

English 1 Summer Reading 2020
Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck
ISBN: 978-0-14-017739-8
(or any version will do)

John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men is a short and powerful novel about friendship, hardship, and difficult choices. With clear language and sharp characterization, Steinbeck tells the story of George and Lennie, migrant farm workers during the Great Depression in the 1930s, who long for a better life than the one they have drifting from job to job on ranch after ranch. Their bond and the events that surround them make a lasting impact and may shape our discussions this year and beyond.

****NOTE—There are mature themes, language, and subject matter in this novel including some issues of violence, sexism, and racism that are an everyday part of the world the novel takes place in. Take note of your reaction to these, handle them in a mature fashion, and we will thoroughly discuss them when the year begins.****

Summer Reading Objectives

Thorough and thoughtful completion of the study guide will prepare students to do the following:

1. review major literary elements to be covered throughout the year
2. participate in class discussions and activities related to the novel
3. understand and interpret complex literature and monitor their own comprehension
4. take a novel test over author information, characters, plot, setting, themes, and motifs

Grading of the Study Guide

- I will collect the study guide on the first day of school.
- The study guide will count as a 100-point quiz grade.
- I am looking for thoughtful, thorough answers. Students are to do their own work—do not refer to Spark Notes or any other source. Do not work together. Do not use answers you got from any other student. I will know, and a zero/cheating offense is the worst way to start next year's class. **You will get *more* credit for a wrong answer that is your own than for a correct answer that is copied or re-hashed from another source, including your parents, friends, and online sources.**

Further Activities/Assessments

During discussions and activities in class, students will

1. learn information about John Steinbeck and discuss how his background and historical circumstances influenced his writing
2. discuss the theme of “The American Dream” as it applies to *Of Mice and Men* and American culture
3. compare/contrast the relationship between the characters in the novel to other novels they have read or films they have seen
4. analyze the mood and setting of the novel
5. analyze characters in the novel
6. analyze major themes and philosophical ideas of the novel

Following discussions in class, students will take a test over the novel.

Instructions

Type answers to all questions. Remember to answer thoroughly and thoughtfully (probably 1-3 sentences per question)!

Chapters 1-2

1. Steinbeck describes the landscape on the first pages before any characters enter. What is it like? How does the entrance of the two characters change this?
2. How would you describe the differences between George and Lennie physically and mentally as they appear in the first few pages of the novel?
3. What is Lennie holding that George will not let him keep? Why shouldn't he keep it?
4. What triggers George's angry outburst at Lennie?
5. What is George mostly upset about during his angry outburst? What kind of life does he imagine without Lennie?
6. What do George and Lennie imagine having one day? Answer with at least three details from George's description of their dream.
7. When they get to the ranch, describe Candy. Who is he, and what is he like?
8. Describe Curley. Who is he, and what is he like?
9. Describe Curley's wife. Who is she, and what is she like?
10. Why does George insist on doing all of the talking? Why won't he let Lennie answer questions?
11. Overall, how would you describe the relationship between Lennie and George? Who is in charge? Why? How do they seem to feel about each other?
12. Ask Your Own Question! Come up with your own original discussion question that you feel is important for these chapters. Then, explain WHY it is an important question. (You must explain). Then, briefly answer it.

Chapters 3-4

1. According to George when he talks to Slim, why do he and Lennie go around together? Summarize their backstory.
2. What happened in Weed? Why can't George and Lennie work there anymore?
3. What does Lennie keep trying to bring into the bunkhouse. Why?
4. How do you feel about what happens to Candy's dog. Is this the right decision? Why or why not?
5. Why do you think Candy asks to join Lennie and George in their dream?
6. Why do you think Curley starts a fight with Lennie? Why does he go after him instead of someone else?
7. Why do you think Crooks doesn't want Lennie to come into his room at first? Why do you think he lets him in?
8. Why do you think Crooks asks to join Candy, Lennie, and George?
9. Where is Curley? Why is his wife all alone?
10. What does Curley's wife say that shuts down Crooks's complaint about her? Why effect does it seem to have on Crooks?
11. Ask Your Own Question! Come up with your own original discussion question that you feel is important for these chapters. Then, explain WHY it is an important question. (You must explain). Then, briefly answer it.

Chapters 5-6

1. What happens to Lennie's pet? Why? And why does he freak out about it so much?
2. Why do you think Curley's wife comes to talk to Lennie?
3. What are all of the other men doing while Lennie is in the barn?
4. What was Curley's wife's life like before she married Curley? What is it like now?
5. What happens to Curley's wife? And why did it happen?
6. Slim and George briefly discuss what will happen to Lennie if George does not go after him. What are the alternatives, and why are they unacceptable?
7. Where does George find Lennie again? Why did he go there?
8. Why do you think Lennie asks George to scold him and "give him hell"? What does he expect will happen next?
9. Why do you think George tells Lennie the story of their dream ranch again at the end of the novel?
10. What do you think of George's decision / actions at the end of the novel? Why did he do what he did, and did he have any reasonable alternative?
11. Ask Your Own Question! Come up with your own original discussion question that you feel is important for these chapters. Then, explain WHY it is an important question. (You must explain). Then, briefly answer it.