



SNOWBALL

SNOWBALL'S ROLE IN THE TEXT

Snowball is the farm's intellectual. He helps to plan the revolution and rivals Napoleon for leadership of Animal Farm. In the text, Snowball:

- energetically promotes the revolution and teaches the animals new skills.
- appears to care for the wellbeing of the other animals, but also supports Napoleon's seizure of the apples.
- is brave in battle and a brilliant strategist. He is the mastermind behind the victorious Battle of the Cowshed, as well as the windmill.
- for all his brilliance, does not notice Napoleon's steady climb to power – or the use he makes of the dogs.
- is nearly killed by Napoleon's dogs in Chapter 5 and flees from the farm.
- after his expulsion, is used as a scapegoat for any misfortune on the farm. He is also used as a malign threat, to frighten the animals into obedience.

SNOWBALL'S IMPORTANCE TO THE TEXT AS A WHOLE

Snowball represents Leon Trotsky, one of the leading figures of the Russian Revolution, who led the Red Army to victory in the Russian Civil War. Orwell presents him as a brilliant idealist, who attempts to modernise society. He uses Snowball to show us an alternative leader to Napoleon: Snowball is intellectual, 'indefatigable' (Ch. 3, p. 19) in organising the other animals into committees and full of 'plans for innovations and improvements' (Ch. 5, p. 30), such as the windmill. He also uses democratic processes such as meetings and committees to put forward his ideas – although he too agrees that the apples and milk should be kept for the pigs, raising the question of exactly how equal a society under Snowball would have been.



TOP TIP

A01

Snowball is generally presented positively in the story. It is also useful to identify negative descriptions or examples of his behaviour (for example, he is said to lack Napoleon's 'depth of character' Ch. 2, p. 9).

A01

EXAM FOCUS: WRITING ABOUT SNOWBALL

A01



Key point	Evidence/Further meaning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snowball is seen as charismatic and a brilliant thinker and communicator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Snowball was ... quicker in speech and more inventive.' (Ch. 2, p. 9)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snowball is dedicated to spreading Major's revolutionary ideas and teaching the animals to run the farm themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'He formed the Egg Production Committee ... the Clean Tails League ... the Wild Comrades' Re-education Committee.' (Ch. 3, p. 19) The comic nature of his committees suggests that his approach is theoretical and impractical – and likely to fail.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snowball is the first to simplify language on Animal Farm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Four legs good, two legs bad.' (Ch. 3, p. 21)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snowball's ruthlessness makes us wonder how different the revolution would have been under him. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'The only good human being is a dead one.' (Ch. 4, p. 26)

TOP TIP: WRITING ABOUT SNOWBALL

A01

You might be asked to contrast Snowball's character with Napoleon's. You could begin by examining Chapter 2, where the two characters are explicitly linked by Orwell: Snowball's plans and ideals seem to put Napoleon in the shade. In contrast to the more talkative Snowball, Napoleon is relatively silent but equally ambitious. Napoleon and Snowball have differing ideas about Animalism – their disagreements parallel those of Stalin and Trotsky (see **Part Four: Themes**).

When writing, compare the two characters' reactions to educating the animals, the Battle of the Cowshed, the Battle of the Windmill and spreading the revolution to neighbouring farms. Ask yourself how sympathetic Orwell expects us to be towards Snowball. Do you think he would have been a better leader simply because Napoleon is such a tyrant? Or can you find evidence to suggest that the animals would genuinely have been better off under Snowball? You should also focus on the way Snowball is used by Napoleon to terrorise the farm animals after he flees the farm.

Look at Snowball's reaction in Chapter 4 when the windfall apples are taken and the fact that he agrees with the pigs' use of the milk. The animals, who believe that they are all living as equals, 'had assumed as a matter of course' (p. 21) that the windfall apples would be shared out, along with the milk.

Orwell tells us that, despite the murmured protests of the animals, 'it was no use' (p. 22) as all the pigs are in agreement. For Orwell this was one of the central passages in the book. Even Mr Jones put the milk in the hens' mash rather than keep it for himself.



TOP TIP

A01

When writing about a character, try to explain their function in the story.

RESPONDING TO WRITERS' EFFECTS

The two most important assessment objectives are **AO1** and **AO2**. They are about *what* writers do (the choices they make, and the effects these create), *what* your ideas are (your analysis and interpretation), and *how* you write about them (how well you explain your ideas).

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE 1

What does it say?	What does it mean?	Dos and don'ts
<p>Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response ● Use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations 	<p>You must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use some of the literary terms you have learned (correctly!) ● Write in a professional way (not a sloppy, chatty way) ● Show you have thought for yourself ● Back up your ideas with examples, including quotations 	<p>Don't write: <i>Clover is a really nice character. Orwell uses lots of nice words to describe her. 'Clover was a stout, motherly mare.'</i></p> <p>Do write: <i>Orwell presents Clover throughout the text as a caring and decent character, for example when she 'makes a sort of wall with her hoof to protect the ducklings in Chapter 1.'</i></p>

IMPROVING YOUR CRITICAL STYLE

Use a variety of words and phrases to show effects. For example:

Orwell suggests ..., conveys ..., implies ..., explores ..., demonstrates ..., signals ..., describes how ..., shows how ...

I/we (as readers) infer ..., recognise ..., understand ..., question ...

For example, look at these two alternative paragraphs by different students about Napoleon. Note the difference in the quality of expression.

Student A:

This sounds as if George Orwell is speaking

It could 'mean' this, but there are other possibilities

Orwell says that Napoleon is really horrible to Snowball in Chapter 5. He walked into Snowball's shed and urinated over the plans. This means that Napoleon is being cruel. This means that he doesn't care if Snowball knows he doesn't like them. Orwell is saying Napoleon and Snowball are at war with each other.

Very chatty and informal

Better to use other words or phrases than 'say' or 'saying'

Student B:

Clear and precise language

Using 'seems' allows the student to explore the idea rather than state it bluntly as fact

Orwell presents Napoleon in an unpleasant light when he sees Snowball's plans for the windmill in Chapter 5. He demonstrates his contempt for Snowball's scheme by walking out without uttering a word, implying that he is also trying to intimidate Snowball.

Orwell also seems to be saying that Napoleon will use actions rather than words to show his opposition.

Good variety of vocabulary

This helps introduce an interpretation – rather than saying 'this is what it means'

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE 2

What does it say?	What does it mean?	Dos and don'ts
<p>Analyse the language, form and structure used by the writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.</p>	<p>'Analyse' – comment in detail on particular aspects of the text or language</p> <p>'Language' – vocabulary, imagery, variety of sentences, dialogue/speech, etc.</p> <p>'Form' – how the story is told (e.g. first person narrative, letters, diaries, chapters)</p> <p>'Structure' – the order in which events are revealed, or in which characters appear, or descriptions are presented</p> <p>'create meanings' – what can we, as readers, infer from what the writer tells us? What is implied?</p> <p>'Subject terminology' – words you should use when writing about plays, such as 'character', 'protagonist', 'imagery', etc.</p>	<p>Don't write: <i>The writing is really descriptive in this bit so I get a good picture of what the farm looks like.</i></p> <p>Do write: <i>Orwell emphasises the beauty of the farm through Clover's view of it after the executions: 'the bursting hedges were gilded by the level rays of the sun'. The change in pace and use of the words 'bursting' and 'gilded' create a lyrical, pastoral image that heightens the tragedy.</i></p>

THE THREE 'I'S

- Firstly, the best analysis focuses on specific ideas, events or uses of language and thinks about what is **implied**.
- This means drawing **inferences**. After Boxer's death in Chapter 9, it is stated 'that from somewhere or other' the pigs 'had acquired the money to buy themselves another case of whisky'. The phrase 'somewhere or other' is **ironic**, suggesting that the animals cannot see what the reader can: that the pigs have sold Boxer to the knacker and spent the money on alcohol.
- From the inferences you make across the text as a whole, you can arrive at your own **interpretation** – a sense of the bigger picture, a wider evaluation of a person, relationship or idea, for example, in this case, the manner in which the animals have had their thoughts manipulated.