

# ***Of Mice and Men***

Study Guide for  
CCEA GCSE English Literature

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# Contents

<b>Product Support from ZigZag Education .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Terms and Conditions of Use .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Teacher’s Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Specification Information .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Plot Overview.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Section-by-Section Analysis .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Section 1 Analysis and Activities .....	5
Section 2 Analysis and Activities .....	13
Section 3 Analysis and Activities .....	20
Section 4 Analysis and Activities .....	27
Section 5 Analysis and Activities .....	33
Section 6 Analysis and Activities .....	39
Lennie’s Story .....	44
<b>Whole-text Analysis.....</b>	<b>45</b>
Characterisation .....	45
Relationships .....	59
Settings.....	61
Themes.....	64
Ideas and Messages .....	75
The Writer’s Use of Language .....	77
Form .....	80
Structure .....	80
Contexts .....	81
<b>Exam Guidance.....</b>	<b>84</b>
Guidance on PEE .....	84
General Guidance on Writing Essays .....	87
Revision Checklist.....	89
<b>Key Terms Glossary .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Further Reading.....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Answers / Indicative Content.....</b>	<b>93</b>

# Teacher's Introduction

This resource has been designed for teachers who have chosen *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck as a set text for Unit 1, Section A of the CCEA GCSE specification for English Literature. There are a variety of debate/discussion prompts and active learning tasks threaded throughout each section of this resource to aid the students' understanding of *Of Mice and Men*. There are also a few informative 'Did You Know?' boxes relating to historical context of the novel. Though context is not assessed in the exam, these activities may still be useful for your students to understand the text as a whole. It is up to you to decide if/how you will use these. Within each section a vocabulary guide has also been included (all terms of which have been amalgamated into a 'Key Word Glossary' towards the end of the resource for your ease), along with important quotations with analysis, discussion points and exercises and a variety of section-based questions such as creative writing and visual tasks. A fun 'Interview between Steinbeck and the Potential Reader' creative <sup>1</sup>activity has also been included for students who want to explore why Steinbeck may have chosen to create the characters in a particular way. This activity can be read in class or set to read as homework. At the end of the 'interview' there is also a task for students on how Steinbeck presents the characters in the text.

Following the section-by-section analysis, this resource begins to ease students into their understanding and interaction with the text, first introducing them to a plot overview and a section-by-section analysis of the text, within which there are a variety of 'Knowledge Check' gap-fill and question exercises to solidify and confirm the students' understanding of the text. After the section-by-section analysis, this resource moves to consider Steinbeck's text as a whole. This includes in-depth analysis of Steinbeck's settings, and his characters and their relationships with one another, with a mind map to aid the students' visualisation of the connection between characters in the novel. The study also explores Steinbeck's themes including dreams, reality, friendship, loneliness, cruelty, hierarchies, and anger and violence. Along with Steinbeck's themes, a section has also been included to highlight the various ideas and messages explored throughout the novel, including Steinbeck's use of the concept of the American Dream, his investigation into the agency of humanity and its nature, and the status of social minorities in 1930s America.

Sections are also included relating to Steinbeck's use of language and form, imagery and structure. PEE activities are used throughout the text, particularly in the exam preparation section. These activities are extremely helpful as they specifically relate to *Of Mice and Men*. There are also five writing activities to allow students to begin exploring and experimenting with the ways in which they can empathise with Steinbeck's characters. In terms of differentiation, at the beginning of the guide the assessment objectives are also presented as 'pupil speak', as an aid to pupils who may need extra support. There are also character-based 'first impression' sheets for pupils who may need further help, particularly when being introduced to different characters. Other activities include storyboard activities and activities for pupils who are more able with the text – sections on Steinbeck's imagery and the use of light and darkness are examples in the guide of language-based activities which encourage interpretation. There are also sections which focus on Steinbeck's use of foreshadowing within each section, which encourages pupils to explore the novel on a deeper level.

Along with supporting textual understanding and analysis, this resource provides general guidance on essay writing, sample responses for Higher and Foundation papers, a range of questions for exam preparation and timed responses which can be used and adapted to suit the needs of the individual student or groups of students. There is also a focus on exam criteria, an activity for exam answer practice and a revision checklist. This study guide can be used as a revision guide and in class as various tasks run throughout.

## Acknowledgement

ZigZag Education would like to thank Lewis Gilliard for providing the original character and scene illustrations.

May 2023

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<sup>1</sup> The interview with John Steinbeck (pp. 56–58) is entirely an original creation and this should be made clear during teaching.

# Specification Information

*Of Mice and Men* has been assigned as a set text for CCEA English Literature, for Section A: Novel. The study of this unit should encourage students to connect ideas and become critical readers. The modern text allows candidates to engage with literary familiarity, either through themes and issues or through language.

*Of Mice and Men* is specifically prescribed for GCSE, CCEA English Literature; however, it is also an optional text for the coursework element for CCEA English Language. The summative units allow for the study of *Of Mice and Men* and the methods of assessment:

English Literature
<b>Unit 1: The Study of Prose</b>
<b>Section A: Novel</b>
Exam: Choice of two essay questions. Students must answer <b>one</b> .
This is a <b>closed-book</b> exam.

- ✓ This is part of an external examination and is worth **20% of your GCSE**.
- ✓ *Of Mice and Men* is featured on **Unit 1: The Study of Prose – Section A: Novel**.
- The exam is **1 hour 45 minutes** long. You should spend **1 hour** on this section.
- There is a choice of two essay questions, from which you **choose one**.
- It is a closed book examination.

## Assessment Objectives

- AO1** Respond to texts critically and imaginatively, and select and evaluate relevant textual detail to illustrate and support interpretations.
- AO2** Explain how language, structure and form contribute to writers' presentation of ideas, themes and settings.

## Language Notes

*Of Mice and Men* can be used as a text for Controlled Assessment tasks in Language to meet requirements for Literature, although Language teachers will find it useful for:

- reading and understanding texts
- developing interpretations of writer's ideas and perspectives
- evaluation of linguistic, structural and presentational features to achieve effective communication

English Language
<b>Unit 3: The Study of Written Language</b>
Controlled Assessment: one task from the task bank
Any Literature text is suitable for this unit.

## Keywords

- Critical** Showing careful judgement or evaluation
- Influence** The act, power or capacity of producing an effect on someone or something

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# Plot Overview

George and Lennie, two **migrant** workers, have been dropped off a bus miles away where they're expected to work. George is small and dark with 'sharp, strong features' while Lennie is a giant with a 'shapeless' face. The novel begins with the two characters stopping at a small town where they decide to camp there for the night. We soon discover that Lennie has a mentor friend and dependent on him for support and protection.

Lennie loves to pet soft things but he often accidentally kills them. This becomes evident when Lennie had been secretly keeping hold of a dead mouse. George angrily threatens Lennie and complains that his life would be a lot easier without the duty of looking after Lennie. Lennie really values their relationship. Their friendship is mutually very strong. The two men dream to own a farm. This would involve caring for rabbits, a task which Lennie was good at. The story ends with their story about what their lives would be like if they were living their dream.

The next morning the men arrive at the ranch ready to work. George tells Lennie that if Lennie could spoil things for them with the boss. George insists that he'll do the work. Lennie is their cousin and that Lennie was kicked in the head by a horse when he was a child. Lennie is a handyman with a missing hand, and an old dog, then Curley, the boss's son. He is jealous of any attention which his flirtatious young wife receives. He is also full of jealousy towards Lennie. When George and Lennie are alone in the bunk house, Curley's wife shows them. George warns Lennie to stay away from her, knowing what trouble both she and Lennie could get into. The other men return from the fields to eat and the two men meet Slim. He is a veterinarian who comments on how rare the friendship shown between George and Lennie is. Lennie is a good hand, brings up how, since Slim's dog has just given birth, they should offer Candy a puppy.

The next day George tells Slim the truth: that he and Lennie are not really cousins. Slim explains how Lennie has got them both into trouble in the past. An example of this is that Lennie took a woman's dress but they had to leave because he was accused of rape. Slim says that Lennie has puppies yet Carlson continues to bring up the subject of Candy's dog. Slim agrees that death would put an end to the suffering of the animal, so Candy agrees – as Lennie does – painlessly. The dog is taken outside.

Slim goes to do some work and Curley appears again, searching for his wife. He wants to know where Lennie is. Later George and Lennie talk some more about their dream, and Candy listens to them. They agree to keep their plan a secret. Slim had been challenged about his whereabouts. Curley, looking for an easy target, picks on Lennie. In a fit of action, Lennie crushes Curley's hand. Slim warns Curley that if he reports what has happened to everyone what has happened on the farm.

The next night Lennie is left with Candy and Crooks as most of the men go to the pool. Lennie is the lonely stable-hand. Curley's wife flirts with them. She sees the cuts on Lennie's face and asks if he has crushed Curley's hand. The next day Lennie accidentally kills his puppy. Curley tells Lennie that her life with Curley is a disappointment and that she wished that she was a movie star. Lennie tells how he loves to pet soft things and she offers to let him pet her. When he points he grabs her too tightly and she cries out. As he attempts to quieten her, he kills her.

Lennie runs back to the pool where George has made plans for either of them to go to the pool. The men back at the ranch find out what has happened and organise a search for Lennie, and Lennie can't believe that George isn't mad at him for killing Curley's wife. Lennie talks about the farm which they will have together – he describes the rabbits that Lennie was good at. One of the men comes closer. George shoots Lennie in the back of the head.

When the others arrive, George tells them that Lennie actually had the gun and that he had shot him and shoot him. Slim is the only one who understands that he has murdered Lennie. Lennie is taken away, and the other men remain, puzzled.

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## Did You Know? Context: Plot Summary

After reading the plot you will become aware that Steinbeck has a number of themes during this time. Straightaway we discover that the main characters are two who embrace the concept of the American Dream. However, through the plot, Steinbeck contrasts greatly with the daily grinds of reality. However, the dream enables them to hope for a better life in the future. Is Steinbeck criticising the concept of the American Dream in the text? It suggests that he does. Through Candy and his dog he shows how one can become a dog in terms of his usefulness in terms of work, and how he can only become a strain on society. The culture in which workers form parts of a hierarchy: from the leadership of the Boss to the lowest place, a place which Crooks fills. Steinbeck also uses the character of Crooks to represent the failure of this dream – his destiny is to remain in the lower ranks because of the colour of his skin. When he tells Candy that he changes his mind after asking if he could become a partner.

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# Section 1 Analysis and Ac

## The Opening

### Summary

We are introduced to two workers walking by the Salinas River, near Soledad, California. Lennie. The pair are making their way to new employment on a local ranch. George tells Lennie off after Lennie, and tells him of the future the pair could have one day owning their own

### Analysis

Before we begin it's important to be aware of Steinbeck's **opening descriptive** paragraphs. They are important and not just simply background description. The descriptions create a world which will be explored.

The story begins with a description of the countryside near to the Salinas river near Soledad. The events in the story will take place either near or at this spot. The area is described as a place of innocence, like Eden before man and woman's fall.

Steinbeck creates a peaceful world of nature in the opening where the wildlife is described. The opening descriptions give the reader positive feelings which are full of hope. The story is set in spring and the cycle will continue no matter what. However, we also see the beginning of interference – man has beaten a path nearby and it is well used.

Two men are introduced and they are dressed in denim which shows that they are ranch-hands. They also carry blankets which reveal that they are used to moving around. George is presented as being small and sharp. He's the leader. Lennie is his opposite – large and blundering, he has a learning disability and relies on George for support, care and guidance. He is like a child, and is described in animal-like terms. Steinbeck uses descriptions to make Lennie sound animal-like in his movements, however, he has the mentality of a child. The two men are presented as being opposites. Lennie is shapeless, whereas George is sharp. Lennie moves and has the strength of an animal, yet is simple-minded. This could potentially be a dangerous combination: strength and innocence.

When we look at the characters we immediately know that George is the leader of the two. He tells Lennie off for drinking from the pool like a horse. Lennie is trying to satisfy his immediate needs like an animal. We also know that Lennie does not understand. George can be angry in temperament. He is irritated by the bus driver who did not stop for them. He becomes more frustrated by Lennie who has forgotten where they are going. George has to explain things to Lennie again. The reader becomes aware that George has to do a lot of explaining. The two men are different in appearance, they are also different in their characters.

Again George's dominance is shown when he has to shout after he discovers that Lennie has killed a mouse to stroke. We learn that he likes to pet soft things – like a child would. This shows Lennie needs comfort and closeness – it also forewarns later events in the novel.



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George also has to instruct Lennie on how to behave when they meet the boss – show how good a worker he is as soon as they start. Lennie says that he will. George past in Weed and we find out that Lennie often gets them into trouble so they have to run on. This is a **foreshadowing** of future events. George reveals how he believes that without Lennie around as he could even get a girlfriend.

George openly tells Lennie that he is a burden on him and his life could be of a better life. There is **tension** in the relationship as George views his life as being more difficult. However, when Lennie follows instructions to collect firewood George shows that he cares.

When Lennie starts to cry George feels sorry for him and takes the time to explain to him a dead mouse as a pet. He tells Lennie that he broke it by petting it.

Again this is a way of **foreshadowing** future events. Lennie does not realise his own strength. This becomes apparent when George reminds him about what happened when he was giving him mice to pet.

The whole pattern of their lifestyle is revealed by George when he is angry at Lennie. They have to keep their jobs because Lennie always does bad things. They never settle anywhere and are always moving on. George always has to bail him out of trouble. The full details of what happens when he brings up how Lennie felt a girl's dress, petting it like it was a mouse. This is a way of showing how he has seen it that way. When she yells the two of them have to hide in a ditch all day.

However George becomes ashamed after his outburst. He genuinely cares for his friend and the way he has caused him to feel anguish.

George is sorry about the way that he has treated him and promises that he will give him a better chance that he gets. Lennie craftily suggests that George tell him the story about the ranch.

George's story begins with a description of what it is like to be a lonely ranch worker. Men like them are the loneliest guys in the world, who have no family and no place to go. They waste their money, but they are different because they have each other and they look after each other.

Lennie confirms it by saying that they look after each other.

This section is important as it sets up the idea that something bad will happen – this particularly after hearing the story in Weed. The reader thinks that Lennie will be safe.



### Mini Vocabulary Guide

<b>Bundle</b>	a small number of items rolled up inside a blanket and carried
<b>Cat house</b>	brothel
<b>'Coons</b>	racoons
<b>Heron</b>	a bird with a long neck
<b>Morosely</b>	in a sad, gloomy manner
<b>Stake</b>	an amount of money

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## Useful Quotations and Analysis

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### Quotation

Page 7

*slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight*

Steinbeck shows at the start of

*willows fresh and green with every spring*

Steinbeck's description of the beauty of Eden

*Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand*

This could be Lennie when he returns to the

*a path beaten hard by boys coming down from the ranches... and beaten hard by tramps who come wearily down from the highway...*

These descriptions of destruction will give the impression of a world spoiled by man

Page 8

*They had walked in single file down the path, and even in the open one stayed behind the other*

This immediately shows Lennie follows George and knows nothing

*Strong features*

Steinbeck introduces strong characters

*walked his opposite, a huge man, shapeless of face...*

The introduction of Lennie is opposite to George's character.

*heavy hands*

Straightaway we know they are strong.

*He smiled happily*

This reveals the nature of Lennie.

*'I ain't sure it's good water,' he said. 'Looks kinda scummy.'*

This line shows Lennie's opinion and his companion

Page 9

*big paw*

This metaphorical imagery Steinbeck uses

*Lennie, who had been watching, imitated George exactly*

This shows how Lennie follows George.

*'Jesus Christ, you're a crazy bastard!'*

George's words to his friend.

Page 10

*'Think I let you carry your own work card?'*

Through the character we learn more about the man who has to take responsibility for the time.

Page 11

*'Give it here!'*

This line shows Lennie's desire for keeping the dead

*'An' you ain't gonna do no bad things like you done in Weed, neither'*

George's words to Lennie have caused trouble and also foreshadow

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## Useful Quotations and Analysis (continued)

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	Quotation	
Page 12	<i>'They run us outa Weed'</i>	Lennie's description of the world again foreshadows his fate.
Page 13	<i>Slowly, like a terrier who doesn't want to bring a ball to its master...</i>	This line shows the relationship between George and Lennie. Steinbeck also uses the imagery of a terrier for Lennie.
	<i>George snapped his fingers sharply</i>	George's action shows his control over their relationship.
Page 14	<i>'Blubberin' like a baby?'</i>	This line again shows Lennie's childish behaviour.
	<i>'you've broke it pettin' it'</i>	Again Steinbeck shows Lennie's behaviour earlier in the novel.
Page 15	<i>George went on furiously. 'I got you!'</i>	George's outburst shows him looking after Lennie. He feels that it is his duty to keep Lennie's 'normal' life.
Page 17	<i>'Tell me - like you done before'</i>	This line shows Lennie's dependence on George.
	<i>'Guys like us... look ahead to...'</i>	George's words show his predicament of having to look after Lennie.
Page 18	<i>'O.k. Some day - we're gonna get the jack together... Nuts!'</i>	This whole passage shows the dream of the future. It also captures Lennie's imagination.
Page 19	<i>'I want you to come right here an' hide in the brush'</i>	This instruction shows the end of the novel.

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## Questions on Section 1

Read Section 1 before answering the questions.

### Active Learning Task 1

- a. Read the beginning of the novel before the introduction to George. What's being described?

- b. Copy the following quotations and underline any words which suggest beauty.

*slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight (p. 7)*  
*willows fresh and green with every spring (p. 7)*

What do these beautiful natural descriptions make you think of earlier about Milton's *Paradise Lost* in relation to George and Lennie? What beauty and innocence could be compared to.

- c. Now discuss with your partner the following lines. Be prepared to discuss what you think about what **message** Steinbeck may have been trying to convey.

*a path beaten hard by boys coming down from the ranches...*  
*and beaten hard by tramps who come wearily down from the highways*

Write down what you think these descriptions suggest.

- d. **The first descriptions of the men**

We've already focussed on first impressions of George and Lennie's appearance. Read this description of their clothes:

*Both were dressed in denim trousers and in denim coats with brass buttons. Both wore shapeless hats and both carried tight blanket rolls slung over their shoulders.*

The casual denim tells us they are ranch-hands. The 'tight blanket rolls' suggest a life of their work – to move around. Their lives involve moving from place to place where work that is available – they have no sense of home. The line about the 'two in a long line of workers who move around.' Aside from their work, the men are completely opposite in the way that they look.

Write what the **clothes reveal about the men** in your own words.

- e. **Visual task**

Based on your first impressions of George and Lennie from early in the novel, introduces them, **draw and label the men using quotations from the text**.

Also focus on the differences between them – for example – when you describe George's features as being 'sharp', remember to draw how Lennie's features are different.

Copy out the table below and use it to compare your drawings of the men. How are they different?

	George	
Size		
Clothes		
Luggage		
Features		
Hands		
Eyes		

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f. **Descriptions of Lennie**

Steinbeck uses descriptions to make Lennie sound animal-like in but also has the mentality of a child.

- Find **two quotations** to show how Lennie is presented as being animal-like. Copy them down.
- Write about how Lennie is presented by Steinbeck in Section 1.

g. Find evidence to show that Lennie looks up to George. Copy down the evidence and why you have chosen it in your own words.

h. Look at the words below. Write two headings: one for George and one for Lennie. Write down the words which describe George under his name. Compare your answers with the person next to you and/or feed back to the group.

slow	clumsy	irritated	cautious	soft
------	--------	-----------	----------	------

i. **George and Lennie's dream**

Read the following passage about George and Lennie's dream.

*'Some day - we're gonna get the jack together and we're gonna have a little place of our own. Three or four acres an' a cow and some pigs and...'*  
*'An' live off the fatta the lan',* Lennie shouted. *'An' have rabbits. Go on. We're gonna have in the garden and about the rabbits in the cages and the stove, and how thick the cream is on the milk like you can have it on your face.'*  
*'Why'n't you do it yourself. You know all of it.'*  
*'No ... you tell it. It ain't the same if I tell it. Go on... George. How I can help you.'*  
*'Well,' said George. 'We'll have a big vegetable patch and a rabbit-hutch and a little house with a porch. In the winter, we'll just say the hell with goin' to work, and we'll just sit around the stove and set around it an' listen to the rain comin' down on the roof.'*

George runs out of time to tell the rest of the dream because he has to go to work.

Write a paragraph that continues what George and Lennie do to maintain their farm.



**Did You Know? Context: Section 1**

The natural world presents an innocent contrast to the threatening society Steinbeck creates. George and Lennie are more at ease in this environment, where they can talk freely about their dream. Steinbeck embraces the idea that to work hard means to achieve your dream, tension mounts as the dream seems further away. George brings up work and warns Lennie not to talk to the boss. This is due to Lennie's child-like nature.

Their lifestyle is revealed in more detail when we discover that they move around from place to place to survive. By the end of the chapter, we know a little about the life of a lonely ranch worker, who lived without family, friends or a home.

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## Knowledge Check

Fill in the gaps for Section 1 using the words at the bottom.

George and Lennie are travelling \_\_\_\_\_ They are

\_\_\_\_\_ working. George is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ after him. Lennie is \_\_\_\_\_

He also has a \_\_\_\_\_ disability and is \_\_\_\_\_

He also likes to \_\_\_\_\_ soft things. The two of them

around because \_\_\_\_\_ forgets things and gets in

\_\_\_\_\_ sometimes gets fed up of looking after Lennie

having to move on. He gets \_\_\_\_\_ but also feels

afterwards. They worked at a place called \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ because Lennie touched a woman's dress

George is angry at the \_\_\_\_\_ driver for not dropping

Instead they spend the night at a clearing near a \_\_\_\_\_

down for sleep Lennie \_\_\_\_\_ George to tell the

\_\_\_\_\_ of owning a \_\_\_\_\_

Weed	George	angry
learning	big	regret
pool	pet	looks
leave	simple	bus
Lennie	smarter	trouble



## Discussion Prompts

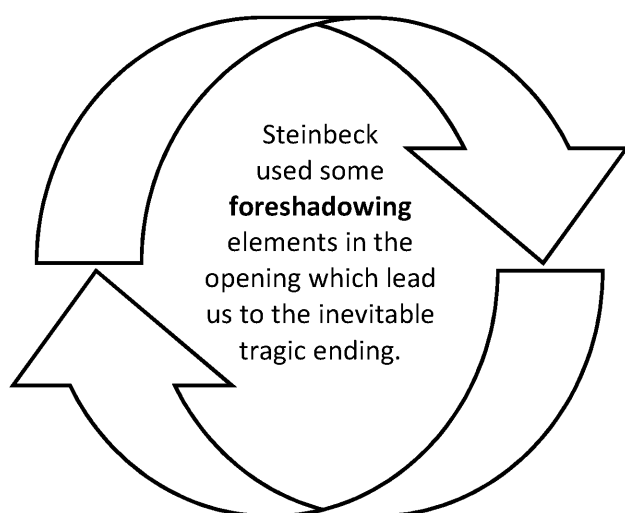
1. What do we learn about George and Lennie's **status** based on the text? How is the way that they speak different to what we consider to be standard? Give three examples from the text.
2. What makes us feel **sympathetic** towards Lennie? Think of two points.

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## Foreshadowing in Section 1



The opening and the ending to the same setting at the end establishes the relationship by the end of the story we see what motivates them. The outdoors scenes associated

Straightaway Steinbeck **for** when he describes how boys clearing and tramps have been. The language emphasises not before we actually see it.

References are made to Weed which foreshadows the trouble to come for George. Not getting the full details, we are aware that Lennie has a tendency to do bad things. This already sets up tension as we want to know more about Lennie and what he can cause problems.

Lennie's character is developed further as we learn that he likes to pet soft things because of his great strength. Although these were accidents we are uneasy about what could happen with Lennie's actions. This is another example of foreshadowing.

Another example of foreshadowing is that we are introduced to George and Lennie. We realise that this dream keeps both men going through their daily realities and about it more with Lennie throughout the story.

It is significant that George tells Lennie to hide in the brush if he gets into any trouble. This foreshadows the inevitability before they even start at the ranch.



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## Section 2 Analysis and Ac

### Summary

George and Lennie arrive at the ranch and are shown to their bunkhouse. The pair meet the ranch owner, Mr. J. D., his son, Curley, and Curley's wife. The pair also meet some of their fellow workers: a man named Candy and his dog, and Slim, a skinner and leader of the ranch's workers. George wants to stay out of trouble, and to avoid Curley and his wife who he believes to be trouble.

### Analysis

The language Steinbeck uses to describe the bunkhouse is plain. George is angry about the idea that his bunkhouse may be infested with fleas and lice. They arrive at ten o'clock and an old man with one hand shows them the bunkhouse. He tells them straightaway that he was there the last night and this makes the reader uneasy – already George and Lennie are on edge. We find out later that this old man is Candy and he reminds them twice that the

We find out that the boss takes his anger out on Crooks, the stable-buck. Candy is a 'nigger'. Immediately we are aware that Crooks is presented as the lowest in the hierarchy of the stable-buck and for being black. This treatment of Crooks is further reinforced when for Christmas they actually let him come in for the night. We learn that Crooks is an outcast differently to the others on the ranch. It's natural that he does not live with the other workers in 1930s America.

Shortly after this exchange, we meet the boss. He wore high-heeled boots and spurs – this makes it clear that he isn't a labourer.

When the boss questions them George sends Lennie a look to remind him to keep quiet. Lennie remembers. However, when the pressure is on Lennie forgets and drops his head in shame at having forgotten. The boss hears that Lennie isn't bright so he questions whether or not George is using him and taking his pay.

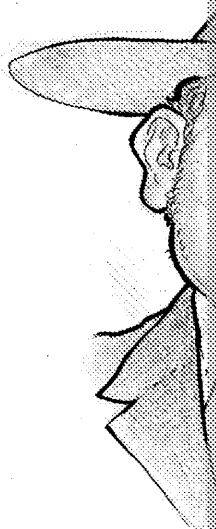
The overall situation with the boss shows us that George and Lennie are already under suspicion. George tells the boss that they are cousins and that he'd told Lennie's mum that he'd take care of him. Nevertheless the boss tells George that he has his eye on them. He also asks about Weed which catches George off guard. George's response is brief, he tells the boss that the job was done. Tension is heightened as George tells Lennie that they are being watched and they can't afford to make any mistakes.

George is annoyed to find that Candy was hanging around outside. He comes in with the dog. There are parallels to be followed between the relationship between Candy and his dog. The dog struggles and depends completely on his master.

George insists that Candy was listening to his conversation with the boss. In his opinion, a guy on a ranch shouldn't listen or ask questions. This shows us that he believes in himself and makes no ties.

When Curley enters he is described as being young and he wears a work glove on his father's hand. He asks if anyone has seen his father. He stands like a boxer and is aggressive. On the left, Candy says that Curley sees himself as a boxer and doesn't like men who are not. To prove his manliness by challenging them. We also find out that Curley has been with the workers Slim and Carlson.

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When Candy leaves George expresses his troubled feelings to Lennie. He reveals he is going to have trouble with Curley. He explains that he has seen that kind of he is going to have a go at Lennie because of his size.

Curley's wife stands in the doorway. She has full, rouged lips and heavily made-up her hair is coiled. She throws herself forward – it seems she has come to look at the staring at her and his eyes move over her. Slim turns up and calls her good-looking her husband. She goes back to the house. George calls her a tramp but Lennie thinks

George warns Lennie about the dangers of getting involved with Curley or his wife him that he doesn't like where they are and that it's a bad place. Lennie also thinks will foreshadow events to come. It's ironic that it's George who says they have to stay

Steinbeck presents Slim as a character to be respected. He's interested when he stick together because it's so unusual.

Carlson also comes in and meets the two men. He's friendly and talks with Slim and produced some new puppies. He then brings up Candy's old dog and suggests that

George and Lennie are about to follow when Curley rushes in. He speaks angrily tone is just as insulting when he answers Curley's questions about his wife. After as George reveals the extent of his hatred for him: he says that he hates his guts know that there will be trouble involving Curley in the future.



## Mini Vocabulary Guide

<b>Burlap ticking</b>	coarse material which covered the straw mattress
<b>Vials</b>	small glass jars and bottles
<b>Roaches</b>	cockroaches
<b>Pants rabbits</b>	lice, fleas, etc.
<b>Swamper</b>	cleaner
<b>Grey-backs</b>	lice
<b>Tick</b>	mattress cover
<b>Stable buck</b>	the negro who looks after the stable
<b>Skinner</b>	driver of a mule team (mule means a type of horse)
<b>A bum steer</b>	false information
<b>Buckers</b>	loaders
<b>Handy</b>	a good fighter
<b>Canned</b>	sacked
<b>Purty</b>	pretty
<b>Jerkline skinner</b>	driver who can control a team of mules with a single rein

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## Useful Quotations and Analysis

### Quotation

Page 22

*'Ya see the stable buck's a nigger'*

This is the intro to the general trend of 1930s America

Page 24

*'... he's sure a hell of a good worker. Strong as a bull'*

George's simile as a worker, an animal-like term

Page 26

*'A guy on a ranch don't never listen nor he don't ast no questions'*

Candy's words on the existence of the

Page 27

*He glanced coldly... fists*

This description of Curley as being aggressive character

Page 28

*'Lennie's strong and quick and Lennie don't know no rules'*

George reveals that he be potentially a foreshadows can

Page 31

*'... full, rouged lips... sausages'*

The description confirming what about her.

Page 33

*'I seen 'em poison before, but I never seen no piece of jail bait worse than her'*

George's warning the story and a relation to work

*'It's mean here'*

Lennie's words and his interaction. It's ironic that George insists on some money.

Page 34

*he moved with a majesty only achieved by royalty and master craftsmen*

The description of most respected

Page 35

*'Ain't many guys travel around together... '*

Slim's surprise for men to travel

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## Questions on Section 2

### Active Learning Task 1

Read Section 2 before answering the questions.

- Describe the building at the start of this section in your own words.
- What is the reason that Lennie isn't too bright according to George?
- Read the following description of Curley and then write down what you think Curley is like and use some quotations to support your ideas. It might help to underline key phrases in the passage first.

*'He glanced coldly at George and then at Lennie. His arms gradually began to move. His hands closed into fists. He stiffened and went into a slight crouch. His face was now all eyes and pugnacious. Lennie squirmed under the look and shifted his feet nervously.'*

Here's an example:



*He stands like a boxer and his behaviour is aggressive. The way he looks like a bully: 'Well, next time you answer when you're spoken to, it'll be up tension – immediately he's a threat. Candy's comment says he's pretty handy. He's done quite a bit in the ring. He's a lightweight.'*

- Write down another reason why Curley singled out Lennie. You must support your answer.
- What does George remind Lennie to do if he gets into trouble?
- Draw and label with quotations Curley's wife based on Steinbeck's description. What does the description make you think of?
- Read Steinbeck's description of Slim:

*'He moved with a majesty only achieved by royalty and master craftsman. (...) His authority was so great that his word was taken on any subject without question.'*

Underline any words or phrases which give you an impression of Slim. Then, in your PEE, write a short description about how you feel that Slim is presented.

- Write down words and phrases Carlson uses to describe Candy's dog. What does this create for the reader?
- When Slim and Carlson leave what does Lennie excitedly talk to George about?
- Look at the words and phrases Steinbeck uses at the end of the section:  
*'You seen a girl around here?' he demanded angrily.  
'Well, what the hell was she doin'?'  
George stood still, watching the angry little man.  
Curley seemed really to see George for the first time. His eyes, for the first time, measured his reach, looked at his trim middle. (pp. 10-11)*

In your own words, write about how Steinbeck presents Curley and his wife.

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## Did You Know? Context: Section 2

Immediately Steinbeck introduces us to the hierarchical nature of the ranch – George and Lennie are warned that the boss is mad, the boss takes his anger out on Crooks because he is a ‘nigger’ – Steinbeck shows us how Crooks is the lowest in status terms.

Steinbeck’s natural style reveals how it was common to treat black people differently in American culture at this time. The predatory nature of society is reinforced when the boss can’t believe that George isn’t using Lennie for his pay.

Candy reinforces the solitary nature of a ranch worker: he believes that a man should keep to himself and not make ties.



## Discussion Prompts

### How the word ‘nigger’ was used in 1930s America

The word ‘nigger’ is an insulting term for ‘Negro’, which is itself a derogatory term for black people, but in the 1930s people would use these terms regularly. In 1930s America, black people were not seen as being equals by many white people. Separation was common in many places. Therefore it’s natural that Crooks doesn’t live with the others. In the animals (the stables).

Thinking about Crooks’ separation from the other men, why do you think he is situated in the stables, as opposed to a bunkhouse separate from the others? How do you think his use of the word ‘Negro’ relates to this separation and treatment?

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## Knowledge check

Fill in the gaps for Section 2 using the words at the bottom.

George and Lennie arrive at the \_\_\_\_\_ the next day. \_\_\_\_\_ takes them to their \_\_\_\_\_ and shows them where \_\_\_\_\_.

They meet the \_\_\_\_\_ who is angry as they have \_\_\_\_\_ becomes suspicious about George and Lennie's \_\_\_\_\_ whether or not he is taking advantage of Lennie. George \_\_\_\_\_ that they are cousins and that Lennie was kicked in the \_\_\_\_\_ he was young.

After the boss has left, we are introduced to Candy and his old \_\_\_\_\_ Curley interrupts them. We find out that he sees himself as a \_\_\_\_\_ not like men who are larger than him. He is looking for his dad, the boss's \_\_\_\_\_ too.

He is \_\_\_\_\_ to Lennie and George worries that \_\_\_\_\_ between them. After Curley has left Candy tells them about his young \_\_\_\_\_ . He warns that she is a \_\_\_\_\_ Lennie to stay away from \_\_\_\_\_.

Curley's wife comes in. She is pretty but heavily made up. Lennie can't \_\_\_\_\_ . After she leaves George warns Lennie to stay away from her too.

\_\_\_\_\_ and Carlson come in. Carlson suggests that \_\_\_\_\_ as he is old. Before George and Lennie leave \_\_\_\_\_ men out, Curley shows up again and is \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ Tension rises between the characters.

Slim	angry	boxer
sheepdog	ranch	staring
Curley	shot	boss
lies	bunkhouse	flirt
	hostile	relationship

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**Active Learning Task 2**

- a. **Research** as much as you can about this period of time and consider how it affects Lennie as a victim of persecution when you read the rest of the text, in particular sections 1-3
- b. **A lot of characters**  
Write down **one** thing that you have learned about the following characters:  
Candy  
The boss  
Curley  
Crooks  
Curley's wife  
Slim  
Carlson
- c. **Lennie**  
*'Lennie's strong and quick and Lennie don't know no rules.'* (p. 28)
  - i) Who says this?
  - ii) Why do they say it?
  - iii) What does it reveal about Lennie? Refer to what we know about him so far.
- d. **Who is it?**  
Copy out the quotation and write down which character is being described:  
*'All people stopped when he spoke'* (p. 34)  
*'His arms gradually bent at the elbows and his hands closed in fists'* (p. 27)  
*'Leaned against the door frame so that her body was thrown forward'* (p. 32)

**Foreshadowing**

Steinbeck sets up a lot of tension by **foreshadowing** events. We know that something will happen to Lennie as the text progresses as firstly it has happened before (for example, in Week 1). In the past, George reminds him to go back to the pool and wait for him there if he gets into trouble. There is an expectancy that Lennie **will** get into trouble.

Also the boss is instantly suspicious of them both, he asks George questions about Lennie and suspects that he is taking advantage of him. He also asks Lennie to speak for himself. After we meet Curley, then his wife. George warns Lennie to stay away from both of them.

Steinbeck uses irony when Lennie himself says that he doesn't want to stay there but they stay for money.

George warns that Lennie is strong and doesn't know any rules, which again creates tension. Parallels are set up between Lennie and Candy's dog who also seems to be headstrong.

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## Section 3 Analysis and Ac

### Summary

George and Slim enter the bunkhouse and the pair talk about Lennie and his strength. Slim has given Lennie a puppy from his dog's litter and now Lennie won't leave him alone. Candy talks about his mental difficulties and his past, particularly an altercation the pair had in the town with a young girl there, resulting in the pair being chased out of town. Candy arrives in the town and Carlson and Slim encourage him to put the dog down to prevent his suffering in his old age outside and shoots it, much to Candy's dismay. Following his dog's death, Candy talks about his own same fate due to his age and disability. George tells Candy of his and Lennie's plan to get a piece of land and invites Candy to join them. Curley enters the bunkhouse and antagonises Lennie, with Lennie crushing Curley's hand and injuring him.

### Analysis

In his discussion with George, Slim speaks favourably about Lennie, admiring him and acknowledging that he isn't bright, but recognises him as a good worker. George agrees, telling Slim that he'll do whatever you say.

George then confides in Slim about his relationship with Lennie and we find out more about them. We hear about Lennie's close relationship with his Aunt Clara, who used to live with them. George also confesses that he was quite mean to Lennie and played some nasty tricks on him, like jump in a river.

George also explains the reasons why he sticks with Lennie in some more depth. He talks about ranch workers on their own and they don't have any fun. In fact, they become more isolated. The companionship and closeness that comes from his friendship with Lennie. There's something from his relationship with Lennie too.

He also talks some more about the events in Weed. We find out that the girl at Weed was the one which makes us visualise Curley's wife – the red symbol of danger becomes more real.

Also George describes how there was a lynch party after Lennie which suggests a sense of danger. After Weed George and Lennie hid in a ditch under water and then escaped at night. Lennie was hurt but George assures him that she wasn't, but was very scared.

Lennie comes in and sits down quickly. Immediately George can tell by his actions that he's a puppy. George tells him off – he must take the puppy back straightaway. Lennie explains in a manner, telling George that he just wanted to pet him a little.

Candy and Carlson return to the bunkhouse. Carlson nags about Candy's old dog and asks why he doesn't shoot him? Carlson has no **empathy** for Candy who protests that his dog is the best he's ever seen. There's a sense of **foreshadowing** in Carlson's description when he describes the dog as old and that it's quick. When Slim agrees with Carlson, Candy agrees to do it. The men try to shoot the dog but Carlson leads the dog out, however there's a tense atmosphere until a shot is heard.

George talks with Whit, another ranch worker, about Curley's wife. Whit says that she's always around. George says that she is going to make a mess. Again this **foreshadowing** of her fate.

Whit invites him to a brothel the next night with the rest of the group. Lennie and George go. Curley bursts in threateningly. He's looking for his wife and is suspicious of Slim.

When it's quieter, George asks Lennie about what Slim was doing in the barn and why he was turned up. Then Lennie moves onto the dream again, asking how long it will be before they have the land and have the rabbits?

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Candy listens as George tells some of his story about the dream. George describes a windmill, a shack, a chicken run, a kitchen and an orchard. Again, their dream is something Candy has heard it.

He wants to become a part of the dream and discusses his financial prospects with Slim, who is saved which he could contribute. At first George is unsure but after discussing the dream with Slim, he wonders. Candy also tells them that he would leave the money to them if he were suddenly seem possible and the dream becomes a plan. Candy tells George what he wants and says that they will fix up the place that he has in mind and they'll live there. Lennie agrees firmly – in a month and he warns them both to keep quiet about it. Candy confesses that he had shot his dog himself.

This reveals that Candy feels that he should have taken responsibility for his dog. When they come back – Slim is scowling as Curley has accused him of flirting with his wife. Candy should tell his wife to stay at home. Curley turns on him too, but Carlson isn't there to help him. Candy tells him that he would kick his head off and Candy joins in by showing his disgust at Curley.

Curley turns on Lennie, who is still smiling about the dream farm. By this point, Curley is extremely angry and he misinterprets Lennie's smile. He thinks that Lennie is laughing at him, so attacks him. Lennie is frightened as he is beaten up by Curley. Curley's cowardly behaviour is shown through his vicious attack on Lennie. Despite Lennie's size, Curley assumes that he is gentle. It's shocking that Curley hits Lennie in the face until he's bleeding. He looks to George for support, but it is not until George gives him permission to defend himself that he grabs Curley's hand.



Slim wants to step in but George shouts to Lennie to get Curley off himself. The tables turn as Lennie fights back and we see the full extent of Lennie's strength. The extremity of Lennie's actions have an effect in the town. George then tells him to let go but Lennie, gripped in terror, won't. Curley's hand is crushed. When Lennie finally lets go Curley looks in wonder at his crushed hand.

Slim and Carlson plan to take Curley to Soledad for medical treatment but George gets fired as a result of what has happened. Slim tells Curley to tell his dad that a man was hurt in order to save his reputation on the ranch. Curley agrees.

George's earlier line which foreshadowed trouble is brought up again when George tells Lennie.



### Mini Vocabulary Guide

<b>Hands</b>	workers
<b>Slug</b>	a single drink, especially of alcohol
<b>Rheumatism</b>	a painful condition involving the joints and the muscles
<b>Loaded shell</b>	an unfired bullet
<b>Magazine</b>	the part of the gun which holds the bullets
<b>Barrel</b>	the long part of the gun through which the bullet travels
<b>Ejector</b>	the part of a gun which throws out the empty cartridge of a shell
<b>Run</b>	an enclosure for animals in which they can feed, run etc.
<b>'Cots</b>	apricots
<b>Alfalfa</b>	a plant widely grown for animal feed
<b>Smoke-house</b>	a building where meat or fish is prepared by means of smoking
<b>Setter dog</b>	a setter is any several breeds of long-haired dogs
<b>Candy wagon</b>	a bus or truck used for transport

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## Useful Quotations and Analysis

### Quotation

Page 37	<i>'Well, what the hell was she doin'?'</i>	Curley's tone is when he quest
Page 39	<i>'he never lifted a finger against me'</i>	George confide loyalty toward
Page 40	<i>red dress</i>	This dress on t Curley's wife a meet her.
Page 42	<i>'He's jes' like a kid, ain't he?'</i>	This is Slim's po
Page 43	<i>'If you was to take him out and shoot him right in the back of the head...'</i>	Carlson's inser man does not another man.
Page 49	<i>'Ever' time the guys is around she shows up'</i>  <i>'She's gonna make a mess'</i>	This line shows the men – we l desires compar  George's word Curley's wife b
Page 53	<i>'George, how long's it gonna be till we get that little place an' live on the fatta the lan'...'</i>	Steinbeck rein much it's need Lennie needs i
	<i>'Got a little win'mill. Got a little shack on it, an' a chicken run. Got a kitchen, orchard, cherries, apples, peaches, 'cots, nuts, got a few berries'</i>	George's word about their dre
Page 55	<i>'I'll break their God damn necks. I'll... I'll smash them with a stick'</i>	Although Lenni cats, his aggress harm and again damage that Le
Page 56	<i>'We'll do her,' he said</i>	George believe accomplish the that it become possible reality
Page 58	<i>Then Curley's rage exploded</i>  <i>Lennie covered his face with his huge paws and bleated with terror</i>	This line shows released which  Again Steinbec when he descr 'paws'. He con
Page 59	<i>The next minute Curley was flopping like a fish on a line</i>	This line captu as Curley is rec

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## Questions on Section 3

### Active Learning Task 1

Read Section 3 before answering the questions.

- a. What does Slim say about Lennie as a worker?
- b. Read what Slim says about ranch-workers in general.

*'Hardly none of the guys ever travel together. I hardly never seen two know how the hands are, they just come in and get their bunk and work and quit and go out alone. Never seem to give a damn about nobody.'* (See page 10)

Write down what impression Slim gives about the lives of ranch-workers. Comment on key words and phrases.

- c. What do we find out about Lennie's relationship with Aunt Clara?
- d. What does George **confess** to Slim about, when he is talking about Lennie?
- e. Read what George says about lone ranch-workers:

*'I seen the guys that go around on the ranches alone. That ain't no good. After a long time they get mean. They get wantin' to fight all the time.'* (See page 11)

What **benefits** does George get from his friendship with Lennie? Use this to help you with your answer.

- f. George also confesses to Slim about what Lennie did in Weed. Write in detail as possible.
- g. What are Lennie's actions like when he comes into the bunkhouse? How does George respond?
- h. In Section 3, George moves onto a description of their dream home: a little house, a little farm, a little white picket fence, a few pigeons, a dog and cats. At one point Lennie interrupts to describe his dream.
  - i) What is it?
  - ii) Who does it involve?
  - iii) Why does he say this?
  - iv) What does Steinbeck show about Lennie through his threat to George?

- i. Later on in this section, we know that Lennie is frightened by Curley. **Underline any words and phrases which show Lennie's fear.** Use your answer with quotations to show that Lennie is scared of the situation.

*Lennie looked helplessly at George, and then he got up and tried to reach for the door handle. He was unbalanced and poised. He slashed at Lennie with his left, and then swung with his right. Lennie gave a cry of terror. Blood welled from his nose. 'George, alone, George.' He backed until he was against the wall, and Curley hit his face. Lennie's hands remained at his sides; he was too frightened to do anything else.'* (See page 12)

**Remember that a character's feelings are revealed through their actions.** How does Steinbeck show that Lennie is scared in this paragraph? Use PEE to support your answer.

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### Questions on Section 3 (continued)

- j. Look at the two examples of **animalistic language** Steinbeck uses when Lennie fights back. For each phrase write down what it suggests about Lennie.
- i) *Lennie covered his face with his huge paws (p. 58)*  
This line suggests...
  - ii) *bleated with terror (p. 58)*  
The word 'bleated' sounds like...



### Did You Know? Context: Section 3

The predatory nature of society is again presented when George confides in Lennie during their younger years. He exploited Lennie, taking advantage of his weakness. Lennie also learns that George now needs Lennie as much as Lennie needs George. This is a stark contrast to being alone, which is the common lifestyle in this ranch culture. The companionship is unusual on the ranch and in the culture of migrant farmers during this period.

Candy's dog is another example of cruelty in American society. Carlson insists on shooting the dog to outlive his usefulness. When Candy asks if he can become a part of the dream, Carlson tells him no, as he knows that he will be asked to leave the ranch soon due to his age and disability. By the end of this section the incident with Curley casts a grim foreshadowing over their future.

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## Knowledge Check

Fill in the gaps for Section 3 using the words at the bottom.

This part of the novel takes place in the \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_ saying what a good worker he is and how  
and Lennie travel around together. George confides in Slim and tells  
\_\_\_\_\_. He also admits that he used to tell Lennie  
advantage of him, he even told him to \_\_\_\_\_ in

George also tells Slim about what happened in \_\_\_\_\_.  
he is hiding a \_\_\_\_\_. George tells him to take it  
\_\_\_\_\_. Carlson tells \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ because he is \_\_\_\_\_  
is \_\_\_\_\_ to his faithful dog. Whit shows Slim a note  
sent by a man who used to \_\_\_\_\_ on the ranch.

Candy finally agrees to let \_\_\_\_\_ shoot his dog  
a \_\_\_\_\_ on Saturday night. When Lennie returns  
about their dream \_\_\_\_\_. When Candy overhears  
\_\_\_\_\_. George starts to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ anyone. Candy confides in George that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ the dog himself.

Curley is \_\_\_\_\_ when he sees Lennie smiling about  
\_\_\_\_\_ farm. Curley beats Lennie up until George  
\_\_\_\_\_ back. Lennie \_\_\_\_\_  
Curley not to tell or he will spread the truth. George tells Lennie that \_\_\_\_\_.

bunkhouse	brothel	angry	crush
wrong	fight	dog	farm
Lennie	puppy	dream	Week
close	shot	Candy	Carlson
barn	suffering	plan	George

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### Active Learning Task 2

Through George's conversation with Slim we find out about the history behind George's relationship which started from a young age.

- a. In your own words write down the history of George and Lennie's relationship, how it started to currently. Remember to include: how they became friends, the horrible treatment of Lennie at first, their travelling lifestyle, what they do for a living and their current situation.

Another event in Section 3 involves Candy's old dog. Just like George takes advantage of Lennie's strength, the cruelty of the world to the weak is shown when Carlson wants to kill Candy's dog because he has outlived his usefulness on the farm, but he is of great importance to Candy.

- b. Look at this extract again. How is the theme of cruelty shown here? Use different points and quotations.

### Foreshadowing in Section 3

There are many **foreshadowing** elements in this part of the story which lead us to believe that Lennie will die.

- The story of Weed describes Lennie's unchanging behaviour – he does not learn from his mistakes.
- We witness the extent of Lennie's capacity to do harm when he crushes Curley's hand.
- The way Carlson kills Candy's dog creates a tense mood which foreshadows the end of the novel.
- Candy confides in George that he wishes that he'd killed the dog himself – the way in which George makes to shoot Lennie himself rather than let Curley and the other men do it.



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## Section 4 Analysis and Ac

### Summary

In this section we are properly introduced to the character, Crooks, and his residence in the ranch's barn. Lennie enters Crooks's bunk in search of company, after George and him go to town and socialise. Crooks teases Lennie and takes pleasure in scaring him to go into town and socialise. Crooks teases Lennie and takes pleasure in scaring him to abandon him. However, after being intimidated by Lennie's temper, Crooks settles his plans with George to own a ranch of their own. Although Crooks initially mocks Lennie, he asks if he too can work and stay on their ranch. Candy enters the room, shortly following Lennie, looking for her husband. After insulting the men and threatening Crooks, Curley's wife enters.

### Analysis

This section begins at the barn where Crooks lives. Steinbeck spends a lot of time describing Crooks's room. We know that where someone lives tells a lot about what they are like. This is why Crooks's arrangements are neat overall but he has some items scattered around. He does this because he is not sharing with other men. We also learn that Crooks is isolated and that he demands that others keep their things to themselves.

Steinbeck presents Crooks as having a body which is bent over to the left by his deformity, which lie deeply in his head and glitter with intensity. His face is lined and his lips are thin. His spine has been damaged as the result of an accident. We learn that he's in constant pain and has to rub his spine. He's also literate – books are specifically mentioned in his room. He's independent. He's annoyed when Lennie interrupts his self-treatment and is shocked when Lennie has no right to come in his room.

Crooks is a **victim of prejudice** because he's black and Steinbeck wants us to have sympathy for him. It's understandable when he tells Lennie that because he isn't wanted in the bunkhouse, he has to live in his room. Steinbeck is showing that his treatment of others is a **defence mechanism** against others who have treated him differently.

Lennie is lonely because the others are spending their Saturday night in town. At first, Crooks is suspicious but he lets his guard down. This is because he is disarmed by Lennie's smile. Like Lennie, he needs some company and he is friendlier to him. Straightaway Lennie lets it slip about the rabbits. He tells Crooks that Candy is thinking about the rabbits and Crooks makes comments about it. Lennie has to respond. He insists that it isn't a lie and they are going to live on their own. He forgets George's rule not to tell anyone.

When Crooks talks about his childhood Lennie doesn't really listen – his mind is on the rabbits. Steinbeck shows the theme of loneliness: even if men talk, others don't really listen. Crooks has the opportunity to torture Lennie, telling him that George may not return. This is too close to his own such thoughts. In this sense Crooks is taking delight in psychologically torturing Lennie. Lennie's reaction about George's possible desertion which upsets Lennie. His face actually lights up.

Lennie becomes increasingly worried and confused by this torment. This nearly ends in a fight. Crooks is dangerous towards Crooks, who realises that he could be in danger. Tension mounts as Crooks uses his words to reassure Lennie that George will be alright. We then find out his motivation.

Crooks has thought a lot about loneliness. He has come to the conclusion that even with company, a man can become lonely and sick. This makes us feel very aware of his own predicament. He talks of how he has no one to set guidelines for him, right or wrong. When Lennie tells him about their hopes for land, Crooks is scornful. He says that hundreds of men pass through with the same thought in their heads but they never do anything about it's just in their heads.

Candy comes in after Crooks has given him permission. He can't cover up the pleasure of having company. At first Candy is reluctant to come in and talk to Crooks because he's aware of the tension in the room. This makes him feel uncomfortable and he says that this is the first time he's ever been in the room.

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When the dream of land is brought up again Crooks again is brutal about it – he insists on talk before and it seems like every man is thinking of land. Candy sticks up for them and the money needed in the bank and has the land picked out for the three of them. When the dream of land is actually becoming a plan of action, he asks if he can become part of it. When Curley's wife comes in and interrupts them. She's very abrupt when she talks about the weak ones behind. This is ironic as she too is isolated and weak because she has no company and seeks it. Curley has gone to the brothel with the other men. We feel sorry for her as she too is lonely.

She confides when she tells them that she likes to talk too every once in a while. She stays in the house all of the time. She describes her isolation despite being married – with Curley all day? She then tries to find out the truth about Curley's crushed hand.

She tells them the story of her own dream. Again, this makes her very similar to the other women who have gone off doing shows and become a film star. One man had even said that he could marry her. However, any sympathies which we have for her do not last as she insults them all, leaving them feeling isolated.

Candy reacts angrily. He again reveals information about their land and says that he is worried about getting fired. She laughs about their plan and then asks Lennie about his facial injury. Lennie doesn't know what to say without George's guidance. All that he can do is repeat the story of the dog caught in a machine.

She speaks to Lennie flirtatiously and she says that she might get a couple of rabbits if Lennie wants. Lennie doesn't understand the double meaning behind her words. Curley comes up, trying to protect Lennie. He tells her he will ask the boss to stop her coming in. Curley, a man, confronting a white woman is putting himself at great risk due to his social position. She is ugly as she threatens to have him strung up against a tree.

It's important to realise that the power of status on the ranch continues, even with Curley on Saturday night. Curley's wife asserts what little power she has by saying that she is the boss. She uses the word 'nigger' to establish her authority over him. It works, as Crooks retreats. She also exerts her power over Candy. Before she sneaks back to the house she tells them that he bust up Curley because she thinks that he had it coming to him. Crooks tells her that he isn't sure if he wants them there anymore. This is because if they hadn't come in, he wouldn't have either – and the chain of events which led to him being threatened wouldn't have happened. It has reminded him of his true position and he no longer wants to be part of the dream.

George returns and scowls when he hears that the plans for the farm have come up. He tells Candy to forget about his request before to be part of the plan. He's changed his mind.



### Mini Vocabulary Guide

<b>Riveter</b>	a tool used to fasten rivets. Rivets are small metal bolts.
<b>Hame</b>	the piece along a horse collar to which chains are attached
<b>Champing</b>	chewing noisily
<b>Meager</b>	of small amount
<b>Keg</b>	a small barrel
<b>Rummy</b>	a card game
<b>Whinnied</b>	the gentle sound a horse makes
<b>Twist</b>	a sharp, sudden punch
<b>Subsided</b>	calmed down

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## Useful Quotations and Analysis

	Quotation	
Page 62	<i>He kept his distance and demanded that other people kept theirs</i>	Crooks is described as being a loner and this line reveals how he treats the other ranch-workers.
	<i>'I ain't wanted in the bunkhouse, and you ain't wanted in my room'</i>	His words show how his way of living and the experience of being a loner affects him.
Page 63	<i>Crooks scowled, but Lennie's disarming smile defeated him.</i>	Crooks longs for friendship despite himself.
Page 65	<i>His voice grew soft and persuasive. 'S'pose George don't come back no more.'</i>	Crooks cannot help but be sympathetic towards Lennie.
Page 66	<i>'a guy gets too lonely an' he gets sick'</i>	Crooks explains his isolation on a man.
Page 67	<i>'Nobody gets to heaven, and nobody never gets no land'</i>	Crooks reveals his bitterness behind many of his actions.
Page 70	<i>'... If you... guys would want a hand to work for nothing - just his keep, why I'd come an' lend a hand'</i>	When Crooks realises the possibility of being accepted, he offers to help.
	<i>'Think I don't like to talk to somebody ever' once in a while?'</i>	Curley's wife reveals her loneliness.
Page 71	<i>'a nigger an' a dum-dum and a lousy ol' sheep'</i>	Curley's wife is bitter about her weaknesses of being a woman and Candy.
Page 73	<i>'Well, you keep your place then, Nigger. I could get you strung up on a tree so easy it ain't even funny.'</i>	Again Curley's wife shows the way that she uses her what little power she has as an example of her bitterness.

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## Questions on Section 4

### Active Learning Task 1

Read Section 4 before answering the questions.

- What do we learn about Crooks from the living arrangements he has?
- Look at the following words and phrases. What do they suggest about Crooks?

*'bent over to the left by his crooked spine'* (p. 62) shows that...

*'lean face was lined with deep black wrinkles'* (p. 62) reveals that...

*'pain-tightened lips'* (p. 62) could suggest that...

- Find a line to show that Crooks is angry about the way that he is treated.
- 'Crooks scowled, but Lennie's disarming smile defeated him'* (p. 63).

What is Steinbeck revealing about Crooks' character through this?

- What does Crooks do to provoke Lennie and make him feel angry?
- 'I tell ya a guy gets too lonely an' he gets sick'* (p. 66).

What is Steinbeck showing about the **effects of isolation** through this?

- How does Crooks react to George and Lennie's dream?
- '...If you... guys would want a hand to work for nothing – just his keep, why I'd work.'*

What makes Crooks change his mind and want to become a part of it?

- Read the short passage which continues the encounter between Crooks and Curley's wife.  
*'She turned to him in scorn. **'Listen, Nigger,'** she said. **'You know you open your trap?'*** Crooks stared **hopelessly** at her, and then he **drew into himself**. She closed on him. *'You know what I could do with you?'* Crooks **shrunk** away from her. *'You know what I could do with you?'* She **pressed** him against the wall. *'Yes, ma'am. Well, you keep your place then, Nigger. I could get you strung up and even funny.'*  
**Crooks had reduced himself to nothing. There was no person in him to arouse either like or dislike. He said: 'Yes, ma'am,' and his voice**

Using the text in bold, **write about how Curley's wife asserts her actions, choice of language and her assertion of status. Also write about her behaviour on Crooks, and how his behaviour contrasts with how she behaves.**

Write a couple of paragraphs and remember to use PEE to plan your answer. Some pupils find that planning their answer first helps, or you can write some answers and get started.

- By the end of this section, Crooks has changed his mind about being a part of the dream. Based on the events at the end of the section, write about what he is no longer wanting to be a part of it.

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## Did You Know? Context: Section 4

Crooks is introduced in this section – so far as we've only heard about him from Steinbeck reveals how isolated Crooks is on the ranch – he doesn't live with the other men, used to the way he's treated – he keeps his distance from the other men. Steinbeck shows Crooks who is a victim of prejudice because of his skin colour. The cruelty of society that the outcasts on the ranch are left to their own devices on a Saturday night. Crooks and Curley's wife are the isolated figures who are left behind.

Through Crooks, Steinbeck shows how unhealthy it is to be isolated in society. This psychologically tortures Lennie. We still feel sympathy for Crooks despite his actions because everybody needs company or else they would become lonely and sick.

However, Crooks is a victim of prejudice on the ranch, and the way that he has been treated by his hands has made him bitter, and has left him believing that Lennie's dream is not possible. In his comment, 'Just-like heaven. Ever'body wants a little piece of lan'. I read plenty of books. Nobody never gets to heaven, and nobody gets no land' (p. 67). Despite this, he still has a plan when he realises that it might provide him with possibility. However, by then it is too late to his fate as a victim of a society which brands him an outcast. He makes this decision when Curley's wife, who used her position to threaten him. Through this event, Steinbeck shows the order established even with the weak: it's the nature of society.

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## Knowledge Check

Fill in the gaps for Section 4 using the words in the box.

It's \_\_\_\_\_ night and Crooks is in his room when \_\_\_\_\_ appears at his door. At first Crooks tells him to \_\_\_\_\_ allowed in the \_\_\_\_\_. Eventually Crooks warms \_\_\_\_\_ . Lennie tells \_\_\_\_\_ Crooks firstly mocks their \_\_\_\_\_ saying that all \_\_\_\_\_ heads. He also winds Lennie up about \_\_\_\_\_ – as what if George doesn't come \_\_\_\_\_? It is on \_\_\_\_\_ that Crooks realises that it's best to stop \_\_\_\_\_. He \_\_\_\_\_ Lennie down and then tells him about \_\_\_\_\_.

Candy appears and talks to Lennie about the \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ aren't being realistic about the farm – George is out now at a \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ insists that it's real – money has gone in the bank. Crooks asks if he can \_\_\_\_\_.

Curley's wife appears claiming to look for \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ . Candy says she shouldn't be fooling around with \_\_\_\_\_ Curley's \_\_\_\_\_. Candy tells her to leave. He goes \_\_\_\_\_ planning to get their own \_\_\_\_\_ – she laughs at them.

She questions Lennie about his \_\_\_\_\_. He doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ repeats the line about him getting his hand caught in the \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ her to get out or he will go to the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ . She turns on him, threatening to have him strung up to a tree. They hear \_\_\_\_\_ out. George appears and is \_\_\_\_\_ that the farm \_\_\_\_\_ . Crooks tells Candy to forget his earlier offer to join the farm.

place	Lennie	annoyed
machine	boss	calms
bunkhouse	rabbits	whorehouse
leave	dream	Saturday
join	bruises	lonely
	George	hand

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## Section 5 Analysis and Act

### Summary

Lennie is playing in the barn alone, holding his puppy who, like his other pets, has been the subject of Lennie's rough play. Lennie is soon joined by Curley's wife, who is lonely and looking to share their dreams, with Lennie speaking of his and George's future ranch and Curley being an actress in a travelling show – a dream that quickly came to an end once Lennie tries to pet Curley's wife. Scared of Lennie's advances, Curley's wife begins to yell, saying that people will come running, Lennie tries to silence her. In the struggle to silence Curley's wife, Lennie murders her and flees the scene. Upon learning of his wife's death, Curley threatens Lennie with vengeance. George and the men leave the ranch in search of Lennie.

### Analysis

It's Sunday afternoon and the workers have some free time. Most men are outside, but Lennie is looking at a small dead puppy which is laid out in front of him. He strokes and pets the puppy. Lennie has bounced the puppy too hard – again, without knowing his own strength.

He puts the body in a little hollow and covers it up with hay. We know that he has a guilty conscience about where to go if he has done a bad thing: he has to go hide in the brush. Again, Lennie is not aware of his own strength: he talks to the puppy, asking him why he died.

He plans to tell George that he found the puppy like that but hurls it in anger as he walks away through his lie. He says that he won't get to tend the rabbits but brings back the puppy instead.

At this point Curley's wife appears and moves quietly so that Lennie doesn't hear her and tries to cover the pup with hay. He tells her that he's not supposed to talk to women, but she knows he broke her husband's hand.

She explains that Curley doesn't allow her to talk to anybody. She asks what he has to do for more detail about what happened to the puppy – Lennie was trying to tell the puppy that he was sorry.

Curley's wife moves closer to him and speaks soothingly. She also says that the men will be back soon and again expresses his concern about what George would say.

We find out Curley's wife needs someone to talk to and she recognises that Lennie is a nice man. She's unhappy with how she lives and insists that she could have made something of herself.

She then tells Lennie about her background starting with how she came to Salinas as a child and a show came through and she met one of the actors, he said that she could go with the show, her mum wouldn't let her because she was only fifteen, later she met another guy who told her that he would put her in films and that she was a natural, he told her when he got back to Hollywood he would write to her, she never got the letter but suspects that her mum stole it, she confronted her mum who said that he hadn't taken a letter, she married Curley to get out of her own home and finally she is like Curley. Curley's wife is similar to Lennie, Crooks and Candy because, like them, she is isolated – like them, she's **isolated**.



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Just like when Crooks talks about his childhood, Lennie doesn't really pay attention. This reinforces the sense of **loneliness** as even when characters talk, others don't listen. It is when Carlson doesn't empathise with Candy when he takes out his dog.

Lennie tells Curley's wife about the farm. He gives details about the house, garden and rabbits. She asks why he likes rabbits and he explains about how he likes to pet soft things. She thinks that he's nuts but then she understands a bit more. She tells him that she likes his hair. She then talks about how nice her own hair feels and she invites Lennie to touch it. Lennie then tells her to stop and jerks her head sideways, and Lennie's fingers close on her hair. She wants him to let go but the more she panics, the more he hangs on.

Lennie shakes her in anger at doing another bad thing and breaks her neck. Her body is found by us of the incident with Curley's hand. When he realises what he has done he grows up. He has done another bad thing and that George will be angry. He remembers George's words and decides to take the pup's body so that George will not be as mad.

Candy discovers the body of Curley's wife and he gets George. When George discovers the body, he has known and believes that part of him did. They talk about what to do next. Candy tells George what to do to Lennie if he catches him – he would not show any mercy. Candy then reveals that he will be getting the farm anymore. Before George even answers, he knows that it won't work. Finally George makes a decision to tell the others. He then tells Candy that they must go and instructs Candy to tell them when he's back in the bunkhouse.

Soon all of the men are at the barn: Slim, Carlson, Whit, Curley and Crooks who stay in last. Curley wants to go after him immediately.

Carlson backs him up saying that he'll get his Luger. When they have gone Slim tells Lennie that he is the cause of her death. George accepts this but asks if they could bring her home. He defends Lennie, telling Slim that he's nuts. Slim understands but knows that Curley is right and reveals that Lennie has stolen his Luger.

Curley coldly calls Lennie a nigger and says that he's now got a shotgun. He then tells Lennie that he's got his guts.

The group are now justified in killing Lennie as they presume that he has the stolen gun. They decide to kill Lennie – he doesn't want to stay with his wife's body. He tells Whit to go and get the gun. He's also suspicious of George and tells him that he's going with them. He tells Carlson to remind George to stick with them.



### Mini Vocabulary Guide

<b>Taloned</b>	a fork with 'claws'
<b>Pulley</b>	a small wheel
<b>Dugs</b>	teats

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## Useful Quotations and Analysis

### Quotation

Page 76

*...looked at a little dead puppy that lay in front of him*

The start of this scene shows Curley's wife with her puppy.

Page 78

*'I get awful lonely'*

This line shows how Curley's wife confides in Lennie.

Page 79

*'I don't like Curley. He ain't a nice fella.'*

This line reveals Curley's wife's loneliness – she has no friends.

Page 81

*Lennie began to cry with fright*

Lennie panics as Curley's wife starts to yell at him.

Page 82

*her body flopped like a fish*

This line reminds us of the strength and agility of a fish, which is reminiscent of the encounter with the bear.

Page 84

*Now Candy spoke his greatest fear. 'You ain't never gonna get that little place, can't we George?'*

Candy's 'greatest fear' is that he will never be able to go ahead with his dream.

Page 88

*'You stick with us so we don't think you had nothin' to do with this'*

Curley reveals his jealousy towards George with regard to his dream.

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## Questions on Section 5

### Active Learning Task 1

Read Section 5 before answering the questions.

- Lennie is alone at the start of this section. Where are the other ranch hands?
- Lennie is worried about how George is going to react. What has he done?
- Look at the description of Curley's wife. What do you notice about her?
- Writing Task: Curley's wife's story**

*Curley's wife came to Salinas as a child. A show came through town, and her mum was in it, with actors, who said that she could go with the show. Her mum was a showgirl, and she was only fifteen.*

*Later she met another guy who told her that he would put her in a movie. He told her that when he got back to Hollywood he would get her a part. She never got the letter but suspects that her mum stole it. She came to Salinas and said that he hadn't taken a letter. She married Curley to get close to him, but she doesn't even like him.*

**Using the information above, write a diary entry as Curley's wife.** You could write about the events leading up to Curley's proposal for her to be a charmer at the Riverside Dance Palace. Make up a Christian name for her. Write a long entry or a series of diary entries. A possible start could be: 'I came to Salinas. Use your imagination as Steinbeck does not give us a full story.'

- How real do you think that Curley's wife's chances were of going to Hollywood that the letter was sent?
- Is Curley's wife naïve in anyway? Write down an example from the text.
- Read the following short passage and underline Lennie's reaction.

*Lennie was in a panic. His face was contorted. She screamed then, and Lennie put his hands over her mouth and nose. 'Please don't,' he begged. 'Oh! Please don't do that!'*

- What does it show about his behaviour?
  - What incidents referred to earlier in the novel are we reminded of?
- her body flopped like a fish (p. 82)*  
What technique does Steinbeck use to describe Curley's wife? What effect does it have?
  - When George discovers the body he says,  
*'I should have known (...) I guess maybe way back in my head I did.'* (p. 84)  
What is George talking about? In what way may he feel responsible?  
What is Candy's 'greatest fear'?

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## Did You Know? Context: Section 5

Curley's wife's loneliness on the ranch becomes evident when she approaches him. It becomes clear that she's unhappy on the ranch. She reveals how she had a dream like George and Lennie, it is one of escapism: to be a film star. However, once age, dreams, and tragedy strikes when Lennie accidentally breaks her neck.

When George discovers the body he tells Candy that he 'should have known'. The realist, he never fully believed that they would accomplish their dream and break out. It was Lennie who made him believe in a possibility. It also suggests that George is the cause of events, as Lennie's companion. Candy too, knows that his hopes of escape are the result of Lennie's death.

Curley's words to Carlson about shooting Lennie in the guts reveals the cruelty of the world; there will be no mercy, despite Lennie's disability. In this sense, Steinbeck presents a threatening place where the strong attack the weak.



## Debate Prompt

### Curley's Wife

Do you think that a different side is shown to Curley's wife at this point of the novel? Take one side of the argument, one arguing for a sympathetic reading of Curley's wife and one against. Find 3 quotations in the text to support your argument and then present it to another member of the class as witness. Whose argument is more convincing?

## Foreshadowing

This section begins in an **ominous** way as Lennie holds his dead puppy and strokes it. He strokes the dead mouse at the start of the novel.

When Curley's wife shows up at the barn we know that something bad is going to happen. There are foreshadowing descriptions throughout the novel so far. In particular, we are reminded of the men who wore red, as Curley's wife wears the clothes that she wore when Steinbeck wrote the novel: a red dress and the shoes with the red ostrich feathers.

The ominous feeling builds up to create tension when Lennie moves closer to Curley's wife. We know how he likes to pet soft things. We already know that Curley's wife is a threat to Lennie. We know that Lennie does not know his own strength and Curley's wife is vulnerable.

The tension is heightened when she lets him stroke her hair as we immediately associate it with the dead puppy and mice of the past. When Carlson comes in and says that Lennie is a threat, we know that Lennie does not have the sense to plan ahead and steal it. Therefore this foreshadowing is significant.

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## Knowledge Check

Fill in the gaps for Section 5 using the words at the bottom.

\_\_\_\_\_ is on his own in the barn stroking his dead \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ that George will be mad at him and won't \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ so he buries the puppy in the hay to \_\_\_\_\_  
he changes his mind and \_\_\_\_\_ it again realising \_\_\_\_\_  
will know anyway that he did it, like he has known before. He \_\_\_\_\_  
puppy across the barn but then \_\_\_\_\_ it up again \_\_\_\_\_

Curley's wife has \_\_\_\_\_ in quietly. She asks what \_\_\_\_\_  
allowed to \_\_\_\_\_ to her. When she discovers the \_\_\_\_\_  
plenty of \_\_\_\_\_ in the world, but Lennie worries \_\_\_\_\_  
after the rabbits. Curley's wife talks about her past and her \_\_\_\_\_  
film star. Lennie is more concerned about the rabbits. She carries on regreting \_\_\_\_\_  
met \_\_\_\_\_. He tells her about how he likes to \_\_\_\_\_  
things and she invites him to \_\_\_\_\_ her hair. He does \_\_\_\_\_  
him to \_\_\_\_\_. He becomes scared and holds on. This \_\_\_\_\_  
until she becomes lifeless. He has broken her neck out of panic. He knows \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ thing and remembers to go to the \_\_\_\_\_

Candy finds Curley's wife and gets George. They \_\_\_\_\_  
the bunkhouse so that he is not a \_\_\_\_\_ when Candy \_\_\_\_\_  
Candy hopes that they will still have the farm but George knows that \_\_\_\_\_  
come in and Curley \_\_\_\_\_ Lennie straightaway \_\_\_\_\_  
guts. Carlson follows him out to get his \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_  
has stolen it. They all leave to search for Lennie.

suspect	Lennie	stop	feels
blames	plan	picks	pet
George	dream	river	crept
angrily	talk	struggle	back
	rabbits	mutts	stroke

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## Section 6 Analysis and Ac

### Summary

In this final section, we find Lennie at the banks of the Salinas river. In a state of shock, he hallucinates, picturing his Aunt Clara and a talking rabbit shouting at him for killing George's anger. In the hallucination, Lennie is reminded that his behaviour is a burden that George will abandon him now for good. George finds Lennie near the river, and looks across the river as he tells him of their ranch dream in an effort to comfort him. George shoots Lennie, and is soon joined by the other men. Slim comforts George and reassures him, and made the right decision in saving Lennie from a cruel fate at the hands of Curley.

### Analysis

The novel ends where it began – at the Salinas river. It's now late afternoon and a description of nature – a water snake swims across the river but becomes the prey. This captures Steinbeck's ideas about the hunter and the prey in society – this links to **foreshadows** what's to come.

Lennie moves like a creeping bear and finds a place to wait for George. As he sits, he wishes that he was alone without Lennie causing trouble for him. This suggests that he has done a bad thing but he may have done something bad enough for them to leave him. George says that he could go off and find a cave to live in, which echoes the start of the novel where he does precisely that. However, that was under different circumstances.

Lennie visualises Aunt Clara before him and she tells him off for causing more trouble. She lets him tend to the rabbits now.

Lennie's mental health can be questioned at this point as he visualises a giant rabbit and a voice, just like the vision of Aunt Clara did. The rabbit is cruel: he tells him that he wouldn't let him look after any rabbits. The rabbit says that George will beat him and leave him. The rabbit continues to taunt him again and again, telling him that George will shoot him. George shouts for George, who appears quietly. He asks him what he is yelling about and if he is going to leave him, George tells him no.

Lennie reveals that he's done another bad thing. George hears the shouts of men and is in much time. This creates tension. Lennie asks if George is going to give him hell and George tells him that he doesn't remember anything that happens but he remembers words that are normal so that nothing appears out of the ordinary to Lennie but he says the lines that Lennie wants to know if he's going to give him more hell but George replies that he won't.

George then tells the story about the farm. This is tragic for George and the reader knows that Lennie is about to die. Tension increases as the men's voices sound closer than before. George realises that he's to get this done. He tells Lennie to look across the river. As he tells Lennie about Carlson's gun and prepares to kill him. Finally George reassures Lennie that they're going to a heavenly place and as George holds the gun close to the back of his head, we hear him say somewhere like it.

George makes Lennie's death quick. Lennie is completely unaware at his point of death. The old dog is evident – it was a task which had to be done to avoid future misery.

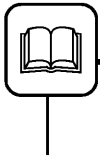
George throws the gun on the bank side. He is very quiet after the event, when the other men are talking. George tells him that a man has got to do things that he doesn't want to do sometimes. George asks if Lennie had his gun. George's voice becomes a whisper. Only he knows that Lennie so that he'd avoid misery inflicted by Curley. He has the responsibility, but a

A new friendship is suggested when Slim tells George that they'll go and get a drink. Slim is trustworthy – a possible good friend for George. Curley and Carlson are both genuine reactions to Lennie's death. The last line from Carlson reveals this when he wonders if Lennie was worth it. This shows the extent to which one man is **isolated** from another's feelings and ex

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## Mini Vocabulary Guide

Gingham	A cotton cloth, usually woven in stripes or checks
Jack-pin	A removable wooden or metal pin put into the rail of ships



## Useful Quotations and Analysis

### Quotation

Page 88	<i>A silent head and beak lanced down and plucked it out by the head...</i>	Steinbeck uses of a hunter and situations with
Page 94	<i>'I ain't mad. I never been mad, an' I ain't now. That's a thing I want ya to know.'</i>	George reveals
Page 95	<i>'Now what the hell ya suppose is eatin' them two guys?'</i>	Carlson's last v really understa seem to be aw affected either



## Questions on Section 6

### Active Learning Task 1

Read Section 6 before answering the questions.

- Where does the novel return to?
- Describe the event with the water snake in your own words. Through description, what is Steinbeck saying about the strong and the weak?
- How does Steinbeck suggest that Lennie's mental health is deteriorating?
- Use the text to write about how Steinbeck presents Aunt Clara.
- What does Aunt Clara say to Lennie?
- What does the rabbit say to Lennie?
- When George 'tells Lennie off' for doing another bad thing, he says 'You better get on your feet and walk.' What does the word suggest about how George has changed compared to when he first met Lennie?
- 'For a moment he was business-like' (Section 6). What does 'business-like' suggest about George?
- We know that there is a chance of friendship between George and Slim. How are Slim's reactions different to the other men's after the discovery of Lennie's secret?
- Carlson said:  
*'Now what the hell ya suppose is eatin' them two guys?'* (Section 6)

Why do you think that Steinbeck chose to finish the novel with Carlson's last line?

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## Did You Know? Context: Section 6

The natural description at the start of this section where a heron captures an animal illustrates the hunter and prey mentality revealed not only in the natural world but also in the society of the novel.

The novel's tragic conclusion reveals how the dream will only ever remain that wish. Lennie's death is inevitable – the narrative structure reveals that it is only a matter of time before what happens which leads to his downfall. The society which Steinbeck presents fails to provide the support which leads to his tragic fate.

At the end of the section Curley and Carlson genuinely can't understand why George reacts the way he does. When Steinbeck reveals a lack of empathy in this cruel society.



## Knowledge Check

Fill in the gaps for Section 6 using the words at the bottom.

\_\_\_\_\_ is by the pool of the Salinas river waiting for George. He visualises his \_\_\_\_\_ telling him off for doing \_\_\_\_\_ to George. Then he pictures a giant \_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_ cruelly tells him that he can't \_\_\_\_\_ the rabbits. \_\_\_\_\_ cries out for his friend. George comes over silently, he asks what Lennie is \_\_\_\_\_ about. Lennie confesses that he has done \_\_\_\_\_ and George is not angry though – instead he tells him that he is \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_ of the farm and George tells him \_\_\_\_\_ as he listens.

While George tells the story, he prepares the \_\_\_\_\_ for Lennie. Lennie knows that he is not \_\_\_\_\_ with him and not \_\_\_\_\_ Lennie. Lennie falls forwards and George \_\_\_\_\_.

The men run over and see the body. They assume that Lennie had the \_\_\_\_\_ problem. Slim suggests that they go for a drink. When they leave, Carlson wonders what the problem is with them.

listening	rabbit	mad
river	throws	Lennie
alright	tend	George
	Aunt Clara	story

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## Discussion Prompt

Once again the scene opens near the riverbed and its surroundings. There is a lot of repetition from the novel's opening such as the Galibian mountains and the water snake clearly sets up Lennie's death: the fall of the innocent and unaware.

**Read the description of the water snake at the start of this section as its death links to Lennie's fate.**

## Fulfilment of Steinbeck's foreshadowing

The story comes 'full circle' by returning to the setting at the start of the novel. The water snake caught by a heron foreshadows Lennie's fate – the image is of the prey falling completely unaware.

Also there is the repetition of the two friends talking at the river – however, we know that it is under different circumstances. **Dramatic irony** is used here – like George, we are aware of Lennie's fate, despite Lennie not knowing himself. Therefore it's tragic when George tells Lennie to take his hat off and Lennie obeys his friend, unquestioningly. It's also tragic when George goes through the motions of telling his friend off so that he doesn't get suspicious. The final tragedy is when George tells Lennie about the dream farm as a final way of providing comfort before his death. In this sense, Lennie does get his dream farm, just not in this reality.



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**Active Learning Task 3****Story Board Activity**

For each storyboard plan there are six events described. There are **three** different storyboards. Choose one and draw (or sketch) the events out. Look at the example on the following page.

**Section 1 events**

- ✍ George and Lennie come to a clearing by the Salinas river
- ✍ Lennie drinks water like a horse from the river
- ✍ George is angry at Lennie for keeping a dead mouse to pet
- ✍ Lennie says that he can go off and live in a cave
- ✍ They have supper
- ✍ George tells Lennie the story of their dream

**Curley's wife's story**

- ✍ A show came through Salinas and Curley's wife met an actor
- ✍ He said that she could go with the show, but her mum wouldn't let her
- ✍ Later another man said that he would make her a film star
- ✍ He said that he'd write to her from Hollywood but she didn't get the letter
- ✍ She confronts her mum, thinking that she stole it. Her mum said that she didn't
- ✍ She meets Curley and marries him, but is unhappy

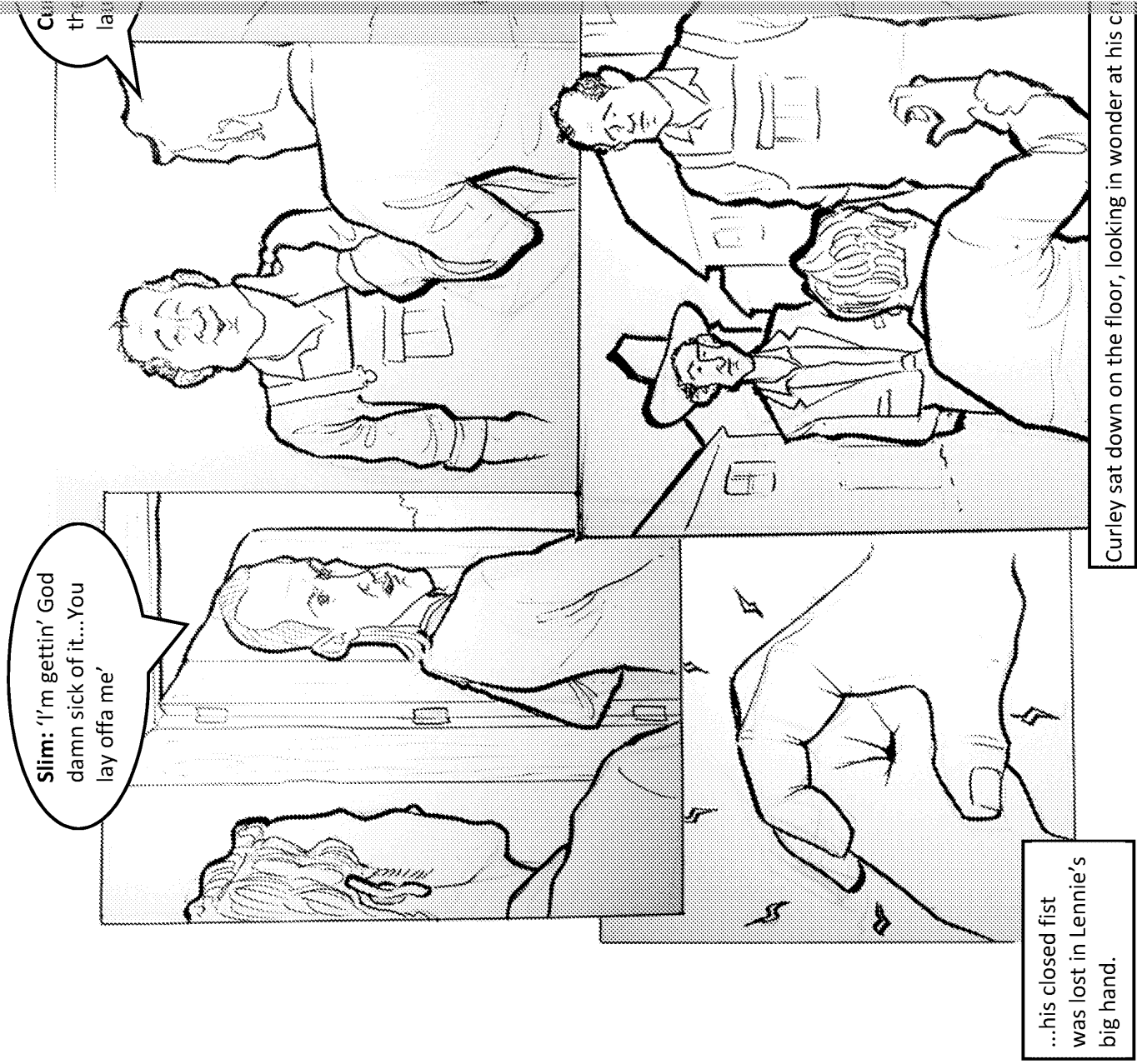
**Events at the ranch**

- ✍ George and Lennie arrive at the ranch and the boss is suspicious of them
- ✍ Candy warns them about Curley and his wife
- ✍ Curley attacks Lennie but Lennie crushes his hand
- ✍ Lennie accidentally kills his pup, then Curley's wife
- ✍ He runs away back to the brush
- ✍ A lynch mob sets out to kill him

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## Lennie's Story



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# Whole-text Analysis

## Characterisation

From the very beginning of the novel, Steinbeck **contrasts** the two main characters. They contrast in their size, appearance and manner.

**Lennie** is a migrant worker who doesn't understand the impact of his own strength. He is strong. He has a mental disability which means that he is dependent upon George to be protected. He has a dream to own a farm with George and tend to the rabbits and soft things like small animals, dresses and people's hair.

**George** is also a migrant worker. He's the opposite of Lennie – small and smart, his travelling companion. George is like a carer to Lennie – he supports him and protects him and regularly tells him about their dream to own a farm in the future.

**Candy** is an old ranch handyman who lost his hand in an accident and worries about his future. He grabs at the chance of being involved with George and Lennie's dream about owning a ranch. When Candy's dog is shot, this is a **foreshadowing** act of mercy which reveals his true feelings.

**Curley's wife** is the only female who features in the novel yet she is never given a name. She is referred to only in terms of her husband, Curley. She is labelled by the other men as a 'tramp' and she constantly seeks attention from men. She likes to dress up and show off in the world. She's a victim: she admits that she's unhappy with Curley and how she wishes to be a film star, before she dies.

**Curley** is the boss's son. There are rumours that he's a champion prize-fighter. He tries to pick fights with other men. He's young and freshly married, yet is jealous of his new wife.

**Crooks** is the black stable-hand. He's bitter and funny, yet isolated from the other men. He grows to like Lennie and even asks if he too can participate in the dream.

**Slim** is a skilful mule driver who is the most respected on the ranch. The others look up to him. When Slim agrees for his old dog to be shot, it is only after Slim agrees with Carlson that it is done. Slim sees the friendship between George and Lennie on a deeper level, and supports George's dream.

**Carlson** is a ranch hand who regularly complains about Candy's old dog, until finally he convinces Candy to let him be shot. Carlson commits the act, promising to make it as painless as possible. The same goes for Slim's dog.

**The Boss** is in charge of the ranch. He's Curley's dad. Like Curley's wife, he is never given a name. When George and Lennie first arrive, he is the only one who doesn't look at them with suspicion.

**Aunt Clara** is Lennie's aunt, who used to look after him until she died. She doesn't appear in the novel except at the end, in Lennie's vision where she tells him off for causing trouble for himself. In the novel, she was a kind woman who cared for Lennie.

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**Active Learning Task 1****First Impressions of George**

- a. Look at the first description of George in *Of Mice and Men*:

*The first man was small and quick, dark of face with restless eyes and sharp, thin body frame. Above all else he looked like a desperate man. He was defined: small, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose. (p. 1)*

Underline the key words which describe George then write them down. Look at the words. What does each one suggest about him?

Here's an example of what the word 'small' suggests about George:



The word 'small' immediately shows that George is a little man, particularly in comparison to his friend.

- b. Write your own suggestions for three words that you've chosen.



This shows...

This word suggests...

This line reveals...

- c. Overall, what first impressions does George provide the reader with? Use a paragraph.

Here's an example of a paragraph which describes a reader's **first impression** of George:



The word 'small' immediately shows that George is little, particularly in comparison to his friend. He is also described as 'quick' which suggests that he is smart and that he is effective in his work and the 'strong features' also reveals his character too. Steinbeck shows this strength of character straight away by saying that he provides Lennie with support.

- d. Have another look at the **first words** George says to Lennie:

*'Lennie!' he said sharply. 'Lennie, for God's sakes don't drink so much.' Lennie looked at him. 'You got a pool. The small man leaned over and shook him by the shoulder. 'Lennie. You got a pool last night.' (Section 1)*

What kind of tone is set by Steinbeck with regards to their relationship?

**Active Learning Task 2****First Impressions of Lennie**

- a. Examine the first description of Lennie. He is described straight after George:

*...walked his opposite, a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with vast, loose-fitting clothes, and a heavy, sloping shoulder. He walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws... (p. 1)*

Underline the key words which describe Lennie then write them down. Write a paragraph about Lennie.

Here's an example:



The phrase 'walked his opposite' could have been used by Steinbeck to describe Lennie to be the opposite of George in terms of appearance and character.

- b. Overall, what first impressions does Lennie provide the reader with? Write a paragraph about Lennie so far.

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**Active Learning Task 3****First Impressions of Curley**

The reader meets Curley a bit further into the novel. Consider the first description

*...a thin young man with a brown face, with brown eyes and a head of tightly curled hair. He wore a brown glove on his left hand, and, like the boss, he wore high-heeled boots. (p. 26)*

Pick two words or phrases which describe Curley and write them down. Now, use your own first impressions of Curley. A couple of sentences will do but make sure to support any points.

**Active Learning Task 4****First Impressions of Curley's wife**

a. Finally, consider the first description of Curley's wife:

*A girl was standing there looking in. She had full, rouged lips and wide-spaced eyes. Her finger-nails were red. Her hair hung in little rolled clusters, like sausages. She had on red mules, on the insteps of which were little bouquets of red ostrich feathers.*

Underline the key words and phrases which you think are important in providing your first impressions of Curley's wife. Write them down.

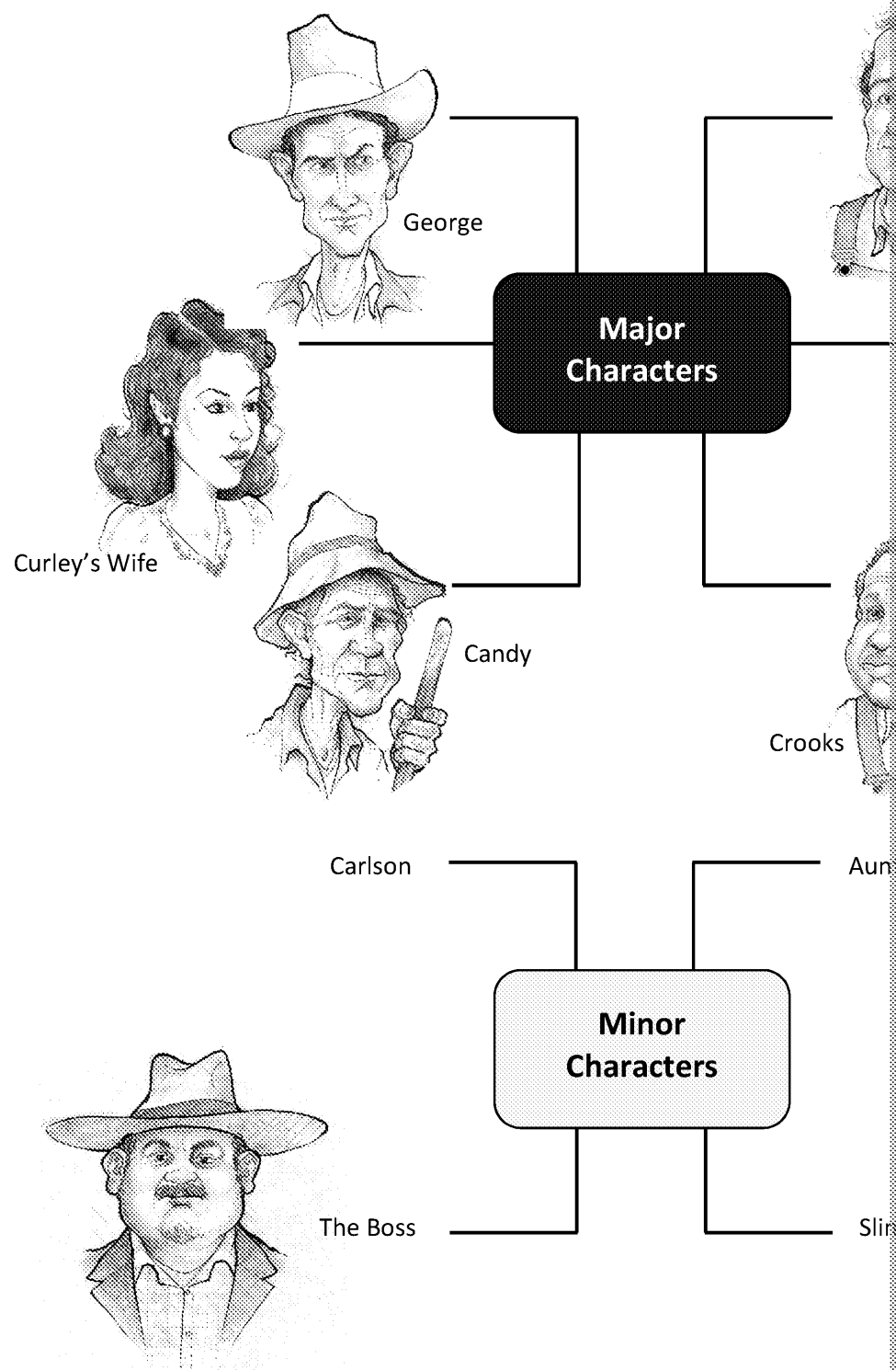
b. Write a paragraph which describes your first impressions of Curley's wife using the quotations which you have underlined. You could start with why you think the name 'Curley's wife' is appropriate rather than using her Christian name?

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## Analysis of Major Characters

Although first impressions are significant we learn more about all of the characters. There are a number of important characters, but the minor characters are also part of the plot along. It's important to understand who the major characters and minor characters are important as they will be used by Steinbeck to explore themes and ideas or symbols.



The next section will focus on analysing the major characters.

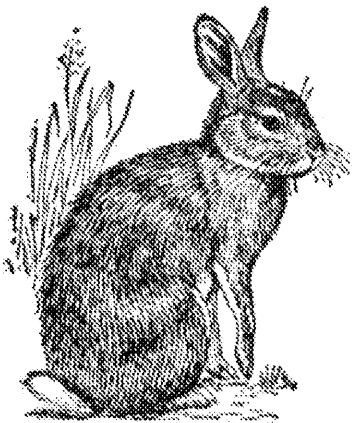
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## Lennie Small

The surname 'Small' is **ironic** as Lennie is actually huge and lumbering. He's described in contrast to George as he is 'shapeless' (Section 1). There's a lot of **animal imagery** used to describe him, such as bear-like movements. There are also other animal descriptions such as the descriptions of a dog and this can lead to ideas about him being loyal to his 'owner' George. Certainly Lennie follows instructions which his 'owner' gives him, but he has no concept of what loyalty is.

The character of Lennie doesn't develop, grow or change throughout the story as it progresses. He's a **simple** character, with the personality of a young child. Everything is interpreted simply by him. Straightaway we learn that even though he is large and strong, he has a learning disability, which gives him a child-like innocence and wonder at the world around him. He is certainly very vulnerable. We know that he's George's companion and is dependent on him for guidance and support. He loves petting soft things. When the world becomes too scary he loves the security which comes from stroking. Lennie believes in the dream about the two men's future farm, even if George is cynical about the farm throughout the story which excites George and keeps the dream alive.



When he does bad things he only knows that he will be punished. He knows George will give him hell and won't let him tend to his own needs. He is not guilty or show any remorse. The combination of his lack of conscience and intelligence makes him dangerous. George does not foresee.

We know from the start that Lennie is a tragic figure. His constant state of helplessness makes him extremely vulnerable to the dangers presented by Curley and his wife. He is compared to most of the characters in the novel who are destroyed.

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## George Milton



Like Lennie, George is presented in a similar way, being physically small with sharp features. He's a loving, supportive friend to Lennie. 'Milton' comes from the author John Milton, one of Steinbeck's favourite pieces of writing, *Poetry*.

In this epic poem, Adam and Eve fall in the Garden of Eden, their fall, man is doomed to walk the earth. Some believe that George is representative of Adam, and suffering. The only thing that makes George's life meaningful is his relationship with Lennie. Although he has a heavy burden of looking after his friend, the ranch is the right place. He protects him to the best of his ability. He shows an understanding and acceptance of Lennie's needs and goals for both of their needs. This is evident when he is involved in the plan for the farm, he describes the land such as where they will get the ranch and the amount of work to pay for it.

However, despite his thoughtful nature he's also prone to becoming angry with himself and his actions. He calms himself by remembering Lennie's situation. Over the course of the novel, George's relationship with Lennie is the only relationship which no other man in the novel has. Lennie makes him stand out from the crowd as he has the duty of responsibility for his friend.

In contrast to Lennie, George changes as the novel progresses. This is firstly evident through his conversation with Slim as he trusts his instincts when telling Slim the truth about his relationship with Lennie. He also admits to Slim that he once abused Lennie to amuse himself.

By the end of the novel George realises that the world will prey on the weak and this is a terrible realisation for him which contrasts with the start of the novel when he tells Lennie about their dream. He's motivated to work for this dream, which was different from the rest of society. George has to make the moral decision to shoot his friend to prevent the brutality which would be inflicted through Curley's lynch party. Unfortunately George's decision to kill the dangerous Lennie could be so he takes the situation into his own hands. The tragedy of George is that he is doomed to once again wander alone.

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## Candy

Candy is an old man. His right hand is a stump because he lost it in an accident. The old handyman worries that soon the boss will tell him to leave the ranch. The situation with his old dog supports his fears – he was once a sheep herder who is now old. The unfeeling Carlson keeps suggesting that the dog should be put out of his misery – but the character of Candy and his dog can both be seen as symbols for anyone who outlives his usefulness in relation to work. Through them Steinbeck is showing how useless someone can become if they are old and handicapped in American society. They will be discarded of.

After Candy's dog has been killed he tells George that he should have taken responsibility for his dog's death himself. This **foreshadows** later events when George makes the decision to kill Lennie.



The relationship between Candy and his old dog **parallels** the relationship between George and Lennie. Just as Lennie depends on George to take care of him, Candy's dog depends on him too. Like George, Candy is different to the other ranch-hands as he has the responsibility of looking after his dog.

Another reason why Candy is important is because of the dream. He actually offers the money to pay for the down payment to start the dream. This is the chance that the dream could become reality. He even begs George to still live after Lennie's death.

## Curley



Curley is a threatening figure in Steinbeck's novel when Candy says that apparently Curley is always picking fights – particularly with men. This is to prove his masculinity, another trait of a physically attractive young female. The fact that he is labelled 'Curley's wife' indicates that she is completely isolated. He makes a big deal out of being gentle with her. The reader knows that there is trouble as he cannot control her actions, his son, and his attitude.

When he challenges and fights Lennie, he realises the danger that he has put himself in. George gives Lennie permission to fight back, which leads to him crushing Curley's hand. The only reason why Curley does not tell his wife is because he does not want to lose status on the ranch amongst the men.

Ultimately when Lennie kills his wife Curley will want revenge and George knows why George plans to kill Lennie – so that he will not suffer.

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## Curley's wife



There's an argument that Steinbeck does not put Curley's wife in a positive light in the novel. Through Curley's wife we can see troublemakers who cause problems. Curley gives her names for her such as 'jailbait' (p. 33). She has too much make-up, has red fingernails and wears feathers. She walks about like a temptress, and Curley sees her as a threat to the workers, and Curley's wife fuels his jealousy and suspicion of his new workers.

There is evidence to suggest that Steinbeck has presented a **misogynistic** view of women – the other women referred to in the novel are either dead or prostitutes.

Lennie can't take his eyes off her when he is with her, repeating 'she's purty.' (p. 32) George warns him to stay away from her. She knows that her strength lies in her beauty and she uses it to get what she wants. Curley is jealous. Like Crooks she's isolated on the ranch because she is a threat – Crooks says that anyone who interacts with her would have to face him.



She can be presented as being like Eve in the Bible, as she represents temptation as she tries to do what she wants. She brings about the end of the dream. Her dream cannot be fulfilled and the two men's dreams are destroyed.

When she's in Crook's room she threatens him to not show her respect as the wife of the boss. She is not aware of her place in society, but the way she acts makes her a threat.

Curley's wife is shown to have some depth. Steinbeck reveals her dreams. At first she may have been described as being a threat to them, but when she speaks to Lennie, Candy and Crooks she admits that she has a dream. A vulnerable side is shown of her when she admits to Lennie her own **dream** of being a movie star. This gives us a fuller picture of her, rather than how she is perceived through the eyes of the men. She becomes more human and real. Like other characters, Curley's wife has learned to use her beauty as a weapon against the others – this is why she is a threat on the ranch.

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## Crooks



Crooks is a black, lively stable hand. His name is Crooks. He's isolated from the other characters because of his skin colour. This makes him lonely. Like Candy, Crooks is a victim of the effects of discrimination. With Candy the discrimination with Crooks it is based on colour. His place in the novel is an important part of the novel which shows how he is treated and he turns him away at first – his reason is that he is away from their houses, then why should he stay? But ultimately his need for companionship is what drives him.

However, like Curley's wife, his vulnerability makes him weaker. He plays a game with Lennie and George has left him – it's only when Lennie stops. The reader is aware of the reasons why he has been lonely for some time and this leads to him being envious of the companionship between George and Lennie.

He would like a sense of belonging. He would like to join in with card games and chat. This is evident when he asks if there would be any room for him on the farm in the future. It is not enough to make Crooks withdraw his offer.

The fact that he wants to become part of the dream farm shows the extent of his loneliness. That when he is no longer of use then he will be told to leave. This makes him vulnerable.



### Did You Know? Context: Characterisation

The American Dream affects George and Lennie as it encourages them to work hard for their abilities. Although George is slightly cynical, Lennie maintains a childlike enthusiasm throughout the novel. However, Lennie is vulnerable by nature, and ultimately by society. At the end of the novel, George realises that the world will prey on the weak.

Candy is another victim of cruelty in Steinbeck's society. He worries that the boss will get rid of him soon because he is old, like his dog. They have both outlived their usefulness and how useless someone can become if they are old and handicapped in society. Candy is a victim in Steinbeck's novel. He's also linked with power and status in society. When he sees Lennie, George has to kill his friend in order to avoid him suffering. In terms of his character, he is strong threatening the weak.

Curley's wife is also a threatening figure, but in terms of temptation as she is a flirtatious isolated figure on the ranch, she is aware of her place in this work-orientated society. She threatens Crooks using her lower status as the wife of the boss' son and a white woman. She is an isolated figure in Steinbeck's society. The colour of his skin excludes him from living the dream. Also the reason why he tells Candy that he is not taking part in the dream.

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### Character's names

Sometimes a character's name can provide relevance about who they are. For instance, it's ironic that Lennie's surname is 'Small', George Milton links with Steinbeck's ideas in the novel which relate to John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the name 'Crooks' seems to tie in with the character who suffers with a crooked spine.

### The character's appearance

When you complete the section you will develop your knowledge of a character's appearance. Most writers use appearance to suggest a character's personality. It is apparent with the first description of Lennie, who is child-like mentally and animal-like in appearance. Lennie is immediately presented as being cautious of the two. Other examples are those of Curley, Curley's wife.

## What to Look For in Characters

### What other characters say about a character

First impressions are sometimes conveyed through the words of other characters. These characters can create a false impression that may not necessarily be true. Nevertheless, they can have value. An example of this is with Curley's wife who comes through the words of the ranch hands as a picture of a tart and flirt. When Curley's wife's expectancies are fulfilled. However, later on she reveals her past to Lennie. We begin to see her character and maybe even feel more sympathy for her especially when she meets her tragic end.

### What a character says and does

A character's personality is conveyed through what they say and do. Hence with Lennie and Lennie we learn more about their characters through their interactions with each other. Similarly, we learn more about Curley's wife when she first appears – her appearance is very suggestive to the reader, as are her actions. Other examples are Curley, Slim, Candy, Crooks and Carlson, one of the minor characters. Overall, a character's words and actions are important to conveying what they are like, their personality and their interactions with other characters are also particularly important in revealing their character.

**Dialogue**, or speech between two or more characters make characters seem more real. Dialogue helps readers learn more about characters such as their ideas, plans, dreams and how they think and feel about other characters.

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## Active Learning Task 5

### Writing in Role

These tasks are designed to encourage you to think how the characters of *George* end of the novel. Writing as if you are both of these characters will allow you to

#### George

You have just shot your best friend.

Write down your **thoughts and feelings** after your drink with Slim.

These might include:

- How you feel about what you did
- Why you decided to do it
- How you feel about the death of Curley's wife
- Whether or not you feel any responsibility towards what's happened
- What you plan to do next, without Lennie

#### Curley

You have just seen Lennie's body after trying to hunt him down. You are still angry.

You are going to write down your **frustrations, thoughts and feelings**.

These might include:

- How you feel now that the day is over
- Your thoughts after the discovery of your wife's dead body
- Your earlier suspicions of George and how you feel about him now
- How much you wanted to get revenge on Lennie
- What you planned to do
- How you felt when you discovered that George had already killed him
- How you can't believe that George and Slim were upset when justice had been done

#### Lennie

You have just accidentally killed your puppy.

Write down your **thoughts and feelings** after this event.

These might include:

- How you feel about what you did
- How it happened
- How you think that George will react when he finds out
- What you think that you will do next

#### Curley's wife

You have just returned home after your argument with Crooks.

Write down your **thoughts and feelings** after this event.

These might include:

- Your anger towards Crooks
- Why you said such hurtful and threatening things to him
- Your thoughts about Curley going with the other men to a brothel
- Your feelings of loneliness in general

#### Crooks

You have just sent Lennie and Candy out after your argument with Curley's wife.

Write down your **thoughts and feelings** after this event.

These might include:

- Your anger towards Curley's wife
- How you feel about her threatening words
- Why you changed your mind about participating in the men's dream

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## Active Learning Task 6

Use the interview to make notes on how Steinbeck presents the characters in *Of Mice and Men*.

### Imagining an interview Between John Steinbeck and a Student

**Student:** Mr Steinbeck, how do you describe Lennie Small?

**Steinbeck:** In Chapter 1 of my book I describe Lennie as:

*...a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with wide, sloping shoulders; ... he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws.*

I wanted to show that he was a gigantic beast of a man so I made him almost animal-like in the way he walked. I hope the reader pictures him as they would a large bear. The way I show the reader that he moves heavily is to describe what happens to his arms as he follows his friend George.

*His arms did not swing at his sides, but hung loosely and only moved when they were pendula.*

I use the adverbs 'heavily' and 'loosely' to emphasise to the reader that his uncontrolled actions are.

I make his face shapeless and his eyes blue so that readers can imagine an overgrown, innocent infant. I make Lennie wear denim trousers and buttons. Only labourers wore denim when I wrote the novel. It was to be dressed in the uniform of the farm labourer at the start to establish him as a farm worker. I make him wear the same black and shapeless hat as his

**Student:** How do you describe George Milton?

**Steinbeck:** I had a few problems here. I had a picture in my mind about what I thought it would be interesting to the reader to make him look and feel like Lennie. Although I dressed them in the same denim outfit and identical

*small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, strong features: small, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose. Better than Lennie's, but still not good.*

who, of course, was Lennie.

I wanted you to know George was intelligent and his intelligence was described by his eyes as 'restless' to show that George was always on his guard. Characters, Slim, a well-respected ranch hand, refers to him in Chapter 2 as 'the guy who was travelling with a 'cuckoo'.

It was almost what you might call a visual joke to see a big bear of a man on whom his whole world depended. There was also something

**Student:** How do you describe Candy?

**Steinbeck:** This is what I write as a description of Candy in Chapter 2:

*The door opened and a tall, stoop-shouldered old man came in. He was carrying a push broom in his left hand.*

I make him a pitiful old man with 'bristly-white whiskers', who does odd jobs up after the workers, including changing their washbasins and keeping the place tidy. He can't do this job very well because he is disabled and slow. He is leaving a stump at the wrist. When he pointed with his right arm, the

*out of the sleeve came a round stick-like wrist, but no hand.*

He also holds the broom between his elbow and his side when he is

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Clearly his hand has been missing sometime.

I made sure that George and Lennie met Candy outside the bunkhouse aside for the workers. In fact, I chose to make Candy lead the two as he was in charge of showing them their accommodation. In order to make the character Candy is in danger of becoming, I show that he finds it hard when he introduces George and Lennie to him. I use the verb 'shut out of the boss' presence. In terms of power on the ranch, the boss is Candy the least.

I make Candy the ranch gossip. He listens in on conversations and knows everyone on the ranch. He does not know when to keep his mouth shut.

I also give Candy a dog. It is an ancient, smelly and nearly blind sheep dog, his companion.

**Student:** How do you describe Curley, the boss' son?

**Steinbeck:** He is a 'mean bastard' like a little bantam cock. Because he is a small man, complex about his size, he feels he has to take on anyone bigger than him.

*...a thin young man with a brown face, with brown eyes and a head of brown hair. He wore high-heeled boots, like his father, to show that he was not a worker.*

Like his father, Curley is small of stature, but he is thin, whereas I call him a 'little man'. It would help if I gave you the description of Curley's father so you are able to picture the similarities and differences between them:

*The boss 'wore blue jean trousers, a flannel shirt, a black, unbuttoned shirt. His thumbs were stuck in his belt, on each side of a square steel buckle. He wore a Stetson hat, and he wore high-heeled boots and spurs to prove he was a man.*

George cannot understand why Curley hates Lennie on sight and he explains to the reader and George with the explanation for Curley's behaviour: he hates just Lennie. Curley is always looking to prove himself as a man by fighting. In this way I show that he is insecure and feels threatened.

I let the old swamper Candy explain the cause of Curley's hostile attitude.

*Curley's like a lot of little guys. He hates big guys. He's alla time picking on 'em. Kind of like he's mad at 'em because he ain't a big guy. You seen little guys always scrappy.*

**Student:** Tell me about Crooks and Curley's wife. Crooks seems to have a reputation on the other ranch hands because he is black. Curley's wife is branded as the only woman on the ranch and feels lonely. Did you deliberately use this to explore racism and sexism in American culture during the depression?

**Steinbeck:** Let me describe Crooks first. I call him 'the negro stable buck', but the other hands call him 'nigger'. This was how black people were addressed in those days. He is a 'aloof' man who kept his room tidy. He had his dignity. Some white people were subhuman and not fit to live with. It was ok to make them as equals. In fact, they were persecuted. The boss took out his anger on them. I saw anything wrong with that.

Crooks wasn't allowed in the bunkhouse because of his colour. He lived in a dung heap. He lived a very lonely and isolated life. To make Crooks feel even more isolated, I made him a 'cripple', or as he referred to himself a 'back-busted nigger', by a horse and was deformed by this accident. Black people called Crooks a 'nigger' in those days because they accepted or were resigned to the inferior position of black people in American society.

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**Student:** What about Curley's wife?

**Steinbeck:** She is different because she is the only woman on the ranch. Candy has strong language. He tells George and Lennie his views on Curley's wife.

*Know what I think... Well I think Curley's married... a tart.*

George seems not to be overly influenced by this when he replies:

*There's plenty done that.*

Candy is eager to press the point home about Curley's wife being a tart.

*Well, you look her over mister. You see if she ain't a tart.*

I like the way I describe Curley's wife. She suddenly appears in the text.

This is how I introduce her:

*A girl was standing there looking in. She had full, rouged lips and white teeth. Her fingernails were red. Her hair hung in little rolled clusters, like cotton housedresses and red mules, on the insteps of which were little tufts of feathers. 'I'm looking for Curley,' she said. Her voice had a brittle, nervous quality.*

She has a hint of that cheap, trailer park 'white trash' look about her. She provokes men with her body. Lennie falls to her obvious charms and spells it out to Lennie that he must keep away from her. He says:

*Listen to me you crazy bastard, don't you even take a look at that bitch and what she does. I seen 'em poison before, but I never seen no piece of meat like her be.*

He has now fallen in with Candy's views about her. In life, she has been troubled and shows her unhappiness. However, she looks calm and content after Lennie breaks her neck in the barn, as if all her cares have melted away about her at that time:

*Curley's wife lay with a half-covering of yellow hay. And the meanness, discontent and ache for attention were all gone from her face. She was like a girl. Her face was sweet and young. Now her rouged cheeks and her reddened lips and sleeping very lightly.*

**Student:** Let's move on to the minor, but important, characters such as Slim.

**Steinbeck:** I use my minor or background characters to advance the plot or show the setting. All the ranch hands look up to Slim. His word is law in the bunkhouse. I show this by writing that 'his authority was so great that his subjects listened to him'. Also 'all talk stopped when he spoke'.

He seems to be any age between 35 and 50, as 'his hatchet face was weathered and lean and their movements are delicate and graceful 'like a ten-year-old boy's'. 'godlike eyes'.

I show that Slim is easy to talk to, approachable, wise and a prince among men. Of knowing him, George, who is a very private person, tells him his secret. Lennie can be a burden to him at times, and even divulges what Lennie has done.

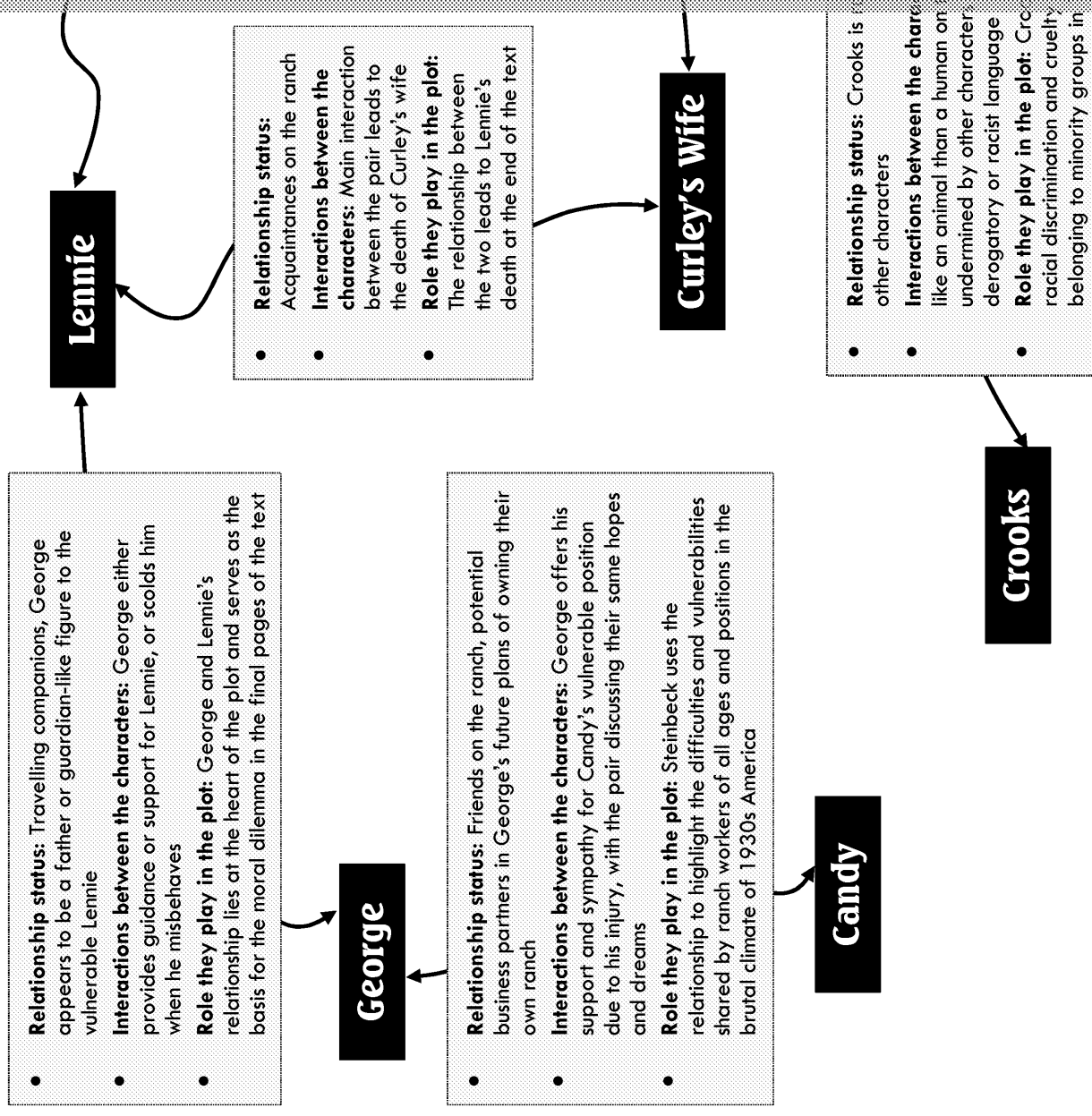
Slim has a drawl which makes him appear slow of speech but he has a lot to say. He is an expert mule driver. I describe him as a king-like person. 'prince of the ranch' who commands respect. The words I use to describe him in Chapter 2:

*A tall man...He held a crushed Stetson hat under his arm while he combed his hair straight back. Like the others, he wore blue jeans and a short denim jacket. His majesty only achieved by royalty and master craftsmen.*

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# Relationships



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## Analysis of Key Relationships

### George and Lennie

The relationship between George and Lennie is the driving force in Steinbeck's text. From the first pages it becomes apparent that the pair are foils of one another, appearing opposite in many ways. Despite the love and friendship between the two travelling companions, the relationship between them is complicated due to George's adoption of a parental role in which he must care for the vulnerable Lennie. However, Lennie provides a companionship and protection that George would not otherwise have. As a travelling worker – a fate that most travellers share in their line of work, as George knows all too well. It is this love that fuels and complicates the final scene in the novel, in which Lennie is killed in a brutal execution at the hand of Curley. While some readers may see this event as a tragedy, an opportunity that he selfishly took to get rid of Lennie, who often became a problem for George when travelling, most read the ending of this relationship as a difficult act of kindness.

### George and Candy

George and Candy become close friends on the ranch, as seen in their promise to enter into business and live with one another on a ranch of their own. The promise of a permanent friendship and working relationship brings a sense of hope and optimism to the pair, and is a key promise of the American Dream as the foundation of their relationship. Despite their shared dreams, George and Candy appear foils of one another, with George representing the younger, more ambitious ranch workers and Candy the older, debilitated, and, therefore, vulnerable, later in life. Despite their differences, Steinbeck uses the relationship between the two to show the social and economic conditions of the world of ranch work in 1930s America. George and Candy face the same difficult dream of security and happiness they both desire, and in Candy George sees the same vulnerability that he too is at risk of facing in a line of work that relies heavily on physical strength.

### Crooks and All Other Characters

Crooks holds a unique position in the text due to his relationship with the other characters. Despite representing the vulnerability of minority groups in 1930s American society, Crooks is not alone. Like Candy and Lennie in their representation of disabled individuals, Crooks remains isolated. Preferring the company of animals to humans, Crooks lives in isolation in the ramshackle room at the end of the rest of the men on grounds of racial segregation. Symbolised by his home in the barn, Crooks is being inferior to his fellow workers, reduced to the status of an animal on the ranch. His isolation is defined by his obedience to their command, and his endurance of their use of racist language when addressing him. Although Slim shows sympathy for Crooks and his work, Crooks arguably holds the closest relationship to Lennie, with both following their exclusion from the other men's social activities. Despite the pair's inequality in their relationship, with Crooks exploiting Lennie's naivety and vulnerability, Crooks resists the opportunity to hold power over a fellow worker.

### Lennie and Curley

From the outset of Lennie's time on the ranch, Curley exerts his superiority over the other men as a target due to Lennie's mental vulnerability. As Candy points out to George, Lennie is with men of a greater physical stature to him and who he perceives as a possible threat. The relationship with Lennie is emphasised in his repeated defending of Lennie against the other men. However, following Curley's vicious assault on Lennie in the bunkhouse, George is forced to defend himself against Curley's attacks, in which Curley's hand is crushed under Lennie's. In the encounter between the two, Lennie and Curley's relationship becomes more complex. Lennie's strength eventually contributes to Curley's determination to kill Lennie as an act of retribution for the murdering of Curley's wife. Despite Curley insisting that his intention to kill Lennie is for the death of his wife, Curley's ignorance and mistreatment of his wife through his bloodthirsty and argumentative nature, causes us to question his motives.

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### Lennie and Curley's Wife

The relationship between Lennie and Curley's wife appears problematic from the start. The presence of Curley's wife among the men instils a foreboding air and the threat to the ranch. This threat appears particularly dangerous to Lennie, with his naivety and inability to reject Curley's wife's advances. The pair's relationship appears all the more dangerous due to Lennie's past experience with a young woman, an event that George tells us resulted in the loss of Lennie's employment and home. This is not the only event that foreshadows the danger in Lennie's relationship, as Steinbeck uses Lennie's relationship with his many pet mice and his dream of owning a ranch to foreshadow the accidental murder of Curley's wife. Although their relationship cannot end, Lennie and Curley's wife share the same loneliness and desire for attention that is denied to them by others.

## Settings

The novel opens and ends at the Salinas river in California. George and Lennie are introduced in these sections. Steinbeck makes a link to the natural cycle of nature, as the novel happens in 'man's world'. There's also the idea that it's a symbolic setting for the novel. The descriptions capture the beauty of the surroundings, yet we are already forewarned of the danger of nature due to the beaten path made by people who come to the clearing by the river.

The action in Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the novel takes place on a ranch in the Salinas Valley. We watch the actions of the characters and their struggles for survival in the man-made setting. The bunkhouse and it is not by chance that it's presented as being in darkness. The natural world has natural light. However, Steinbeck presents the man-made reality as being emphasised by the solitary game of solitaire which George plays, and the dim bulb in the bunkhouse. Darkness and light is continued with ideas such as when Curley's wife blocks out the light by reference to threat.

Other places in the ranch are the barn (where Lennie kills Curley's wife) and Crook's. Steinbeck opens each section with important descriptions of the place and it's important to note that these are relevant to Steinbeck's ideas. In the task below, see if you can consider how the descriptions are used to convey ideas, rather than merely being descriptive.

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**Active Learning Task 1**

Below is a quotation from each section of *Of Mice and Men* which describes **setting**. Write what kind of **mood** Steinbeck evokes through each description:

**Section 1 – the natural world**

- a) *'Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening'*

This description...

**Section 2 – the bunkhouse**

- b) *'Over each bunk there was nailed an apple box with the opening forward so that a man's personal belongings of the occupant of the bunk. And these shelves were loaded with talcum powder, razors and those Western magazines ranch-men love to read and look at. And there were medicines on the shelves, and little vials, combs; and from nails came neckties.'*

Steinbeck creates...

**Section 3 – the bunkhouse at night**

- c) *'Slim and George came into the darkening bunkhouse together. Slim reached up and turned on the tin-shaded electric light. Instantly the table was brilliant with light, and the brightness straight downward, leaving the corners of the bunkhouse still in dusk.'*

Steinbeck's description evokes ...

**Section 4 – Crooks' room**

- d) *'Crooks' bunk was a long box filled with straw, on which his blankets were flung. On the wall there were pegs (...) And scattered about the floor were a number of personal possessions. Crooks could leave his things about...'* (p. 61)

Steinbeck's description of Crooks' room ...

**Section 5 – the barn (where Lennie kills Curley's wife accidentally)**

- e) *'The afternoon sun sliced in through the cracks of the barn walls and lay in bright patches on the floor.'*

This description makes me think...

**Section 6 – the natural world (George and Lennie come full circle)**

- f) *'Already the sun had left the valley to go climbing up the slopes of the Galician mountains. The hills were rosy in the sun.'*

Steinbeck's words make me feel...

**Active Learning Task 2**

Look at the beginning of each section again.

Find your own quotation which you consider to be important and write about what you think through his words, for each one. Remember to practise considering the effect of the setting (this will help you with this).

There should be six in total which focus on:

1. The natural world
2. The bunkhouse
3. The bunkhouse at night
4. Crooks' room
5. The barn
6. The natural world again

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Each place is important to the novel – firstly, the natural world parallels with man's 'hunter and the prey' are a natural part of life. The places on the ranch are general descriptions in the bunkhouse and Crooks' room show the ranch-hands' solitary

In Section 2, the cowboy magazine in the bunkhouse stands out: Steinbeck uses it to show that most of the ranch-hands secretly want to live – a subtle reference to the American Dream.



### Did You Know? Context: Setting

We know that the natural world at the start and end of the novel contrasts with the man-made world. However, man's destructive nature is apparent even here, as the land which has been worn down.

The ranch contains the characters as they struggle for survival in this 'dog eat dog' world. That the bunkhouse is presented as being in darkness and the sleeping area suggests lives that are prone to change. In this sense, the setting reflects the solitary culture.

In the bunkhouse Steinbeck subtly contrasts the reality of the setting with the lives the ranch-hands secretly aspire to with a cowboy magazine. The image on this magazine fuels the

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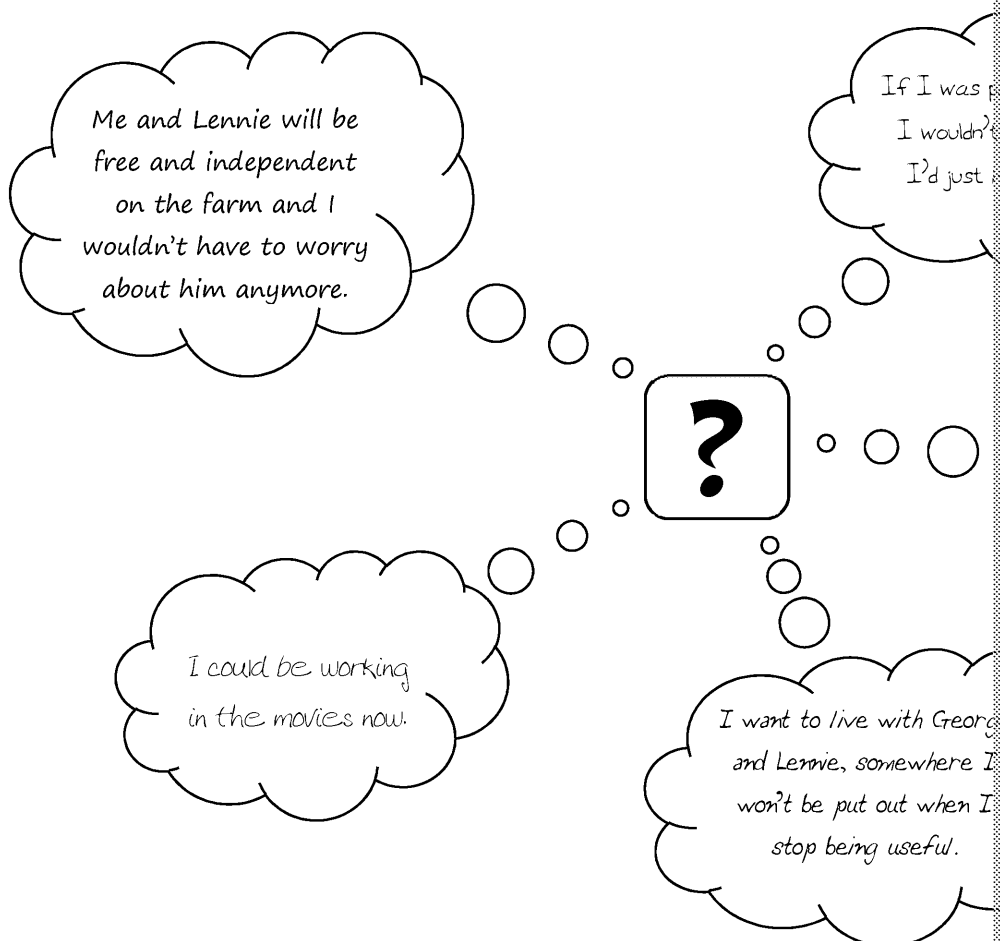
# Themes





Themes are ideas or messages which writers explore in their texts. Usually a novel and Steinbeck uses the form of *Of Mice and Men* to explore different themes such as loneliness and cruelty in a hierarchical society and friendship.

## Dreams

### Active Learning Task 1

Match the dream to the dreamer:



		
Curley's wife	Crooks	
		

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## George and Lennie's Dream

We first hear about the dream in Section 1.

Straightaway we know that Lennie is obsessed with this dream and likes George to tell it as often as he can get him to. George uses the dream to make Lennie happy and it also settles him down if he becomes angry.

When George tells the story at the end of Section 1 he speaks as if he is telling a bedtime story to a child. Lennie loves to hear the story and he knows the details.

When Candy hears about the dream he wants to become part of it. He offers to give his savings. He sees this as a chance to belong somewhere and be part of something that is a possible reality as George starts to think on a practical level.

When Lennie tells Crooks about the dream he too wants to become a part of it but he knows it might become a reality. However, after being treated brutally by Curley's wife he gives up his part of the dream, understanding that his reality is suffering.

The dream dies with Lennie. When Candy asks about whether or not the future is possible without Lennie, we know from George's response that it won't.



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## The Power of the Dream

Steinbeck makes George and Lennie's dream so powerful that Candy and Crooks

### Section 3: Candy

Candy, the one-handed swamper, overhears them talking and wants to become

*'Tell you what ... S'pose I went in with you guys. Tha's three hundred an' fifty bu good...but I could cook and tend the chickens and hoe the garden some. How'd that*

#### Active Learning Task 3

- How does Candy try and become a part of the dream?
- What does he offer to do around the farm?

### Section 4: Crooks

Crooks is cruel to Lennie at first about the dream. What he says here shows that

*'I seen hundreds of men come by on the road an' on the ranches with their bundles damn thing in their heads. Hundreds of them. They come, an' quit an' go on; every of lan' in his head. An' never a goddam one of 'em ever gets it. Just like heaven. Ev lan'. Nobody never gets to heaven, and nobody gets no land. It's just in their head. about it, but it's just in their head.'* (pp. 67-68)

#### Active Learning Task 4

- What is the dream that every man has, according to Crooks?
- What does he compare getting a piece of land to?

Later in this section Crooks attempts to become a part of it when he realises that coming true because of the plans put in place.

*'I never seen a guy really do it,' he said. 'I seen guys nearly crazed with loneliness, whore-house or a blackjack game took what it takes... You guys would want a hand keep, why I'd come an' lend a hand. I ain't so crippled I can't work like a son of a b*

#### Active Learning Task 5

- What usually distracts most men from their dream?
- What does Crooks say that he'd work for?

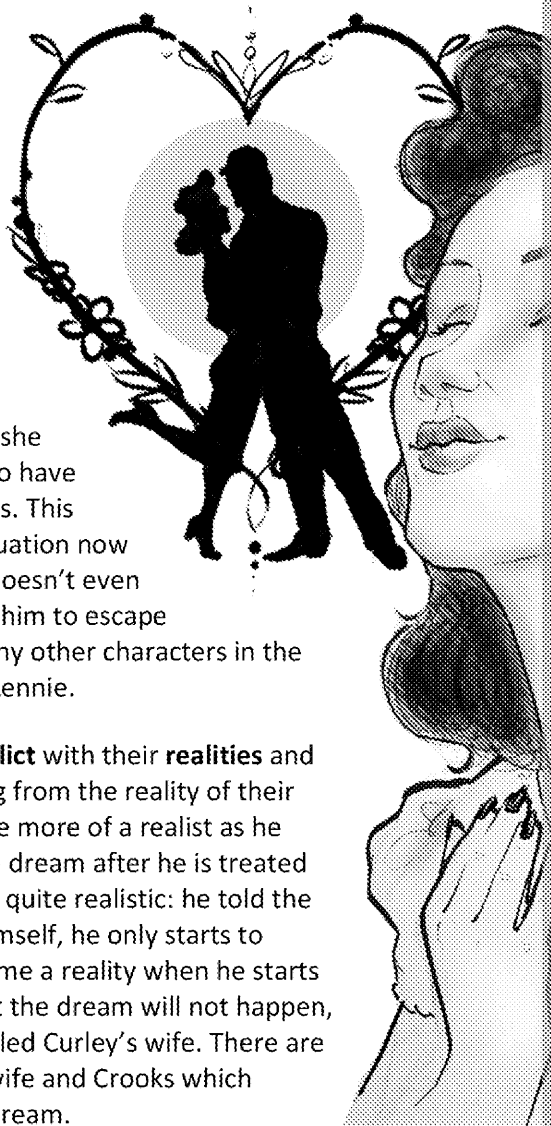
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### Curley's Wife's Dream

We learn about Curley's wife's dream when she reveals to Lennie that she wanted to be a film star. She wanted to be glamorous and a part of Hollywood. However, her dreams are not very realistic, as we find that men have made comments but they were only passing comments that did not seem to really mean anything. She comes across as being naive when she talks about these men who seem to have led her astray for their own reasons. This makes her feel upset about her situation now with Curley. She realises that she doesn't even like him and that she only married him to escape from home. She is isolated like many other characters in the story and meets a tragic fate, like Lennie.

The characters' dreams are in **conflict** with their **realities** and they use them as a way of escaping from the reality of their situations. Only Crooks seems to be more of a realist as he changes his mind about joining the dream after he is treated brutally by Curley's wife. George is quite realistic: he told the story to please Lennie and calm himself, he only starts to believe that the dream could become a reality when he starts to plan it, and he later accepts that the dream will not happen, after he realises that Lennie has killed Curley's wife. There are also comments made by Curley's wife and Crooks which make fun of George and Lennie's dream.



### Did You Know? Context: Dreams

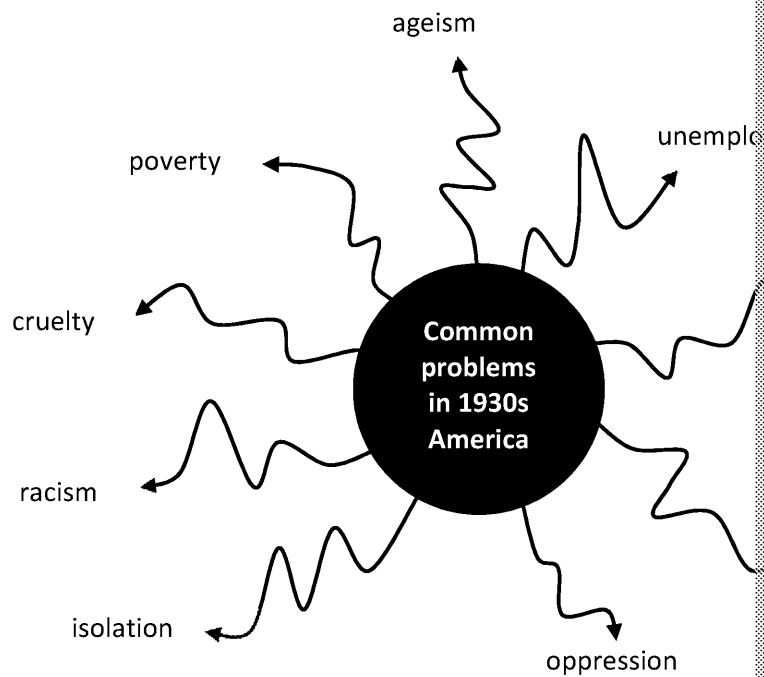
The dream which George and Lennie have is to 'live off the fatta the land' and have a house of their own. This idea appeals to Candy and Crooks, who have both experienced discrimination. The ranch can be seen as a microcosm of society during this time. Through it, Steinbeck shows cruelty, discrimination and isolation. The dream is George and Lennie's own version of hope lived by in this period of Depression: hope and a chance to escape daily suffering.

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## Reality

George and Lennie's dream continuously clashes with the reality of their situation. The kinds of problems which they faced were common in 1930s America during the Great Depression.



Nearly every character in *Of Mice and Men* suffers from one or more of these problems.



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### Active Learning Task 6

Tick the appropriate box in the table to show which characters suffer from each

	George	Lennie	Candy	Crooks
unemployment				
poverty				
isolation				
homelessness				
sexism				
racism				
disability				
ageism				
oppression				

- Look at the results. Who do you think is the best and the worst off?
- Write about who you have chosen as the 'best off' and give examples from
- Write about who you have chosen as the 'worst off' and give examples from



### Did You Know? Context: Reality

During this period of hardship and suffering, dreams became a form of escape and a symbol of hope for many. It allowed people to deal with common problems such as

However, Steinbeck shows that not everyone could believe in the American Dream due to isolation and racism. Understandably, he is cynical about the idea of the dream, especially of the dream farm, at first. By the end of the novel he believes that the dream is not able to have, and is resigned to this understanding and his situation.

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## Friendship

George and Lennie have the strongest friendship in the novel and their relationship is unusual. Their friendship is unusual because it was common for men working in a situation of isolated figures. The two men travel together, work together and look after each other. George trusts Lennie and Lennie trusts him greatly.

During the American Depression in the 1930s migrant workers lost their homes as a result of this. Workers had to travel from place to place looking for work alone. They were not anywhere long enough to make long-lasting friendships.

We know that their friendship is **different** because it is commented on so much. At the start of the friendship at the start of the story, when he suspects that George is taking advantage of him for pay. Another example is when Lennie is victimised by Crooks who taunts Lennie and does not return to him. This may be because Crooks is **envious** of the friendship between George and Lennie, which is greatly with his complete isolation.

Slim seems to be understanding about their friendship. George even confides in him with Lennie. He trusts Slim and at the end of the novel we can take some hope and share an understanding about the loss of Lennie.

However, George does get **angry** with Lennie regularly. We know this at the start of the novel when George is angry with Lennie for petting a dead mouse. We get the idea that Lennie does 'better' than learn from his mistakes. He simply follows instructions from George, if he can remember them. Understandably, becomes frustrated with Lennie's actions, especially when he forgets to repeat them.

However, George benefits from his friendship with Lennie too. It stops him from being a loner worker and he finds that telling the story of the dream relaxes him and gives him a sense of purpose.



### Did You Know? Context: Friendship

In a period which embodies the idea of the 'survival of the fittest', close friendship is unusual. Steinbeck presents friendship as a form of hope in the novel. In an isolated society, a close relationship is unusual to the other workers, who are accustomed to feelings of isolation. George and Lennie's relationship stands out because it contrasts so greatly with the interactions between the other workers.

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## Loneliness

As we know, life as a migrant worker was a lonely occupation which is why it was Lennie were travelling companions. This was because workers tended to move from work to work, so that they did not settle anywhere and form relationships. This would have

The characters who experience loneliness in the story are Crooks, Candy and Curley.

Candy is old and disabled and therefore does not fit in on the ranch. He knows the time as a worker and is becoming a burden. The only close companionship which was with his old dog. The other men fail to understand how the loss of Candy's dog affects him. The dog depended on him and Candy later regrets that he didn't take better care of him.

When he hears about George and Lennie's dream he desperately wants to become a part of it. This is because he knows that soon he will find it difficult to find employment with his savings.

Crooks is also a victim of loneliness. He is victimised due to the colour of his skin. He feels the frustrations on him and he is isolated in the stables with the animals. He warns Lennie that loneliness has on a person after he has been cruel towards Lennie, perhaps because of his friendship with George. Like Candy he wants to become a part of the dream but his encounter with Curley's wife leads him to decide to stay with reality and know his place.

Curley's wife is also lonely. This explains why she regularly comes out to see the men, a threatening figure, particularly because Curley is suspicious of any interactions with her. She admits that she regrets marrying Curley, which she did to escape her family.



### Did You Know? Context: Loneliness

The lifestyle of a migrant worker is one of loneliness, and we know that George contrasts with the others on the ranch. Workers moved from place to place to find work, so they were always alone. However, through Crooks, Steinbeck warns that isolation is unhealthy and companionship is needed.

Sadly, those who are 'different' are excluded. Steinbeck uses the characters of Crooks and Curley's wife to show this. The dream of the future farm is a brief glimpse of escape for Crooks and Lennie. They are both excited about this exciting prospect. However, they both become resigned to their situation.

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## Cruelty

Cruelty is a theme which runs throughout the novel and there are many events which show through the way that the characters treat each other. One example is when George and Lennie play tricks on Candy and even told him to jump into a river. Unlike other characters, Candy is not to take advantage of his friend.

Another example is when Carlson takes out Candy's old dog to shoot. He thinks that the dog is a nuisance of his misery but he's not acknowledged the cruelty of taking the dog from Candy.

Just as this act is cruel, Candy is aware that what happened to his dog could foreshadow his own fate. As he ages and becomes less useful, he knows that the time will come when he will be discarded.

Cruelty is perhaps noticed the most strongly in relation to Crooks. We see the way that he is treated by the workers and his boss. Black people were commonly treated as being inferior in America during the Depression. Some white people considered that black people were subhuman. Black people became used to being addressed with the word 'nigger' and being treated differently from white people.

This treatment also shows the **hierarchical** nature of society in the world of the novel. The strong oppress the weak but the weak attack the weaker. Weakness could be due to colour, age or physical strength. These causes suffering and a sense of disempowerment.

The ending of the novel confirms this as Steinbeck uses nature to describe the cycle of life. The river becomes the prey of a heron. The hunter and the prey is shown and the cycle continues between the characters in a natural manner.



### Did You Know? Context: Cruelty

In his microcosm on the ranch, Steinbeck depicts a society which is cruel and does not support them. An event in the text where this is evident is the shooting of Candy's dog. The shooting foreshadows Candy's fears of being cast out of the American culture which requires hard work, a man who outlives his usefulness will inevitably be discarded.

Cruelty is also imparted to Crooks who is also a victim of society at this time: he's isolated because this was widespread and acceptable in American culture at this time. The people weren't treated on equal terms.

Even George is not immune to cruelty – he confides in Slim that he used to take pleasure before he realised that it was wrong.

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## Hierarchies

A hierarchy is a system which places people in order of importance. The most important (the rich) are at the top and then the hierarchy moves downwards towards the mass of the bottom.

People at the top of a hierarchy would own a greater share of wealth and power and would own little and make a living by selling their labour to people higher up. Steinbeck makes the hierarchy animal-like in the sense that people pick on those weaker than themselves.

### Active Learning Task 7

Think about the hierarchy in *Of Mice and Men*. Place the following characters on the hierarchy: Lennie, Curley, Curley's wife, Slim, Carlson, Crooks. Give reasons for each of your placements.



### Did You Know? Context: Hierarchies

The hierarchical system depicted on the ranch is used by Steinbeck to highlight the cruelty which takes place between people of different positions – examples of this are it being perceived as being acceptable for the boss to take out his frustrations on Crooks, the way that Curley speaks to the workers on the ranch, the way that Curley mimics the way that his father dresses and how Curley's wife uses her little power to threaten Crooks.

Steinbeck uses these examples to reveal the nature of this society: how people instinctively pick on those weaker than themselves.

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## Anger and Violence

Steinbeck presents different angry characters in *Of Mice and Men*. Curley stands out as he's eager to assert his authority, through his masculinity, over the other men. He does this because of his flirtatious wife. We see the full extent of his aggression when he crushes Lennie's hand. Following nature's cycle, he attacks someone weaker than he is, or at least that's what Slim says. Lennie for the simple reason that he is bigger than he is.

There are a lot of incidents of violence throughout the novel with Curley – he's a threatening character and uses threatening language and actions towards the others. This is his way of asserting authority. It is only when Lennie crushes his hand that his ego falters – for a short while. He seems to be more bothered about his reputation than his crushed hand, so that Slim is able to blackmail him to keep quiet about what really happened.

However, he takes revenge when he gets the chance and gets a lynch mob together when he discovers that Lennie has killed his wife. His language is violent, leading George to having to take matters into his own hands before Curley can make Lennie suffer. Curley tells Carlson to aim for the gut with his gun when he sees Lennie.

Other examples of violence which involve Lennie are his crushing of a furry creature, his downfall, and the murder of Curley's wife, at the climax of the text.

There are other acts of violence in the text. These are the shooting of Candy's dog and the natural act of the heron eating the water snake at the end of the text where violence is a natural part of society.

George is angry with Lennie at times, but he does not use violence. He does reveal himself to be cruel to Lennie when he was younger, before he realised that it was wrong. We see his anger and frustration on Crooks before we even meet them.

Crooks is often a victim of other people's anger – because he's the lowest in the 'pecking order', he's a target for others, like the boss, on a regular basis. Curley's wife also angrily threatens him with a lynch-mob, taking advantage of her position of power over him. It seems that Crooks is angry with others, because of the way that he's treated, however it likewise makes him angry with himself.

He attacks Lennie on a psychological level – possibly because he is jealous of Lennie and George, possibly to release some of his own anger and frustration at the way he is treated. He acknowledges that being alone is not good for a person, and it can make them sick.



### Did You Know? Context: Anger and Violence

Persecution of black people was common during this period and Steinbeck presents other people's anger and abuse. Power was linked with hierarchy and status and was used by those in power using anger and violence to those beneath them. There's also a competition between men in with masculinity. Mainly this links with Curley and his eagerness to prove himself.

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## Ideas and Messages

Linguistic and narrative devices are literary techniques used by authors to convey messages that they wish to pass on to their reader. An author's 'idea' is any thought, influence and surfaces in their writing. When writing *Of Mice and Men*, John Steinbeck was writing during a period of economic devastation and uncertainty in 1930s America, an age of social upheaval, and a time when the reality of the American Dream was never more distant from the American people.

### The American Dream

The dream remains a powerful motif in Steinbeck's text (See the 'Themes' section for more on dreams). However, it is a specific type of dream that Steinbeck had in mind when he wrote 'The American Dream'. The American Dream is an age-old ideal held by the country that any person, regardless of background or station in life, can be successful and achieve anything he or she puts their mind to. The Dream brings with it hope and infinite possibility for the American individual, and the belief that all of humanity is equal in terms of their ability to be successful and reach their desired goals. The American Dream caused many to migrate to America, with many believing they could find success from living and working off the rich and fertile lands in America's farming states. During a period of dry weather and dust winds throughout America's farming states, an area known as the 'Dustbowl', many dreamers, like George and Lennie, moved to areas such as California in search of their dream. However, following the crash of the stock market in America, the 'Great Depression' and intense poverty and economic decline worldwide that lasted throughout the 1930s, the dream as California, and farmers and workers were left disappointed with their dream unfulfilled.

Lennie and George's discussion of their dreams of owning and living off a ranch are a clear embodiment of the American Dream, with the pair trusting in the ideal that they can achieve it as men who come from poor travelling backgrounds. Despite the disheartening situation, with low income, and a lack of property and security, the promise of the American Dream is what motivates the men and motivates them in their work. Like George and Lennie, Candy, and even the dismissal of Lennie and his dream, buy into the hope and opportunity promised by the American Dream. Steinbeck's union of these men through the ideal of the American Dream is part of his message to his audience. By uniting men from vastly different backgrounds (with Candy being a Black man, segregation due to his race, Candy losing his employment security and being belittled by the other men, George and Lennie losing their homes and stability through their status as solo travellers), Steinbeck emphasises to us readers the universal nature of the American Dream and its power. However, there is a cynical tone to Steinbeck's message, as all men are also united by the fact that they cannot achieve the dream and achieve the ideal they strive for. Following the death of Curley's wife, the future for George and Candy appears bleak, with the pair abandoned by Lennie. By the end of Steinbeck's novel, we as readers are left believing Crook's words: 'talk about it a hell of a lot' but 'won't get no land.' (Section 4).

### Agency of Humanity and Our Nature

Throughout Steinbeck's body of work there is a recurring fascination with the moral agency of humanity. In *Of Mice and Men*, this fascination sees Steinbeck explore the agency of individuals, particularly in relation to people's future or fate. Throughout the novel, Steinbeck explores with to what extent we as humans are able to change the future or fate mapped out for them. This is clearly in his use of the idea of the American Dream throughout the novel. While the pursuit of a better future drives the narrative and motivates their actions throughout the novel, the question the likelihood of those dreams becoming reality for the men on the ranch is a central theme whose agency Steinbeck calls into question is Lennie. From the outset of the novel, Lennie's experiences with trouble, and Steinbeck works hard to increase the tension and drama. By the time Lennie murders Curley's wife, his actions have already been foreshadowed by the fate of his pet mice and the pup given to him by Slim. Following Lennie's death, we are left to question to what extent Lennie had any control in his fate, and whether his downfall was always inevitable due to his vulnerability and inability to truly look after himself. As a result, we must also question the ability to keep himself and Lennie out of trouble, and perhaps his naivety in thinking that he could.

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to rescue Lennie from trouble. Steinbeck here seems to be asking us as readers to consider free will, agency, and what power any of us have in determining our future when faced with the circumstances in which we are brought into the world.

### Minorities in 1930s American Society

In the individuals making up the work force on the ranch, Steinbeck has included a range of minority groups of people in 1930s America. While Crooks represents the number one minority group that suffered under laws of racial segregation, Candy represents those with a physical disability, and Curley's wife represents those with a mental disability. To some extent, Curley's wife, as a woman, is also a minority on the ranch among the stronghold of male workers. Certainly, like black women too suffered prejudice and discriminative behaviour in society, particularly in the 1930s. The characterisation of these individuals is no doubt deliberate, and a bid to urge his readers to consider how such minorities are treated within society. Steinbeck makes a point of emphasising that these individuals are often exploited for what society deems any factor that makes them different. While Curley's wife is often silenced, ignored, mistreated and made the subject of ridicule, Crooks is segregated from the other men and dehumanised in his placement with the dogs, living like an animal. Like Curley's wife and Crooks, Lennie and Candy are also alienated from the other men, as seen in their exclusion from the social trips to town and games on the ranch. While this here illustrates the cruelty in society and the inequality within it, there does appear to be a sense that all four characters find some level of comfort in their alienation and loneliness together. Steinbeck's message is not a happy one. While Lennie and Curley's wife both reach for a better future, in their vulnerable status, the future of Candy appears to hold unemployment, financial hardship, and Crooks appears forever destined to a life of segregation on the ranch.

## Essay Questions

### Unit 1: The Study of Prose

#### *Of Mice and Men*, John Steinbeck

#### EITHER

- (6) 'Lennie is a victim of the society in which he lives.'

Explore the character of Lennie in *Of Mice and Men*.

#### OR

- (7) Examine the significance of the natural world and how it relates to the characters in *Of Mice and Men*.

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## The Writer's Use of Language

Steinbeck's **simple** language makes the story realistic. The story is written in the way that we can observe everything that is going on with the different characters. There are two ways to write a person: a writer can be 'universal' and allow the reader to see everything that has happened to everything if the writer wants them to. This style of narration is also known as being 'objective'. Steinbeck lets us 'see' the different characters.

The dialect is written as it's spoken to make the characters even more realistic. Steinbeck uses simple language, to show the dialect that the characters would have spoken. Also language is used to show the characters' personalities. Two examples of this are: Lennie's language is child like to show that he has a learning disability. Curley's is confrontational, revealing how aggressive he is.

### Imagery

Imagery is the use of words to create images or pictures in the reader's mind. A writer uses words more powerful to the reader.

#### Active Learning Task 1

Read the following lines from the text. Steinbeck has written them to create a particular image in your mind. Write out each line then draw out the image that comes to your mind:

1. *Her hair hung in little rolled clusters, like sausages* (p. 32)
2. *...This girl squawks and squawks* (p. 40)
3. *His body was bent over to the left by his crooked spine...* (p. 62)
4. *Lennie dabbled his big paw in the water.* (p. 9)

### How are these images effective?

Although *Of Mice and Men* is written in a **simple** style, Steinbeck uses **images** as symbols to represent ideas.

### Animal Imagery

#### Lennie

*'...drank with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse.'* (p. 8)

*'He walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws.'* (p. 8)

*'Lennie dabbled his big paw in the water'* (p. 9)

*'Slowly, like a terrier who doesn't want to bring a ball to its master, Lennie approached'*

*'Lennie covered his face with his huge paws...'* (p. 58)

*'...he came as silently as a creeping bear moves.'* (p. 88)

#### Curley

*'Curley stepped over to Lennie like a terrier'* (p. 58)

*'Curley was flopping like a fish on a line'* (p. 59)

#### Curley's wife

*'her body flopped like a fish'* (p. 82)

#### Active Learning Task 2

- a. Write about how Steinbeck uses **animal imagery** to describe Lennie.
- b. Write about the **animal imagery** Steinbeck uses for Curley and Curley's wife.



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## Images of Light and Darkness

Steinbeck uses images of light and darkness throughout his novel as a **stylistic technique**.

### Active Learning Task 3

Look at the following quotations below. You have to decide whether they are suitable for 'light' or 'darkness'. You should record each quotation under the heading of either 'light' or 'darkness'. Be as interpretive as possible!

- 'Although there was evening brightness showing through the windows of the bunkhouse I have put this quotation under... because it shows... This is important to the themes of the story as...'*
- Crooks' eyes 'lay deep in his head, and because of their depth seemed to glitter with light. Both light and darkness are shown here because... I think that this description reveals...'*
- When Curley's wife first appears at the bunkhouse, 'the rectangle of sunshine in the doorway... This reveals...'*
- As the story reaches its tragic climax, 'the light climbed on out of the valley' (p. 100). This suggests that...'*

### Important points:

- Steinbeck uses images of darkness and light throughout the novel which the reader can interpret.
- The darkness and the light are **symbolic** of other interpretations.



### Did You Know? Context: Images of Light and Darkness

The imagery of light and darkness links with the settings and ideas in the novel. Light is linked with freedom and the darkness in the bunkhouse represents the darkness of Crooks' situation. Similarly, Crooks' treatment on the ranch leads to contrasting feelings within him. Steinbeck's uses of him captures this. It's sad that Crooks' intelligence and independence are suppressed as he can't see past the colour of his skin.

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## Symbolism

The story begins and ends with descriptions of nature by the Salinas river. The way the end of the novel could symbolise the interactions between men – at least in the beginning.

There's also the idea that the natural descriptions could symbolise the beauty of the world. In the Bible God creates Eden and man who he places there to look after it. God then creates the serpent to eat from the tree of knowledge despite God forbidding them to do so. This food to man. They then have knowledge of good and evil. When God finds out he punishes them. Adam suffers greatly during child bearing and man will suffer through hard work. Both of these descriptions could symbolise man's suffering in general – through the daily grind of life.

As stated earlier, George Milton could represent man wandering (Adam after being expelled from Eden) and Lennie could represent Eve in Eden (temptation). In John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve, who fall in the Garden of Eden. Because of their fall, each man is forced to suffer as a lonely being.

Descriptions of animals are usually linked with the character of Lennie. He's described animals throughout the novel such as a horse and a bear when we are first introduced to him. This symbolises anyone who outlives their usefulness.

On an economic level, George and Lennie could be recognised as symbols of the struggle to be in control of their own lives.



### Did You Know? Context: Symbolism

We know that the description of the heron attacking the water snake at the end of the novel is a symbol of the nature of the prey and the victim in man's culture. Another example of symbolism is the treatment of Candy's dog.

Another interpretation of the novel is that George and Lennie could be recognised as symbols of the struggle to be in control of their own lives, as stated above. In this sense, the novel is a symbol of man's quest for the 'American Dream'. It is up to you to decide what you think about the novel after reading.

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## Form

Description is mostly used at the start of each section, before Steinbeck moves in the characters.

The first and the last sections contain a lot more description of the natural world. The

The sections at the ranch focus on character and interaction. The plot moves toward

Steinbeck intended the story to be adapted for the stage which would explain the on character and dialogue and minimal settings.

## Structure



**Structure** is the way that the story is put together.

*Of Mice and Men* is the first of Steinbeck's **form**. Each section contains few descriptions. Steinbeck's imagery of light and darkness was on the stage.

Although the form is short, the story has a powerful impact on the reader, due to the tragic figure from the start – we know this due to the ominous foreshadowing Steinbeck used in the novel. The novel is also cyclical – it starts and ends at the Salinas river. The two men move from the man-made world only to return to the natural world once again at the end.

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# Contexts



In terms of Literature, **context** is the circumstances in which an event occurs; a setting. Other words for 'context' are **background, connection, relations, meaning.**

John Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California, where he based a lot of *Of Mice and Men*. Steinbeck worked on the experiences of rural California and stayed with him.

He enrolled at Stanford University in 1919 but left six years later without having a degree. In his early years writing while also working as a reporter and then as a caretaker. Success came with the publication of *Tortilla Flat* in 1935.

## The title, *Of Mice and Men*

The title of the novel is drawn from the Robert Burns poem *To a Mouse*. He took it from a line in the penultimate stanza:

*The best laid schemes o' mice an' men / Gang aft agley*

This is often paraphrased in English as meaning:

*The best laid plans of mice and men / Go often awry*

In the novel George and Lennie have plans to make their dream come true, but they fail. In this sense, the title **foreshadows** the tragic nature of the novel.

## Literary Context

Steinbeck's renowned works focus on the lives of **poor California wanderers** who struggle in their surroundings, usually succeed on a spiritual level. He was one of the most famous writers of the Great Depression.

**The lives of the California labouring class in Steinbeck's trilogy of novels:** 'In Dubious Battle' 1936, 'Of Mice and Men' 1937 and 'The Grapes of Wrath' 1940. All three portray the struggle of migrant workers.



## Did You Know? Context: US History

The book is set in America during the **Depression**. The economic conditions were so bad that people like George and Lennie were treated like victims. The novel is set in the Salinas Valley, California, where Steinbeck was born. It was a place of **major immigration**.

In America, the idea of **the American Dream** is that through hard work, courage and determination success can be achieved. People of every rank can feel that they can achieve a 'better, richer and happier life' (James Truslow Adams, 1931).

The idea is also rooted in the **Declaration of Independence** which states that 'all men are created equal' and that they are 'endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights', including 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness'.

**Discussion**  
Pick a character from *Of Mice and Men* and write a paragraph about their role in the story.

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Steinbeck **critiques** the concept of the dream in *Of Mice and Men*. As we know, this was the time – during the 1920s and 1930s the Depression was the cause of hardship for many.

The word '**dream**' suggests that something is desirable, yet unrealistic. George and Lennie have their own farm but this is never fully realised because of forces beyond their control.

In terms of George and Lennie's dream, we hear that part of it is to live off the 'fat' of the land. This is an expression which refers to having the best of everything. In terms of George and Lennie and their own place, it means that they believe they will be able to survive by relying on what they can grow and raise – as the land is so 'fat' they will need no money.

### Active Learning Task 1

Make notes relating to America as 'another culture' as you read and re-read your text. You can make notes under the following headings:

- Steinbeck's descriptions of place which tells me about the conditions in America
- The way that characters behave and the attitudes they express, and how this changes over time



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## The History of Migrant Farmers in California

*Of Mice and Men* is set in California during the period of the **Great American Depression**, a time when unemployment was high. Industry and the banks collapsed so a lot of people were left without money for the basic needs for survival: food, clothes and rent. Homelessness and joblessness became common.



During this time things grew worse in the country because farmers had to leave. The Dirty Thirties was a period of severe dust storms which caused agricultural damage in 1939. This was coupled with a period of drought which led to crops failing, so farmers lost their bank loans. As a result, lots of farmers were left without a home. Many of them they chased their **dream to own a piece of land**. You will recognise the link to this in *Of Mice and Men*.

The two characters suffer throughout the novel, despite continuing to follow their dream to own their own farm. Other characters are also drawn into this dream, which gives the characters hope, if only for a short period of time.

**Active Learning**  
Consider how this relates to the concept of the American Dream in relation to the novel you are about to read it. What is the concept of the American Dream?

George and Lennie are not just characters but they are also **symbols** for the hunger for land and the need to be in control of their own lives. They never achieved their dreams in reality. The difference between dreams and reality are seen when the two men dream but are faced with the reality of their situation on a day-to-day basis.

Historically, the Californians became scared that there were too many men involved and they drove them away with force. Those who stayed were put into refugee camps. Steinbeck gathered material for his books when visiting these camps.



### Did You Know? Context: History of Migrant Farmers in California

Migration was accepted as part of the culture in this period. There was a general need for survival – a 'survival of the fittest' mentality. The American Dream became a part of America's culture: the dream to own a piece of land.

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# Exam Guidance

## Guidance on PEE

### Use of point evidence explain when describing characters

You will be aware of the skill of **point evidence explain** as it can be important to texts. For example if you were asked to write about how Lennie is presented at the start of the novel you could use the structure of PEE to help you to write an answer. Here's a reminder:

**P: point**

**E: evidence**

**E: explain**

Here's a more detailed explanation with an example:

**P: A point** is made *Lennie is presented using animal imagery at the start of the novel.*

**E: evidence** *A quotation is provided to support the point 'and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws'.*

**E: explain** *A comment is made in some more detail, maybe a word or group of words in your quotation. The phrase 'a bear drags his paws' is effective as it immediately shows the size of Lennie and how he moves in a lumbering way, like a large bear.*

### Now, imagine that you take away the PEE scaffolding:

*Lennie is presented using animal imagery at the start of the novel.*

*'and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws.'*

*The phrase 'a bear drags his paws' is effective as it immediately shows how Lennie is portrayed in a lumbering way, like a large bear.*

You can see that there's a paragraph that provides a small part of an answer to the question **'Lennie presented using animal imagery at the start of the novel?'** To make a longer answer you could use more paragraphs.

Here's an example of how a longer answer would gradually form from your writing. **Lennie presented using animal imagery at the start of the novel?** The first paragraph is here to show the effect of how the writing looks altogether!

*Lennie is presented using animal imagery at the start of the novel.*

*'and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws.'*

*The phrase 'a bear drags his paws' is effective as it immediately shows how Lennie is portrayed in a lumbering way, like a large bear.*

**P:** *Lennie is also compared to a horse, showing that his actions are quite out of control and he cannot control himself:*

**E:** *'drank with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse.'*

**E:** *The fact that he 'snorts' shows a lack of self-awareness, he is following his instincts and again this is animal-like.*

**P:** *The bear imagery is continued to show the size of Lennie's hands:*

**E:** *'Lennie dabbled his big paw in the water and wiggled his fingers...'*

**E:** *The metaphor of the 'paw' reveals the great strength of Lennie and how his physical strength contrasts with the childlike innocence of his mind, shown when he is with the mice.*

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**Active Learning Task 1****How is George presented at the start of the novel?**

Read the passage below and highlight any words or phrases (a phrase is a small group of words) that describe how George is presented at the start of the novel. Highlight at least three different words or phrases.

*The first man was small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, strong features. Every part of him was defined: small, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose. Behind him was a second man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with wide, sloping shoulders; and he walked awkwardly, as if his feet were a little, the way a bear drags his paws. His arms did not swing at his sides, but were held out to his sides, because the heavy hands were pendular.*

*The first man stopped short in the clearing, and the follower nearly ran over him. He took the sweat-band with his forefinger and snapped the moisture off. His huge companion flung himself down and drank from the surface of the green pool; drank with long gulps, like a horse. The small man stepped nervously beside him.*

*'Lennie!' he said sharply. 'Lennie, for God's sakes don't drink so much.' Lennie continued to drink. The small man leaned over and shook him by the shoulder. 'Lennie. You gonna be sick?' (Section 1)*

Now look at the PEE framework below. Notice that it's there **three times for three different points**. If you're unsure about your points look again at the points which you have underlined. Think about the points in your mind which relate to **how George is presented at the start of the novel. Copy the PEE framework and structure an answer.**

P:

E:

E:

P:

E:

E:

P:

E:

E:

If you're unsure about what to do or have run out of ideas have a look at the example below.

Another source of help is this example for George (without PEE in the margin):

*Steinbeck reveals that George is the dominant one in the relationship from the start of the novel straightaway:*

*'Lennie!' he said sharply.*

*The word 'sharply' gives the impression of a strict yet caring teacher looking out for Lennie's welfare as he 'sharply' warns him about the danger of the pool when he runs over to the pool.*

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## Active Learning Task 2

### Revising PEE

In order to write well and develop your points, you need to be confident with using evidence from the text.

Copy and complete this **practise page for PEE**. Different parts of the PEE chain

- a. *George is like a guardian to Lennie:*

' \_\_\_\_\_ '

*This line reveals...*

- b. *Curley's wife is \_\_\_\_\_*

*'Her finger-nails were red.'* (Section 2)

*The description suggests that she is a character who represents*

- c. *Curley is aggressive towards Lennie.*

*'Curley stepped over to Lennie like a terrier. 'What the hell you'*

*This line shows \_\_\_\_\_*

**Now make up your own PEE paragraphs for the following points. Try and use one or two:**

Lennie is described as being childlike.

Candy is an old man who is worried about his future.

Slim is a respectable figure on the ranch.

Crooks is an isolated figure.

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# General Guidance on Writing Essays

This section is for **any essay** so it is important to read before you focus on specific reminders to help you with your essay writing skills – you should already have had this section divided up into five sections:

- Planning
- Writing an Introduction
- Writing the main part of your essay
- Writing a conclusion
- Tips for writing better essays

## Planning

Before you plan, you should **underline and examine the key words in the question** on what the examiner is looking for and it will help you to prepare an answer.

Jot down any **immediate ideas** and read through the passage related to the question.

**Mind-map an essay plan** – if it helps put the question in the middle of the page and then, number your points in the order which you think is best for each paragraph. You may prefer to use bullet points.

Also note down any **quotations** which you think support your points – you should use four or five.

Remember to include page numbers for any quotations which you will use as they are your points.

## Writing an introduction

An introduction is usually **short and to the point** – **addressing the question focus** is to introduce your ideas or arguments. Remember to **address the key words and focus**.

## Writing the main part of your essay

After writing your introduction you may be feeling more confident. It's important to stay focused at this stage. You should now work through your plan creating a **structured argument**. If you have numbered your points, this may help you – or you could number them after you have written them. You may prefer to work through your plan naturally, adding and crossing out different points as you go.

Be aware of **timing**, however – you don't want to still be working on the main part of your essay. Timing is essential – don't dwell on one part for too long.

The structure of each paragraph could follow **PEE** and if you have practised this regularly, your writing flows naturally while following this form. Remember that for each paragraph, your analysis will be assessed.

Remember to **keep quotations short** and to **comment on the effects of words and phrases**. Look at good answers and be aware of what grade they received and why. Look at lower grades and how they could be improved.

## Writing a conclusion

After working through your main points your conclusion should be **short and concise**. The conclusion should **sum up your main points** which you have made and refer back to the question.

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## Tips for writing better essays

Read essays which have gained the **grade** that you are aiming for – look at what is effective and consider how your own writing can improve to meet that target. Look at:

- How the introduction is approached and how the points are developed throughout
- How the essay maintains its focus on the question throughout
- How quotations are used and to what effect: for example, does the writer use them to support their points at all?
- How effectively the essay is concluded

### Information about the question

With a passage based question, some pupils may find it easier to actually read the passage and then know what they are focussing on when they read the passage. This saves time so you don't have to read it twice. Also underlining the focus of the question helps.

#### Active Learning Task 3

##### Answer these questions:

- What should you focus on in the question?
- How many points should you roughly aim for in your essay?
- How should you sum up your main points?

### Using bullet points and spider diagrams

Spider diagrams are helpful for getting ideas down and maintaining focus when you write. You can refer back to and you don't have to use all of your ideas in it. You may even change your ideas.

They may just be a starting point and may progress as you start writing. You may add more ideas as you're writing.

After studying your question, it's helpful to **write down as many ideas as you can**. You can also jot down any particular quotations or sections that you're planning to use. **of making notes** but remember to keep your focus on the question's key words and phrases.

### When to use bullet points and spider diagrams

If your essay title requires you to write about a character, theme or any aspect of the text, use bullet points or spider diagrams.

#### Active Learning Task 4

- Making notes on each character

Make notes on each main character and focus on:

- What they say
- What they do
- What other characters say about them
- Any physical descriptions
- The way that they interact with other characters
- How they develop – do they change throughout the course of the novel?

For this activity you will need to **go through the text** looking at the parts where a character is introduced, their features or is discussed by other characters.

- Apply your own planning technique to the following characters:

**George**

**Lennie**

**Curley's wife**

**Crooks**

Remember to support your ideas on your diagram with quotations as much as possible.

### Further planning activities for revision:

- Different themes in the text
- Different settings in the text

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# Revision Checklist

Make sure that you know which unit you are doing *Of Mice and Men* for and detail how long it is.

Have you looked at **sample questions**?

- ☑ It would help to look at the questions in this guide and plan some possible answers. Practise **planning and timing** – 5 to 10 minutes maximum planning time. Also write some questions and time yourself when you write them. Remember that it is better to plan before writing. The benefits of this are that it will increase your confidence and you will be efficient with time management.
- ☑ Remember that **time management** is crucial so the more time you spend writing the better you have for the text, the better. Have a **rough plan** for timing in your head: 10 minutes planning, 20 minutes writing and 5 minutes to read through your work and check it in your mind when you read over it.
- ☑ **Re-read the text.** This will enable you to gain a deeper understanding of the motivations and themes. You will also respond to subtle techniques such as symbolism, darkness and descriptions of the setting. You will also be more aware of how Steinbeck uses foreshadowing throughout the novel, prior to the tragic ending. Make notes for particular areas on your second reading.

## When writing exam responses

- Remember not to waste time with lengthy introductions – move straight into your answer.
- Remember to use standard English throughout your essay – make sure that you are clear and concise.
- Use a spider diagram or bullet points to help you with brainstorming and planning. You don't need to – feel free to add or erase points to it.
- Make the most of the exam time. Divide it up so that you are aware of how much time you have. This way you will spread your efforts out. Be aware of how many marks are for each section as this indicates how much you are expected to write.
- Remember to build in planning time at the start and time to check through your work at the end.
- If you're unsure what to write at first it might help if you start with the quotation. Think about any points that you would like to make and/or you might not have thought of which you would like to use for your explanation!
- Be confident when quoting from the text. Remember to keep quotations short and to the point. Paraphrase and interpret key words and phrases in your own words. Bring your ideas to the text. Remember that a writer's ideas are open to interpretation. Try and use embedded quotations to make your writing flow.
- Don't be tempted to make your paragraphs long by over quoting from the text. The marker of your work will not be fooled and you will lose marks for it. Plan your paragraphs and responses!
- Embedding quotations is a sophisticated way of expressing your points. You will find it comes naturally to you or you may want to practise writing in this way. Obviously don't overuse quotations but sometimes embedding a quotation helps your writing to 'flow'.

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# Key Terms Glossary

<b>A Bum Steer</b>	False information
<b>Alfalfa</b>	A plant widely grown for animal feed
<b>Barrel</b>	The long part of the gun through which the bullet travels when fired
<b>Bindle</b>	A small number of items rolled up inside a blanket and carried
<b>Buckers</b>	Loaders
<b>Burlap Ticking</b>	Coarse material which covers a straw mattress
<b>Candy Wagon</b>	A bus or truck used for transport
<b>Canned</b>	Sacked from a job
<b>Cat House</b>	Brothel
<b>Champing</b>	Chewing noisily
<b>Context</b>	In terms of literature, the circumstances in which an event occurs
<b>'Coons</b>	Racoons
<b>'Cots</b>	Apricots
<b>Critical</b>	Showing judgement or evaluation
<b>Dugs</b>	Teats
<b>Ejector</b>	The part of a gun which throws out the empty cartridge of a gun
<b>Form</b>	The shape or structure of something as distinguished from its content
<b>Gingham</b>	A cotton cloth, usually woven in stripes or checks
<b>Grey-backs</b>	Lice
<b>Hame</b>	The piece along a horse collar to which chains are attached
<b>Hands</b>	Workers
<b>Handy</b>	A good fighter
<b>Heron</b>	A bird with a long neck
<b>Influence</b>	The act, power or capacity of producing an effect on someone
<b>Jack-pin</b>	A removable wooden or metal pin put into the rail of ships
<b>Jerkline-skinner</b>	A driver who can control a team of mules with a single rein
<b>Keg</b>	A small barrel
<b>Loaded Shell</b>	An unfired bullet
<b>Magazine</b>	The part of the gun which holds the bullets
<b>Meager</b>	Of small amount
<b>Migrate</b>	To move, relocate, resettle, travel, wander or roam
<b>Misogyny</b>	Hatred of women
<b>Morosely</b>	In a sad, gloomy manner
<b>Mule</b>	A type of horse
<b>Pants Rabbits</b>	Lice, fleas, etc.
<b>Pulley</b>	A small wheel
<b>Purty</b>	Pretty
<b>Rheumatism</b>	A painful condition involving the joints and the muscles
<b>Riveter</b>	A tool used to fasten rivets (small metal bolts)

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<b>Roaches</b>	Cockroaches
<b>Rummy</b>	A card game
<b>Run</b>	An enclosure for animals in which they can feed, run, etc.
<b>Setter Dog</b>	Any of several breeds of long-haired dogs
<b>Skinner</b>	Driver of a mule team
<b>Slug</b>	A single drink, especially of alcohol
<b>Smoke-house</b>	A building where meat or fish is prepared by means of smoke
<b>Stable Buck</b>	The negro who looks after the stable
<b>Stake</b>	An amount of money
<b>Structure</b>	In terms of literature, the way that a story is put together, con
<b>Subsided</b>	Calmed down
<b>Swamper</b>	Cleaner
<b>Symbol</b>	An object which is used to represent something else
<b>Taloned</b>	A fork with 'claws'
<b>Tick</b>	Mattress cover
<b>Twict</b>	A sharp, sudden punch
<b>Vials</b>	Small glass jars and bottles
<b>Whinnied</b>	Past tense of 'whinny', the gentle sound a horse makes

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## Further Reading

### Books

*The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck (Penguin Books: 2000)

If students enjoyed *Of Mice and Men* then this Steinbeck classic could be an enjoyable read. The story of the struggles of American farmers set also during the Great Depression. This edition includes an accessible and informative critical introduction by author and scholar, Robert De Witt

*The Great Depression and the New Deal: A Very Short Introduction*, Eric Rauchway

*Of Mice and Men*, John Steinbeck (Penguin Books: 2000)

This edition of the text includes an accessible and informative critical introduction by Susan Shillinglaw.

### Media

'The Origins of the American Dream', BBC Radio 4

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08k2fmj>

Short programme detailing the history and literature surrounding the idea of 'The American Dream' and its impact on today's society

1992 film adaptation, *Of Mice and Men*, directed by and starring Gary Sinise, and featuring a trailer, along with several clips from the film, is available on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQtiStdDaYw>

'Open Book: John Steinbeck Special', BBC Radio 4

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0001sxs>

A short half-hour programme celebrating and discussing Steinbeck's greatest works, *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath*

### Websites

Official Webpage for 'The National Steinbeck Center'

<https://www.steinbeck.org/>

An organisation and museum dedicated to honouring and exploring Steinbeck's life and work

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# Answers / Indicative Content

## Section-by-Section Analysis

Question/Task	Answer / Indicative Content
<b>Section 1: Active Learning Task 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Surrounding valley, river and mountainous landscape</li> <li>b. Garden of Eden, pre-lapsarian</li> <li>c. Same road taken by all men in life, all roads lead to death for ageing, maturity and degeneration</li> <li>d. Travelling job, matching attire of companions, lack of individuality evoked by 'shapeless' hats, etc.</li> <li>e. Student's own creative response required</li> <li>f. Examples could include, 'shapeless of face', 'the way he snorted into the water like a horse', 'dabbled his big hands'</li> <li>g. Examples could include 'Lennie, who had been watching George' and 'He pulled his hat down a little more over his eyes'</li> <li>h. George: Irritated, cautious, soft, quick Lennie: Slow, clumsy, soft, easy-going</li> <li>i. Student's own creative response required</li> </ul>
<b>Section 1: Knowledge Check</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing terms as follows: Companions, ranches, small dog, pet, Lennie, trouble, George, angry, regret, Weed, loneliness, dream, farm</li> </ul>
<b>Section 1: Discussion Prompts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. They have received little education, and often drop letters and use colloquialisms in their speech, e.g. 'ya', 'jus' and 'hell with what I says'</li> <li>b. Lennie's learning disability, his tendency to be easily manipulated in situations</li> </ul>
<b>Section 2: Active Learning Task 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Student's own reading required</li> <li>b. He got kicked in the head by a horse when he was a child</li> <li>c. Curley appears hostile, aggressive, egotistical, intimidating</li> <li>d. 'He hates big guys.'</li> <li>e. Hide in the bushes near the Salinas river</li> <li>f. Quotations may include 'full, rouged lips and wide-spreading red' and any reference to the colour red – evokes danger</li> <li>g. Words or phrases may include, for example; majesty, craftsmanship, prince, authority. Slim is presented as a successful accomplished individual</li> <li>h. Words or phrases may include, for example; God damn it, can't eat. The dog appears vulnerable and aged like Lennie</li> <li>i. The possibility of owning one of Slim's pups</li> <li>j. Curley is presented as misogynistic, over-bearing, aggressive</li> </ul>
<b>Section 2: Discussion Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steinbeck places Crooks in with the animals in order to highlight his isolation; this combined with the other men's repeated use of terms to refer to him heightens his alienation from them/affirms his status as 'other' to the men on the ranch</li> </ul>
<b>Section 2: Knowledge Check</b>	Missing terms as follows: Ranch, bunkhouse, belongings, sheepdog, boxer, Lennie, hostile, wife, flirt, Curley, stardust

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Question/Task	Answer / Indicative Content
<b>Section 2: Active Learning Task 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Student's own research required, accurate presentation</li> <li>b. Responses may include, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candy: Kind, loves his sheepdog but fears for both of them</li> <li>Curley: Antagonistic, will pose a threat to Lennie throughout the novel</li> <li>Curley's Wife: Will also pose a threat to Lennie later in the novel</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) George</li> <li>ii) In response to Curley's threatening behaviour towards Lennie</li> <li>iii) Possibility of overpowering all others, threat to Lennie</li> </ul> </li> <li>d. Slim, Curley, Curley's Wife</li> </ul>
<b>Section 3: Active Learning Task 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Strong, quick, obedient worker who outdoes his fellow workers</li> <li>b. Lonely life of solitude, complete freedom and agency</li> <li>c. Clara took on the role of mother to Lennie, the only woman on the farm</li> <li>d. George's previous exploitation of Lennie's naivety and fear</li> <li>e. George has fun and laughs with Lennie, Lennie keeps him company</li> <li>f. Lennie tried to touch a young girl's red dress and scared her, which led them to their death</li> <li>g. Secretive, naïve, child-like, mischievous, George scares the townsfolk</li> <li>h. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Breaking the necks of cats and smashing them</li> <li>ii) Cats who may prey on Lennie's rabbits</li> <li>iii) Upset and angry at thought of rabbits under the house</li> <li>iv) Violent tendencies, but fierce loyalty and care for Lennie</li> </ul> </li> <li>i. Words and phrases may include, for example; helpless, terror, frightened</li> <li>j. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Lennie is bear like, and despite his size he is easily scared</li> <li>ii) Lennie is like a sheep here, a contrast to the last line of Steinbeck that summons the image of a brave man</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Section 3: Knowledge Check</b>	Missing terms as follows: Bunkhouse, Lennie, George, Aunt Clara, barn, Candy, dog, suffering, close, work, Carlson, brother, angry, dream, fight, crushes, wrong
<b>Section 3: Active Learning Task 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Lennie began travelling with George after his Aunt Clara took advantage of Lennie's naivety and once told him to stay with George and often gets the pair in trouble, like in Weed when Curley's wife's dress and scared her, which led them to their death</li> <li>b. Quotations may include, for example; 'Well, I can't let you out and shoot him right in the back of the head', 'Let's go to sleep with him stinkin' around in here'</li> </ul>

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Question/Task	Answer / Indicative Content
<b>Section 4: Active Learning Task 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. He is segregated from the other men and dehumanised as a poor and respectable man, dedicated to the job that has ruined him</li> <li>b. Crippled by the job to which he is dedicated, he is resigned to his state of prolonged suffering and discomfort</li> <li>c. Quotation could be, for example, 'Well, I tell you, you can't get any right in here but me'</li> <li>d. Crooks is reserved and has been deeply affected by his isolation but ultimately he has a good heart</li> <li>e. He tells Lennie that George will one day abandon him as a result of an abuse of power and Crooks' seizing of a rare opportunity over someone else</li> <li>f. Mental unhappiness and loneliness can manifest itself in various ways</li> <li>g. He first dismisses the dream but eventually buys into it</li> <li>h. His discussion of loneliness, and after seeing that Lennie has weaknesses with money and vice as previous men</li> <li>i. For example, Curley's wife uses racist, derogatory language against Crooks, using violent imagery to exacerbate the effect</li> <li>j. For example, Curley's wife's threats could have reminded him of the world they live in and his vulnerability within it, or could have deterred him</li> </ul>
<b>Section 4: Knowledge Check</b>	Missing terms as follows: Saturday, Lennie, leave, bunkhouse, George, back, dangerous, calms, rabbits, whorehouse, job, bruises, machine, boss, annoyed,
<b>Section 5: Active Learning Task 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. They are at a horseshoe tenement</li> <li>b. Killed his puppy</li> <li>c. She appears over-dressed for the occasion and is dressed in a way that denotes danger and seduction</li> <li>d. Student's own creative response required</li> <li>e. Student's own opinion required</li> <li>f. Curley's wife can be interpreted as naïve, as she sees the glamour promised by the travelling show and the man as 'a natural'</li> <li>g. A) He is desperate, scared, confused, and worried about his future B) The incident in Wee</li> <li>h. Simile, emphasises the limp and lifeless body of Curley compared to Lennie's strength</li> <li>i. George believes he should have predicted, and then prevented, the event. He may feel responsible as he is the one who took Lennie to the horseshoe tenement</li> <li>j. That his dream with George and Lennie will now be ruined by his wife's death, and Lennie's imminent murder</li> </ul>
<b>Section 5: Debate Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Argument for: Curley's wife's death will no doubt excite the audience, encouraged by her sharing of her dreams and the disappointment and unhappiness she feels with her life. This has humanised her</li> <li>• Argument against: Curley's wife has arguably been a necessary introduction in the novel and has repeatedly put her in difficult situations, her cruelty to Crooks also shows her less than sympathetic nature</li> </ul>
<b>Section 5: Knowledge Check</b>	Missing terms as follows: Lennie, worries, rabbits, conceals, picks, crept, talk, mutts, dream, Curley, pet, feel, stop, stop, blames, Luger

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Question/Task	Answer / Indicative Content
<b>Section 6: Active Learning Task 1</b>	a. Salinas river and the valley b. The strong always conquer the weak and the weak always meet their inevitable fate c. Lennie has a hallucination d. Aunt Clara is presented as a 'little fat old woman' who takes pleasure in teasing him and scaring him e. That George will abandon him and has had enough of him f. That he was crazy to ever think he would tend rabbits g. He is reluctant to scold Lennie and does so with little conviction h. George is trying to subdue his emotions and prevent something personal i. Slim is sympathetic and sees the kindness in George's actions j. Steinbeck could be suggesting that no-one suspects George's feelings; he could be hinting that George and Slim will be companions from the beginning of the novel
<b>Section 6: Knowledge Check</b>	Lennie, George, Aunt Clara, listening, rabbit, tend, shouting, mad, throws, agrees
<b>Section 6: Discussion Prompt</b>	Student's own reading and response required here but possible points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerability of the water snake mimics that of Lennie</li> <li>• Water snake unaware of the fate that awaits it, as is Lennie</li> <li>• Predator/prey image of the bird and the water snake contrasts with Curley's relationship</li> </ul>
<b>Section 6: Active Learning Task 2</b>	'Dramatic irony' is an instance in which the audience knows more than the character does
<b>Section 6: Learning Task 3</b>	<b>Storyboard Activities</b> Student's own creative response required

### Whole-text Analysis

Question/Task	Answer / Indicative Content
<b>Characterisation Active Learning Task 1</b>	<b>First Impressions of George</b> a. Words underlined could be, for example; small, quick, intelligent, defined. All words reflect George's intellect, wit, strength, and status in the novel b. Student's own reading required c. Student's own reading required d. Tone set is a parental one, with George taking on the role of a father or protector, despite his slighter build
<b>Characterisation Active Learning Task 2</b>	<b>First Impressions of Lennie</b> a. Words underlined could be, for example; huge, shapeless, clumsy, heavily, dragging, bear, paws. All words reflect Lennie's physical nature, his ambling and slow demeanour, and his lack of self-awareness and instincts b. Student's own reading required
<b>Characterisation Active Learning Task 3</b>	<b>First Impressions of Curley</b> Words or phrases could be, for example; thin young, tight-fitting, high-heeled boots. All words and phrases reflect Curley's physical appearance, his temper, and his egotistical demeanour and status on the ranch.

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Question/Task	Answer / Indicative Content
<b>Characterisation Active Learning Task 4</b>	<b>First Impressions of Curley's Wife</b> a. Words or phrases could be, for example; full, rough, red, rolled clusters, house dress, red mules, red oiled hair b. Red symbolises the threat Curley's wife poses and her role on the ranch, entirely defined by her status as a housewife and her Christian name symbolising lack of own identity
<b>Characterisation Active Learning Task 5</b>	<b>Writing in Role</b> Student's own creative response required here, but, for example, characters may experience feelings such as: George: Regret, guilt, peace/relief, sadness, sorrow, loneliness Curley: Anger, frustration, lack of closure, injustice, sadness, loss of wife, embarrassment, confusion Lennie: Frustration, guilt, anger, confusion, dread, fear, loneliness Curley's Wife: Anger, frustration, empowerment, guilt, loneliness, sympathy, understanding Crooks: Vulnerability, anger, frustration, sadness, emasculated
<b>Characterisation: Active Learning Task 6</b>	<b>Interview Between John Steinbeck and a Student:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lennie presented as animal-like and child-like, lack of understanding of George and his example</li> <li>George characterised as polar opposite of Lennie – humour evoked in their opposition</li> <li>Candy used to evoke sympathy from the reader, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Setting: Active Learning Task 1</b>	a. Mood: Peaceful, naturalistic, calming, Edenic, etc. b. Mood: Homely, domestic, minimal, masculine, etc. c. Mood: Eerie, minimal, atmospheric, mysterious, dark d. Mood: Loneliness, domestic, isolation, minimal, etc. e. Mood: Violent, ominous, foreboding, bittersweet, etc. f. Mood: Ominous, lonely, foreboding, calming, naturalistic, picturesque, etc.
<b>Setting: Active Learning Task 2</b>	Student's own choice from many possible quotations relevant to the setting
<b>Themes: Active Learning Task 1</b>	<b>Dreams:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Me and Lennie...' – George</li> <li>'If I was part...' – Crooks</li> <li>'I want to live off...' – Lennie</li> <li>'I want to live with...' – Candy</li> <li>'I could be working...' – Curley's Wife</li> </ul>
<b>Themes: Active Learning Task 2</b>	Candy and Crooks
<b>Themes Active Learning Task 3</b>	a. Candy offers money b. He offers to cook for the men, tend the chickens and the garden
<b>Themes: Active Learning Task 4</b>	a. To own a piece of land b. Getting to heaven
<b>Themes: Active Learning Task 5</b>	a. 'Whore houses or a blackjack game' (Section 4) b. No income

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Question/Task	Answer / Indicative Content						
Themes: Active Learning Task 6	Reality:		George	Lennie	Candy	Crooks	
		unemployment					
		poverty	✓	✓	✓		
		isolation				✓	
		homelessness	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		sexism					
		racism				✓	
		disability		✓	✓	✓	
		ageism			✓		
		oppression		✓	✓	✓	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ‘Best off’: Curley as most likely answer – examples provided will vary</li><li>• ‘Worst off’: Crooks, Candy, or Curley’s wife as most likely answer – examples provided will vary</li></ul>				
		Themes Active Learning Task 7	<b>Hierarchies:</b> Student’s own reading required here but most likely hierarchy is as follows: Slim <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Curley</li><li>• Curley’s Wife</li><li>• Crooks</li><li>• Carlson</li><li>• Lennie</li></ul>				
Essay Questions	Many responses possible here and student’s own reading and understanding of the text will be key. A guide for each question is as follows: 6. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lennie is presented as vulnerable, naïve, taking his actions – he is described as shapeless with a large head and naïve and innocent nature.</li><li>• He is vulnerable in the society in which he lives, and the physical and mental disabilities he has renders him with adult responsibilities and expectations that are impossible to fulfil.</li><li>• His mental disability also leads others to form prejudices about him, leading him to be misunderstood and isolated from the powerful/able members of society.</li></ul> 7. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Description of the natural world in the opening paragraph and the natural world in the final chapter – initially appears as a place of freedom, but the cruelty, pressures and responsibilities of work and the harshness of the environment make it a place of danger.</li><li>• By the end, the natural world is haunted by death and the dream of the water snake which George and Lennie’s dream dies.</li><li>• The image of the water snake and the ominous sound of the water snake are used to suggest the danger Lennie is in and his inevitable fate again as Curley.</li></ul>						

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Question/Task	Answer / Indicative Con
<b>The Writer's Use of Language: Active Learning Task 1</b>	Student's own creative response required
<b>The Writer's Use of Language Active Learning Task 2</b>	<b>Animal Imagery:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For example, Steinbeck uses animal imagery to emphasise Lennie's large stature, but also his simple nature and impulsive, immature nature. Lennie is often compared to a bear. Steinbeck also compares Lennie to a dog when Lennie experiences great fear or intimidation.</li> <li>Steinbeck likens Curley's short temper and quick mood to a cat and Curley's wife are both compared to fish in the novel. This imagery to describe their status and bodily responses, affirming their status as Lennie's prey and their vulnerability.</li> </ol>
<b>The Writer's Use of Language Active Learning Task 3</b>	<b>Images of Light and Darkness</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both light and dark, but mainly dark here, emphasising the dark bunkhouse and foreshadowing the future conflict. Themes in novel of the constant conflict between light and dark and cynicism.</li> <li>Both light and dark, emphasising the contrast between Lennie's dark skin and the lightness of his eyes. Description reveals that the men on the ranch define him by his darkness. Lennie's dream with Lennie shows his lightness.</li> <li>Darkness, and a darkness that envelops all lightness. The novel shows overwhelming evil on the ranch and in the life and death of Lennie that shadows their dreams and ideals. Symbolism of Lennie conquer his own darkness and triumph over evil.</li> </ol>
<b>Contexts: Discussion Prompt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any reference to Lennie and George's dream of owning their own land.</li> <li>Ideas created about senses of identity, agency, reality, and humanity, a cynical message from Steinbeck, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Contexts: Active Learning Task 1</b>	Notes may include, for example: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hotter climate, context of Dust Bowl and climate change, particularly relevant here.</li> <li>Free and frequent use of taboo, discriminative and derogatory language towards Curley's wife, treatment of Crooks and his wife with no fear of prosecution, etc.</li> </ol>
<b>Contexts Active Learning Task 2</b>	<b>The History of Migrant Farmers in California</b> In regards to The American Dream, Steinbeck is emphasising the ideal but also challenging the notion of the American dream as a fantasy or impossibility.

## Exam Guidance

Question/Task	Answer / Indicative Con
<b>Exam Guidance PEE: Active Learning Task 1</b>	Student's own response required here with many possible quotations, but, for example, responses may include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'The first man was small and quick, dark of face, with a few features. Every part of him was defined' (Section 3) – a small and perceptive man</li> <li>'The first man stopped short in the clearing, and then he came back' (Section 1) – George is the leader in his and Lennie's relationship</li> <li>'The small man leaned over and shook him by the shoulder' (Section 1) – Lennie and appears to ironically function as his guide due to his inferiority in size and strength</li> </ol>

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Question/Task	Answer / Indicative Content
<b>Exam Guidance</b> <b>Revising PEE</b> <b>Active Learning</b> <b>Task 2</b>	<p>Student's own response required here, but responses may include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'You never oughta drink water when it ain't running' reveals that George cares for Lennie and advises him</li> <li>Curley's wife is flirtatious with the men, striking in a way that draws attention, and foreboding</li> <li>This line shows that Curley is argumentative, aggressive towards others, which he enjoys</li> </ol>
<b>Exam Guidance</b> <b>Active Learning</b> <b>Task 3</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any keywords used and establish what it is that the character does</li> <li>Four or five</li> <li>In a short and concise conclusion that refers back to the question</li> </ol>
<b>Exam Guidance</b> <b>Active Learning</b> <b>Task 4</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>Student's own in-depth response required here, but may include:</p> <p><b>George:</b> Guides and defends Lennie and tells him about the dream of owning their own land; other characters respect George; Lennie; described as small, quick, sharp and intelligent; has a protective nature; George grows bitter by the end of the novel than when he started</p> <p><b>Lennie:</b> Often speaks and thinks of his and George's things and animals, and his fear of upsetting George; Lennie's strength and often ends up in trouble and hurting others; George pities Lennie and grows to care for him except Curley who resents Lennie's vulnerability; described as tall, big, shapeless and clumsy; shows compassion to other characters but often ends up hurting them; Lennie injures Curley and kills his wife; Lennie shows no development, reaching a cruel end after a period of degeneration</p> <p><b>Candy:</b> Speaks of his vulnerability due to his disability, his loneliness in the future and his consequential desire to enter into business; Candy does little manual work as a result of his disability; Candy has a deep care for Lennie and George but resents his dog; Candy due to his time on the ranch but resents his dog's misery; described as old, frail and whiskered, defined by his need for care for Lennie and George and shares in their dream; by the end of the novel Candy has lost his faith in the dream</p> <p><b>Crooks:</b> Defensive tone with others, voices wisdom and experience of ranch workers and the reality of their dreams; stable-hand; shows cruelty and kindness to Lennie, and is submissive to Curley; Curley undermines Crooks as a result of his race, he is segregated; Crooks takes his anger out on him, but Slim and Candy respect him; Crooks' pride; defined by injury to back and colour of his skin, physical description; defensive towards others and has grown angry by the end of the men and Curley's Wife; Crooks does not appear to change, quickly reverting to his cynical attitude towards men, his dream</p> <p><b>Curley:</b> Antagonistic, cruel and egotistical in exchange for power and physical violence; son of the boss, neglectful of others; all the characters despise Curley and believe his wife is a threat to the power he holds with his father; curly hair, short and thick, fashioned as a boxer; cruel, victimising, manipulative towards others; shows little improvement or progress by the end of the same anger and aggression as at the start</p> <p><b>Curley's Wife:</b> Attention-seeking discourse, often speaks of her dreams to Lennie, spends her time asking after Lennie; Lennie's housewife, spends her time bothering and insulting others; Lennie's characters believe her to be a flirt and to be trouble; Lennie's wife is made-up, dressing in red and ostrich feathers with Lennie; Lennie's Curley's wife becomes more likeable and Steinbeck's Lennie's wife reaches her dreams but she reaches an unfortunate and violent end</p> </li> <li>Student's own response and personal approach required</li> </ol>