

English Year 9 Summer A

Blended Learning Booklet

Of Mice and Men

Name:

Form



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Of Mice and Men KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

Context - Of mice and men written by John Steinbeck

<p>John Steinbeck - John Steinbeck was an American author who lived between 1902 and 1962. He was a Nobel Prize winner for his book <i>Of Mice and Men</i>. He is best known for his novel <i>Of Mice and Men</i>, which is a story about two migrant workers, George and Lennie, who travel across the country in search of a better life. The novel is set during the Great Depression, a time of extreme poverty and hardship in the United States. Steinbeck's writing is characterized by its simplicity and its focus on the lives of ordinary people. He was also a social activist and a member of the Communist Party.</p>	<p>The American Dream - The American Dream is a concept that represents the idea of a better life through hard work and determination. It is a dream of success, wealth, and happiness. The American Dream is a central theme in many American novels, including <i>Of Mice and Men</i>. In the novel, George and Lennie dream of owning a piece of land where they can live and work together, free from the hardships of migrant life. This dream represents their hope for a better future and a more secure life.</p>
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<p>Major Characters - <i>Of Mice and Men</i> features several key characters who drive the plot forward. George is the protagonist, a young man who is intelligent and ambitious. He is the one who dreams of owning a piece of land. Lennie is George's companion, a large man with a mental disability. He is simple-minded but loyal to George. Candy is an old man who is a friend to George and Lennie. He is a former owner of a piece of land and is now a migrant worker. Slim is another migrant worker who is respected by everyone. He is a leader among the workers and is known for his wisdom and fairness. Curley is the boss of the workers, a small, malicious man who is jealous of Lennie. He is the one who kills Lennie at the end of the novel.</p>	<p>Setting - The novel is set in California during the Great Depression. The story takes place in a migrant workers camp and on a ranch. The setting is a time of extreme poverty and hardship, which is reflected in the characters' lives. The novel is set during the 1930s, a time when many people were struggling to survive. The setting is a key element of the novel, as it helps to explain the characters' actions and the overall mood of the story.</p>
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<p>Themes - <i>Of Mice and Men</i> explores several important themes. One of the main themes is the American Dream, which is the dream of a better life through hard work. Another theme is the struggle for survival, as the characters are constantly fighting to make ends meet. A third theme is the importance of friendship, as George and Lennie are inseparable. The novel also explores the theme of loneliness, as the characters are often isolated from others. Finally, the novel touches on the theme of hope, as the characters believe in their dream and work hard to achieve it.</p>	<p>Symbolism - <i>Of Mice and Men</i> uses several symbols to represent important ideas. The most prominent symbol is the dream of owning a piece of land, which represents the American Dream. Other symbols include the rabbits, which represent George and Lennie's dream, and the mice, which represent the characters' desire for a better life. The novel also uses the symbol of the ranch, which represents the characters' current situation and their hope for a better future.</p>
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Notes by: Steve Summary - Although this questions have not come

<p>Question 1 - What is the main theme of the novel? The main theme of the novel is the American Dream, which is the dream of a better life through hard work.</p>	<p>Answer - The main theme of the novel is the American Dream, which is the dream of a better life through hard work.</p>
<p>Question 2 - Who are the main characters in the novel? The main characters in the novel are George, Lennie, Candy, Slim, and Curley.</p>	<p>Answer - The main characters in the novel are George, Lennie, Candy, Slim, and Curley.</p>
<p>Question 3 - What is the setting of the novel? The setting of the novel is California during the Great Depression.</p>	<p>Answer - The setting of the novel is California during the Great Depression.</p>
<p>Question 4 - What is the plot of the novel? The plot of the novel is the story of George and Lennie's journey across the country in search of a better life.</p>	<p>Answer - The plot of the novel is the story of George and Lennie's journey across the country in search of a better life.</p>
<p>Question 5 - What is the climax of the novel? The climax of the novel is the moment when Lennie is killed by Curley.</p>	<p>Answer - The climax of the novel is the moment when Lennie is killed by Curley.</p>

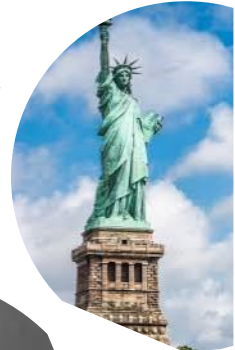
<p>Section 1: Literary Devices</p> <p>Symbolism - The novel uses several symbols to represent important ideas. The most prominent symbol is the dream of owning a piece of land, which represents the American Dream. Other symbols include the rabbits, which represent George and Lennie's dream, and the mice, which represent the characters' desire for a better life.</p> <p>Metaphor - The novel uses several metaphors to represent important ideas. The most prominent metaphor is the dream of owning a piece of land, which represents the American Dream. Other metaphors include the rabbits, which represent George and Lennie's dream, and the mice, which represent the characters' desire for a better life.</p> <p>Personification - The novel uses several personifications to represent important ideas. The most prominent personification is the dream of owning a piece of land, which represents the American Dream. Other personifications include the rabbits, which represent George and Lennie's dream, and the mice, which represent the characters' desire for a better life.</p> <p>Imagery - The novel uses several images to represent important ideas. The most prominent image is the dream of owning a piece of land, which represents the American Dream. Other images include the rabbits, which represent George and Lennie's dream, and the mice, which represent the characters' desire for a better life.</p>	<p>Section 2: The Meaning of the Title</p> <p>The title of the book is <i>Of Mice and Men</i>. This title is significant because it represents the characters' dream of owning a piece of land. The title is also a reference to the poem <i>Of Mice and Men</i> by Robert Burns, which is a poem about the struggle for survival. The title is a key element of the novel, as it helps to explain the characters' actions and the overall mood of the story.</p>
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Lesson 1 - The American Dream

The American Dream and the Great Depression

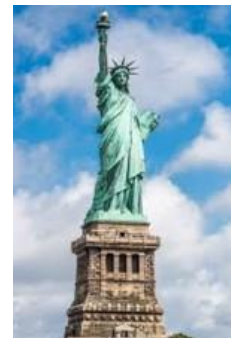
L/I: To situate the novel within the historical context in which it was written

1. Who or what is pictured in each of the three images?
2. How does each link to American history?
3. What is the 'American Dream'?



What is the American Dream?

- America has always been seen as the Land of Opportunity, partly because immigrants from Europe saw it as a place of freedom, a place to begin a new life, a place for real possibilities and wealth for all.
- **The belief in America as a country where ordinary people could create a better life for themselves is often referred to as The American Dream**
- What does have the Statue of Liberty have to do with this?



DART – The American Dream

James Truslow Adams, in his book *The Epic of America*, which was written in 1931, stated that the American dream is "that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able

to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous

circumstances of birth or position."

The authors of the United States' Declaration of Independence held certain truths to be self-evident: "that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." Might this sentiment be considered the foundation of the American Dream?

Some say that the American Dream has become the pursuit of material prosperity - that people work more hours to get bigger cars, fancier homes, the fruits of prosperity for their families – but have less time to enjoy their prosperity. Others say that the American Dream is beyond the grasp of the working poor who must work two jobs to insure their family's survival. Yet others look toward a new American Dream with less focus on financial gain and more emphasis on living a simple, fulfilling life.

Thomas Wolfe said, "...to every man, regardless of his birth, his shining, golden opportunitythe right to live, to work, to be himself, and to become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make him."

What is the American Dream?

Write a three bullet point summary of the below (use the underlined sections to help you)

The Great Depression

On October 4 1929, millions of dollars were wiped out in an event that became known as the Wall Street Crash. It led to the Depression in America which crippled the country from 1930 - 1936. People lost their life savings when firms and banks went bust, and 12 - 15 million men and women - one third of America's population - were unemployed.

The Great Depression was steeper and more protracted in the United States than in other industrialized countries. The unemployment rate rose higher and remained higher longer than in any other western country. As it deepened, the Depression had far-reaching political consequences. The Depression vastly expanded the scope and scale of the federal government and created the modern welfare state. It gave rise to a philosophy that the federal government should provide a safety net for the elderly, the jobless, the disabled, and the poor, and that the federal government was responsible for ensuring the health of the nation's economy and the welfare of its citizens.

The stock market crash of October 1929 brought the economic prosperity of the 1920s to a symbolic end. For the next ten years, the United States was mired in a deep economic depression. By 1933, unemployment had soared to 25 percent, up from 3.2 percent in 1929. Industrial production declined by 50 percent, international trade plunged 30 percent, and investment fell 98 percent.

DIP- Use the information learnt in this lesson to answer the following question:

Why was the American Dream not always a reality in 1920s and 1930s America?

Think about:

What is meant by the American Dream

Significant events and how they impact the lives of ordinary people

Who in society was able to 'follow the dream'

How could this be linked to recent events and/or your culture and identity unit?

Lesson 2 – John Steinbeck and Historical Context

L/I: To situate the novel within the historical context in which it was written

DIP - Why did Steinbeck write *Of Mice and Men*?

Think about:

- The link between the Great Depression and the American Dream
- His own experiences and reflections on them
- The political, social and economic climate in the USA at the time

Thinking back to the previous lesson and what you already know, which of these characters are best placed to achieve 'the American Dream'? List the characters in order of social status. Write a short explanation for each of your choices.

- **Lennie Small:** a nondescript, hulking creature of a man whose childlike mentality continually gets him into scrapes with men who neither respect nor understand him.
- **George Milton:** a small, lean man, used to fighting for his place in the world. He oversees and protects Lennie.
- **Slim:** a tall skinner (a highly skilled mule-driver) that serves as a counsellor to the ranch hands.
- **Candy:** The one-handed ranch worker who has lived past his prime.
- **Curley's wife:** never named, she is not respected by the men on the ranch.
- **Crooks:** the African-American stable buck is called Crooks because of a spinal injury inflicted by a kicking horse.
- **Curley:** the boss' son, he possesses a jealous, cruel streak.

Historical Background

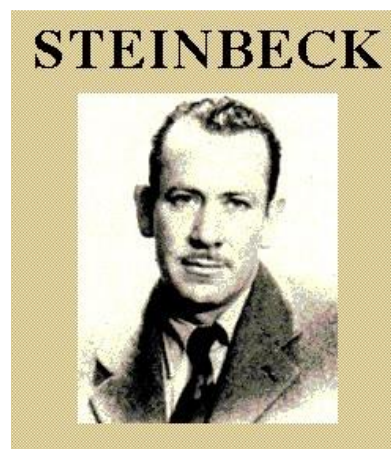
Following the collapse of the New York Wall Street stock market in 1929, the US entered a prolonged period of economic depression from which it emerged only with the onset of the Second World War in 1939. During this period of failed businesses, harsh poverty and long-term unemployment, hordes of migrant workers came to California from other parts of America in search of work. In the 'dust bowls' of the south-west (mainly in the states of Oklahoma and Arkansas), a series of droughts and failed crops added to the migration west. Men, mostly travelling alone, migrated from ranch to ranch on short-term, poorly paid contracts, this being the only type of work available to them. Under the New Deal economic regeneration policy of the then US President Roosevelt, agencies – like Murray and Ready mentioned in the novel – had the task of directing migrant workers like George and Lennie to ranches and farms where work existed. Although we never learn from Steinbeck where they come from, George and Lennie personify the commonplace dream of the migrant worker, the dream to own their own piece of land and have a chance to settle down in the 'promised land' which California represented.

1. Which adjective shows the economic depression lasted for a significant period of time?
2. Which noun shows lots of migrant workers travelled to California?
3. Why did they do this? Identify five things.
4. Which President introduced the New Deal?
5. What did California represent?

About The Author

- He wrote the book 'Of Mice and Men' in 1936
- He came from Salinas, California
- Like 'Of Mice and Men' many of his books deal with the lives and problems of working people.
- Many of his characters in his books are immigrants who went to California looking for work or a better life.
- Steinbeck worked on a ranch when he was 19, and used his experiences in 'Of Mice and Men'.
- The living conditions for the farm workers were very poor.
- Often men travelled alone but sometimes whole families had to move and all live in their car.
- Steinbeck's novels can all be classified as social novels dealing with the economic problems of rural labour. They tend to focus on trials and tribulations people experience and often make the reader root for the underdog.
- In 1962, Steinbeck won the Nobel Prize for literature for his "realistic and imaginative writing, combining as it does sympathetic humour and keen social perception." Both *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice and Men* won Pulitzer Prizes. They both focused on the plights of poor migrant workers searching for hope and the American Dream

Identify five key biographical details about Steinbeck. How do they link to the historical context in which he wrote?



Lesson 3 – Of Mice and Men – Section 1

L/I: To read section 1 and compare the initial presentation of George and Lennie

Let's read – Section 1 – pages 18-35

Comparing George and Lennie

- Read each of the eight quotations on the next slide. Which are said by George and which are said by Lennie?

- Choose two quotes from each character. What do they show about that character?
How are the differences between George and Lennie shown?

<p>'The first man was small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, strong features'</p>	<p>'A huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with wide, sloping shoulders'</p>	<p>'No – look! I was jus' foolin' Lennie. 'Cause I want you to stay with me'</p>
<p>'Look, George. Look what I done'</p>	<p>'Where we goin' George?'</p>	<p>'I don't know why I can't keep it. It ain't nobody's mouse. I didn't steal it. I found it lyin' right beside the road'</p>
<p>'You can't keep a job and you lose me ever' job I get. You get in trouble. You do bad things and I got to get you out'</p>	<p>'Might jus' as well spen' all my time tellin' you things and then you forget 'em, and I tell you again'</p>	

DIP - How are George and Lennie presented in the opening to *Of Mice and Men*?

- George is presented as... For example he says... This shows... In contrast, Lennie is presented as... For example he says... This highlights...
- George and Lennie's relationship is introduced as... For example George says... This suggests... Whereas George is... Lennie appears to be... For example... The reader can infer...

Consolidate –

- Why does Lennie travel with George?
- What problems could this cause?

Lesson 4 – Setting the Scene

L/I: To analyse the use of language and structure to establish the setting

What do we know about Lennie and George?

- Physical appearance
- Personality
- Their motivation for travelling across the country

DART – The Promised Land

When pioneers began to migrate across the country in the middle of the 19th century, they were in search of ideal farmland. What they saw, in the vast expanse of prairie in the

Midwest, was a promised land. The grass that covered the plains stood six feet high and stretched all the way from Canada south to Texas. Homesteaders flocked to the grasslands, certain that they had found the richest soil in the world and the ideal place to settle down. Men began to clear the land — using the endless prairie to grow wheat, and the trees to build houses, barns and outbuildings. What was unknown to these early pioneers was that the grass and trees of the plains essentially nourished and held the soil in place with their tough roots. When they were gone, the moisture that would have gone to the roots ran off into creeks, streams and rivers — basically carrying the land with it. The scene was set for the Dust Bowl.

In 1930, there was no better place to be a farmer than in the Southern Plains, where men and women had turned untamed prairie into one of the most prosperous regions in the whole country. The rest of the nation was struggling with the initial effects of the Great Depression, but in wheat country, farmers were reaping a record-breaking crop. With the onset of World War I, the demand for wheat had been astonishing. Farmers were paid record prices. Thus, to the farmer, it made sense to turn every inch of the Southern Plains into profit. During the war, the land produced millions and millions of bushels of wheat and corn, which helped to feed America as well as numerous nations overseas.

The farming practices that made the plains so productive were beginning to take a toll on the land. The grasslands had been deeply ploughed and planted. During the years when there was adequate rainfall, the land produced bountiful crops. However, as a drought that started in the early 1930s persisted, the farmers kept ploughing and planting with increasingly dismal results. In 1930 and early 1931, the Oklahoma and Texas panhandles were known as the most prosperous regions in the nation. For plains farmers, the decade opened with prosperity and growth. But in the summer of 1931, those farmers would face the most difficult eight years of their lives. The rain simply stopped.

1. What were the 'pioneers' searching for?
2. Where did they find it?
3. What gradually happened over time?
4. Why did this happen?
5. How would this contribute to the problems we have identified in previous lessons?

DIP – Read the extract below and answer the following question:

How has the writer used language to create a peaceful scene in the opening paragraphs?

- Find the phrase which tells us lots of people had settled there before
- Find the phrase/s that tells us the scene is very quiet
- Identify three descriptions of nature

WAGOLL

The opening paragraphs of the novella create a peaceful scene which is inviting for the reader. The writer uses lots of imagery relating to nature, for instance, 'the shade climbed up the hill towards the top...' The writer personifies the shade, bringing it to life as it creeps

slowly and uninterrupted across the scene, helping the reader to imagine the tranquil, quiet scene before it is disturbed by the arrival of the two men.

The Opening

A few miles south of Soledad, the Salinas River drops in close to the hillside bank and runs deep and green. The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool. On one side of the river the golden foothill slopes curve up to the strong and rocky Gabilan Mountains, but on the valley side the water is lined with trees- willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter's flooding; and sycamores with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool. On the sandy bank under the trees the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them. Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covered with the night tracks of 'coons, and with the spread pads of dogs from the ranches, and with the split-wedge tracks of deer that come to drink in the dark.

There is a path through the willows and among the sycamores, a path beaten hard by boys coming down from the ranches to swim in the deep pool, and beaten hard by tramps who come wearily down from the highway in the evening to jungle-up near water. In front of the low horizontal limb of a giant sycamore there is an ash pile made by many fires; the limb is worn smooth by men who have sat on it.

Evening of a hot day started the little wind to moving among the leaves. The shade climbed up the hills toward the top. On the sand banks the rabbits sat as quietly as little gray sculptured stones. And then from the direction of the state highway came the sound of footsteps on crisp sycamore leaves. The rabbits hurried noiselessly for cover. A stilted heron labored up into the air and pounded down river. For a moment, the place was lifeless, and then two men emerged from the path and came into the opening by the green pool.

Lesson 5 – Section 2

L/I: To read section two and analyse George and Lennie's arrival at the ranch

1. Why did George get annoyed at Lennie in section 1?
2. What do they end the section dreaming of?
3. What does George tell Lennie to do if he gets in trouble?

Let's Read – Section 2 – Pages 38-60

DIP - Is the ranch welcoming or hostile?

Think about: how Lennie and George are treated, the different characters they meet, the social and economic situation at the time and how this might impact people's behaviour

Lesson 6 – Women in the 1920's

L/I: To situate the introduction of Curley's wife within the context in which the novel was written

1. How were women regarded in the early 20th Century?
2. Why was marriage important?
3. How might WW1 have changed this?

DART – Women in the 1920's

No cultural symbol of the 1920s is more recognizable than the flapper. A young woman with a short “bob” hairstyle, cigarette dangling from her painted lips, dancing to a live jazz band. Flappers romped through the Roaring Twenties, enjoying the new freedoms ushered in by the end of the First World War and the dawn of a new era of prosperity, urbanism and consumerism. The old restrictions on dress and behaviour were being overthrown. Highly publicized flappers shortened their skirts, drank illegal alcohol, smoked, and otherwise defied society's expectations of proper conduct for young women. The decade kicked off with passage of the 19th Amendment, which finally gave women the vote. Women also joined the workforce in increasing numbers, participated actively in the nation's new mass consumer culture, and enjoyed more freedom in their personal lives.

Is this glamorous and rebellious image of the flapper a true representation of the 1920s woman? Not entirely. In order to be a flapper, a woman had to have enough money and free time to play the part. Despite increasing opportunities in employment and education, and the expanding concept of a “woman's place,” marriage remained the goal of most young women. Magazine articles and movies encouraged women to believe that their economic security and social status depended on a successful marriage. The majority worked only until they married.

Surprisingly, some women didn't want the vote. A widespread attitude was that women's roles and men's roles did not overlap. This idea of “separate spheres” held that women should concern themselves with home, children, and religion, while men took care of business and politics.

- **Summarise each paragraph**
- **Was the 1920s a decade of progress for women or did things remain the same?**

Extract 1

"Wait'll you see Curley's wife." George cut the cards again and put out a solitaire lay, slowly and deliberately.

"Purty?" he asked casually.

"Yeah. Purty... but-"

George studied his cards. "But what?"

"Well- she got the eye."

"Yeah? Married two weeks and got the eye? Maybe that's why Curley's pants is full of ants."

"I seen her give Slim the eye. Slim's a jerkline skinner. Hell of a nice fella. Slim don't need to wear no high-heeled boots on a grain team. I seen her give Slim the eye. Curley never seen it. An' I seen her give Carlson the eye."

George pretended a lack of interest. "Looks like we was gonna have fun." The swamper stood up from his box. "Know what I think?" George did not answer. "Well, I think Curley's married... a tart." "He ain't the first," said George. "There's plenty done that."

Extract 2

Both men glanced up, for the rectangle of sunshine in the doorway was cut off. A girl was standing there looking in. She had full, rouged lips and wide-spaced eyes, heavily made up. Her fingernails were red. Her hair hung in little rolled clusters, like sausages. She wore a cotton house dress and red mules, on the insteps of which were little bouquets of red ostrich feathers. "I'm lookin' for Curley," she said. Her voice had a nasal, brittle quality. George looked away from her and then back.

"He was in here a minute ago, but he went."

"Oh!" She put her hands behind her back and leaned against the door frame so that her body was thrown forward. "You're the new fellas that just come, ain't ya?"

"Yeah." Lennie's eyes moved down over her body, and though she did not seem to be looking at Lennie she bridled a little. She looked at her fingernails.

"Sometimes Curley's in here," she explained.

George said brusquely. "Well he ain't now."

"If he ain't, I guess I better look someplace else," she said playfully. Lennie watched her, fascinated. George said, "If I see him, I'll pass the word you was looking for him." She smiled archly and twitched her body. "Nobody can't blame a person for lookin'," she said.

DIP - How has the writer used language to present the character Curley's wife?

- What does she look like?
- What is she wearing?
- What does she sound like?
- How does she talk to the men?
- How did the men talk about her?
- How does this fit within the context of the time?

Within the text, it could be thought that Curley's Wife is..... This is demonstrated where Steinbeck states: "....." The use of the word "...." has connotations of..... To the reader this suggests..... The reader will feel towards Curley's Wife, because.....

Lesson 7 - Race and Segregation

L/I: To situate the introduction of Crooks within the context in which the novel was written

1. What was the civil rights movement?
2. What was the situation for African Americans before this?
3. How did this represent the legacy of the slave trade?

DART – Segregation in the USA

After the United States abolished slavery, Black Americans continued to be marginalised through enforced segregated and diminished access to facilities, housing, education—and opportunities.

Segregation is the practice of requiring separate housing, education and other services for people of colour. Segregation was made law several times in 18th and 19th-century America as some believed that Black and white people were incapable of coexisting.

The first steps toward official segregation came in the form of “Black Codes.” These were laws passed throughout the South starting around 1865, that dictated most aspects of Black peoples’ lives, including where they could work and live. The codes also ensured Black people’s availability for cheap labour after slavery was abolished.

Segregation soon became official policy enforced by a series of Southern laws. Through so-called Jim Crow laws (named after a derogatory term for Blacks), legislators segregated everything from schools to residential areas to public parks to theatres to pools to cemeteries, asylums, jails and residential homes. There were separate waiting rooms for whites people and Black people in professional offices and, in 1915, Oklahoma became the first state to even segregate public phone booths.

In 1896, the Supreme Court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that segregation was constitutional. The ruling established the idea of “separate but equal.” The case involved a mixed-race man who was forced to sit in the Black-designated train car under Louisiana’s Separate Car Act.

1. What happened after the abolition of slavery?
2. What belief led segregation to be introduced?
3. What were the Jim Crow laws?
4. Why did the Supreme Court decide segregation was legal?
5. Do you think this worked in reality?

Crooks – what does each quote show about Crooks and his status on the ranch (and therefore within society?)

Stable Buck - a derogatory name for an African-American man who works in the stables (the lowest position in the hierarchy of labourers)

‘Got books in his room’

'Let him come in that night'

'The boss gives him hell when he's mad'

'The old swamper'

'Got a crooked back where a horse kicked him'

DIP - What does the language used to describe the stable buck tell us about the relationship between black people and white people on the ranch?

- Use specific examples in your answer
- What does this show about the context in which the novel was written?
- Think about the relative social status of all the characters involved

Lesson 8 – Section 3

L/I: To read section three with a focus on the character of Lennie

1. Why is it unusual for Lennie and George to travel together?
2. Why does George speak on Lennie's behalf?
3. What suggests Lennie has caused trouble for George before?

Let's Read – Section 3 – Pages 64 - 94

- How does Slim realise what Lennie is really like?
- What do we learn about the origins of Lennie and George's relationship?
- Why does Lennie not fight back against Curley straight away?

DIP - How is Lennie presented as reliant on George?

Consider what happens in this chapter and the rest of the book in your answer:

- Their history together before the ranch
- How George helped Lennie to get a job at the ranch
- The way George sticks up for Lennie
- Why Lennie doesn't fight back straight away when he is under attack

Lesson 9 – Curley

L/I: To analyse use of dialogue in the presentation of Curley

1. What position does Curley hold on the ranch?
2. Why is he angry in section 3?
3. How does this reflect his relationship with his wife?

Read the extract and complete the following:

1. Highlight or underline all the dialogue.
2. For each characters who speaks in the extract (George, Lennie, Slim, Curley, Carlson and Candy) write down the most important thing they say.

3. Which characters does Curley respect/disrespect? How do we know?
4. Which character seems to control the situation?

The door opened. Slim came in, followed by Curley and Carlson and Whit. Slim's hands were black with tar and he was scowling. Curley hung close to his elbow. Curley said, "Well, I didn't mean nothing, Slim. I just ast you."

Slim said, "Well, you been askin' me too often. I'm gettin' God damn sick of it. If you can't look after your own God damn wife, what you expect me to do about it? You lay offa me."

"I'm jus' tryin' to tell you I didn't mean nothing," said Curley. "I jus' thought you might of saw her."

"Why'n't you tell her to stay the hell home where she belongs?" said Carlson. "You let her hang around bunk houses and pretty soon you're gonna have som'pin on your hands and you won't be able to do nothing about it."

Curley whirled on Carlson. "You keep outa this les' you wanta step outside."

Carlson laughed. "You God damn punk," he said. "You tried to throw a scare into Slim, an' you couldn't make it stick. Slim throwed a scare into you. You're yella as a frog belly. I don't care if you're the best welter in the country. You come for me, an' I'll kick your God damn head off."

Candy joined the attack with joy. "Glove fulla vaseline," he said disgustedly.

Curley glared at him. His eyes slipped on past and lighted on Lennie; and Lennie was still smiling with delight at the memory of the ranch. Curley stepped over to Lennie like a terrier. "What the hell you laughin' at?"

Lennie looked blankly at him. "Huh?"

Then Curley's rage exploded. "Come on, ya big bastard. Get up on your feet. No big son-of-a-bitch is gonna laugh at me. I'll show ya who's yella." Lennie looked helplessly at George, and then he got up and tried to retreat. Curley was balanced and poised. He slashed at Lennie with his left, and then smashed down his nose with a right. Lennie gave a cry of terror. Blood welled from his nose.

"George," he cried. "Make 'um let me alone, George." He backed until he was against the wall, and Curley followed, slugging him in the face. Lennie's hands remained at his sides; he was too frightened to defend himself.

George was on his feet yelling, "Get him, Lennie. Don't let him do it."

Lennie covered his face with his huge paws and bleated with terror. He cried, "Make 'um stop, George." Then Curley attacked his stomach and cut off his wind.

Slim jumped up. "The dirty little rat," he cried, "I'll get 'um myself."

George put out his hand and grabbed Slim. "Wait a minute," he shouted. He cupped his hands around his mouth and yelled, "Get 'im, Lennie!" Lennie took his hands away from his face and looked about for George, and Curley slashed at his eyes. The big face was covered with blood. George yelled again, "I said get him." Curley's fist was swinging when Lennie reached for it. The next minute Curley was flopping like a fish on a line, and his closed fist was lost in Lennie's big hand. George ran down the room. "Leggo of him, Lennie. Let go." But Lennie watched in terror the flopping little man whom he held. Blood ran down Lennie's face, one of his eyes was cut and closed. George slapped him in the face again and again, and still Lennie held on to the closed fist. Curley was white and shrunken by now, and his struggling had become weak. He stood crying, his fist lost in Lennie's paw. George shouted over and over. "Leggo his hand, Lennie. Leggo. Slim, come help me while the guy got any hand left."

Suddenly Lennie let go his hold. He crouched cowering against the wall. "You tol' me to, George," he said miserably. Curley sat down on the floor, looking in wonder at his crushed hand. Slim and Carlson bent over him. Then Slim straightened up and regarded Lennie with horror. "We got to get him in to a doctor," he said. "Looks to me like ever' bone in his han' is bust." "I didn't wanta," Lennie cried. "I didn't wanta hurt him."

Slim said, "Carlson, you get the candy wagon hitched up. We'll take 'um into Soledad an' get 'um fixed up." Carlson hurried out. Slim turned to the whimpering Lennie. "It ain't your fault," he said. "This punk sure had it comin' to him. But—Jesus! He ain't hardly got no han' left." Slim hurried out, and in a moment returned with a tin cup of water. He held it to Curley's lips.

George said, "Slim, will we get canned now? We need the stake. Will Curley's old man can us now?"

Slim smiled wryly. He knelt down beside Curley. "You got your senses in hand enough to listen?" he asked. Curley nodded. "Well, then listen," Slim went on. "I think you got your han' caught in a machine. If you don't tell nobody what happened, we ain't going to. But you jus' tell an' try to get this guy canned and we'll tell ever'body, an' then will you get the laugh." "I won't tell," said Curley. He avoided looking at Lennie.

DIP - How does Steinbeck use dialogue to present the character of Curley?

Steinbeck uses the conversation as Curley enters the bunkhouse to show... For example... This suggests... The reader can infer...

Curley's interactions with Lennie show... For example... Curley is trying to... This highlights to the reader...

After the fight, Slim talks to Curley which shows... For example... This reinforces ... The reader is reminded...

Lesson 10 – Candy**L/I: To analyse Candy within the context in which the novel was written**

1. Why did so many workers move across America in the early 1930s?
2. What was the ultimate dream for these workers?
3. What concerns might they have as they got older?

Candy's Dog

The old man squirmed uncomfortably. "Well—hell! I had him so long. Had him since he was a pup. I herded sheep with him." He said proudly, "You wouldn't think it to look at him now, but he was the best damn sheep dog I ever seen."

1. What does Carlson want to do to Candy's dog?
2. Why does Candy not want this to happen?
3. What can you infer about Candy from this?
4. What does Slim decide?
5. How does this link to what we already know about Slim?

Lennie drummed on the table with his fingers. "George?"

"Huh?"

"George, how long's it gonna be till we get that little place an' live on the fatta the lan'—an' rabbits?"

"I don't know", said George. "We gotta get a big stake together. I know a little place we can get cheap, but they ain't givin' it away."

Old Candy turned slowly over. His eyes were wide open. He watched George carefully. Lennie said, "Tell about that place, George." "I jus' tol' you, jus' las' night." "Go on—tell again, George." "Well, it's ten acres," said George. "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. They's a place for alfalfa and plenty water to flood it. They's a pig pen—"

"An' rabbits, George."

"No place for rabbits now, but I could easy build a few hutches and you could feed alfalfa to the rabbits."

"Damn right, I could," said Lennie. "You God damn right I could."

George's hands stopped working with the cards. His voice was growing warmer. "An' we could have a few pigs. I could build a smoke house like the one gran'pa had, an' when we kill a pig we can smoke the bacon and the hams, and make sausage an' all like that. An' when the salmon run up river we could catch a hundred of 'em an' salt 'em down or smoke 'em. We could have them for breakfast. They ain't nothing so nice as smoked salmon. When the fruit come in we could can it—and tomatoes, they're easy to can. Ever' Sunday

we'd kill a chicken or a rabbit. Maybe we'd have a cow or a goat, and the cream is so God damn thick you got to cut it with a knife and take it out with a spoon."

Lennie watched him with wide eyes, and old Candy watched him too. Lennie said softly, "We could live offa the fatta the lan'."

"Sure," said George. "All kin's a vegetables in the garden, and if we want a little whisky we can sell a few eggs or something, or some milk. We'd jus' live there. We'd belong there. There wouldn't be no more runnin' round the country and gettin' fed by a Jap cook. No, sir, we'd have our own place where we belonged and not sleep in no bunk house."

"Tell about the house, George," Lennie begged.

"Sure, we'd have a little house an' a room to ourself. Little fat iron stove, an' in the winter we'd keep a fire goin' in it. It ain't enough land so we'd have to work too hard. Maybe six, seven hours a day. We wouldn't have to buck no barley eleven hours a day. An' when we put in a crop, why, we'd be there to take the crop up. We'd know what come of our planting."

"An' rabbits," Lennie said eagerly. "An' I'd take care of 'em. Tell how I'd do that, George."

"Sure, you'd go out in the alfalfa patch an' you'd have a sack. You'd fill up the sack and bring it in an' put it in the rabbit cages."

"They'd nibble an' they'd nibble," said Lennie, "the way they do. I seen 'em."

"Ever' six weeks or so," George continued, "them does would throw a litter so we'd have plenty rabbits to eat an' to sell. An' we'd keep a few pigeons to go flyin' around the win'mill like they done when I was a kid." He looked raptly at the wall over Lennie's head. "An' it'd be our own, an' nobody could can us. If we don't like a guy we can say, 'Get the hell out,' and by God he's got to do it. An' if a fren' come along, why we'd have an extra bunk, an' we'd say, 'Why don't you spen' the night?' an' by God he would. We'd have a setter dog and a couple stripe cats, but you gotta watch out them cats don't get the little rabbits."

George sat entranced with his own picture. When Candy spoke they both jumped as though they had been caught doing something reprehensible.

Candy said, "You know where's a place like that?"

George was on guard immediately. "S'pose I do," he said. "What's that to you?"

"You don't need to tell me where it's at. Might be any place."

"Sure," said George. "That's right. You couldn't find it in a hundred years."

Candy went on excitedly, "How much they want for a place like that?"

George watched him suspiciously. "Well—I could get it for six hundred bucks. The ol' people that owns it is flat bust an' the ol' lady needs an operation. Say—what's it to you? You got nothing to do with us."

Candy said, "I ain't much good with on'y one hand. I lost my hand right here on this ranch. That's why they give me a job swampin'. An' they give me two hunderd an' fifty dollars 'cause I los' my hand. An' I got fifty more saved up right in the bank, right now. Tha's three hunderd, and I got fifty more comin' the end a the month. Tell you what—" He leaned forward eagerly. "S'pose I went in with you guys. Tha's three hunderd an' fifty bucks I'd put in. I ain't much good, but I could cook and tend the chickens and hoe the garden some. How'd that be?"

George half-closed his eyes. "I gotta think about that. We was always gonna do it by ourselves."

Candy interrupted him, "I'd make a will an' leave my share to you guys in case I kick off, 'cause I ain't got no relatives nor nothing. You guys got any money? Maybe we could do her right now?" George spat on the floor disgustedly. "We got ten bucks between us." Then he said thoughtfully, "Look, if me an' Lennie work a month an' don't spen' nothing, we'll have a hunderd bucks. That'd be four fifty. I bet we could swing her for that. Then you an' Lennie could go get her started an' I'd get a job an' make up the res', an' you could sell eggs an' stuff like that."

They fell into a silence. They looked at one another, amazed. This thing they had never really believed in was coming true.

George said reverently, "Jesus Christ! I bet we could swing her." His eyes were full of wonder. "I bet we could swing her," he repeated softly.

Candy sat on the edge of his bunk. He scratched the stump of his wrist nervously. "I got hurt four year ago," he said. "They'll can me purty soon. Jus' as soon as I can't swamp out no bunk houses they'll put me on the county. Maybe if I give you guys my money, you'll let me hoe in the garden even after I ain't no good at it. An' I'll wash dishes an' little chicken stuff like that. But I'll be on our own place, an' I'll be let to work on our own place." He said miserably, "You seen what they done to my dog tonight? They says he wasn't no good to himself nor nobody else. When they can me here I wisht somebody'd shoot me. But they won't do nothing like that. I won't have no place to go, an' I can't get no more jobs. I'll have thirty dollars more comin', time you guys is ready to quit."

DIP - How does Steinbeck present Candy as a typical character at this time?

Think about:

His relationship with his dog

How he reacts to Lennie and George

His concerns about the future

The context in which the novel was written

Lesson 11 - Writing Like Steinbeck

L/I: To write a description of setting in the style of John Steinbeck

Read the opening paragraph from each of the three sections we have read so far.

What do you notice?

Why do you think Steinbeck chooses to do this?

Section 1

A few miles south of Soledad, the Salinas River drops in close to the hillside bank and runs deep and green. The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool. On one side of the river the golden foothill slopes curve up to the strong and rocky Gabilan Mountains, but on the valley side the water is lined with trees- willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter's flooding; and sycamores with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool. On the sandy bank under the trees the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them. Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covered with the night tracks of 'coons, and with the spread pads of dogs from the ranches, and with the splitwedge tracks of deer that come to drink in the dark.

Section 2

The bunk house was a long, rectangular building. Inside, the walls were whitewashed and the floor unpainted. In three walls there were small, square windows, and in the fourth, a solid door with a wooden latch. Against the walls were eight bunks, five of them made up with blankets and the other three showing their burlap ticking. Over each bunk there was nailed an apple box with the opening forward so that it made two shelves for the personal belongings of the occupant of the bunk. And these shelves were loaded with little articles, soap and talcum powder, razors and those Western magazines ranch men love to read and scoff at and secretly believe. And there were medicines on the shelves, and little vials, combs; and from nails on the box sides, a few neckties. Near one wall there was a black cast iron stove, its stovepipe going straight up through the ceiling. In the middle of the room stood a big square table littered with playing cards, and around it were grouped boxes for the players to sit on.

Section 3

Although there was evening brightness showing through the windows of the bunk house, inside it was dusk. Through the open door came the thuds and occasional clangs of a horseshoe game, and now and then the sound of voices raised in approval or derision. Slim and George came into the darkening bunk house together. Slim reached up over the card table and turned on the tin -shaded electric light. Instantly the table was brilliant with light, and the cone of the shade threw its brightness straight downward, leaving the corners of the bunk house still in dusk. Slim sat down on a box and George took his place opposite.

Choose your favourite description:



What setting is described?



Identify five things (nouns) in the extract



Identify five adjectives used in the extract



Identify an example of a complex sentence



What is the difference between the first and final sentences in the extract?

Steinbeck is a master at setting a scene. He wanted the audience to feel like they were there and wrote in a way that they would have a visual construction of the scene in their mind. He didn't use lots of big words to get his ideas across, his writing is often quite simple, but he still manages to create breath-taking imagery.

His descriptions are beautiful and vivid, starting out with the wider scene before zooming in on smaller details.

DIP - Choose an image and plan a description

- Identify ten things (nouns) to describe (start big finish small)

- Identify two adjectives for each noun
- Use complex sentences to add descriptive detail
- Focus on colours





Self-assess your work:



Identify the nouns you have used – could any be improved?



Identify the adjectives you have used – could any be improved?



Have you zoomed in?



Have you described colours?



Have you used sensory description?



Have you used similes, metaphors or personification?

Lesson 12 – Section 4

L/I: To analyse the importance of section four to the characterisation in the novel

1. What is Lennie most worried about?
2. What is Candy most worried about?
3. Why is Crooks treated badly?

Let's Read – Section 4 – Pages 98 – 116

Thinking Questions

- Why do Lennie, Candy and Crooks not go into town?
- What does Curley's wife have in common with these characters?
- Why does Curley's wife feel able to verbally attack Crooks?

DIP - How is the characterisation in OMAM presented in section 4?

Think about:

Who appears in section 4

How these characters are similar

Who doesn't appear in section 4

What this says about society at this time

Use examples from the section 4 and the rest of the novel in your answer

Lesson 13 – Crooks

L/I: To situate the introduction of Crooks within the context in which the novel was written

1. Where does Crooks rank in the social hierarchy on the ranch?
2. What shows this?
3. How does this reflect the context in which OMAM is written?

Read the extract and make notes on the following...

1. How is the harness room described, where is it located and where does Crooks sleep?
2. Identify three things that were broken in the room. What does this suggest?
3. Why is Crooks 'more permanent than the other men'?
4. What books does Crooks possess?
5. How does Crooks keep his room? Why?

Extract from the start of section 5

Crooks, the Negro stable buck, had his bunk in the harness room; a little shed that leaned off the wall of the barn. On one side of the little room there was a square four-paned window, and on the other, a narrow plank door leading into the barn. Crooks' bunk was a long box filled with straw, on which his blankets were flung. On the wall by the window there were pegs on which hung broken harness in process of being mended; strips of new leather; and under the window itself a little bench for leather-working tools, curved knives and needles and balls of linen thread, and a small hand riveter. On pegs were also pieces of harness, a split collar with the horsehair stuffing sticking out, a broken hame, and a trace chain with its leather covering split. Crooks had his apple box over his bunk, and in it a range of medicine bottles, both for himself and for the horses. There were cans of saddle soap and a drippy can of tar with its paint brush sticking over the edge. And scattered about the floor were a number of personal possessions; for, being alone, Crooks could leave his things about, and being a stable buck and a cripple, he was more permanent than the other men, and he had accumulated more possessions than he could carry on his back.

Crooks possessed several pairs of shoes, a pair of rubber boots, a big alarm clock and a single-barrelled shotgun. And he had books, too; a tattered dictionary and a mauled copy of the California civil code for 1905. There were battered magazines and a few dirty books on a special shelf over his bunk. A pair of large gold-rimmed spectacles hung from a nail on the wall above his bed.

This room was swept and fairly neat, for Crooks was a proud, aloof man. He kept his distance and demanded that other people keep theirs. His body was bent over to the left by his crooked spine, and his eyes lay deep in his head, and because of their depth seemed to glitter with intensity. His lean face was lined with deep black wrinkles, and he had thin, pain-tightened lips which were lighter than his face.

It was Saturday night. Through the open door that led into the barn came the sound of moving horses, of feet stirring, of teeth champing on hay, of the rattle of halter chains. In the stable buck's room a small electric globe threw a meager yellow light.

Crooks sat on his bunk. His shirt was out of his jeans in back. In one hand he held a bottle of liniment, and with the other he rubbed his spine. Now and then he poured a few drops of the liniment into his pink-palmed hand and reached up under his shirt to rub again. He flexed his muscles against his back and shivered.

How is Crooks presented elsewhere in the novel? Explode the following quotations:

- 'The boss gives him hell when he's mad'
- 'Got a crooked back where a horse kicked him'
- 'A guy needs somebody—to be near him.' He whined, "A guy goes nuts if he ain't got nobody.'
- 'They play cards in there, but I can't play because I'm black.'
- 'Nobody never gets to heaven, and nobody gets no land. It's just in their head.'

DIP - How is Crooks presented in Of Mice And Men?

- Use examples from the extract and the rest of the novel
- Explain your answer in relation to the context of the time

Lesson 14 – Section 5

L/I: To read and understand section 5 of the novel

- Choose three words to describe Curley's wife
- Choose three words to describe Lennie
- How can they be considered similar?

Let's Read – Section 5 – Pages 120-136

DIP - How does Steinbeck present George in section 5?

- Use quotations to support your answer
- How does Steinbeck want the reader to feel towards George?
-

Lesson 15 – Section 6

L/I: To read and understand section 6 and reflect on the end of the novel

- What did Lennie do to Curley's wife?
- How does Lennie react?
- What does George do?

Let's Read – Section 6 – Pages 140-149**Thinking Questions**

- Why did George know where Lennie was going to be?
- Why did George choose to kill Lennie himself?
- What does Slim think of this decision?

DIP - Is George a loyal friend?

Think about:

- George shooting Lennie and why he decides to do this
- Slim's reaction to George's confession and the importance of his character through the novel
- George's support for Lennie throughout the novel
- The plans George and Lennie had for the future
- Use specific examples, consider both sides of the argument and different perspectives in your answer

Lesson 16 – Curley's Wife**L/I: To analyse the presentation of Curley's wife and the theme of gender across the whole novel**

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Curley's wife?

- She doesn't love her husband
- She spends too much time in the barn
- She dresses inappropriately

Identify an argument for and an argument against each statement**Think about the context in which the novel was written**

In 1938 John Steinbeck wrote the following about Curley's wife in a letter to the actress who was playing her in a play that was based upon his novel. It offers a different perspective on her and helps to show some of the complexity that lay behind her character:

- Identify five key biographical details about Curley's wife Steinbeck shares with Luce
- What do these suggest about her character?
- Does this change your opinion?

Dear Miss Luce,

Annie Laurie says you are worried about your playing of the part of Curley's wife although from the reviews it appears that you are playing it marvellously. I am deeply grateful to you and to the others in the cast for your feeling about the play. You have surely made it much more than it was by such a feeling.

About the girl--I don't know of course what you think about her, but perhaps if I should tell you a little about her as I know her, it might clear your feeling about her. She grew up in an atmosphere of fighting and suspicion. Quite early she learned that she must never trust any one but she was never able to carry out what she learned. A natural trustfulness broke through constantly and every time it did, she got her. Her moral training was most rigid. She was told over and over that she must remain a virgin because that was the only way she could get a husband. This was harped on so often that it became a fixation. It would have been impossible to seduce her. She had only that one thing to sell and she knew it.

Now, she was trained by threat not only at home but by other kids. And any show of fear or weakness brought an instant persecution. She learned to be hard to cover her fright. And automatically she became hardest when she was most frightened. She is a night, kind girl, not a floozy. No man has ever considered her as anything except a girl to try to make. She has never talked to a man except in the sexual fencing conversation. she is not highly sexed particularly but knows instinctively that if she is to be noticed at all, it will be because some one finds her sexually desirable.

As to her actual sexual life--she has had none except with Curley and there has probably been no consummation there since Curley would not consider her gratification and would probably be suspicious if she had any. Consequently she is a little starved. She knows utterly nothing about sex except the mass misinformation girls tell one another. If anyone--a man or woman--ever gave her a break--treated her like a person-- she would be a slave to that person. Her craving for contact is immense but she, with her background, is incapable of conceiving any contact without some sexual context. With all this--if you knew her, if you could ever break down a thousand little defenses she has built up, you would find a nice person, an honest person, and you would end up by loving her. But such a thing could never happen.

I hope you won't think I'm preaching. I've known this girl and I'm just trying to tell you what she is like. She is afraid of everyone in the world. You've known girls like that, haven't you? You can see them in Central Park on a hot night. They travel in groups for protection. They pretend to be wise and hard and voluptuous. I have a feeling that you know all this and that you are doing all this. Please forgive me if I seem to intrude on your job. I don't intend to and I am only writing this because Annie Laurie said you wondered about the girl. It's a devil of a hard part. I am very happy that you have it.

Sincerely,

John Steinbeck

DIP - Is Curley's wife an innocent victim or dangerous jailbait?

Use the examples below from the text to consider both sides of the argument and alternative perspectives in your answer

How can Steinbeck's letter influence your answer?

- A girl was standing there looking in. She had full, rouged lips and wide-spaced eyes, heavily made up. Her fingernails were red. Her hair hung in little rolled clusters, like sausages. She wore a cotton house dress and red mules, on the insteps of which were little bouquets of red ostrich feathers. "I'm lookin' for Curley," she said. Her voice had a nasal, brittle quality. (31)
- "I don't care what she says and what she does. I seen 'em poison before, but I never seen no piece of jail bait worse than her. You leave her be." (32)
- "Sure I gotta husban'. You all seen him. Swell guy, ain't he? Spends all his time sayin' what he's gonna do to guys he don't like, and he don't like nobody. Think I'm gonna stay in that two-by four house and listen how Curley's gonna lead with his left twict, and then bring in the ol' right cross?" (78)
- "...Whatta ya think I am, a kid? I tell ya I could of went with shows. Not jus' one, neither. An' a guy tol' me he could put me in pitchers..." She was breathless with indignation. "—Sat'iday night. Ever'body out doin' som'pin'. Ever'body! And what am I doin'? Standin' here talkin' to a bunch of bindle stiffes— an' a dum-dum and a lousy ol' sheep—an' likin' it because they ain't nobody else." (78)
- She turned on him in scorn. "Listen" she said. "You know what I can do to you if you open your trap?" Crooks stared hopelessly at her, and then he sat down on his bunk and drew into himself. She closed in on him. "You know what I could do?" Crooks seemed to grow smaller, and he pressed himself against the wall. "Yes, ma'am." (80)
- "I get lonely," she said. "You can talk to people, but I can't talk to nobody but Curley. Else he gets mad. How'd you like not to talk to anybody?" (87)

Lesson 17 – Dreams and Ambitions

L/I: To track the theme of dreams and ambitions through OMAM

- What is the American Dream?
- What was the Great Depression?
- Was/is the American Dream a possibility for all people?

DART – Dreams in OMAM

The theme of dreams is introduced at the start of the book through George's description to Lennie of the farm that they hope one day to own together. They continue to discuss this throughout the text, with Candy also becoming involved and making it finally seem possible. This dream is very important to the men because it represents freedom and having control over their own lives, which they do not have while moving around looking for work.

Dreams in *Of Mice and Men* are linked to the 'American Dream'. This is the idea that in America, it is possible for anyone to achieve success and improve their lives through hard work. This is linked to the United States Declaration of Independence which states that 'all

men are created equal'. For the men on the ranch in *Of Mice and Men*, having dreams gives them some hope that their hard work will be rewarded. Curley's wife also has a dream – to be a film star – and although she no longer has any real hope that this could come true, it gives her a distraction from the unhappiness of her life, which is also true of dreams for the other characters.

Although dreams are initially a source of hope in the book, Lennie's death makes his and George's dream impossible so as the novel ends, we see that even simple, modest dreams are unattainable in the harsh environment of America during the Great Depression.

Overall, Steinbeck seems to suggest the American Dream was hopeless for men like George and Lennie.

1. What is George and Lennie's dream?
2. Why is this important to them?
3. Why does Candy's involvement make it seem more realistic?
4. What does the United States Declaration state?
5. Is this true?

What is the dream for each of these characters?

- Lennie and George
- Curley's Wife
- Candy
- Crooks

DIP - How does Steinbeck explore the theme of dreams in *Of Mice and Men*?

What do the characters have in common?

Why do they not achieve their dreams?

Are their dreams futile from the start?

How does your answer reflect the context in which the novel was written?

Lesson 18 - Social Hierarchy and Powerlessness

L/I: To track the themes of social hierarchy and powerlessness through OMAM

- What is a hierarchy?
- How do they impact a person's ability to achieve the American Dream?
- What are inequalities?

List the characters in order of social status. Write a short explanation for each of your choices.

Have your choices changed having read the book?

Would ordering the characters in terms of their level of happiness be the same or different?

- **Lennie Small:** a nondescript, hulking creature of a man whose childlike mentality continually gets him into scrapes with men who neither respect nor understand him.
- **George Milton:** a small, lean man, used to fighting for his place in the world. He oversees and protects Lennie.
- **Slim:** a tall skinner (a highly skilled mule-driver) that serves as a counsellor to the ranch hands.
- **Candy:** The one-handed ranch worker who has lived past his prime.
- **Curley's wife:** never named, she is not respected by the men on the ranch.
- **Crooks:** the African-American stable buck is called Crooks because of a spinal injury inflicted by a kicking horse.
- **Curley:** the boss' son, he possesses a jealous, cruel streak.

What do these extracts show about social hierarchies?

Text 1

"Any you boys seen Curley?" They swung their heads toward the door. Looking in was Curley's wife. Her face was heavily made up. Her lips were slightly parted. She breathed strongly, as though she had been running.

"Curley ain't been here," Candy said sourly.

She stood still in the doorway, smiling a little at them, rubbing the nails of one hand with the thumb and forefinger of the other. And her eyes travelled from one face to another. "They left all the weak ones here," she said finally. "Think I don't know where they all went? Even Curley. I know where they all went."

Lennie watched her, fascinated; but Candy and Crooks were scowling down away from her eyes. Candy said, "Then if you know, why you want to ast us where Curley is at?"

She regarded them amusedly. "Funny thing," she said. "If I catch any one man, and he's alone, I get along fine with him. But just let two of the guys get together an' you won't talk. Jus' nothing but mad." She dropped her fingers and put her hands on her hips. "You're all scared of each other, that's what. Ever'one of you's scared the rest is goin' to get something on you."

Text 2

The door opened. Slim came in, followed by Curley and Carlson and Whit. Slim's hands were black with tar and he was scowling. Curley hung close to his elbow. Curley said, "Well, I didn't mean nothing, Slim. I just ast you."

Slim said, "Well, you been askin' me too often. I'm gettin' God damn sick of it. If you can't look after your own God damn wife, what you expect me to do about it? You lay offa me."

"I'm jus' tryin' to tell you I didn't mean nothing," said Curley. "I jus' thought you might of saw her."

"Why'n't you tell her to stay the hell home where she belongs?" said Carlson. "You let her hang around bunk houses and pretty soon you're gonna have som'pin on your hands and you won't be able to do nothing about it."

Curley whirled on Carlson. "You keep outa this les' you wanta step outside."

Carlson laughed. "You God damn punk," he said. "You tried to throw a scare into Slim, an' you couldn't make it stick. Slim throwed a scare into you. You're yella as a frog belly. I don't care if you're the best welter in the country. You come for me, an' I'll kick your God damn head off."

Candy joined the attack with joy. "Glove fulla vaseline," he said disgustedly.

Curley glared at him. His eyes slipped on past and lighted on Lennie; and Lennie was still smiling with delight at the memory of the ranch. Curley stepped over to Lennie like a terrier. "What the hell you laughin' at?"

Lennie looked blankly at him. "Huh?"

Then Curley's rage exploded. "Come on, ya big bastard. Get up on your feet. No big son-of-a-bitch is gonna laugh at me. I'll show ya who's yella." Lennie looked helplessly at George, and then he got up and tried to retreat. Curley was balanced and poised. He slashed at Lennie with his left, and then smashed down his nose with a right. Lennie gave a cry of terror. Blood welled from his nose.

Where else
in the
novel are
hierarchies
shown?

Lennie and George arriving on the ranch

The hopes and fears of the men on the ranch

Slim

Treatment of Crooks

Curley's relationship with his wife

Any other examples you can think of

DIP - How does Steinbeck explore the theme of powerlessness in *Of Mice And Men*?

- Use examples from the extract and elsewhere in the novel in your answer

- How does your answer reflect the context in which the novel was written?

Lesson 19 – Loneliness and Companionship

L/I: To track the themes of social hierarchy and powerlessness through OMAM

- What is loneliness?
- What is isolation?
- What is companionship?

DART – Loneliness and Companionship

Although present in all the characters to some degree, the theme of loneliness is most notably present in Candy, Crooks, and Curley's wife. They all fight against their isolation in whatever way they can. Until its death, Candy's dog stopped Candy from being alone in the world. After its death, Candy struggles against loneliness by sharing in George and Lennie's dream. Curley's wife is also lonely; she is the only female on the ranch, and her husband has forbidden anyone to talk with her. She combats her loneliness by flirting with the ranch hands. Crooks is isolated because of his skin colour. As the only black man on the ranch, he is not allowed into the bunkhouse with the others, and he does not associate with them. He combats his loneliness with books and his work, but even he realizes that these things are no substitute for human companionship.

Steinbeck reinforces the theme of loneliness in subtle and not so subtle ways. In the vicinity of the ranch, for example, is the town of Soledad. The town's name, not accidentally, means "solitude" or "alone." Also, the others' reactions to George and Lennie traveling together reinforces that, in Steinbeck's world, traveling with someone else is unusual. When George and Lennie arrive at the ranch, four other characters — the boss, Candy, Crooks, and Slim — all comment on the suspicious nature of two guys traveling together. This companionship seems strange and, according to at least the boss and Curley, the relationship is exploitative.

1. Which three characters are most lonely in OMAM?
2. Why are each of them lonely?
3. What does Soledad translate to?
4. How do the other characters react to George and Lennie travelling together?
5. What does this show about the society in which the novel is set?

Which of the following quotes applies to each question?

- 'Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don't belong no place... With us it ain't like that. We got a future. We got somebody to talk to that gives a damn about us.'
- '... I ain't wanted in the bunk house, and you ain't wanted in my room.'
- 'Candy looked for help from face to face.'
- 'I never get to talk to nobody. I get awful lonely.'

Questions:

- Why does Crooks want to be left alone?
- Why does George travel with Lennie?
- Why did Curley's wife marry her husband?
- Why is Candy so protective of his dog?

DIP - How does Steinbeck explore the themes of loneliness and companionship in Of Mice And Men?

- Write about the four characters we have discussed in this lesson.
- How does your answer reflect the context in which the novel was written?



	Reading
Yellow Plus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">You use inference, context, and genre to understand the holistic or underlying meaning of the text, exploring different interpretations or different layers of meaning within it.You make judicious and focussed use of textual evidence to develop analytical, authentic, and thoughtful responses to the text.You explain the inextricable link between authorial intent and the impact on the reader, fully considering why the writer made particular choices.Your critical judgements fully explore how specific elements of a text reflect authorial intent, explicitly and directly explaining why they are effective in fulfilling their aims.You explain why the author has used a range of devices and what they sought to achieve.
Yellow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">You demonstrate a thorough understanding of texts by drawing inferences and fully exploring implicit meaning.Your responses demonstrate originality and are enhanced by carefully chosen evidence from the text.Your explanation and analysis show a well-developed understanding of authorial intent, the impact on the reader, and the link between the two.You make interesting and perceptive critical judgements directly supported by carefully chosen, relevant and focussed (word-level) evidence from the text.You explain the effect of a range of devices.
Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your understanding of a text goes beyond what is literally on the page to consider implicit meaning, the conventions of genre and the influence of context.Your responses to the text are detailed, sometimes original, and supported with relevant (word-level) evidence.You give detailed explanation and analysis beginning to explore the deliberate impact of the writer's choices on the reader.You make critical judgements that are clearly supported and explained with relevant evidence from the text, explaining why you have reached that judgement.You explain the effect of simple devices.
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your understanding of a text is more nuanced and includes a basic sense of genre and the context in which it was written.Your responses to the text are valid, and you attempt to support and explain them with relevant evidence from the text.Your explanation and analysis are more developed, referring to the impact or effect on the reader.You make simple judgements and support them with relevant evidence from the text, starting to consider why you have reached that judgement.You identify and label a range of devices.
White	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your explanations of the text are simple, identifying explicit meaning.Your responses to the text are simple but valid with some relevant reference to the text.Your answers include a basic attempt to explain the relevance of basic points.You make basic judgements and attempt to support them with relevant evidence from the text.You identify and label simple language devices.