the animal’s revolution? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-Up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their own work moving forward.

Discuss — 20 minutes

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs. Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
 - How is Yocandra’s quality of life similar to or different from Fidel Castro’s quality of life?
 - How does Valdés illustrate the quality of life in Cuba during the Special Period?
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: In what ways does life in Communist Cuba parallel life on Animal Farm?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- How would Napoleon and the pigs define equality? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Homework

- Read *Animal Farm*, Chapter X (pages 127–141) and Preface (pages v–xiv) and “Freud’s Notion of the Uncanny in *Animal Farm*.”

Seminar 8: Whole Class Novel and Connected Text

Teacher Context

Sigmund Freud, a leading German psychoanalyst from the early 1900s, applied his theories of psychology to literary criticism. He proposes the idea of the uncanny: something that is scary because it is or reminds us of something familiar. This plays out in many places in literature; he uses *The Sandman* as a case study.

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars evaluate whether *Animal Farm* is a fairy story by analyzing both Woodhouse’s argument about a successful fairy story and Freud’s concept of the uncanny.

Seminar 8:

***Animal Farm*: Introduction (pages xv–xxvii) and “Freud’s Notion of the Uncanny in *Animal Farm*” by Polly Sapakie (Nonfiction)**

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous Seminar to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous Seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Build excitement for today’s final discussion on the fairy story *Animal Farm* and Sigmund Freud’s concept of the uncanny.

Read and Discuss — 20 minutes

Read:

- **Read Aloud (10 minutes):** Introduction, pages xv–xxvii.

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs. Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
 - According to C.M. Woodhouse, what are the qualities of a fairy story that “succeeds”? (page xxiii)
 - Why does C.M. Woodhouse think Orwell subtitled *Animal Farm* “A Fairy Story”?
- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:

- What is Freud's notion of the uncanny?
 - What does Sapakie argue is uncanny in the finale of *Animal Farm*?
- Extension: How does this notion of the uncanny connect to Woodhouse's argument about a successful fairy story?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Based on what you have read, is *Animal Farm* a fairy story? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

You Did It!

Congratulations! You've reached the end of Literature Unit 5: *Animal Farm*!

As a result of teaching this unit, you as the teacher have:

- Helped your scholars fall in love with this classic literary satire.
- Built your scholars' ability to articulate their understanding of texts both orally and in writing.

Your scholars can:

- Notice interesting language and structures used by an author and explain how these choices support the big idea.
- Write and revise arguments of 200 words to demonstrate their understanding of texts.

Celebrate your scholars' successes by acknowledging what they can now do as readers as a result of their work during this unit. Invite scholars to share how much fun they had exploring satire and learning the many historical contexts *Animal Farm* touches.

Reflect on your successes and stretches, as well as those of your scholars. Have your scholars grown as readers over the last month? Do you have any readers who are not reading at Level Z? If so, create a plan to target those scholars during the independent reading portions of each lesson. Additionally, you must enlist parents to help get scholars over this hump!

Scholars must read at home, as well as in school. Do you have 100% of your scholars reading nightly at home? Make sure at-home reading is happening and meet with families who are falling short to recommit them to this team effort.

Do you have 100% of your scholars reading fluently? Using all of the tools at their disposal to figure out the meaning of what they are reading?

Do you have 100% of your scholars doing their literacy homework? You must insist that 100% of scholars are completing their homework nightly.

Going into the next unit, make specific reading goals for yourself. Set a percentage goal for how many scholars you will move. Set a goal for scholars who are not reading at home. Who will you get

to consistently read at home? Set a goal for moving any scholars stuck below Level Z. Why are they stuck? Do they read fluently? Do they understand what they're reading? Do they understand the big idea? How will you partner with parents to support their growth?

If you are having trouble meeting your goals, do not wait until you have NOT succeeded. Consult your colleagues. Consult your leaders. ASK FOR HELP so you can meet your goals!