**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 akways 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?