***OF MICE AND MEN***

**MR JOHNSON’S**

**EXAM REVISION**

**BOOKLET**

**HOW SHOULD I REVISE?**

1. OK, firstly you need to look at some **past exam questions** so you know what to expect – see **pages 2 - 6**. Do this now. Once completed put a tick next to this first step.
2. Righty ho, now that you’ve done that you need to understand **what** to write and **how** to write it. You’ll find all of this information on **page 7**. Read and digest this information now. Once completed put a tick next to this second step.
3. Okely dokely. Now you need to refamiliarise yourself with the **author, the novel, the characters, themes, etc**. Read **pages 8 – 20**. Don’t forget all the class notes, discussions & controlled assessment!Once completed put a tick next to this third step. Happy reading. ☺
4. Smashing. Now for the most important part of your revision. Create a list of the top 20 quotes from the play (with page numbers if you have the correct exam edition) that will allow you to answer most questions about the main themes, e.g. dreams, loneliness, etc. Create **quick mini-mindmaps** (or bullet points if you prefer) **for each quote**. On each mindmap link to use of language, themes, character(s) concerned, symbolism, Steinbeck, 1930’s America, etc. Use colour and images to bring it alive; your brain likes colour and images. Stick them up on your bedroom wall. Your One Direction posters are so passé anyway. Tick the box when done.
5. Practise answering some (or all) of my ‘Possible Exam Questions’ (see Turton Blog) under timed conditions – 45 minutes. Although we’ll do some in class, the more you do, the better you’ll get. Hand to me for marking/feedback.
6. As you approach the exam look at your mindmap, ensure you know where to find your evidence and reread this booklet.

Put in the time and it’ll pay off, I promise.

Good luck Year 11.

Mr J

**PAST EXAM PAPERS (HIGHER) – *OF MICE AND MEN***

**JANUARY 2011**

**Question 21** Read the passage and then answer **part (a)** and **part (b)**.

The old man was reassured. He had drawn a derogatory statement from George. He felt safe now, and he spoke more confidently. ‘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.’

The old man moved toward the door, and his ancient dog lifted his head and peered about, and then got painfully to his feet to follow. ‘I gotta be settin’ out the wash basins for the guys. The teams’ll be in before long. You guys gonna buck barley?’

‘Yeah.’

‘You won’t tell Curley nothing I said?’

‘Hell no.’

‘Well, you look her over, mister. You see if she ain’t a tart.’ He stepped out the door into the brilliant sunshine.

**Part (a)** What methods does Steinbeck use in this passage to present Candy?

**and** then **Part (b)**

How do you think Steinbeck uses the character of Candy in the novel as a whole to convey important ideas about society at that time? *(30 marks)*

**JUNE 2011**

**Question 21** Read the following passage and then answer **part (a)** and **part (b)**.

‘I don’t want no fights,’ said Lennie. He got up from his bunk and sat down at the table, across from George. Almost automatically George shuffled the cards and laid out his solitaire hand. He used a deliberate, thoughtful, slowness.

Lennie reached for a face card and studied it, then turned it upside down and studied it. ‘Both ends the same,’ he said, ‘George, why is it both end’s the same?’

‘I don’t know,’ said George. ‘That’s jus’ the way they make ’em. What was Slim doin’ in the barn when you seen him?’

‘Slim?’

‘Sure. You seen him in the barn, an’ he tol’ you not to pet the pups so much.’

‘Oh yeah. He had a can a’tar an’ a paint brush. I don’t know what for.’

‘You sure that girl didn’t come in like she come in here today?’

‘No. She never come.’

George sighed. ‘You give me a good whore house every time,’ he said. ‘A guy can go in an’ get drunk and get ever’thing outta his system all at once, an’ no messes. And he knows how much it’s gonna set him back. These here jail baits is just set on the trigger of the hoosegow.’

Lennie followed his words admiringly, and moved his lips a little to keep up. George continued, ‘You remember Andy Cushman, Lennie? Went to grammar school?’

‘The one that his old lady used to make hot cakes for the kids?’ Lennie asked.

‘Yeah. That’s the one. You can remember anything if there’s anything to eat in it.’ George looked carefully at the solitaire hand. He put an ace up on his scoring rack and piled a two, three and four of diamonds on it. ‘Andy’s in San Quentin right now on account of a tart,’ said George.

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?’

**Part (a)** How do the details in this passage add to your understanding of George and his relationship with Lennie?

**and** then **Part (b)**

How does Steinbeck use their relationship in the novel as a whole to convey ideas about America in the 1930s? *(30 marks)*

**JANUARY 2012**

**Question 21** Read the passage and then answer **part (a)** and **part (b)**.

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 stove-pipe 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.

At about ten o’clock in the morning the sun threw a bright dust-laden bar through one of the side windows, and in and out of the beam flies shot like rushing stars.

The wooden latch raised. The door opened and a tall, stoop-shouldered old man came in. He was dressed in blue jeans and he carried a big push-broom in his left hand. Behind him came George, and behind George, Lennie.

‘The boss was expectin’ you last night,’ the old man said. ‘He was sore as hell when you wasn’t here to go out this morning.’ He pointed with his right arm, and out of the sleeve came a round stick-like wrist, but no hand. ‘You can have them two beds there,’ he said, indicating two bunks near the stove.

George stepped over and threw his blankets down on the burlap sack of straw that was a mattress. He looked into the box shelf and then picked a small yellow can from it. ‘Say. What the hell’s this?’

‘I don’t know,’ said the old man.

‘Says “positively kills lice, roaches, and other scourges”. What the hell kind of bed you giving us, anyways. We don’t want no pants rabbits.’

**Part (a)** How does Steinbeck use details in this passage to present the bunkhouse and its inhabitants?

**and** then **Part (b)**

In the rest of the novel, how does Steinbeck present the lives of ranch workers at that time? *(30 marks)*

**JUNE 2012**

**Question 21** Read the following passage and then answer **part (a)** and **part (b)**.

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 some place 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. There were footsteps behind her, going by. She turned her head. ‘Hi, Slim,’ she said.

Slim’s voice came through the door, ‘Hi, good-lookin’.’

‘I’m tryin’ to fi nd Curley, Slim.’

‘Well, you ain’t tryin’ very hard. I seen him goin’ in your house.’

She was suddenly apprehensive. ‘Bye, boys,’ she called into the bunk house, and she hurried away.

George looked around at Lennie. ‘Jesus, what a tramp,’ he said. ‘So that’s what Curley picks for a wife.’

**Part (a)** In this passage, what methods does Steinbeck use to present Curley’s wife and the attitudes of others to her? Refer closely to the passage in your answer.

**and** then **Part (b)**

How does Steinbeck present attitudes to women in the society in which the novel is set? *(30 marks)*

**JANUARY 2013**

**Question 21** Read the following passage and then answer **part (a)** and **part (b)**.

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 kept 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.

Noiselessly Lennie appeared in the open doorway and stood there looking in, his big shoulders nearly filling the opening. For a moment Crooks did not see him, but on raising his eyes he stiffened and a scowl came on his face. His hand came out from under his shirt.

Lennie smiled helplessly in an attempt to make friends.

Crooks said sharply, ‘You got no right to come in my room. This here’s my room. Nobody got any right in here but me.’

**Part (a)** In this passage, how does Steinbeck present Crooks? Refer closely to the passage in your answer.

**and** then **Part (b)**

In the rest of the novel how does Steinbeck use Crooks to present attitudes to black people at the time the novel is set? *(30 marks)* SPaG: *(4 marks)*

**JUNE 2013**

**Question 21** Read the following passage and then answer **part (a)** and **part (b)**.

A tall man stood in the doorway. He held a crushed Stetson hat under his arm while he combed his long, black, damp hair straight back. Like the others he wore blue jeans and a short denim jacket. When he had fi nished combing his hair he moved into the room, and he moved with a majesty only achieved by royalty and master craftsmen. He was a jerkline skinner, the prince of the ranch, capable of driving ten, sixteen, even twenty mules with a single line to the leaders. He was capable of killing a fly on the wheeler’s butt with a bull whip without touching the mule. There was a gravity in his manner and a quiet so profound that all talk stopped when he spoke.

His authority was so great that his word was taken on any subject, be it politics or love. This was Slim, the jerkline skinner. His hatchet face was ageless. He might have been thirty-fi ve or fi fty. His ear heard more than was said to him, and his slow speech had overtones not of thought, but of understanding beyond thought. His hands, large and lean, were as delicate in their action as those of a temple dancer.

He smoothed out his crushed hat, creased it in the middle and put it on. He looked kindly at the two in the bunk house. ‘It’s brighter’n a bitch outside,’ he said gently. ‘Can’t hardly see nothing in here. You the new guys?’

‘Just come,’ said George.

‘Gonna buck barley?’

‘That’s what the boss says.’

Slim sat down on a box across the table from George. He studied the solitaire hand that was upside down to him. ‘Hope you get on my team,’ he said. His voice was very gentle. ‘I gotta pair of punks on my team that don’t know a barley bag from a blue ball. You guys ever bucked any barley?’

**Part (a)** In this passage, how does Steinbeck present Slim? Refer closely to the passage in your answer.

**and** then **Part (b)**

In the rest of the novel, how does Steinbeck show that some people on the ranch are considered more important than others? How does this reflect the society in which the novel is set? *(30 marks)* SPaG: *(4 marks)*

**JUNE 2014**

**Question 21** Read the following passage and then answer **part (a)** and **part (b)**.

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 sweat-band 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.

‘Lennie!’ he said sharply. ‘Lennie, for God’ sakes don’t drink so much.’ Lennie continued to snort into the pool. The small man leaned over and shook him by the shoulder. ‘Lennie. You gonna be sick like you was last night.’

Lennie dipped his whole head under, hat and all, and then he sat up on the bank and his hat dripped down on his blue coat and ran down his back. ‘Tha’s good,’ he said. ‘You drink some, George. You take a good big drink.’ He smiled happily.

George unslung his bindle and dropped it gently on the bank. ‘I ain’t sure it’s good water,’ he said. ‘Looks kinda scummy.’

Lennie dabbled his big paw in the water and wiggled his fingers so the water arose in little splashes; rings widened across the pool to the other side and came back again. Lennie watched them go. ‘Look, George. Look what I done.’

**Part (a)** In this passage, how does Steinbeck introduce the relationship between George and Lennie? Refer closely to the passage in your answer.

**and** then **Part (b)**

In the rest of the novel, how does Steinbeck present ideas about relationships on a ranch at the time the novel is set? *(30 marks)* SPaG: *(4 marks)*

**JUNE 2015**

**Question 21** Read the following passage and then answer **part (a)** and **part (b)**.

Lennie’s big fingers fell to stroking her hair.

‘Don’t you muss it up,’ she said.

Lennie said, ‘Oh! That’s nice,’ and he stroked harder. ‘Oh, that’s nice.’

‘Look out, now, you’ll muss it.’ And then she cried angrily, ‘You stop it now, you’ll mess it all up.’ She jerked her head sideways, and Lennie’s fingers closed on her hair and hung on. ‘Let go,’ she cried. ‘You let go.’

Lennie was in a panic. His face was contorted. She screamed then, and Lennie’s other hand closed over her mouth and nose. ‘Please don’t,’ he begged. ‘Oh! Please don’t do that. George’ll be mad.’

She struggled violently under his hands. Her feet battered on the hay and she writhed to be free; and from under Lennie’s hand, came a muffled screaming. Lennie began to cry with fright. ‘Oh! Please don’t do none of that,’ he begged. ‘George gonna say I done a bad thing. He ain’t gonna let me tend no rabbits.’ He moved his hand a little and her hoarse cry came out. Then Lennie grew angry. ‘Now don’t,’ he said. ‘I don’t want you to yell. You gonna get me in trouble jus’ like George says you will. Now don’t you do that.’ And she continued to struggle, and her eyes were wild with terror. He shook her then, and he was angry with her. ‘Don’t you go yellin’,’ he said, and he shook her; and her body flopped like a fish. And then she was still, for Lennie had broken her neck.

He looked down at her, and carefully he removed his hand from over her mouth, and she lay still. ‘I don’t want ta hurt you,’ he said, ‘but George’ll be mad if you yell.’ When she didn’t answer nor move he bent closely over her. He lifted her arm and let it drop. For a moment he seemed bewildered. And then he whispered in fright, ‘I done a bad thing. I done another bad thing.’

He pawed up the hay until it partly covered her.

**Part (a)** In this passage, how does Steinbeck present the death of Curley’s wife? Refer closely to the passage in your answer.

**and** then **Part (b)**

In the rest of the novel, how does Steinbeck present the brutality of life on a ranch at the time the novel is set? *(30 marks)* SPaG: *(4 marks)*

**WHAT SHOULD I WRITE?**

* For **Part A**, underline or highlight **good** pieces of evidence in the text and aim to write **2 or 3 detailed P.E.E.L.s**. in 20 minutes (max) – **WATCH YOUR TIME**!
* For **Part B**, write a **couple of detailed P.E.E.L.s** in 20 minutes (max) (use evidence from **other parts of the book!**)
* Conclusion: in one or two sentences, sum up how Steinbeck shows/presents whatever the last question is.

**WHAT ARE THE EXAMINERS LOOKING FOR?**

***“Examiners are encouraged to reward any valid interpretations.”***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Candidate clearly explains his/her point  | *These basically means* ***P.E.E.L.***Needed for a **C** grade (explain what the evidence suggests) |
| Candidate uses evidence to back up points made |
| Candidate focuses on question  |
| Candidate explains writer’s use of **language and/or structure** and **links to context (when the play is set) / themes** where appropriate | **B** grade |
| Candidate also provides an insightful and exploratory interpretation | **A/A\*** |

**SO WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Steinbeck uses animal imagery to demonstrate Lennie’s strength. Curley is described as ‘stood crying, lost in Lennie’s paw’. This suggests that Lennie is as big and strong as a bear and that Curley will have difficulty getting away.  | **C** |
| Steinbeck uses imagery to show Lennie’s strength. Curley is described as ‘stood crying, lost in Lennie’s paw’. This metaphor suggests that Lennie is not only as big and strong as a bear but that he can be dangerous and perhaps unpredictable when, moments before, he had been childishly ‘smiling with delight at the memory of the ranch’. | **B** |
| Steinbeck uses imagery to show Lennie’s strength. Curley is described as ‘stood crying, lost in Lennie’s paw’. This metaphor suggests that Lennie is dangerous and can perhaps be unpredictable when, moments before, he had been childishly ‘smiling with delight at the memory of the ranch’. Steinbeck describes Lennie in this way to perhaps suggest that he, like an animal, reacts instinctively to the immediate situation. *This forms a pattern of behaviour that can be traced throughout the novel and leads to the death of Curley’s wife.* | **A / *A\**** |

**John Steinbeck**

John Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California, which is where *Of mice and men* is set; he knew the area very well. His most famous books were written in the 1930s & 1940s and are set in his home state. 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.

Steinbeck's father owned land in the area and as a young man Steinbeck had worked as a ranch 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.

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 farm workers to where they were needed. George and Lennie got their works cards from Murray and Ready's, one of these agencies.

**The American Dream**

Immigrants (often trying to escape persecution/poverty in their native country) as well as ‘native’ Americans were looking for something to call their own or simply a better way of life for them and/or their children. In America people had always believed that if they worked hard they could be successful – anybody could ‘make it’ if they tried hard enough. This idea was known as the ‘American Dream’. In the 1930s, the myth of the American Dream was put to the test; many individuals lost everything they owned. 1/3 of the population (45 million at the time / now 300 million) was unemployed! They felt that they had no hope of making a decent life for themselves and lost all self-respect and faith in their society. Some still clung desperately to the dream of success and opportunity, despite all of their hardships.

*Of mice and men* has been one of the most controversial books in American literature and is **still** banned in many American high schools.

**The Plot**

You need to know what happens in each chapter. Whilst reading this, **circle** the correct answers **or cross out** the wrong ones.

**1** George and Lennie, two **travelling / settled / well-dressed** farm hands, camp beside a pool in a valley. The next day, they are due to **buy a house / begin work / live off the land** on a ranch.

It is clear that George – small and **overweight / timid / quick-witted** – is the one is charge. He looks after Lennie, who is huge and **child-like / restless / nervous**.

We learn that the two men have had to leave the town of **Salinas / Soledad / Weed** because Lennie frightened a **mouse / girl / rabbit** there. George gets **angry / sick / drunk** because he always has to get Lennie out of trouble. When Lennie offers to give him his **mouse / shoot himself / leave him and go away**, George is sorry for being mean.

We find out Lennie loves to ‘pet’ soft things, especially **girls / dresses / small animals**. He does not understand how dangerous his great strength is.

George speaks about their dream of **giving up work / getting a job / buying their own place**. He tells Lennie to come back to **Weed / the ranch / the pool** if there is any trouble.

**2** George and Lenny arrive at the ranch. They are given **food / work / bunks** by Candy who is the **swamper / owner / farmer**. The **boss / boss’ son / stable buck** signs the men up for work. The boss is angry because they are late. He is **pleased with / suspicious of / impressed by** the way George protects Lennie.

The boss’ son, **Candy / Carlson / Curley**, is **aggressive / friendly / helpful** towards the new men, especially Lennie. Candy tells them that Curley has just married a **nice girl / widow / ‘tart’**. The whole set-up **interests / scares / pleases George**. He tells Lennie to **keep away from / make friends with / fight with Curley**.

The other men return from work. **Slim / the stable buck / Whitey** is very friendly. Carlson complains about Candy’s old dog because it **whines / stinks / barks**. He says it should be shot and asks Slim to give Candy one of his **mice / rabbits / puppies**. Lennie gets excited at the idea of having one of the puppies. Curley returns, looking for his **glove / boots / wife**.

**3** George chats to Slim and tells him about what happened in **the bunk-house / the barn / Weed**. Once slim has agreed, **Carlson / Candy / Curley** shoots Candy’s old dog.

George and Lennie tell **Crooks / Candy / Curley** about their dream and he offers to **mend the fences / cook the meals / put up some money** if he can join them.

When Curley comes in, Lennie is still smiling with delight. Curley thinks that Lennie is **mad / just happy / making fun of him** and picks a fight. At George’s command, Lennie **punches Curley / kicks Curley / crushes Curley’s hand**.

**4** All the men have gone **home / into town / to a club** except Crooks, Lennie and Candy. They meet and talk in Crooks’ room which is off the barn. They are **encouraged / disturbed / inspired** by Curley’s wife who insults Candy and Crooks. She is interested to find out that it was Lennie who **injured / helped / insulted** Curley.

**5 That night / a week later / the following afternoon**, Curley’s wife finds Lennie very upset in the **garden / barn / house**. He has killed the puppy by accident.

Curley’s wife **invites him / shouts at him / forbids him** to stroke her hair. But then she panics and begins to **run away / scream and struggle / shout for Curley**. Lennie is terrified: he tries to silence her but he breaks her neck. He remembers what George told him and runs to **town / Weed / the pool**.

Candy discovers the body and realises their ‘dream’ **has come true / will happen soon / is over**. He fetches George who sends the other men the wrong way.

**6** Lennie is having nightmares. George finds him and, while Lennie is **sleeping / running away / looking the other way** and dreaming of their little farm, George shoots him with Carlson’s gun. The other men arrive – **Slim / Carlson / Curley** is the only one who really understands why George had to kill his friend.

**‘TO A MOUSE’** is a poem by the Scottish poet Robert Burns – Steinbeck took the name of his novel from this poem.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Burns Poem – Standard English Translation** | **What’s happening in each stanza** |
| Small, sleek, cowering, timorous beast,O, what a panic is in your breast!You need not start away so hastyWith hurrying scamper!I would be loath to run and chase you,With murdering plough-staff.I'm truly sorry man's dominionHas broken Nature's social union,And justifies that ill opinionWhich makes thee startleAt me, thy poor, earth born companionAnd fellow mortal!I doubt not, sometimes, but you may steal;What then? Poor beast, you must live!An odd ear in twenty-four sheavesIs a small request;I will get a blessing with what is left,And never miss it.Your small house, too, in ruin!It's feeble walls the winds are scattering!And nothing now, to build a new one,Of coarse grass green!And bleak December's winds coming,Both bitter and keen!You saw the fields laid bare and wasted,And weary winter coming fast,And cozy here, beneath the blast,You thought to dwell,Till crash! the cruel plough pastOut through your cell.That small bit heap of leaves and stubble,Has cost you many a weary nibble!Now you are turned out, for all your trouble,Without house or holding,To endure the winter's sleety dribble,And hoar-frost cold.But Mouse, you are not alone,In proving foresight may be vain:The best laid schemes **of mice and men**Go often askew,And leaves us nothing but grief and pain,For promised joy!Still you are blest, compared with me!The present only touches you:But oh! I backward cast my eye,On prospects dreary!And forward, though I cannot see,I guess and fear! | The poet is doing his utmost to assure this terrified little creature that he has no intention of causing it any harm.He then goes on to apologise to the mouse for the behaviour of mankind; he equates himself with the mouse in life’s great plan.Here he tells the mouse that he realizes its need to steal the odd ear of corn, and he does not really mind. He’ll get by with the remainder and never miss it.Dismay at the enormity of the problems he has brought on the mouse causes him to reflect on what he has done - destroyed her home at a time when it is impossible to rebuild. There is no grass to build a new home and the December winds are cold and sharp. Her preparations for winter are gone!Where the mouse had thought that she was prepared for winter in her comfortable little nest in the ground, now she is faced with trying to survive in a most unfriendly climate, with little or no hope in sight.It seems probable that here the poet is really comparing his own hard times with that of the mouse – a life of harsh struggle, with little or no reward at the end.Here the poet is essentially saying that what we plan in life often doesn’t go according to plan. In fact, life usually just leaves us full of sadness and despair.This final verse reveals the absolute despondency that Burns was feeling at this stage in his life. Not at all what one might expect from a young man of twenty-six, supposedly so popular  with the lassies, and with his whole life ahead of him, but nevertheless expressing sentiments with which many of us today can easily relate. |

**Burns shows how the plans of men are no more secure than those of the mouse, and this is the point of Steinbeck's title.**

**Allegory**

**Allegory** - a story (extended metaphor) in which the people, places, and things represent general concepts or moral qualities.

**“Outside” characters**

**Crooks’** disability is his color, and he is segregated from the rest of the workers because of it.  He is unhappy and often hostile, having always lived in hostile environments. As a result, Crooks acts out against others, alienating them in turn. This is why he taunts Lennie in Chapter 4, even though Lennie doesn't judge him.

**Lennie** is also alienated, because of his mental disability. While Crooks is removed physically from the rest of the staff, Lennie is removed intellectually. He doesn't know how to communicate with the others, besides George, and is often left behind in conversation.

**Candy's** disability is physical, revolving both around his age and his hand.  Like the dog he wants so much to save, Candy has reached a point in his life where he cannot contribute materially to the work that the other men are doing.  He is so protective of his dog because he fears a similar treatment.  This is why Candy grasps on so tightly to the dream of the farm - it is a place where he would be both wanted and useful.

Finally, there is **Curley's wife**.  As a woman, she is also alienated in this world dominated by men. She has no friends and few rights, and like Crooks, she acts out with hostility when threatened.

**Carlson** is not an outsider but does typify the men George describes as “the loneliest guys in the world”. He is outwardly friendly, but essentially selfish. He finds the smell of an old dog offensive so the dog must be shot. He has little regard for the feelings of the dog's owner. At the end of the novella, as Slim goes to buy George a drink, and comfort him, it is Carlson who says to Curley, “What the hell...is eatin' them two guys?”

##### **Fraternity and the Idealized Male Friendship**

One of the reasons that the tragic end of George and Lennie’s friendship has such a profound impact is that one senses that the friends have, by the end of the novella, lost a dream larger than themselves. The farm on which George and Lennie plan to live – a place that no one ever reaches – has a magnetic quality, as Crooks points out. It seduces not only the other characters but also the reader, who, like the men, wants to believe in the possibility of the free, idyllic life it promises. After hearing a description of only a few sentences, Candy is completely drawn in by its magic. Crooks has witnessed countless men fall under the same silly spell, and still he cannot help but ask Lennie if he can have a patch of garden to hoe there. The men in *Of Mice and Men* desire to come together in a way that would allow them to be like brothers to one another. That is, they want to live with one another’s best interests in mind, to protect each other, and to know that there is someone in the world dedicated to protecting them. Given the harsh, lonely conditions under which these men live, it should come as no surprise that they idealize friendships between men in such a way.

Ultimately, however, the world is too harsh and predatory a place to sustain such relationships. Lennie and George, who come closest to achieving this ideal of brotherhood, are forced to separate tragically. With this, a rare friendship vanishes, but the rest of the world – represented by Curley and Carlson, who watch George stumble away with grief from his friend’s dead body – fails to acknowledge or appreciate it.

**Letter from John Steinbeck to an actress playing Curley’s Wife in a stage production of *Of Mice and Men*.**

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 marvelously. 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 anyone, but she was never able to carry out what she learned. A natural trustfulness broke through constantly, and every time it did, she got hurt. 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 she had to be hard to cover her fright. Automatically she became hardest when she was most frightened. She is a nice, kind girl and 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 sex 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 of misinformation girls tell one another. If anyone – a man or a 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 of this – if you knew her, if you could ever break down the 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 can 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 of 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

**Language & POV**

Don’t forget to comment upon **how** Steinbeck uses language, e.g. repetition, similes, etc. Why are they used? See exemplar paragraph on Crooks for a model.

The book is written in the 3rd person – reader is able to gain an insight into the characters. Although with the exception of Crooks – ‘he was a proud aloof man’ – and Lennie’s nightmare at the end of the book, most insight into characters is only revealed by what the characters say or do…like a play. This is what Steinbeck wanted to achieve – a hybrid of play and novel. Plus, we judge some characters simply because of the gossip we hear! Steinbeck’s intention?

**SOME useful character quotes (but not definitive!) Please note that the page numbers are for a different edition.**

***George*** *A travelling farm worker, friend and protector of Lennie. He is small, but intelligent and quick-witted.*

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| ***Chapter*** | ***Page*** | ***The quotation*** | ***What it shows*** |
| Ch 1  | p 19 | ‘The first man … sharp, strong features.’ | Describes. Sounds sharp/quick-witted. Note language. |
| Ch 1  | p 21 | ‘So you forgot that … a crazy bastard!’ | Impatient. Bullies Lennie. Language style aggressive. |
| Ch 1  | p 24 | ‘God, you’re a lot of trouble … maybe have a girl.’ | Regrets his promise sometimes. Sees how life could be alone. Emotive. |
| Ch 1  | p 31–2 | ‘Guys like us … They don’t belong no place.’‘With us it ain’t like that … that gives a damn about us.’ | Compares their relationship to other lonely souls. Makes them different. Their dream. Lyrical, song-like language. |
| Ch 2  | p 44 | ‘He’s my … cousin.’ | Sticks up for Lennie. Lies for him, even if mad. |
| Ch 2  | p 45 | ‘You was pokin’ … nosey.’ | Defensive/protective. |
| Ch 2  | p 52 | ‘Hide till I come for you … Say that over.’ | Protective. Clever. Senses danger. |
| Ch 3  | p 87–8 | ‘George said reverently … I bet we could swing her.’ | Starts to believe dream will come true – Candy’s money. Hopeful tone. |
| Ch 5  | p 130 | ‘Oh Jesus Christ … and his eyes were hard and tight as wood, and his eyes were hard.’ | His reaction. Dream over. Shuts off feelings. Note use of imagery (simile) to express. |
| Ch 6  | p 147 | ‘No … I want ya to know.’ | Last kind words. |
| Ch 6  | p 147–8 | ‘And George … and then he threw it from him.’ | Kills Lennie. Has to push himself. Thinks it’s for best. |

***Lennie*** *A huge child-like man who travels with George. He is incapable of looking after himself, is extremely strong and is fascinated by small, soft things like mice and puppies.*

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| ***Chapter*** | ***Page*** | ***The quotation*** | ***What it shows*** |
| Ch 1  | p 19 | ‘Behind him walked … a bear drags its paws.’ | Describes. Stress on animal-like. |
| Ch 1  | p 20–1 | ‘Lennie, who had been … imitated George exactly.’ | Copies George. Looks up to him. Father figure. |
| Ch 1  | p 24 | ‘Lennie droned … I ain’t gonna say nothin’.’ | Has to be told like a child. Can’t remember. Style. |
| Ch 1  | p 31 | ‘Go on, George … rabbits.’ | Lennie’s simple dream |
| Ch 2  | p 43 | ‘Lennie smiled … Strong as a bull.’ | Forgetful/childlike. Language matches. |
| Ch 3  | p 91 | ‘Curley’s fist … Lennie’s big hand.’ | Fights back. Shows strength. Won’t let go – hint for later (C’s wife). |
| Ch 4  | p 101 | ‘It ain’t no lie. We’re gonna do it. Gonna get a little place an’ live on the fatta the lan’.’ | Lennie’s dream. Key phrase. |
| Ch 4  | p 104 | ‘Who hurt George? … Lennie growled back to his seat …’ | Basic reaction; animal imagery. Reacts to Crooks’ teasing. |
| Ch 5  | p 120 | ‘Lennie sat in the barn and looked at the little dead puppy …’ | Foreshadowing. Symbolic. Uncontrolled power.  |
| Ch 5  | p 121 | ‘Lennie began to cry … tend no rabbits.’ | He panics. Doesn’t know own strength. |
| Ch 6  | p 140 | ‘Suddenly Lennie … as a creeping bear moves.’ | Animal imagery; naturalistic surroundings. Mood matches. |
| Ch 6  | p 141–3 | Aunt Clara vision/giant rabbit | Symbolism – but what does it represent? State of mind? His past? Flashback narration? |
| Ch 6  | p 141 | ‘George gonna give me hell … botherin’ him’ | Aware that G. will be angry. Like a child. |
| Ch 6  | p 147 | ‘No Lennie … Lennie obeyed him.’ | Trusts him. Doesn’t know. |

***Crooks*** *Looks after the horses (the ‘stable buck’). A victim of prejudice, Crooks is the only black worker on the ranch, a proud and lonely man who seeks respect through his learning.*

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| ***Chapter*** | ***Page*** | ***The quotation*** | ***What it shows*** |
| Ch 2  | p 41 | ‘The boss gives him hell when he’s mad.’ | Victim. |
| Ch 2  | p 41 | Fight at Xmas | Seen as lower/entertainment. |
| Ch 3  | p 77 | ‘The door opened quietly … a lean negro head, lined with pain, the eye patient.’ | Description/action reveals personality. |
| Ch 4 all |  | Focal chapter | Investigate text! pp 98–116 |
| Ch 4  | p 98 | ‘ … and being a stable buck and a cripple … .more possessions than he could carry on his back.’ | Different outlook on life cf itinerant ranch hands; tied to one place. Dependent? Vulnerable? |
| Ch 4  | p 98–99 | ‘Crooks possessed … above his bed.’ | Crooks’ things = his beliefs/attitude. Symbolic. |
| Ch 4  | p 99 | ‘He kept his distance and demanded other people kept theirs.’ | Proud; aloof. Metaphor. |
| Ch 4  | p 99–100 | ‘Crooks said sharply … any right in here but me.’ | Proud and protective. Keeps himself to himself. |
| Ch 4  | p 100 | ‘ … I got a right to have a light’‘I ain’t wanted in the bunkhouse, and you ain’t wanted in my room.’ | Sensitive to prejudice; feels able to act superior to Lennie. |
| Ch 4  | p 102 | Story about his background: used to be more prosperous. Link to dream? | Wasn’t always in this position: now sees himself as ‘just a nigger talkin’, an a busted back nigger. So it don’t mean nothing, see?’ |
| Ch 4  | p 103 | ‘S’pose George don’t come back no more.’‘Crooks’ face lighted with pleasure at the torture.’ | Torments Lennie. Cf to his own treatment? What does it say about him?  |
| Ch 4  | p 105 | ‘A guy goes nuts if he ain’t got nobody … a guy gets too lonely an’ he gets sick.’ | Isolation – emotions. |
| Ch 4  | p 105 | ‘If some other guy was … it would be alright.’ | Crooks’ dream – a friend. (Like G and L.) |
| Ch 4  | p 105–6 | ‘The stable buck went on dreamily …’ (paragraph) | Crooks’ idyllic dream ranch cf Ch 1/3 G and L. Use of flashback narration to his happier past. |
| Ch 4  | p 106 | ‘Nobody gets to heaven, and nobody never gets no land.’ | Cynical. Note comparison of heaven and land: American dream. |
| Ch 4  | p 107 | ‘Come on in … difficult for Crooks to conceal his pleasure with anger.’  | Enjoys company. Tone of voice changes. |
| Ch 4  | p 109 | ‘If you … guys … work like a son-of-a-bitch if I want to.’ | Buys into their dream. |
| Ch 4  | p 113 | ‘I could get you strung up on a tree so easy it ain’t funny.’ | Curley’s wife uses society’s prejudice to put Crooks down. |
| Ch 4  | p 113 | ‘Crooks had reduced himself to nothing.’ | Metaphor to express emotion: harsh reality. |
| Ch 4  | p 116 | ‘Member what I said … Jus’ foolin’ | Wants their dream – but backs off. Loner. |

***Curley’s wife*** *A pretty, lonely woman who dreams of being a film star. We never learn her name.*

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| ***Chapter*** | ***Page*** | ***The quotation*** | ***What it shows*** |
| Ch 2  | p 49–50 | ‘Well, I … A tart.’ | Candy has a low opinion of her flirting. |
| Ch 2  | p 53 | ‘A girl was standing … nasal, brittle quality.’ | Full description. Clothes/voice match her personality. Artificial.  |
| Ch 2  | p 54 | ‘Don’t you even … leave her be.’ | George sees her as a threat (jail bait). |
| Ch 3  | p 78 | ‘Been any trouble … here.’‘She’s gonna make a mess … trigger.’ | Foreshadowing by George. Opinion on women as temptation/trouble. |
| Ch 4  | p 110 | ‘They left all the weak ones here …’ | Cruel portrayal. Is she included? |
| Ch 4  | p 110 p 114 | ‘Sure I got a husban’. … Swell guy, ain’t he?’‘I’m glad you bust Curley up … I’d like to bust him myself.’ | Disillusioned with marriage; no one to confide in; bitter. Uses sarcasm. |
| Ch 4  | p 111 | ‘You bindle bums … he could put me in pitchers.’ | Her dream = film star. Name calls. Childish behaviour. |
| Ch 4  | p 111 | ‘I tell you … Maybe I will yet.’ | All = her dreams/hopes when younger. Bitter now. |
| Ch 4  | p 113 | ‘Well you keep your place … it ain’t even funny.’ | Threatens Crooks. Knows power. Fits image. What’s Steinbeck doing? |
| Ch 5  | p 122–3  | ‘I get so lonely … How’d you like not to talk to nobody?’ | Isolation. |
| Ch 5  | p 124–5 | ‘I live right in Salinas … from the rest.’ | Flashback narration to provide an insight into previous life cf Crooks Ch 4. Provoking empathy by Steinbeck? |
| Ch 5  | p 128–9 | Description of death | Powerful graphic language. |
| Ch 5  | p 128 | ‘And she continued … her body flopped like a fish.’ | Ends as a victim. Describes her terror. Powerless – like on ranch. |
| Ch 5  | p 129 | ‘And the meanness … her lips were parted.’ | Cf description Ch 2. Natural description sharp contrast. Why? Discuss language. |

***Candy*** *An elderly man who has lost one hand in an accident on the ranch. He looks after the bunkhouse. A fount of knowledge about people there.*

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| ***Chapter*** | ***Page*** | ***The quotation*** | ***What it shows*** |
| Ch 2  | p 38 | ‘The door opened … in his left hand.’ | Describes him and job. |
| Ch 2  | p 41–2 | ‘The old swamper … out of the door.’ | Scared of Boss. Likes a quiet life.  |
| Ch 2  | p 45 | ‘I didn’t hear nothing … nor he don’t ast no questions.’ | Uneasy. Willing to please. A loner. |
| Ch 3  | p 72 | ‘Candy looked for help from face to face.’ | Alone. Symbolic. |
| Ch 3  | p 74 | ‘At last … .and stared at the ceiling.’ | Very upset about dog but no power. Accepts. Symbolism of death. |
| Ch 3  | pp 87–89 –shared dream L/G/Ca | ‘S’pose … How’d that be?’‘Candy interrupted … right now.’ | His dream – to join in. Prepared to pay. Scared to end like his dog/alone. |
| Ch 4  | p 108–9 | ‘Candy cried, ‘Sure they all want it … He stopped overwhelmed with his picture.’ | Outlines his dream to Crooks; overcome with the dream. |
| Ch 4  | p 111 | ‘But a change came over old Candy … You ain’t wanted here.’ | New sense of fraternity makes him bold with Curley’s wife. Note emotive language. |
| Ch 4  | p 114 | ‘No … listen to us.’ | Passive/powerless |
| Ch 5  | p 131 | ‘What we gonna do now, George?’ | Passive: looks for guidance – a follower. Use of questions to show. |
| Ch 5  | p 131 | ‘Now Candy spoke his greatest fear … He knew.’ | End of his dream. Blames C’s wife p 132 ‘You lousy tart/you god-damn tramp.’ |

***Curley*** *The Boss’s son: a small, angry ex-boxer who is always ready to pick a fight. He has been married a fortnight.*

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| ***Chapter*** | ***Page*** | ***The quotation*** | ***What it shows*** |
| Ch 2  | p 46 | ‘He glanced coldly … calculating and pugnacious.’ | Aggressive on meeting people. Keen to make impression. |
| Ch 2  | p 47 | ‘Curley lashed … getting into it for?’ | Aggressive. |
| Ch 2  | p 51 | ‘Curley’s like a lot of little guys … he ain’t a big guy.’ | Curley = a fighter. A threat to Lennie. Builds tension. |
| Ch 3  | p 80 | ‘Curley burst into the room … seen my wife?’ he demanded. | Insecure about wife and status. Challenging language. |
| Ch 3  | p 81 | ‘Where the hell’s Slim?’ | Threatened by Slim. |
| Ch 3  | p 90 | ‘Curley glared … show ya who’s yella.’ | Attacks Lennie. Coward. Scared of Slim/Carlson (p 87–90). |
| Ch 3  | p 92 | ‘Curley was white … his fist lost in Lennie’s paw.’ | Weak; Lennie described as an animal (image). |
| Ch 3  | p 93 | ‘I won’t tell … Lennie.’ | Humiliated. |
| Ch 5  | p 133p 134 | ‘Curley came suddenly to life …’‘Shoot for his guts.’ | Violent reaction matches violent language. |

***Slim*** *The antithesis of Curley, Slim is a tall, thoughtful man- a natural leader. An expert worker who everyone looks up to.*

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| ***Chapter*** | ***Page*** | ***The quotation*** | ***What it shows*** |
| Ch 2  | p 55–6 | ‘A tall man … a temple dancer.’ | Full description of personality. ‘Prince of the ranch’. Lyrical description. |
| Ch 2  | p 57 | ‘You guys … confidence without demanding it.’ | Good listener. Non-judgemental. |
| Ch 2  | p 57 | ‘Ain’t many guys … scared of each other.’ | Comment on friendship. Accepts G and L. |
| Ch 3  | p 64 | ‘Maybe he ain’t bright … worker.’ | Judges people on actions. |
| Ch 3  | p 65 | ‘Slim neither encouraged … receptive.’ | Trustworthy. People e.g. George confide in him. |
| Ch 3  | p 66 | ‘ … and saw the calm, Godlike eyes … him.’ | Status. Imagery. |
| Ch 3  | p 74 | ‘Candy looked … Slim’s opinions were law.’ | Slim = important. Decides about the dog. Men look up to him. |
| Ch 3  | p 77 | ‘Oh! Hello, Crooks … matter.’ | Treats Crooks differently.  |
| Ch 3  | p 89–90 | ‘Well you been askin’ me … what do you expect me to do about it?’ | Will defend himself against Curley. Strength.  |
| Ch 3  | p 92 | ‘If you don’t tell … an’ then will you get the laugh.’ | Sorts out situation. Authority over Curley. |
| Ch 4  | p 107 | ‘Guys don’t come into a colored guy’s room very much. Nobody been here but Slim.’ | Slim behaves differently. Lack of prejudice? |
| Ch 5  | p 133 | ‘Then Slim went quietly over to her … the spell was broken.’ | Different reaction. Calm language. Use of metaphor to suggest influence on others. |
| Ch 5  | p 134 | ‘Slim sighed. ‘Well I guess we got to get to him.’ | Sympathetic. Non-judgemental. Tries to divert Curley. |
| Ch 6  | p 148 | ‘Slim came directly … very close to him.’ | Understands. Protects George. Respects him. |

***The Boss*** *A small stocky man who owns the ranch. Suspicious and short-tempered but considered a ‘good’ boss.*

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| ***Chapter*** | ***Page*** | ***The quotation*** | ***What it shows*** |
| Ch 2  | p 41 | ‘A little stocky man … not a labouring man.’ | Describes. Shows he’s different. |
| Ch 2  | p 43 | ‘I said what stake … his pay away from him?’ | Suspicious of people. Aggressive. A bully. |
| Ch 2  | p 43 | ‘I never seen one guy take so much trouble … interest is.’ | Can’t believe in relationship: unusual. |

***Carlson*** *A ranch worker, Carlson is powerfully built and a bully, with little understanding of people’s feelings. He owns a Lugar pistol.*

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| ***Chapter*** | ***Page*** | ***The quotation*** | ***What it shows*** |
| Ch 2  | p 57 | ‘A powerful … bunkhouse.’ | Description |
| Ch 2  | p 57 | ‘He ain’t very small … joke.’ | Makes fun of people. |
| Ch 2  | p 58 | ‘Why’n’t you get Candy … raise up.’ | Lack of emotion. Pragmatic. |
| Ch 2  | p 59 | ‘Carlson stepped back … door.’ | Respects Slim. |
| Ch 3  | p 70–1/74 | ‘Tell you what … back of the head.’ | Brutal reality.  |
| Ch 3  | p 90 | ‘You God damn punk … I’ll kick your God damn head off.’ | Brutal. Physically unafraid of Curley. Follows Slim’s lead. |
| Ch 5  | p 133 | ‘Carlson said, ‘I’ll get my Luger.’ | Simple reaction; simple straightforward language. Simple sentence. |
| Ch 6  | p 149 | ‘Now what the hell ya suppose is eatin’ them two guys?’ | Final symbolic comment; lack of empathy/incomprehension. Use of metaphor. Why did Steinbeck choose Carlson’s voice to finish? |

**Exemplar paragraph for Crooks**

**C:** One of the ways that Steinbeck creates sympathy for Crooks is through his description of him. In chapter 4 the reader learns that Crooks is ‘aloof’ but despite this, Steinbeck manages to create compassion for him. The reader fully understands the distance that Crooks ‘demands’ from the white men; it is simply the only right he would have as a black man, the right of segregation. **C/B:** The **reader** also shares his feelings of wanting to be separated from the white men because of the names they address him by, either ‘nigger’ or ‘Crooks’ which is a particularly **cruel** name to give him considering the pain his crooked spine gives him. **B:** The idea of ‘depth’ is actually **repeated** three times in one paragraph, which, along with the word ‘intensity’ suggests that he is in considerable pain. **A:** It has in fact physically impacted upon the way Crooks looks; his face has been ‘lined with deep…wrinkles’ and he has ‘pain-tightened lips’. **A\*:** Steinbeck has used the lowest member of the underclass, a negro, to garner sympathy from the reader and thereby questions the idea of a fair society in which anything is possible for anyone; this is particularly controversial at a time when segregation was the law.

**Animal imagery**

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Below is a jumble of **25 points** about animals and creatures in the novel. These are the sorts of points that you would make if you had to write an essay on this topic.

1. Slim kills at birth several of his dog’s puppies, showing the practical attitude to animals on the ranch as these puppies are not needed and Lulu cannot feed them all.
2. Candy is upset that he has allowed someone else to kill his dog. This links with the novel’s ending when George musters his courage to kill Lennie, ensuring that he dies happy and unafraid.
3. In the opening paragraphs of the novel, Steinbeck creates a picture of the natural world being disturbed by humans as the animals flee to safety.
4. Steinbeck describes Lennie as being like a horse when he drinks. Like an animal, he is simply answering a basic need.
5. At the end in the clearing, the heron eats a water snake, demonstrating Nature’s way of the survival of the fittest.
6. Carlson is the most forthright in his views on Candy’s dog. He can see no further use for it, stating that it is unkind to let it live.
7. Because he is black, Crooks is treated on the ranch as little better than an animal. He is made to live in the barn with the horses and the smell of their manure.
8. When a mule splits its hoof, Crooks and Slim tend to it. This attention is needed for practical, unsentimental reasons to keep it as a useful, working creature on the ranch, unlike Candy’s dog.
9. Another piece of animal imagery for Lennie is when Steinbeck describes him as a terrier because he is so tenacious, always unwilling or unable to release his hold.
10. When Lennie explains early in the novel how he always unintentionally killed the mice that his Aunt Clara gave him, Steinbeck is giving the reader an indication of how he is unable to control his strength.
11. Lennie kills the puppy with his heavy-handed petting and clumsy shows of affection.
12. Candy’s dog has for many years provided companionship for him, regardless of the fact that it has long since stopped being a useful and skilful sheepdog.
13. In the barn, as Curley’s wife’s body is discovered, Steinbeck emphasises the ranch animal noises that accompany this scene.
14. Steinbeck’s simile that compares Lennie to a bear conveys to mixture of brute strength and innocence.
15. When Lennie tries to sneak the puppy into the bunkhouse, his low animal mentality is immediately obvious to George. This incident shows that Lennie cannot help but get into trouble.
16. Steinbeck’s detail of the noise that the lizards make adds sounds to the opening scene.
17. The dog’s mercy-killing is paralleled by the ending. Both the dog and Lennie are crippled, one physically and the other mentally: both are shot with the same gun.
18. When Lennie claims that he will go and live in a cave, and George states that someone will shoot him, the author is suggesting Lennie’s similarity to a wild animal.
19. In his description of the carp’s movement, Steinbeck stresses how Nature is full of strange forces.
20. Lennie yearns to tend rabbits so that he can pet and protect them. His childlike character is shown by the fact that he wants different-coloured ones.
21. Steinbeck again likens Lennie to a bear with paws during the confrontation with Curley. Here, Lennie shows only an animal’s sense of self-protection. He is not aggressive though it is interesting to note that Curley is compared to a rat.
22. The importance of rabbits to Lennie, the killing of Curley’s wife and the muddle in his brain about being in trouble all join at the end of the novel to make him hallucinate a giant rabbit.
23. The fact that the dog is near the end of its life suggests the same idea about Candy.
24. The dove symbolises peace, conveying the tranquillity of the scene before George and Lennie appear.
25. Slim is a jerkline skinner who controls the mules with a skill that makes him respected and admired on the ranch.

**Darkness and light**

Look out for the numerous images of darkness and light. For example, when Curley’s wife first appears in the bunkhouse, both Lennie and George notice that the rectangle of sunshine in the doorway is cut off. Foreshadowing? How? What does light and darkness symbolise?

**Isolation and Loneliness**

Many of the characters admit to suffering from profound loneliness. George sets the tone for these confessions early in the novella when he reminds Lennie that the life of a ranch-hand is among the loneliest of lives. Men like George who migrate from farm to farm rarely have anyone to look to for companionship and protection. As the story develops, Candy, Crooks, and Curley’s wife all confess their deep loneliness. The fact that they admit to complete strangers their fear of being cast off shows their desperation. In a world without friends to confide in, strangers will have to do. Each of these characters searches for a friend, someone to help them measure the world, as Crooks says. In the end, however, companionship of his kind seems unattainable. For George, the hope of such companionship dies with Lennie, and true to his original estimation, he will go through life alone.

