Of Mice and Men: Chapter 1 Reading and Study Guide

I. VOCABULARY: Be able to define the following words and understand them when they appear in the novel.

- **bindle** [slang] a bundle, as of bedding, carried by a hobo
- **jack** [slang] money
- **morosely**
- **pantomime**
- **droned**
- **contemplated**

II. Allusions and historical references:

- **Soledad** a coastal California city about 130 miles south of San Francisco.
- **Salinas River** a river that flows through Soledad and into Monterey Bay
- **Weed** a northern California mining town

  *watchin' that blackboard* employment agencies would post available jobs on a blackboard in front of their offices. Prospective employees would watch the blackboard for any new jobs.

  *work cards* a job assignment from an employment agency would be written on a work card to be presented by the worker to the employer.

III. LITERARY TERMS: Be able to define each term and apply each term to the novel.

- **imply**
- **infer**
- **exposition**
- **setting**

  What is the setting of this novel?

- **point of view**

  From what point of view is the story told?

IV. QUESTIONS: answer the following questions. Use complete sentences.

1. Where did the bus drop the two men off?
2. How is George described?
3. How is Lennie described?
4. What does Lennie do with the water that makes him proud of himself?
5. What does Lennie not have in his pocket?
6. Why does Lennie not have it in his pocket?
7. What does Lennie take out of his pocket that gets him yelled at by George?
8. What did Lennie want to do with this item?
9. Where are George and Lennie going?
10. From where are George and Lennie coming?
11. When they get to where they are going, what does George tell Lennie to do?
12. Why did George and Lennie leave the last place they were at?
13. When Lennie goes out to get wood for a fire, what does he bring back that George takes away?
14. Who used to give Lennie mice?
15. Why did she stop giving Lennie mice?
16. What does Lennie want with his dinner that they don’t have?
17. What does George imply happened in Weed with the girl?
18. What dream does George and Lennie share?
19. Where does George tell Lennie to go if he gets in trouble?

V. Paragraph: write a 100-word paragraph to answer the following question. Use quotations to support your answer.
20. Explain the relationship that exists between George and Lennie based on Chapter 1 of the book.

_Of Mice and Men_: Chapter 2 Reading and Study Guide

I. VOCABULARY: Be able to define the following words and understand them when they appear in the novel.

swamper handyman; someone who performs odd jobs—such as cleaning. Refers to the character Candy

tick soft mattress covering

stable buck a stable is a building where horses are kept. A buck, in this case, is a derogatory word for a black man. A stable buck, then, would be a black man who works in a stable.

skinner a mule driver
II. LITERARY TERMS: Be able to define each term and apply each term to the novel.

dialect

novella

irony

What is an example of something ironic from this chapter?

direct characterization

indirect characterization

III. QUESTIONS: answer the following questions. Use complete sentences.

1. According to the old man, why was the boss mad at George and Lennie?

2. What does George find in the box by his bed and what does he assume?

3. Describe the “stable buck.” What physical attributes does he have? What does the boss use him for?

4. Describe the fight between the “stable buck” and Smitty.

5. What is Lennie’s last name?

6. What does the boss suspect George of doing to Lennie? What makes him think this?

7. What reason does George give for taking care of Lennie?

8. What is George’s last name?

9. Who is Curley?

10. What does the swamper tell George about Curley’s left hand?

11. Describe Curley’s wife.

12. Why does she come into the bunkhouse?

13. Describe Slim. What is his job on the ranch? What are some of his character traits?

14. What did Slim do to four of his pups? Why?

15. What does Lennie want George to ask Slim?
IV. SHORT ESSAY: write a 100-word paragraph to answer the following questions. Use quotations to support your answer.

16. Describe the atmosphere of the ranch and bunkhouse. Be sure to include characteristics of different characters that were formally or informally introduced to us in this chapter.

Of Mice and Men: Chapter 3 Reading and Study Guide

I. VOCABULARY: Be able to define the following words and understand them when they appear in the novel.

- derision
- receptive
- reprehensible
- reverence

II. Allusions and historical references:

Luger (German semiautomatic pistol)

III. LITERARY TERMS: Be able to define each term and apply each term to the novel.

- theme
- imagery
- onomatopoeia
- example: ______________________________________________________________________
- foreshadow
- conflict

IV. QUESTIONS: answer the following questions. Use complete sentences.

1. What does Slim say he would have done to the dog if he hadn’t given it to Lennie?

2. What does Slim say he finds funny?
3. George says if he were really smart he would be doing what?

4. What is the story behind why Lennie and George travel together?

5. What can the reader infer about Lennie’s childhood and family life?

6. What did George do once that made him stop playing jokes on Lennie?

7. What card game does George play?

8. What does George tell Slim happened in Weed?

9. What sneaky thing does Lennie try to do?

10. What game has the other guys been playing while George and Slim talk?

11. What is Carlson’s problem and what does he tell Candy to do?

12. What reason’s does Carlson give for wanting Candy’s dog shot?

13. What does Whit show Slim?

14. What does Carlson say he has?

15. What does Slim tell Carlson to take with him when goes to shoot Candy’s dog? Why?

16. Whit says that George and Lennie must have come to work. What reason does he give?

17. What does Whit invite George to do “tomorrow” night?

18. Why don’t the guys visit Clara’s house instead of Susy’s?

19. Why does George say he will go and get a drink but that he isn’t going to pay for a flop?

20. What is Curley looking for?

21. What does Curley think Slim is doing?

22. What is Slim really doing in the barn?

23. Who has been listening to and finally interrupts George and Lennie’s conversation about the ranch?

24. For what reason would the people sell the ranch for only $600?
25. How did Candy get $250?

26. What is George afraid will happen to them if others find out they are going to buy a ranch?

27. What does Candy tell George he wishes he had done?

28. Why was Lennie smiling?

29. About what does Curley think Lennie smiling about?

30. What happens between Curley and Lennie?

V. Paragraph: write a paragraph answer to the following questions. Use quotes from the book to support your answer.

31. There are some similarities between Candy and his dog and George and Lennie. In a paragraph explain the similarities.

Of Mice and Men: Chapter 4 Reading and Study Guide

I. VOCABULARY: Be able to define the following words and understand them when they appear in the novel.

aloof

fawning

apprehension

indignation

crestfallen

II. LITERARY TERMS: Be able to define each term and apply each term to the novel.

verbal irony

example:

symbolism
III. QUESTIONS: answer the following questions. Use complete sentences.

1. What are two books that Crooks owns?
2. How does Crooks react to Lennie when he comes to visit?
3. For what reason did Lennie come to the barn?
4. Where is George?
5. What do we learn about Crooks family?
6. What does Lennie tell Crooks, even though he probably shouldn’t have?
7. What is Crook’s opinion of George and Lennie desire to get land?
8. About what did Candy want to talk to Lennie?
9. Where is George’s money going, according to Crooks.
10. Who visits Crooks, Candy, and Lennie?
11. What do we learn about Curley’s wife?
12. Before Curley’s wife leaves, what does she notice about Lennie?
13. What does Curley’s wife say she could have done to Crooks?
14. What is the last thing Crooks says to Candy?

V. Paragraph: write a paragraph answer to the following questions. Use quotes from the book to support your answer.

15. How is the theme of loneliness developed in this chapter? Think about the characters Lennie, Crooks, Candy, and Curley’s wife.

Of Mice and Men: Chapters 5 & 6 Reading and Study Guide

I. VOCABULARY: Be able to define the following words and understand them when they appear in the novel.

woe______________________________________________________________
writhed___________________________________________________________
belligerently_______________________________________________________
monotonous_________________________________________________________
II. LITERARY TERMS: Be able to define each term and apply each term to the novel.

Protagonist __________________________________________ Who is/are the protagonist(s)? ________________________________

Personification __________________________________________ example ______________________________________________________

III. QUESTIONS: answer the following questions. Use complete sentences.

Chapter 5
1. What day and time is it at the beginning of chapter 5?
2. What is Lennie doing in the barn by himself?
3. Why does Lennie think that he might not get to tend the rabbits?
4. Who visits Lennie in the barn?
5. According to Curley’s wife, why isn’t anyone going to leave the horseshoe tournament?
6. According to Curley’s wife, how come she didn’t get into show business?
7. What can we infer is the reason Curley’s wife married Curley?
8. What plan does Lennie have to avoid getting in trouble?
9. What did Lennie lose that he wishes he had now?
10. For what does Curley’s wife yell at Lennie?
11. What did Lennie do to Curley’s wife?
12. Who finds Curley’s wife?
13. What does Candy hopefully ask George?
14. What favor does George ask of Candy?
15. What does Carlson think happened to his Luger?

Chapter 6
16. Where is Lennie hiding?
17. With whom does Lennie have his first imaginary conversation?
18. With whom/what does Lennie have his second imaginary conversation?
19. What story does George tell Lennie?
20. What does he do while telling him this story?

V. Paragraph: write a 100-word paragraph to answer the following questions. Use quotations to support your answer.

21. Was George justified in what he did to Lennie?
Of Mice and Men
Performance Assessment

Choose ONE of the following:

Each project must be neat and organized. Genuine effort must be visible. The grade is based on creativity, neatness, accuracy, and effort. Writing must be typed. Choose a project that appeals to your own personal talents and interests.

(There is a big difference between something you jot down in a few minutes and something you put time into)

✓ Poem—write one long poem (at least 30 lines) in the form of your choosing about the story, a theme from the story, or one or more of the characters. Illustrate it or include some sort of visual. The poem can be from your own perspective or it can be from the perspective of one of the characters—for example, Lennie is writing the poem or George, etc. (I don’t want elementary school rhyming “roses are red/violets are blue/Lennie is sweet/and George is, too.” —I want thought and insight.)

✓ Create a mobile or collage (at least 11 x 14) that captures one important aspect of the story—it can be about one character or one theme, etc. (When making a collage, the poster board should be filled) Write an explanation for the items you chose. Explain: why did you include it, what does it represent?

✓ Capture your impressions of George or Lennie in any form you choose (drawing, sculpture, collage, paper mache, essay, etc.) Write a brief description of your image.

✓ Make a tape or CD of at least 7 songs that represent the themes/characters/events in the story. Make a cover for the cassette or CD and liner notes to briefly explain why you chose each song.

✓ Write/perform a song/rap characterizing an aspect of the story. (Make sure when you write it, it looks like a song written in stanzas with a chorus.)

✓ You may choose to do something else that is creative and that represents the story in some way, but you must get the project approved by me.

Standards addressed in this novel packet:

ELA10RL1 The student demonstrates comprehension by identifying evidence (i.e., examples of diction, imagery, point of view, figurative language, symbolism, plot events and main ideas) in a variety of texts representative of different genres (i.e., poetry, prose [short story, novel, essay, editorial, biography], and drama) and using this evidence as the basis for interpretation.

ELA10RL3 The student deepens understanding of literary works by relating them to contemporary context or historical background, as well as to works from other time periods.

ELA10RL4 The student employs a variety of writing genres to demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of significant ideas in selected literary works. The student composes essays, narratives, poems, or technical documents.

ELA10RL5 The student understands and acquires new vocabulary and uses it correctly in reading and writing.

ELA10RC1 The student reads a minimum of 25 grade-level appropriate books or book equivalents (approximately 1,000,000 words) per year from a variety of subject disciplines. The student reads both informational and fictional texts in a variety of genres and modes of discourse, including technical texts related to various subject areas.

ELA10RC2 The student participates in discussions related to curricular learning in all subject areas.

ELA10RC3 The student acquires new vocabulary in each content area and uses it correctly.

ELA10RC4 The student establishes a context for information acquired by reading across subject areas.

ELA10W1 The student produces writing that establishes an appropriate organizational structure, sets a context and engages the reader, maintains a coherent focus throughout, and signals closure.

ELA10LSV1 The student participates in student-to-teacher, student-to-student, and group verbal interactions.

ELA10LSV2 The student formulates reasoned judgments about written and oral communication in various media genres. The student delivers focused, coherent, and polished presentations that convey a clear and distinct perspective, demonstrate solid reasoning, and combine traditional rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description.
Of Mice and Men: Character Chart
Directions: Below fill in the chart. Use quotes when needed and page numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Physical Description</th>
<th>Personality and Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Milton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lennie Small</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crooks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curly's Wife</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of Mice and Men Factsheet

Background to Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

John Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California in 1902. His most famous books were written in the 1930s and 1940s, and are set in California. They deal with the lives and problems of working people. Many of the characters in his books are immigrants from Mexico or from other parts of the United States who went to California looking for work or a better life.

John Steinbeck 1902 - 1968

The Setting of Of Mice and Men

Of Mice and Men is set in the farmland of the Salinas valley, where John Steinbeck was born and which he knew all his life. Steinbeck's father owned land in the area, and as a young man Steinbeck had worked as a farm hand. The ranch in the story is near Soledad, which is south-east of Salinas on the Salinas river. Weed is nearby. The countryside described at the beginning of the book, and the ranch itself, would have been very familiar to John Steinbeck.

Migrant Farm Workers

By the time that Of Mice and Men was published almost half of America's grain was harvested by huge combine harvesters. Five men could do what would have taken 350 men a few years earlier. George and Lennie are some of the last of the migrant farm workers. Huge numbers of men travelled the countryside between the 1880s and the early 1930s harvesting wheat. They earned $2.50 or $3.00 a day, plus food and very basic accommodation. During the 1930s, when there was very bad unemployment in the United States, agencies were set up under the New Deal to send farmworkers to where they were needed. George and Lennie got their works cards from Murray and Ready's, one of these agencies.

Farm workers getting work cards under a Government Scheme
The American Dream

From the 17th Century, when the first settlers arrived, immigrants dreamed of a better life in America. People went there to escape from persecution or poverty, and to make a new life for themselves or their families. They dreamed of making their fortunes in the goldfields. For many the dream became a nightmare. The horrors of slavery, of the American Civil War, the growth of towns with slums as bad as those in Europe, and the corruption of the American political system led to many shattered hopes. For the American society as a whole the dream ended with the Wall Street crash of 1929. This was the start of the Great Depression that would affect the whole world during the 1930s. However the dream survived for individuals. Thousands made their way west to California to escape from their farmlands in the mid-West. George and Lennie dreamed of their 'little house and a couple of acres'. The growing popularity of cinema was the last American Dream for many, Curley's wife was one: 'Coulda been in the movies, an' had nice clothes.'

Why Of Mice and Men?

The title of the novel comes from a poem by the Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759 - 96):

The best laid schemes o' mice and men  
Gang aft agley [often go wrong]  
And leave us nought but grief and pain  
For promised joy!

Mass Exodus from the Plains – Surviving the Dust Bowl

"The land just blew away; we had to go somewhere."
-- Kansas preacher, June, 1936

When the drought and dust storms showed no signs of letting up, many people abandoned their land. Others would have stayed but were forced out when they lost their land in bank foreclosures. In all, one-quarter of the population left, packing everything they owned into their cars and trucks, and headed west toward California. Although overall three out of four farmers stayed on their land, the mass exodus depleted the population drastically in certain areas. In the rural area outside Boise City, Oklahoma, the population dropped forty percent, with 1,642 small farmers and their families pulling up stakes.

The Dust Bowl exodus was the largest migration in American history. By 1940, 2.5 million people had moved out of the Plains states; of those, 200,000 moved to California. When they reached the border, they did not receive a warm welcome, as described in this 1935 excerpt from Collier's magazine. "Very erect and primly severe, [a man] addressed the slumped driver of a rolling wreck that screamed from every hinge, bearing and coupling. 'California's relief rolls are overcrowded now. No use to come farther,' he cried. The half-collapsed driver ignored him -- merely turned his head to be sure his numerous family was still with him. They were so tightly wedged in, that escape was impossible. 'There really is nothing for you here,' the neat trooperish young man went on. 'Nothing, really nothing.' And the forlorn man on the moaning car looked at him, dull, emotionless, incredibly weary, and said: 'So? Well, you ought to see what they got where I come from.'"

The Los Angeles police chief went so far as to send 125 policemen to act as bouncers at the state border, turning away "undesirables". Called "the bum brigade," by the press and the object of a lawsuit by the American Civil Liberties Union, the LAPD posse was recalled only when the use of city funds for this work was questioned.

Arriving in California, the migrants were faced with a life almost as difficult as the one they had left. Many California farms were corporate-owned. They were larger, and more modernized that those of the southern plains, and the crops were unfamiliar. The rolling fields of wheat were replaced by crops of fruit, nuts and vegetables. Like the Joad family in John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath", some 40 percent of migrant farmers wound up in the San Joaquin Valley, picking grapes and cotton. They took up the work of Mexican migrant workers, 120,000 of whom were repatriated during the 1930s. Life for migrant workers was hard. They were paid by the quantity of fruit and cotton picked, with earnings ranging from seventy-five cents to $1.25 a day. Out of that, they had to pay twenty-five cents a day to rent a tar-paper shack with no floor or plumbing. In larger ranches, they often had to buy their groceries from a high-priced company store.
The sheer number of migrants camped out, desperate for work, led to scenes such as that described by John Steinbeck in his novel, “The Grapes of Wrath.” “Maybe he needs two hundred men, so he talks to five hundred, an’ they tell other folks, an’ when you get to the place, they’s a thousand men. This here fella says, ’I’m payin’ twenty cents an hour.’ An’ maybe half a the men walk off. But they’s still five hundred that’s so goddamn hungry they’ll work for nothin’ but biscuits. Well, this here fella’s got a contract to pick them peaches or -- chop that cotton. You see now? The more fella’s he can get, less he’s gonna pay. An’ he’ll get a fella with kids if he can.”

As roadside camps of poverty-stricken migrants proliferated, growers pressured sheriffs to break them up. Groups of vigilantes beat up migrants, accusing them of being Communists, and burned their shacks to the ground. To help the migrants, Roosevelt’s Farm Security Administration built 13 camps, each temporarily housing 300 families in tents built on wooden platforms. The camps were self-governing communities, and families had to work for their room and board.

When migrants reached California and found that most of the farmland was tied up in large corporate farms, many gave up farming. They set up residence near larger cities in shacktowns called Little Oklahomas or Okievilles, on open lots local landowners divided into tiny subplots and sold cheaply, for $5 down and $3 in monthly installments. They built their houses from scavenged scraps, and lived without plumbing and electricity. Polluted water and a lack of trash and waste facilities led to outbreaks of typhoid, malaria, smallpox and tuberculosis.

Over the years, they replaced their shacks with real houses, sending their children to local schools and becoming part of the communities, although they continued to face discrimination when looking for work, and were called "Okies" and "Arkies" by the locals, regardless of where they came from.

**Definitions of key terms**

*Speculation* - Undertaking risk on stocks or real estate for the chance of profit

*buy on margin* - Practice of buying stocks by paying 10 to 50 percent of the full price and borrowing the rest; common in the 1920s before the stock market crash of 1929

*Black Tuesday* - On this day, Oct 29, 1929, a record 16.4 million shares were sold, compared with 4 to 8 million shares a day, earlier in the year

*Collateral* - Something pledged as security for a loan that can be claimed by the lender if the loan is not repaid

*Hooverville* - Towns of makeshift houses built by homeless people during the Great Depression

*Father Divine* - African American minister; his Harlem soup kitchens fed the hungry during the Great Depression

*Twenty-first Amendment* - Constitutional amendment of 1933 repealing the Eighteenth Amendment, thus ending prohibition

*Reconstruction Finance Corporation* - Government corporation set up by President Herbert Hoover in 1932 that gave government loans to banks

*Eleanor Roosevelt* - First Lady 1933-1945; tireless worker for social causes, including women’s rights and civil rights for African Americans and other groups

*hundred days* - First one hundred days of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s term of office where he feverishly pushed program after program through Congress to provide relief, create jobs, and stimulate economic recovery

*Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)* - established by Congress to insure deposits of $5000

*Fair Labor Standards Act* - set the minimum wage at twenty-five cents an hour which was well below what most covered workers already made

*Social Security Act* - Legislation of 1935 that established a social welfare system funded by employee and worker contributions; included old-age pensions, survivor’s benefits for victims of industrial accidents, and unemployment insurance

*political right* - Those who wish to preserve the current social and political system or power structure

*political left* - Those who wish to change the current social and political system or power structure

*demagogue* - Charismatic leader who manipulates people with half-truths, false promises, and scare tactics

*court-packing plan* - Roosevelt asked Congress to pass a bill that would allow him to appoint 6 new justices to clean up the court system

*national debt* - Total debt of the federal government
Causes of the Great Depression

Speculation in the 1920s caused many people to buy stocks with loaned money and they used these stocks as collateral for buying more stocks. Broker's loans went from under $5 million in mid 1928 to $850 million in September of 1929. The stock market boom was very unsteady, because it was based on borrowed money and false optimism. When investors lost confidence, the stock market collapsed, taking them along with it.

Short signed government economic policies were one of the factors that led to the Great Depression. Politicians believed that business was the key business of America. Thus, the government took no action against unwise investing. Congress passed high tariffs that protected American industries but hurt farmers and international trade.

The economy was not stable. National wealth was not spread evenly. Instead, most money was in the hands of a few families who saved or invested rather than spent their money on American goods. Thus, supply was greater than demand. Some people profited, but others did not. Prices went up and Americans could not afford anything. Farmers and workers did not profit. Unevenness of prosperity made recovery difficult.

Stock Market crash of 1929

Effects of the Great Depression

Summary

- Both physical and psychological impact on the entire nation
- Fear of losing jobs and unemployment cause anxiety
- People became depressed and considered and attempted suicide

Impact on Health

- Thousands went hungry
- Children suffered long term effects from a poor diet and inadequate medical care
- People grew food and ate berries and other wild plants in the country and sold apples and pencils in the city
- Land owners planted “relief gardens” for food and to barter

Family Problems

- Living conditions changed when multiple families crowded into small houses or apartments
- Divorce went down because couples could not afford separate households and others postponed wedding plans
- Unemployed men felt like failures when they could not support their families and lost their status when they saw their wives and children working to the point when they were too ashamed to get relief or help from friends
- Women were blamed for taking the jobs of men and in 1931, the Federation of Labor even endorsed it
- Women continued to work doing “women’s work” such as nursing, and even if they were able to get an industry job which seldom hired women, they usually were paid less than men