

Of Mice and Men

by John Steinbeck



A prose unit for National 5 English

OF MICE AND MEN

Aims and objectives:

- ❖ The aim of this unit is to provide you with a general introduction to Of Mice and Men.
- ❖ You will look at the historical context of the novel.
- ❖ You will be guided through the novel, and will look in detail at the key characters.
- ❖ You will analyse the language used in the description of setting in the novel.

At the end of this unit you will:

- ❖ understand the social and political messages of the novel.
- ❖ know something about John Steinbeck's own life.
- ❖ have a clear understanding of the key characters, relationships and conflicts.
- ❖ have sufficient understanding to write a broad-ranging essay in the National 5 examination.

THE PLOT

Of Mice and Men is a novel about the nature of compassion and friendship. The story is a fiction, but many of the lessons found within it are applicable to our own lives. It is also a novel about hope.

It is set during the Great Depression, a global economic catastrophe in the 1920s, and shows how fragile life is when many of the supports we take for granted are removed.

When the novel opens, George and Lennie, the protagonists are arriving at a new farm to begin work. However, events on the farm expose the difficulties faced by itinerant labourers at this time, and in comparison, we can learn much about ourselves from their experiences.

THE TITLE

The title of the book comes from Robert Burns's poem, "To A Mouse" (1785).

In the poem, a mouse which has built a nest for the winter, sees it destroyed by a plough. On a symbolic level, the poem suggests that the world is cruel, and we are vulnerable, even when we believe we have put in place systems which will prevent us from ill fortune.

Burns writes, "the best laid schemes o' mice an' men// gang aft agley" – *the best laid plans of mice and men often go wrong*.

The title, then, foreshadows that the dreams held by the novel's protagonists will not turn out well.

JOHN STEINBECK: A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Steinbeck was born on February 27, 1902 in Salinas, California, the third child of Olive Hamilton, former school teacher, and John Ernst Steinbeck, manager at Sperry Flour mill. He had two older sisters, Esther and Beth, and a younger sister, Mary. In the early twentieth century, Salinas was a prosperous farming community, the county seat of Monterey County, and a trading and shipping centre for the lower Salinas Valley.

From his birth until he went to Stanford University in 1919, Steinbeck enjoyed a comfortable childhood and youth in Salinas, although the family experienced setbacks when he was a teenager. His father lost his job as manager of Sperry flour, then opened a feed and grain store that failed. Only when Steinbeck was in college did the family fortunes stabilise .

In 1919, Steinbeck enrolled at Stanford University, hoping to sharpen his writing skills. He took creative writing courses and relished courses in world history. Though he attended college off and on for six years, he left Stanford in 1925 without receiving a degree.

After leaving Stanford in 1925, Steinbeck briefly lived in New York City, attempting to support himself as a manual labourer and journalist. "I had a thin, lonely, hungry time of it" in New York," he wrote in 1935. "And I remember too well the cockroaches under my wash basin and the impossibility of getting a job. I was scared thoroughly. And I can't forget the scare."

Of Mice and Men (1937) is Steinbeck's first play-novelette, an experimental form he developed. The text of *Mice*, he hoped, would also be the script for a play—an experiment that failed when it was performed in San Francisco shortly after the book was published.

In the late 1950s he spent ten months in Somerset, England with his wife, Elaine. When he returned to America in late 1959, he was distressed by what he felt were America's moral lapses. Out of that distress, he wrote a novel about a man's own moral quandary, *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961).

Publication of that novel earned him the Nobel Prize for Literature, which he was awarded for his body of work in 1962.

In 1967, he traveled to Vietnam to report on the war for Newsday, a series called "Letters to Alicia." He visited combat zones, including remote area where his younger son was posted.

Throughout the mid-Sixties, Steinbeck's health continued to decline. He suffered increasingly frequent episodes resembling mini-strokes, and eventually died at his home in New York City on December 20, 1968.

TASK ONE

1. What was the Great Depression?

2. What were "itinerant labourers"?

3. Why were these workers paid so little?

4. What support was available to unemployed workers at this time in America?

5. What was "Hooverville"?

LANGUAGE

TASK TWO

Look at the words in bold type. Check that you understand their meanings, as used here, then complete the definitions in the box below.

Of Mice and Men is a **tragedy**, in that the audience is aware from early in the novel that things will not end well for the protagonists. The novel is laden with **symbols**, all of which point to the tragic conclusion. Underpinning the whole novel is Steinbeck's **naturalist philosophy**, that our lives are subject to forces outside our control; even though we are strong, our sense of control is an illusion.

Steinbeck's writing style mirrors his characters. He writes as the men would literally speak (we would say he has a **literary-realist** style) but on a deeper level, the language of the book is simple but compelling—just like the characters. Though the characters never gush about each other, it's clear that they feel deeply. For example, while George explains that he sticks with Lennie because "you get used to goin' around with a guy an' you can't get rid of him," what he's *really* saying is that their friendship is the only thing he's ever really had to hold on to. The writing is full of **sub-texts**.

Steinbeck uses his writing style as another means to suggest that every story is important, no matter whose story it is. Though these characters are workers without access to big vocabularies or grand philosophies, they can still communicate about the things that really matter.

Tragedy is...

Symbols are...

Naturalist philosophy is...

Literary-realism is...

Sub-text is...

BACKGROUND

TASK THREE

Read the following information, then complete the box below.

The Depression

On October 29 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.

There was then no dole to fall back on, so food was short and the unemployed in cities couldn't pay their rent. Some ended up in settlements called 'Hooverilles' (after the US president of the time, Herbert C Hoover), in shanties made from old packing cases and corrugated iron.

Migrant farmers

Added to the man-made financial problems were natural ones. A series of droughts in southern mid-western states like Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas led to failed harvests and dried-up land. Farmers were forced to move off their land: they couldn't repay the bank-loans which had helped buy the farms and had to sell what they owned to pay their debts.

Many economic migrants headed west to 'Golden' California, thinking there would be land going spare, but the Californians turned many back, fearing they would be over-run. The refugees had nowhere to go back to, so they set up home in huge camps in the California valleys - living in shacks of cardboard and old metal - and sought work as casual farmhands.

Ranch hands

Against this background, ranch hands like George and Lennie were lucky to have work. Ranch hands were grateful for at least a bunk-house to live in and to have food provided, even though the pay was low.

Think about how the men agree to hush-up the fight between Curley and Lennie and claim that Curley got his hand caught in a machine: they know that Lennie and George would be fired if the boss came to hear of it, and then Lennie and George could be left with nothing.

List four difficulties facing working people during the Great Depression.

THE THEMES OF THE NOVEL

A **theme** is the underlying message of a novel, poem, play or short story.

Aspects of **character, structure, setting** and **plot** do not exist independently of the theme.

For example, a particular character may be used to illustrate the theme by his or her actions or behaviour.

Think about these statements:

“A sad soul can kill quicker than a germ.”

“Man is the only kind of varmint sets his own trap, baits it, then steps in it.”

“If you're in trouble, or hurt or need - go to the poor people. They're the only ones that'll help - the only ones.”

“We are lonesome animals. We spend all our life trying to be less lonesome.”

“It is true that we are weak and sick and ugly and quarrelsome but if that is all we ever were, we would millenniums ago have disappeared from the face of the earth.”

“If I wanted to destroy a nation, I would give it too much and I would have it on its knees, miserable, greedy and sick.”

Steinbeck is interested in several things in this play. He is interested in how the kinds of life America's poorest had at this time; he looks at the nature of friendship, and what it means to be a friend; he is damning of the way the rich profit on the suffering of the poor; and he spends considerable time looking at how human-beings fit into the natural world.

Key themes in this novel include:

- The predatory nature of human-beings
- Friendship and Loneliness
- Strength
- The impossibility of the American Dream
- Capitalism/ Socialism
- The indifference of nature to human suffering

Chapter One



TASK FOUR

Answer the following questions in the boxes provided.

1) Look at the way both Lennie and George are first described. How is this initial description fitting when we find out more about each man?

2) Is the relationship between George and Lennie one of friendship, or does George only feel obligated to take care of Lennie? What evidence can you find to support either conclusion?

3) Why does Lennie have the dead mouse? Why does George take it away?

4) What happened at the last place where Lennie and George worked?

5) Describe the dream George and Lennie share for their future. Why is it so important to both men?

TASK FIVE

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.

1. Describe the tone of this opening; quote two pieces of evidence that support your idea.

2. Why does Steinbeck mention so many animals in this section?

3. What is missing from this setting?

TASK SIX

Evening of a hot day started the little wind to moving among the leaves. The shade climbed up the hills towards to top. On the sand-banks the rabbits sat as quietly as little grey, 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 laboured 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.

They had walked in single file down the path, and even in the open one stayed behind the other. Both were dressed in denim trousers and in denim coats with brass buttons. Both wore black, shapeless hats and both carried tight blanket rolls slung over their shoulders. 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 walked his opposite, a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with wide, sloping shoulders; and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws. His arms did not swing at his sides, but hung loosely.

The first man stopped short in the clearing, and the follower nearly ran over him. He took off his hat and wiped the sweatband with his forefinger and snapped the moisture off. His huge companion dropped his blankets and flung himself down and drank from the surface of the green pool; drank with long gulps snorting into the water like a horse. The small man stepped nervously beside him.

1. What happens to the scene when the protagonists appear? What is the symbolism here?

2. Describe Lennie – use at least two quotations to support your answer.

3. Describe George – use at least two quotations to support your answer.

TASK SEVEN

Write a short analysis for each of these quotations; you should refer to as many of the following aspects as possible:

Characterisation; conflict; poetic technique; theme; motif; tension; historical context; punctuation; tone; symbolism...

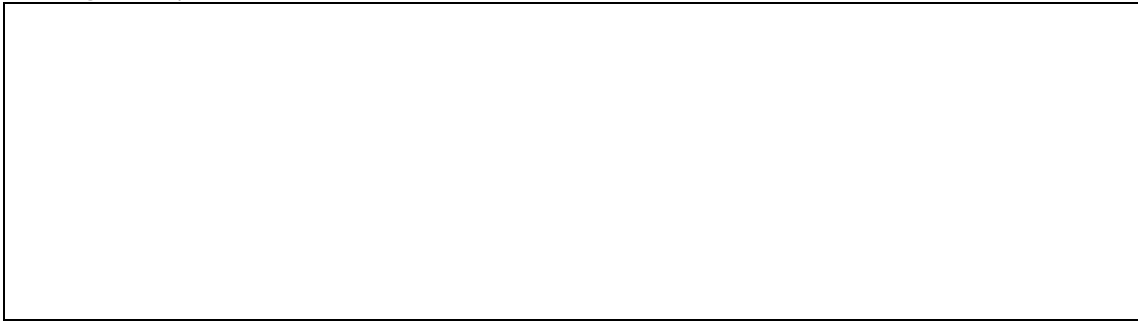
“What you want of a dead mouse, anyways?”

“I could pet it with my thumb while we walked along,” said Lennie.”

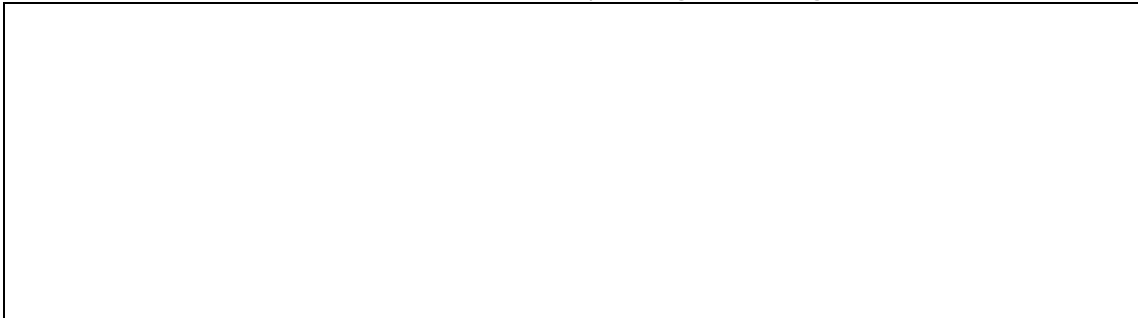
“God, you're a lot of trouble,” said George. “I could get along so easy and so nice if I didn't have you on my tail. I could live so easy and maybe have a girl.”

“You jus' stand there and don't say nothing. If he finds out what a crazy bastard you are, we won't get no job, but if he sees ya work before he hears ya talk, we're set.”

“Lennie looked sadly up at him. “They was so little,” he said apologetically. “I’d pet ‘em, and pretty soon they bit my fingers and I pinched their heads a little and then they was dead—because they was so little. I wish’t we’d get the rabbits pretty soon, George. They ain’t so little.”



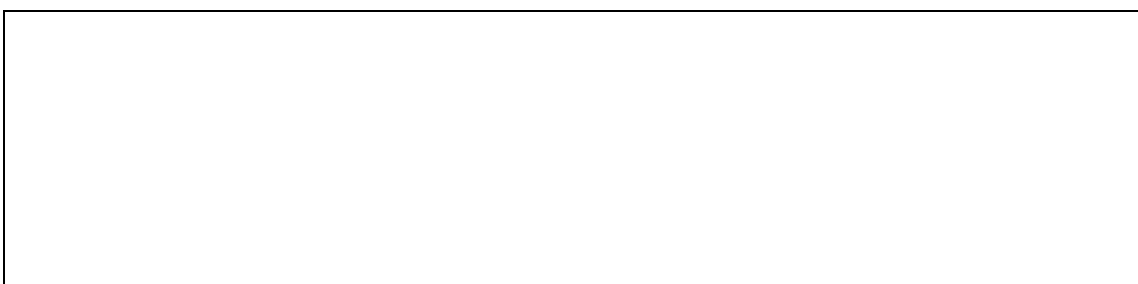
“Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don’t belong no place. They come to a ranch an’ work up a stake and then they go inta town and blow their stake, and the first thing you know they’re poundin’ their tail on some other ranch. They ain’t got nothing to look ahead to.”



“Lennie—if you jus’ happen to get in trouble like you always done before, I want you to come right here an’ hide in the brush... Hide in the brush till I come for you.”



“Lennie, who had been watching, imitated George exactly. He pushed himself back, drew up his knees, embraced them, looked over to George to see whether he had it just right. He pulled his hat down a little more over his eyes, the way George’s hat was.”



Chapter Two



TASK EIGHT

Answer the following questions in the boxes provided.

1) How is the bunk house described? What does the description tell the reader about the men who live there?

2) What do we find out about Curley, his wife, and his father through George's discussions with others.

3) How would you describe Curley and his wife? What do their actions tell you about each of their characters?

4) Re-read Steinbeck's description of Slim. What does this description tell you about Slim's character? Is he a man to be trusted and looked up to?

5) What is Lennie eagerly talking about toward the end of the chapter?

TASK NINE

Write a short analysis for each of these quotations; you should refer to as many of the following aspects as possible:

Characterisation; conflict; poetic technique; theme; motif; tension; historical context; punctuation; tone; symbolism...

The old man came slowly into the room. He had his broom in his hand. And at his heels there walked a dragfooted sheep dog, gray of muzzle, and with pale, blind old eyes. The dog struggled lamely to the side of the room and lay down, grunting softly to himself and licking his grizzled, moth-eaten coat. The swamper watched him until he was settled. "I wasn't listenin'. I was jus' standin' in he shad a minute scratchin' my dog."

"Well—she got the eye."

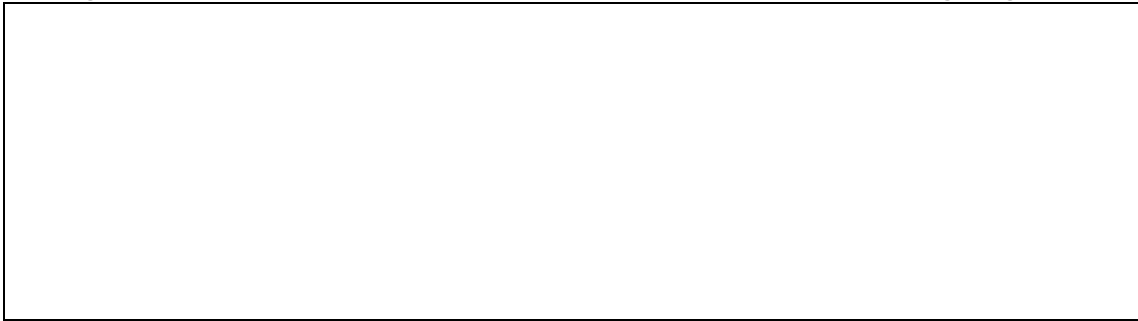
"Yeah? Married two weeks and got the eye? Maybe that's why Curley's pants is full of ants."

Lennie's eyes moved down over her body, and though she didn't seem to be looking at Lennie she bridled a little. She looked at her fingers...

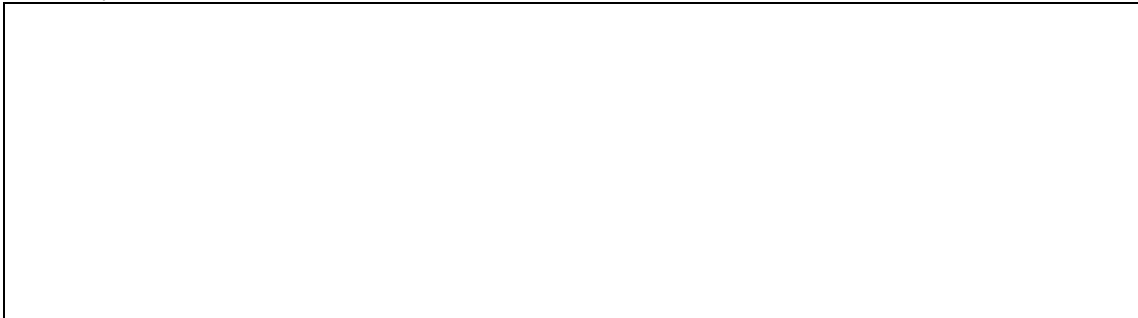
Lennie watched her, fascinated...

She smiled archly and twitched her body. "Nobody can't blame a person for lookin'," she said.

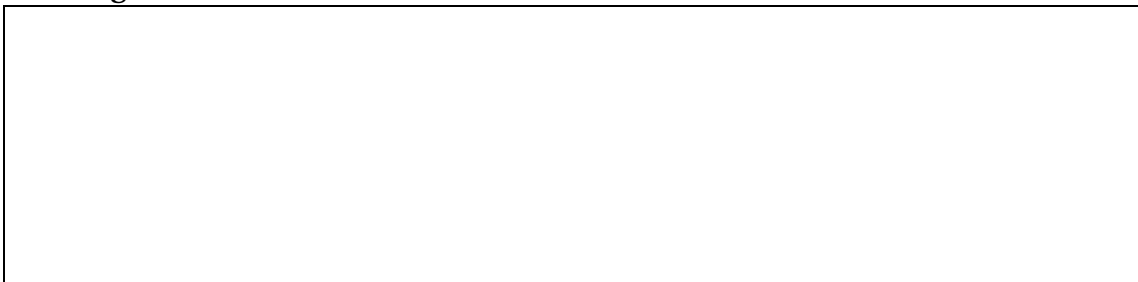
The boss pointed a playful finger at Lennie. "He ain't much of a talker, is he?"
"No, he ain't, but he's sure a hell of a good worker. Strong as a bull."
Lennie smiled to himself. "Strong as a bull," he repeated.
George scowled at him, and Lennie dropped his head in shame at having forgotten.



The swamper considered... "Well . . . tell you what. Curley's like a lot of little guys. He hates big guys. He's all the time picking scraps with big guys. Kind of like he's mad at 'em because he ain't a big guy. You seen little guys like that, ain't you? Always scrappy?"



Lennie cried out suddenly—"I don't like this place, George. This ain't no good place. I wanna get outa here."



Slim looked through George and beyond him. "Ain't many guys travel around together," he mused. "I don't know why. Maybe ever'body in the whole damn world is scared of each other."



Chapter Three



TASK TEN

Answer the following questions in the boxes provided.

1) What are Carlson's reasons for shooting Candy's dog?

2) What are Candy's reasons for not shooting the dog?

3) In what ways is Candy like his dog?

4) What does the fight between Lennie and Curley show about their characters?

5) Why doesn't George help Lennie in the fight?

TASK ELEVEN

Write a short analysis for each of these quotations; you should refer to as many of the following aspects as possible:

Characterisation; conflict; poetic technique; theme; motif; tension; historical context; punctuation; tone; symbolism...

[Candy] 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."

George said, "She's gonna make a mess. They's gonna be a bad mess about her. She's a jail bait all set on the trigger. That Curley got his work cut out for him. Ranch with a bunch of guys on it ain't no place for a girl, specially like her."

Candy looked a long time at Slim to try to find some reversal. And Slim gave him none. At last Candy said softly and hopelessly, "Awright—take 'im." He did not look down at the dog at all. He lay back on his bunk and crossed his arms behind his head and stared at the ceiling.

A shot sounded in the distance. The men looked quickly at the old man. Every head turned toward him.

For a moment he continued to stare at the ceiling. Then he rolled slowly over and faced the wall and lay silent

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."

"He ain't mean," said Slim. "I can tell a mean guy from a mile off."

"I ought to of shot that dog myself, George. I shouldn't ought to of let no stranger shoot my dog."

"Sure, he's jes like a kid. There ain't no more harm in him than a kid neither, except he's so strong."

Chapter Four



TASK TWELVE

Answer the following questions in the boxes provided.

1) What does Crook's room and the things in it tell you about his character?

2) What does Crooks say to Lennie about loneliness?

3) Why would Crooks react so negatively to Lennie, then let him in anyway?

4) Why does Crooks torture and taunt Lennie about George?

5) Why is Crooks called "Crooks"? How does this reflect his personality?

TASK THIRTEEN

Read the introductory paragraphs to Chapter 4.

We learn a lot about Crooks here. In the box below, write down what we learn of Crooks, providing evidence from the extract.

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-barreled 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.

TASK FOURTEEN

Write a short analysis for each of these quotations; you should refer to as many of the following aspects as possible:

Characterisation; conflict; poetic technique; theme; motif; tension; historical context; punctuation; tone; symbolism...

"This is just a nigger talkin', an' a busted-back nigger. So it don't mean nothing, see?"

"They left all the weak ones here," she said finally.

She turned on him in scorn. "Listen, Nigger," 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.

"Awright," she said contemptuously. "Awright, cover 'im up if ya wanta. Whatta I care? You bindle bums think you're so damn good. 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! An' what am I doin'? Standin' here talkin' to a bunch of bindle stiffs—a nigger an' a dum-dum and a lousy ol' sheep—an' likin' it because they ain't nobody else."

"I seen hunderds of men come by on the road an' on the ranches, with their bindles on their back an' that same damn thing in their heads. Hunderds of them. They come, an' they quit an' go on; an' every damn one of 'em's got a little piece of land in his head/ An' never a God damn one of 'em ever gets it. Just like heaven. Ever'body wants a little piece of lan'. I read plenty of books out here. Nobody never gets to heaven, and nobody gets no land. It's just in their head. They're all the time talkin' about it, but it's jus' in their head."

Chapter Five



TASK FIFTEEN

Answer the following questions in the boxes provided.

1) How have Curley's wife's dreams for her life changed or been lost?

2) Why does Curley's wife tell Lennie about "the letter"? What do you think the letter symbolizes?

3) How does Lennie's killing of the puppy parallel his killing of Curley's wife and the mice?

4) How does Candy react to the death of Curley's wife?

5) What options do George and Candy discuss after the discovery of the body?

TASK SIXTEEN

Write a short analysis for each of these quotations; you should refer to as many of the following aspects as possible:

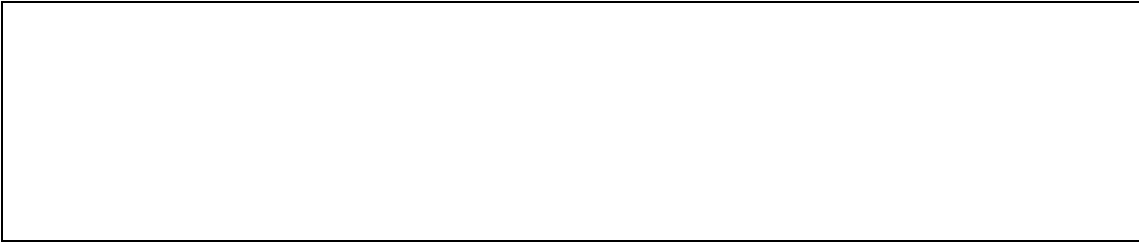
Characterisation; conflict; poetic technique; theme; motif; tension; historical context; punctuation; tone; symbolism...

"I tell you I ain't used to livin' like this. I coulda made somethin' of myself." She said darkly, "Maybe I will yet." And then her words tumbled out in a passion of communication, as though she hurried before her listener could be taken away. "I lived right in Salinas," she said. "Come there when I was a kid. Well, a show come through, an' I met one of the actors. He says I could go with that show. But my ol' lady wouldn't let me. She says because I was on'y fifteen. But the guy says I coulda. If I'd went, I wouldn't be livin' like this, you bet."

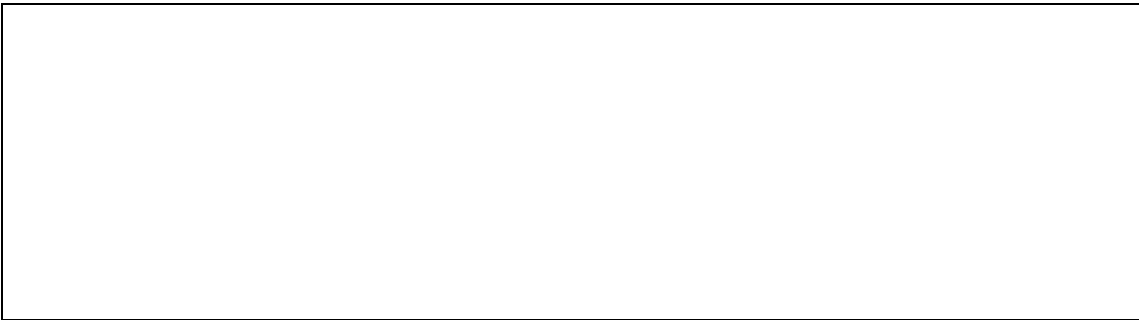
"Then—it's all off?" Candy asked sulkily. George didn't answer his question. George said, "I'll work my month an' I'll take my fifty bucks an' I'll stay all night in some lousy cat house. Or I'll set in some poolroom til ever'body goes home. An' then I'll come back an' work another month an' I'll have fifty bucks more."

Slim nodded. "We might," he said. "If we could keep Curley in, we might, But Curley's gonna want to shoot 'im. Curley's still mad about his hand. An' s'pose they lock him up an' strap him down and put him in a cage. That ain't no good, George."

And when they were gone, Candy squatted down in the hay and watched the face of Curley's wife. "Poor bastard," he said softly.



George said softly, "—I think I knowed from the very first. I think I knowed we'd never do her. He usta like to hear about it so much I got to thinking maybe we would."



Chapter Six



TASK SEVENTEEN

Answer the following questions in the boxes provided.

1) What is the significance of the rabbit appearing at the end of the book?

2) Why did George kill Lennie and was he justified in doing that?

3) Explain what happens to the dream at the end of the novel for both Lennie and George.

4) In what way does Slim show understanding for George's decision? Why does Carlson ask the last question?

TASK EIGHTEEN

Write a short analysis for each of these quotations; you should refer to as many of the following aspects as possible:

Characterisation; conflict; poetic technique; theme; motif; tension; historical context; punctuation; tone; symbolism...

Lennie said, "I thought you was mad at me, George."

"No," said George. "No, Lennie, I ain't mad. I never been mad, and I ain' now. That's a thing I want ya to know."

Lennie said, "George."

"Yeah?"

"I done another bad thing."

"It don't make no difference," George said, and he fell silent again.

Slim came directly to George and sat down beside him, sat very close to him. "Never you mind," said Slim. "A guy got to sometimes."

TASK NINETEEN

The beginning to the final chapter is similar, but more sinister, to the opening section.

Read the paragraphs again, then answer the following questions.

The deep green pool of the Salinas River was still in the late afternoon. Already the sun had left the valley to go climbing up the slopes of the Gabilan Mountains, and the hilltops were rosy in the sun. But by the pool among the mottled sycamores, a pleasant shade had fallen.

A water snake glided smoothly up the pool, twisting its periscope head from side to side; and it swam the length of the pool and came to the legs of a motionless heron that stood in the shallows. A silent head and beak lanced down and plucked it out by the head, and the beak swallowed the little snake while its tail waved frantically.

A far rush of wind sounded and a gust drove through the tops of the trees like a wave. The sycamore leaves turned up their silver sides, the brown, dry leaves on the ground scudded a few feet. And row on row of tiny wind waves flowed up the pool's green surface.

As quickly as it had come, the wind died, and the clearing was quiet again. The heron stood in the shallows, motionless and waiting. Another little water snake swam up the pool, turning its periscope head from side to side.

1. What does the incident with the heron and the watersnake symbolise?

2. How does the wind, coming quickly then disappearing, have a metaphorical meaning?

3. In the opening section, the animals are presented a neutral way – how would you describe their presentation at the novel's conclusion?

TASK TWENTY

Now you have finished reading the play, answer the following questions in the boxes below:

Which character did you feel most sympathy for? Why?

Which characters did you find unsympathetic?

Which scene did you find most emotional, and why?

Which theme do you feel is the most important to the novel, and why?

Which quotation do you feel is the most memorable in the play, and why?

TASK TWENTY-ONE

Revision Quiz

1. What is the name of the author?

2. When was the novel written?

3. When is the novel set?

4. Where is the novel set?

5. How many chapters are in the book?

6. Which three animals is Lennie likened to in the opening pages?

7. Identify the speaker of this quotation: "If he finds out what a crazy bastard you are, we won't get no job."

8. Identify the person *to whom* this comment refers: "Wonder he isn't too damn good to stop in Soledad at all."

9. What luxury does Lennie like on his beans?

10. What does Lennie retrieve instead of firewood?

11. Which town did the two last work in “up north”?

12. Identify the speaker: “Lady, huh? Don’t even remember who that lady was.”

13. What is the name of the blacksmith who last was the occupant of George’s bunk?

14. Why has the stable-buck, Crooks, got a crooked back?

15. Identify the person *to whom* this quote refers: “He hates big guys. He’s all the time picking scraps with big guys”.

16. Identify the speaker of this quotation: “Guy don’t need no sense to be a nice fella.”

17. Who shoots Candy’s old dog?

18. Identify the person *to whom* this quotation refers: “He kept his distance and demanded that other people keep theirs”.

19. What agreement do Candy and Lennie forget they have made when they visit Crooks’s room?

20. Identify the speaker of this quotation: “He ain’t a nice fella”.

21. Identify the speaker of this quote: "An' I got you. We got each other, that's what, that gives a hoot in hell about us".

Complete the following quotations:

22. Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the _____ guys in the world

23. "Maybe ever'body in the whole damn world is _____ of each other."

24. "I shouldn't ought to of let no _____ shoot my dog."

25. "They left all the _____ ones here," she said finally.

26. "An' s'pose they lock him up an' strap him down and put him in a _____ . That ain't no good, George."

27. "I done another _____ thing."

28. Name three themes the novel addresses.

TASK TWENTY-TWO

In the National 5 examination you must answer a question on literature.

As practice for that part of the examination, and as a way of reviewing *Of Mice and Men* as a whole, choose one of the following questions and write **at least two sides** of A4 on it.

Answers to questions in this section should refer to the text and to such relevant features as: characterisation, setting, language, key incident(s), climax, turning point, plot, structure, narrative technique, theme, ideas, description . . .

1. Choose a novel **or** a short story where there is an incident which is a turning point crucial to the fate of the main character.

Briefly describe what happens at this point and go on to explain why this is crucial to the fate of a main character.

2. Choose a novel **or** a short story **or** a non-fiction text **or** group of texts which deals with an important human issue (such as the abuse of power, conflict between good and evil, loss of freedom or hatred between individuals or groups).

Show how the author reveals the issue through the portrayal of people and events throughout the text, and show how your understanding of the issue has deepened.

3. Choose a novel **or** a short story which deals with a powerful human emotion such as: love, hatred, jealousy, despair, etc. . . .

Show how the powerful emotion affects **at least one** of the characters and go on to show how it affects the outcome of the story.

4. Choose a novel **or** a short story which has a character who has to struggle with difficulties.

Describe what these difficulties are and go on to explain how the character tries to deal with these difficulties.