

University of Georgia supplemental essay prompt: “The transition from middle to high school is a key time for students as they reach new levels of both academic and personal discovery. Please share a book (novel, non-fiction, etc.) that had a serious impact on you during this time. Please focus more on why this book made an impact on you and less on the plot/theme of the book itself (we are not looking for a book report).”

WORD COUNT - 345/350

“Reading about farm animals is so stupid. I’m basically in high school,” I thought as we began *Animal Farm* by George Orwell in eighth grade. I had just come from a hard math test, so I was happy to zone out for a bit when I got to English. A friend’s whisper brought me back to the moment; “Bro, what does this Charlotte’s Web knockoff have to do with the Russian Revolution and Stalin? Mr. Alexander must be crazy.” After hearing that I paid attention the rest of class, and I am so glad that I did.

Centered around a revolution called “Animalism,” where animals free themselves from human exploitation, *Animal Farm* depicts three pigs running for leadership: Napoleon, Squealer, and Snowball. Corruption and groupthink inevitably impede the revolution and lead the other animals right back to where they started.

Transitioning to high school, I noticed that people were no longer all friends with each other. Instead, they formed cliques and if you ventured past your group, you’d be laughed at and outcast. This dynamic is polarizing because if you don’t agree with others in your group, you’re ostracized, even if your opinion may be the more logical one. Early on, I noticed how people’s thought processes started to become indistinguishable, since everyone followed the same mindset. I made it my mission to reject this dynamic and become friends with as many groups as I could.

Looking back, I am overjoyed that I made the decision to connect with everyone, not just a select group. Some of my closest friends are widely different, from football players to debate team leaders; theater kids to basketball team captains; and all of them from different cultural, familial, political, and religious backgrounds. Connecting with people with different ideas and ideals has allowed me to express myself more than I ever would have otherwise. As I sit here and write, I ask myself: what if I had just gone with the flow and followed Napoleon? Would I have ended up like Clover or had an even worse misstep and been Boxer?