

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ANIMAL HOUSE

AUTHORITY, REBELLION,
AND THE APPEAL OF MISRULE

DISCUSSION GUIDE

★ A comedic classic that pokes fun at authority and celebrates misrule—while quietly asking what freedom, responsibility, and belonging really mean.

1

THE COMIC TRADITION OF MISRULE



- What makes the rule-breaking in *Animal House* funny to us?
- How does comedy give us permission to enjoy what we wouldn't in real life?
- When can breaking rules be healthy—and when can it be harmful?

2

WHY REBELLION IS SO SATISFYING TO WATCH



- What do we get to experience vicariously through the students?
- How does the film let us imagine freedom from authority?
- Do you connect this to times you've questioned "the scripts" in your own life?

3

THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY



- How would you describe Dean Wormer?
- What drives his need for control and punishment?
- Have you encountered similar rigidity in authority figures?
- How does his character create the perfect setup for rebellion?

4

ORDER VERSUS FREEDOM



- What does the establishment value? What does the fraternity value?
- Is it possible to balance order and freedom? How?
- What are the costs of too much order? Too much chaos?

5

THE NEED TO BELONG



- What does the fraternity offer its members that they may not get elsewhere?
- How do acceptance and loyalty play into their choices?
- Where do you find your sense of belonging? How does it shape your decisions?

6

THE GROWTH EDGE

QUESTION

THINK

CHOOSE

GROW

- When does questioning authority lead to growth?
- How can we challenge bad rules while still taking responsibility?
- What would it look like to use your freedom to build a better community?

★ REFLECT & APPLY ★



What "rules" in your life do you follow without questioning? Why?



When do you need to push back against authority—and how can you do it well?



How can you build **confidence** and values that don't depend on fitting in or rebelling against others?



What does a healthy community look like to you? How can you contribute to it?



What lesson from *Animal House* will you take with you?



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Understanding minds.

Strengthening connections.