

SAMPLE ESSAY ON ANIMAL FARM'S LITERARY DEVICES

Among the entire list of writers' tools, there are few that cannot be found in *Animal Farm*. George Orwell filled his novella with powerful literary devices from cover to cover. The three most prevalent of these are his use of foreshadowing, pathos, and allegory. Much of what makes this piece of work so masterful is centered on Orwell's use of these three devices.

Thesis statement

Topic Sentences
introduce idea of foreshadowing

Orwell often uses foreshadowing in *Animal Farm* to allow the reader to predict what will happen in upcoming events. He uses these hints both subtly and blatantly, allowing careful readers to quickly hypothesize outcomes. One such example of subtle foreshadowing occurs in chapter eight when the animals have just finished building the windmill for the second time after its initial collapse. Admiring the finished work, it was noted that, "Nothing short of explosives would lay them low this time!" (66) This, of course, was a hint that the windmill would indeed eventually be destroyed with the use of explosives, but for many readers it is not recognized as foreshadowing until this prediction comes to fruition later in the same chapter once Frederick and his men invade Animal Farm. The astute Benjamin is the first to realize what is happening: "Do you not see what they are doing? In another moment they are going to pack blasting powder into that hole." (69) Orwell cleverly uses the animals' boasting to foreshadow their eventual downfall.

set up context of your example

Support with a quote

explain how it is an example of foreshadowing

Final sentence to sum up the example

Transition + topic sentence

→ Another example of more blatant foreshadowing occurs in chapter seven when Boxer, for the very first time, begins to show skepticism toward Squealer's blatant lies. When Squealer assured the animals that "Snowball was in league with Jones from the very start" (53), Boxer protests. Although Squealer is eventually able to change Boxer's thinking by invoking Napoleon's name, the narrator notes that Squealer "cast a very ugly look at Boxer with his little twinkling eyes." (55) Later in that chapter is when Napoleon's dogs unexpectedly attacked the animals, targeting Boxer in particular. Readers can assume that the attack, although made to look like an accident, was a deliberate response to Boxer's perceived disloyalty due to the foreshadowing that Orwell included earlier in the chapter.

context

Quote for support

explanation for how this is an example of foreshadowing to sum it up.

Transition and topic sentence to introduce the idea of pathos

Quote to show pathos

In addition to foreshadowing, Orwell skillfully uses pathos at critical moments in *Animal Farm* to evoke sympathy for the more pure characters of the novella, especially Boxer. Orwell first uses pathos when describing Boxer's inability to learn how to read: "Boxer could not get beyond the letter D. He would have A, B, C, D in the dust with his great hoof [...] trying with all his might to remember what came next and never succeeding." (21) Boxer is a hard-working and pure-hearted character who deserves the best life has to offer, so Orwell's description of Boxer's inability to educate himself evokes a strong sense of pity and sympathy for the beloved horse.

set a context + introduce your quote.

explanation of how it is pathos to sum it up.

Transition + topic sentence

Later in the novella, Orwell's use of pathos comes to a climax in the scene where Boxer is taken to the knacker. When Boxer finally becomes aware of Napoleon's manipulation- exactly what the reader has hoped for throughout the entire story- it is too late: "The time had been when a few kicks from Boxer's hoofs would have smashed the van to matchwood. But alas! his strength had left him; and in a few

Quote

moments the sound of drumming hoofs grew fainter and died away." (82) It is at this point that the reader loses all hope for Boxer and the other animals, because if Boxer, who most deserves it, does not get justice, who else will? Orwell effectively uses pathos to illustrate the dangers of a naïve working class who will only ever be used and manipulated for the gains of the ruling class under Stalin's communism.

explanation of why this is "pathos"

- effect of pathos to sum it up

Transition + topic sentence to introduce the idea of "allegory"

Finally, perhaps the most prevalent literary device in *Animal Farm* is allegory. The whole novella is a representation of the Russian Revolution, the plot and its characters each having a correlation to that time period. For example, Squealer, whose job it is to protect his leader Napoleon with lies, represents Stalin's newspaper "Pravda." More generally, he represents the entire propaganda machine that fueled Stalin's popularity and image as a god. In describing Squealer's speeches, the narrator notes, "Squealer would talk with the tears rolling down his cheeks of Napoleon's wisdom, the goodness of his heart, and the deep love he bore to all animals everywhere..." (62) Squealer is also described as "a brilliant talker" who "could turn black into white." (9) Following the Russian Revolution, it was this type of propaganda, such as Squealer disseminated, that convinced the public of Stalin's benevolent leadership.

example of Orwell's use of allegory

- Sum it up

Transition + topic sentence to introduce next example

Another example of how *Animal Farm* uses allegory to mirror the Russian Revolution is found in the book's description of The Great Purge. As Stalin gained power, he solidified his position by eliminating all perceived threats. No one was safe. Anyone from average citizens to high ranking communists were susceptible to Stalin's terror. During this time he was able to force false confessions out of people by threatening the safety of loved ones. People admitted to crimes that they did not commit and were executed or sent to work in the Gulags, making Stalin look like the protector of communism for weeding them out. This time period manifests itself in *Animal Farm* in the animal confessions of chapter seven. It began with four pigs who "confessed that they had been secretly in touch with Snowball" (56) and continued with numerous other animals confessing to various crimes such as stealing food and urinating in the drinking pool "until there was a pile of corpses lying before Napoleon's feet and the air was heavy with the smell of blood..." (57) This event and the killings that followed in subsequent chapters are a clear representation of the thousands- or possibly millions- of citizens whose blood is on Stalin's hands.

- Historical context

- how it is represented in the book

- Sum it up

Orwell's masterpiece is carefully woven together using numerous literary devices, each with a powerful purpose. The three most prevalent of these are foreshadowing, pathos, and allegory. Hinting at upcoming events compels the reader to read on and in the case of the windmill's explosion, creates a clever irony that engages the audience; by evoking pity for the inherently good characters using pathos, Orwell drives home his point that an uneducated working class will most certainly lead to the exploitation of society's most deserving citizens; and in his use of allegory, Orwell is able to cleverly criticize Stalin and his communist government in a way that is both enlightening and entertaining. Certainly without the skilled use of such literary devices, *Animal Farm* would not be the celebrated work of literature that it is today.

Restate thesis

Summarize the effect of using those devices

concluding statement to bring to a close