

# **Of Mice and Men**

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***Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck • Sketching a Portrait--Characterization**

Steinbeck introduces his two main characters in this chapter, creating a first impression of George's and Lennie's looks, personalities, beliefs, and dreams. Sometimes authors use *direct characterization* to describe characters—that is, they will directly tell readers important information about a character. For example, an author might write: "Harry was an extremely generous person." However, in this novel Steinbeck prefers to use *indirect characterization*. In other words, we learn about characters by interpreting clues that Steinbeck gives.

Steinbeck tells us about his characters in the following ways:

- A. He describes their appearances.
- B. He shows their actions.
- C. He quotes their explanations of their own actions.
- D. He quotes their expressions of how they believe and feel.
- E. He gives clues from what others say to or about a character.



**Directions:** For each selection from the novel below, use the list in the box above to identify the method Steinbeck uses to give information about the character(s). Then tell what you learn about the character(s) from the selection. An example has been done for you.

Example: They [George and Lennie] had walked in single file down the path, and even in the open one stayed behind the other.

Method: B What you learn George is the leader; Lennie is the follower.

Selection 1: [Lennie] drank with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse.

Method: \_\_\_\_\_ What you learn \_\_\_\_\_

Selection 2: The first man was small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, strong features.

Method: \_\_\_\_\_ What you learn \_\_\_\_\_

Selection 3: "Lennie," he said hopelessly. "You'd drink out of a gutter if you was thirsty."

Method: \_\_\_\_\_ What you learn \_\_\_\_\_

Selection 4: Lennie...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.

Method: \_\_\_\_\_ What you learn \_\_\_\_\_

Selection 5: "I forgot," Lennie said softly. "I tried not to forget. Honest to God I did, George."

Method: \_\_\_\_\_ What you learn \_\_\_\_\_

Selection 6: His anger left him suddenly. He looked across the fire at Lennie's anguished face, and then he looked ashamedly at the flames.

Method: \_\_\_\_\_ What you learn \_\_\_\_\_

Selection 7: Behind him walked his opposite, a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with wide sloping shoulders...

Method: \_\_\_\_\_ What you learn \_\_\_\_\_

### John Steinbeck Brochure (20 pts)

In your brochure you must include a **title page** and a **back page** as well as information about **three** different topics. You may choose to research any of the following:

- The Great Depression
- The Life of John Steinbeck
- Mercy Killings
- Mental Disabilities in the 1930's
- The Pulitzer Prize
- The Migrant Experience in the 1930's.

Your brochure can be done by hand or on a computer.

Brochure Layout should be:

1. Front page including title, your name and some sort image.
2. Three middle pages with a different topic on each page. **DO NOT** just copy and paste from a website. Put the information in your own words. You may use bullet points or write a paragraph. **Create an MLA CITATION for each of your pages.** (If you use the library databases, they create a citation for you. You can also use Noodle Tools or Easy Bib).
3. Back Page which should include a map of California which shows Salinas Valley

Poor (5)	Satisfactory (8)	Excellent (10)
Does not contain the required content	Contains the required content but detail is limited.	Contains the required content with detail and related images.
Brochure does not pay attention to detail, does not show student effort, or has many mechanical errors	Brochure shows attention to detail and student effort, may have a few mechanical errors	Brochure shows great attention to detail and student effort with no mechanical errors.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

***Of Mice and Men* Pre-Reading:  
What Is *Your* American Dream?**

List three goals or dreams you would like to accomplish before the age of thirty.

*Ms. Shintaku's Example: I hope to pay off all my student loans*

1.

2.

3.

List three goals or dreams you would like to accomplish before you die.

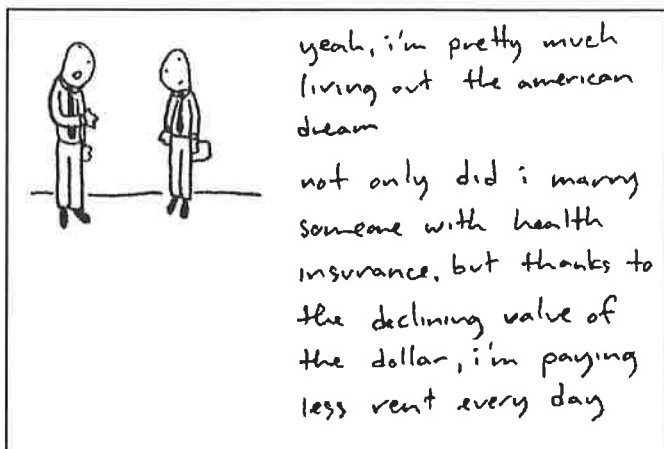
*Ms. Shintaku's Example: I hope to travel the world*

1.

2.

3.

Of the above goals and dreams, which are most important to you? How will you fulfill these dreams? What are you currently doing to insure your dreams will be possible in the future? How would you feel if you were unable to attain these dreams in the future? What do your dreams say about you as a person of 2018? Is the American Dream still alive today? Write a paragraph or two about your own dreams on the back of this sheet using these questions.



**Bonus points:** tell me how this comic is ironic.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Of Mice and Men* Pre-Reading:

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

**Marginalization**

In your own words, what does it mean to be marginalized?

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My partner's  
response \_\_\_\_\_

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List three social groups that are sometimes marginalized by society:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

List three ways in which we sometimes alienate or marginalize people:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think this  
happens? \_\_\_\_\_

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Why is this important to consider or  
discuss? \_\_\_\_\_

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Stereotype of the 1930's	How Steinbeck Portrays
<p>Women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Responsible to take care of the home (which became a challenge as men were losing jobs during the Great Depression).</li> <li>- Not supposed to be athletic</li> <li>- Supposed to be “docile” (quiet, friendly, not cause trouble)</li> </ul>	
<p>Mentally Ill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Often over-drugged to be put into a coma-like state</li> <li>- Treated like burdens on their families</li> <li>- Often put into institutions which treated them poorly.</li> <li>- Lobotomy (cutting into the brain) and Shock therapy were often used</li> </ul>	
<p>African American Men</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uneducated</li> <li>- Lazy</li> <li>- Sexual predators</li> <li>- “Last hired and first fired”</li> </ul>	
<p>Elderly Men</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unable to work = useless</li> <li>- Dependent on their families</li> <li>- High poverty rates</li> </ul>	







## Of Mice and Men Study Questions

### Chapter One:

1. Discuss the following quote: "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 into town and blow their stake, and the first thing you know they're poundin' their tail on some other ranch. They ain't got a thing to look ahead to." (George, p.15) How does this help us understand the main characters?
2. Steinbeck spends a lot of work describing the setting. How do you feel about this place? What places have you seen that are similar?
3. What do you think of the way George treats Lennie? George says he'd like to get rid of Lennie. Do you think that's the way he really feels? Give proof for your opinion.
4. What has life been like for George and Lennie in the past? What do you expect it will be like for them now?
5. What would life be like for both these men if they didn't have each other?
6. What is their dream? What do you think of it?
7. What happened in Weed?
8. Describe (physically) George and Lennie.
9. What is Lennie supposed to do if the boss talks to him? Why?
10. List the animals Lennie would like as pets.

## **Chapter Two:**

1. Discuss the quote: "Curley's like a lot of little guys. He hates big guys. He's all a 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." (Candy, p.29) What does this tell us about Candy's personality?
2. Describe the ranch-hands. What are they like? How do they live? How do they get along together? How do they react to George and Lennie?
3. What do you learn about Curley and Curley's wife?
4. Of the new people in this chapter, which one do you like the best and why? Which one do you dislike and why?
5. How are dogs important in this chapter?
6. What do you know about the stable buck? How is he treated? Why?
7. What does Carlson offer to do to Candy's dog?
8. List all the lies that George tells.
9. Why did the blacksmith leave the ranch?
10. George does not talk openly to Candy until after they talk about Curley and his wife. Why is George so reserved? What prevents farmers from talking to one another?

## Chapter Three:

1. Discuss the quote: "Funny," said George. "I used to have a...lot of fun with 'im. Used to play jokes on 'im 'cause he was too dumb to take care of 'imself. But he was too dumb even to know he had a joke played on him...Tell you what made me stop that. One day a bunch of guys was standin' around on the Sacramento River. I was feeling pretty smart. I turns to Lennie and says, 'Jump in'. An' he jumps. Couldn't swim a stroke. He damn near drowned before we could get him. An' he was so damn nice to me for pullin' him out. Clean forgot I told him to jump in. Well, I ain't done nothing like that no more." What life lesson does George learn?
2. Carlson and Candy disagree about the dog. Who do you think is right? What would you do? Have you ever had a similar experience?
3. Who is William (Bill) Tenner? What did he do?
4. Why do you think George tells Slim what happened in Weed? How can he trust Slim?
5. What is Suzy's place? How is it different from Clara's place?
6. How do both of these places show the man's loneliness?
7. What game is being played with cards? How does it reflect the life of the farm worker?
8. What does Candy say to George after they shoot his dog? Why?
9. Why does Candy have so much more money than the others do? How has it affected his life? What does he want to make himself happy?
10. What is the plan of Lennie, George, and Candy? How much longer do they need to work on the farm to achieve this dream?

11. What do you think of Curley's attacking Lennie?
12. What is the machine that Curley got his hand caught in?

### **Chapter Four:**

1. What is Crooks doing at the beginning and at the end of the chapter? What does this seem to represent about him?
2. If the chapter would have started with Crooks reading, how would this affect how you view him?
3. Where was Crooks born? What did his family own?
4. Discuss this quote: "I had enough," he (Crooks) said coldly. "You got no rights comin' in to a colored man's room. You got no rights messing around in here at all. Now you jus' get out, an' get out quick. If you don't, I'm gonna ask the boss not to ever let you ever come in the barn no more." What does this tell us about Crooks? Make inferences
5. How is the setting different in the chapter? How do your feelings change because of this difference?
6. Why does Crooks "S'pose" a lot of situations to Lennie?
7. Why does Crooks offer to join in the dream of Candy, Lennie and George?
8. The idea of loneliness is a key part of this book. How does this chapter focus on isolation and loneliness?
9. How does the arrival of Curley's wife affect the three men in Crooks' room? What do you think of her?

10. Why is George unhappy when he returns to the ranch? What do you think he should do?

11. What do you expect will happen next in the story?

12. What is Crooks' dream? Why does he give up on his dream?

### **Chapter Five:**

1. Discuss the quote: "Why do you got to get killed? You ain't so little as mice." He picked up the pup and hurled it from him. He turned his back on it. He sat bent over his knees and he whispered, "Now I wont get to tend the rabbits. Now he wont let me." He rocked himself back and forth in his sorrow. (Lennie, Chapter 5). What does this tell us about Lennie?
2. How does Lennie try to justify the puppy's death? What do you think he should do at this time?
3. Curley's wife tells Lennie that he can always get another puppy because there are so many of them. This implies their lack of value. Tie this in with how Curley's wife views men and connect the puppies to the farm workers.
4. What do you learn about Curley's wife? What career could she have had? Who does she blame for not getting to Hollywood?
5. Do your feelings about her change? What advice would you give her?
6. What clues have there been throughout the book to lead up to Lennie's killing Curley's wife?
7. What did Aunt Clara once give Lennie that he later lost?
8. Why is Candy so upset about the girl's death?

9. What is the main reason Curley doesn't want to bring Lennie in unharmed?
10. How does Slim feel about the boys going after Lennie? What does Slim think should be done about Lennie?
11. Who do they think stole Carlson's Luger? Does this make sense?

### **Curley's Wife: Stereotypes and Attitudes (*After Reading Chapter 5*)**

1. What does the swamper Candy mean when he says Curley's wife "got the eye" (28)?
2. Reading the description of Curley's wife on page 31, what impressions do you have of her? Why?
3. Why is George so quick to label Curley's wife as "bitch", "jailbait" and "rat-trap" (32)?
4. In today's society, what actions or appearances need to exist for a girl to be labeled the same way by a boy?
5. After reading Whit's description of Curley's wife on page 51, what is Whit saying about Curley's wife?
6. On page 77, Curley's wife says that only "the weak ones" are left on the farm, but she is soon to express her desire to "talk to somebody" on the farm. What does this tell you about Curley's wife?
7. On page 88, Curley's wife has a "passion of communication" with Lennie. Why? Why can't she do this with any of the other boys?
8. Why does Curley's wife allow Lennie to touch her hair?
9. How does Curley's wife represent a member of a marginalized community?

## **Chapter Six:**

1. Compare the beginning of chapter one with the beginning of chapter six. How are they similar?
2. Why does Aunt Clara and the rabbit come out of Lennie's head?
3. Why does Lennie think of Aunt Clara now? What does the rabbit mean?
4. What is the last thing George tells Lennie and why?
5. Why did George kill Lennie? What gave him the idea? Do you think he was right?
6. How is George killing Lennie tied to Candy wishing he would have been the one to shoot his own dog?
7. George threw the gun "near the pile of old ashes" (106). How is this symbolic?
8. How is the gun explained? How come George has it?
9. Would you have acted like Slim if you knew these people?
10. What do you think will happen to George now?





## American Dream Benchmark Organizer

Article Title \_\_\_\_\_ author \_\_\_\_\_

Main

idea \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Quote that shows main

idea \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Article Title \_\_\_\_\_ author \_\_\_\_\_

Main

idea \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Quote that shows main

idea \_\_\_\_\_

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Article Title \_\_\_\_\_ author \_\_\_\_\_

Main

idea \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Quote that shows main

idea \_\_\_\_\_

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Article Title \_\_\_\_\_ author \_\_\_\_\_

Main  
idea \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Quote that shows main  
idea \_\_\_\_\_  
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Article Title \_\_\_\_\_ author \_\_\_\_\_

Main  
idea \_\_\_\_\_  
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Quote that shows main  
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