This downloadable file includes the Novel Guide book followed by the Remedial Activities and Bonus Handouts.
Note
The text used to prepare this novel guide was published by Penguin Books, an imprint of The Penguin Group, 1993.
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Thomas Mondry has been a high school English teacher in Kentucky for fourteen years… and counting. His other published works include fantasy fiction with artist Larry Elmore and nonfiction work for a California software manufacturer. *Of Mice and Men* is one of his favorite novels.
Overview

Novel guides help you navigate through great literature. This teacher-created guide frees up your day, giving you more time to motivate your students to appreciate *Of Mice and Men*. This guide increases your students’ understanding of literary techniques, such as characterization, theme, symbolism, plot, and more. Creative, innovative, and fun activities improve reading comprehension and strengthen critical thinking skills. Student sections include journal writing, research skills, expository writing techniques, and pre-reading questions. Each section has key questions to be used as your students’ novel road map to success. Teacher sections contain background information, section summaries, discussion questions, writing topics, a grading rubric, and a final test.

How to Use This Guide

Follow this basic sequence of steps to ensure the smoothest course through the novel:

1. Prepare your students to read by working through the *Before We Start* handouts.
   a. Read through the background information to familiarize yourself with the novel.
   b. Print and hand out the Character List, Synopsis, Vocabulary Definition List, Novel Road Map to Success, and Overall Grading Rubric to your students before they start reading.
   c. Have your students complete the pre-reading questions to provide a firm foundation for entering the text.

2. *Target on Text* contains everything you need as the students read. We have divided the activities into six sections of roughly the same length. This provides the necessary stopping places for review as students work their way through the text.
   a. Read through the section summaries, target objectives, and lesson plan details located on the *Teaching Essentials* page at the start of each section.
   b. Print and hand out the activities provided in each section to your students as they read through the novel.
   c. Hold a class discussion at the end of each section to review what your students just read.
3. Reflect on Reading contains activities for students to complete after reading the novel. In this section, the students synthesize their learning:
   a. Hold a final class discussion with the 20 discussion questions.
   b. Assign the activities.
   c. Return to the pre-reading questions for an interesting debate on whether or not students’ original ideas and assumptions have changed.
   d. Administer the final test.

4. For your convenience a disk is provided which includes:
   a. all reproducibles
   b. bonus handouts that supplement the handouts in the book
   c. specially designed exercises for struggling readers
   d. the entire Novel Guide

**Timeline**

The entire unit lasts six weeks. Below are suggested time frames (based on a 50-minute class period) for each stage of your study. The lesson plan details located on the Before We Start, Reflect on Reading, and Teaching Essentials pages list approximate completion times for each activity.

1. **Before We Start:** two class periods
2. **Target on Text:** two class periods per section
3. **Reflect on Reading:** ten class periods
Before We Start

This section contains preparatory information and activities for both you and your students. You receive background information on the novel. Students get a character list, synopsis, vocabulary definition list, pre-reading questions, novel road map to success, and overall grading rubric.

**LESSON PLAN DETAILS**

1. Character List—hand out for student reference
2. Synopsis—hand out and discuss in class (20 minutes)
3. Vocabulary Definition List—hand out for student reference
4. Pre-Reading Questions—hand out and have students complete in class (20 minutes)
5. Novel Road Map to Success—hand out for students to complete as they read
6. Overall Grading Rubric—hand out and discuss (20 minutes)
Author Biography

John Steinbeck (1902–1968) was born in Salinas, California. He came from a middle class family. His father was the county treasurer, and his mother was a former schoolteacher. She inspired and encouraged his love of books and reading.

He attended Stanford University, but he did not graduate. In his twenties, he traveled to New York City with the dream of supporting himself as a freelance writer. When his efforts failed, he went home to California. He then began to work seriously on novels and short stories.

When Steinbeck was a young adult, he spent his summer vacations working as a hired hand on local ranches. His interactions with the people he met during those summers greatly influenced the characters he created throughout his career. In an interview following the publication of Of Mice and Men, Steinbeck revealed that all the characters in the novel are composites based on real people.

Steinbeck said in his essay “Advice For Beginning Writers” (1963) that he still felt afraid every time he began writing a story, even though he had a long successful writing career behind him. He went on to say that a writer who does not experience this fear may not have an appropriate respect for the art of writing.


Book Summary

Background

Of Mice and Men was published in 1937, after John Steinbeck had achieved literary acclaim with his novel Tortilla Flat but before he wrote his better known works The Grapes of Wrath and East of Eden. The story epitomizes the themes and ideas that Steinbeck propounded throughout his novels: the plight of laborers, the perils of isolation, and the hope for a better future. Set in California during the Great Depression, Of Mice and Men is an excellent vehicle for teaching about the life and times of migrant workers in the 1930s. With its beautiful descriptive passages, easily accessible dialogue, and fast-paced timeline, few students have difficulty following along. They are drawn in by the memorable characters that, ironically, represent a segment of society that was largely ignored in its day. Analyzing the balance of power, the importance of friendship, and the role of dreams in our lives allows readers to gain a deeper understanding of the text while applying valuable lessons to their own lives.
**Of Mice and Men**

**Novel Setting**

*Of Mice and Men* is set in the Salinas Valley of Southern California in the late 1930s, the era of the Great Depression. Like many writers of the Modern Period (1915–1945), John Steinbeck attempts to make sense of life in the early decades of the 20th century; he sees the humanity in a class of people who are often ignored by writers and by society at large. These issues are further developed in Steinbeck’s great work, *The Grapes of Wrath*. 

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Character List

Below is a list of the major characters.

Lennie Small:
Lennie is a nondescript, hulking creature of a man whose childlike mentality continually gets him into scrapes with men who neither respect nor understand him.

George Milton:
George is a small, lean man, used to fighting for his place in the world. He oversees and protects Lennie.

Slim:
Slim is a tall skinner (a highly skilled mule-driver) who serves as a counselor to the ranch hands.

Candy:
Candy is the one-handed ranch worker who has lived past his prime.

Curley’s Wife:
She is never named, nor is she respected by the men on the ranch.

Crooks:
Crooks is the African-American stable buck who gets his name because of a spinal injury inflicted by a kicking horse.

Curley:
Curley is the boss’ son; he possesses a jealous, cruel streak.
Of Mice and Men

John Steinbeck’s novel Of Mice and Men places the reader in Depression-era California, traveling from job to job with two migrant laborers, George Milton and Lennie Small. The novel explores their friendship, in contrast to the isolation of their peers, and the way dreams can either sustain or discourage people. It also addresses a variety of issues, including racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination, that play out against the backdrop of lonely people seeking happiness. In addition to examining important ethical dilemmas, studying Of Mice and Men provides an opportunity to discuss literary devices such as foreshadowing, symbolism, and point of view. After reading this novella, not only do you understand the content, but you also develop critical opinions of the author’s message and techniques.
Vocabulary Definition List

The following provides definitions for some of the more difficult words in the text.

**Section 1**
- **mottled**: to mark with spots or blotches of different shades or colors
- **recumbent**: lying down, especially in a position of comfort or rest
- **morosely**: sullenly melancholy
- **junctures**: places where two things are joined
- **droned**: to make a continued, low, dull humming sound
- **lumbered**: to walk or move with heavy clumsiness
- **hesauously**: in a blunt direct manner
- **pantomime**: the telling of a story without words, by means of bodily movements, gestures, and facial expressions
- **imperiously**: arrogantly overbearing or domineering
- **anguished**: expressing agonizing physical or mental pain
- **yammered**: to complain peevishly or whimperingly, whine

**Section 2**
- **occupant**: one that occupies a position or place
- **splotch**: an irregularly shaped spot or discolored area
- **skeptically**: marked by or given to doubt
- **liminant**: a medicated fluid rubbed into the skin to soothe pain or relieve stiffness
- **cesspool**: a covered hole or pit for receiving drainage or sewage, as from a house
- **grizzled**: having fur or hair streaked or tipped with gray
calm in intensity, temper or feeling
- **mollified**: calmed in intensity, temper or feeling
- **pugnacious**: disposed to fight, inclined to fighting
- **gingerly**: with great care or delicacy
- **ominously**: of or pertaining to an omen
- **sloshed**: to discard as undesirable or unfavorable, get rid of
departing or belittling
- **plaintively**: expressively of sorrow or melancholy
- **mourned**: made a low, indistinct, mournful sound

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contorted: twisted or strained out of shape
apprehensive: fearful or uneasy anticipation of the future, dread
disengage: to release from something that holds fast, holds, or entangles
gravity: grave consequence, seriousness or importance
profound: penetrating beyond what is superficial or obvious
complacently: self-satisfied and unconcerned

Section 3
disquisition: any of several pathological conditions of the muscles, tendons, joints, bones, or nerves, characterized by discomfort or disability
quiver: to shake with a slight, rapid, tremulous movement
deliberate: done with or marked by full consciousness of the nature and effects
reprehensible: deserving rebuke or censure
bemused: caused to be engrossed in thought
spectacles: a pair of eyeglasses

Section 4
deliberate: done with or marked by full consciousness of the nature and effects
persuasive: tending or having the power to persuade
scornful: to feel contempt or disdain toward a person or object considered despicable or unsavory
dignity: the quality or state of being worthy of esteem or respect

Section 5
crouched: pressed the entire body close to the ground with the limbs bent
sorrow: mental suffering or pain caused by injury, loss, or despair
viciously: characterized by violent or destructive behavior
snivel: sniffled
gradually: advancing or progressing by regular or continuous degrees

Section 6
scudded: to run or skim along swiftly and easily
Pre-reading questions help you explore your views in order to uncover important themes in the novel.

Directions: Write down your response to each of the questions below. Keep this handout. You will need it after you finish the novel.

1. How does society treat people with mental handicaps?

2. How important is friendship in our lives?

3. Explain whether or not men continue to treat women as objects.

4. Define the American Dream.

5. Explain whether or not writers have a responsibility to address social concerns.
**Of Mice and Men**

**Novel Road Map to Success**

These questions help you stay on track with the plot as well as build your reading comprehension.

**Directions:** Answer these questions on a separate piece of paper as you read.

### Section 1

1. Describe the atmosphere that is created by the imagery in the first two paragraphs of the novel.
2. Why does George get angry with Lennie after they arrive in the clearing?
3. What does the dead mouse in his jacket pocket reveal about Lennie?
4. Why does George urge Lennie to remain quiet when they meet the boss at the ranch where they’ll be working?
5. As they prepare the campfire for dinner, Lennie remarks that he likes his beans with ketchup, sending George into a rage. How is George's tirade revelatory?
6. Is Lennie capable of manipulating George?
7. What is the purpose of the story of the rabbits that George tells Lennie?
8. Before they go to sleep, George tells Lennie to “hide in the brush” near their campsite and wait for George to come if he gets into any trouble. What prediction can readers draw from George's instructions?
9. Why does Steinbeck describe Lennie in animalistic terms?
10. What did you learn in the first section of *Of Mice and Men*?

### Section 2

1. How does the boss react to Lennie's silence?
2. Why does the boss find George and Lennie's relationship unusual?
3. How does the boss treat George and Lennie?
4. What is George's fear at this point in the novel?
5. When Lennie questions George about telling the boss Lennie was kicked in the head by a horse, George says, "Be a damn good thing if you was... Save ever'body a hell of a lot of trouble." What does this mean?
6. Describe Candy's connection to his dog.
7. How is Candy's relationship with his dog reflective of George's relationship with Lennie?
8. When George confronts Candy about eavesdropping, Candy says, "A guy on a ranch don't never listen nor he don't ask no questions." What does this reveal about the lives of the migrant workers?
9. Steinbeck describes Curley's glance as “at once calculating and pugnacious,” and he strides about with “his elbows…still bent out a little.” How does this description reveal Curley's personality?

10. How do George and Lennie react to seeing Curley's wife for the first time?

Section 3
1. What caused George to stop playing mean-spirited jokes on Lennie?
2. What detail is added to the Weed story when George confides in Slim?
3. Carlson offers a simple solution to the problem of Candy's dog's smell and feebleness: shoot it. Slim concurs, saying that the old dog only suffers. What is the significance of this scene?
4. When Carlson starts to take Candy's dog out to be shot, Slim reminds him to “[t]ake a shovel.” What does he mean?
5. The discussion of Curley's wife leads Whit to invite George to come with the other men “to old Susy's place.” What is “old Susy's place,” and what purpose does it serve in the novel?
6. What is Candy's reaction to the gunshot and later to Carlson cleaning his gun?
7. What is the attraction of the vision of the farm and the rabbits to Candy?
8. Why does Candy say that he should've shot his own dog?
9. Why is Slim angry with Curley when they return to the bunk house?
10. Why does Curley attack Lennie?

Section 4
1. Curley's wife is lonely because she's a woman. Candy is lonely because of his age. Why is Crooks lonely?
2. Why does Lennie wander into Crooks' room?
3. Why is Crooks rude to Lennie?
4. What is Crooks' initial evaluation of Lennie?
5. How does Crooks taunt Lennie?
6. Why does Crooks relent in his taunting of Lennie?
7. What does Curley's wife suspect about Curley's injury?
8. What is Curley's wife's reaction to the dream of the farm with the rabbits?
9. How does the promise of the farm embolden Candy and Crooks?
10. Why does Crooks abandon the dream of the farm?

Section 5
1. What has Lennie done as the section opens?
2. What is Lennie's fear?

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Of Mice and Men

Before We Start
Handout 5, continued

1. What personal information does Curley’s wife reveal to Lennie in the barn?
2. To console Lennie over the death of his puppy, Curley’s wife tells him that he can get another one, that “[t]he whole country is fulla mutts.” What is the significance of this line?
3. Why does Curley’s wife get angry when Lennie tells her that George said he shouldn’t talk to her?
4. What was Curley’s wife’s dream? She indicates that life with Curley is not what she wanted for herself.
5. Why does Curley’s wife offer to let Lennie stroke her hair?
6. Why does Curley’s wife become afraid of Lennie as he’s stroking her hair?
7. Why does Lennie kill Curley’s wife?
8. Why does Lennie leave Curley’s wife’s body in the barn, but take the puppy with him when he leaves to go to the river?

Section 6
1. The novel ends where it began, in the clearing by the river. What is the atmosphere established by the description at the beginning of the final section?
2. What is the purpose of Aunt Clara’s appearance in Lennie’s mind’s eye?
3. What does Lennie fear his punishment will be?
4. Why does the giant rabbit appear to Lennie?
5. Why does George struggle with the description of the farm when Lennie asks him to recite it to him there, on the river bank?
6. What is Slim’s role at the end of the story?
7. What is the significance of Carlson asking George if Lennie had his gun and supplying the story that George wrestled the gun away from Lennie and shot him?
8. When George — obviously upset — and Slim go for a drink, Carlson remarks, “Now what the hell ya suppose is eatin’ them two guys?” Why doesn’t he understand?
## Overall Grading Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emended 90%–100%</th>
<th>Good 80%–89%</th>
<th>Competent 70%–79%</th>
<th>Needs Improvement 60%–69%</th>
<th>Weak 50%–59%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates a generally accurate understanding of the characters and plot. Nearly perfect.</td>
<td>Demonstrates a basic understanding of the characters and plot with minor errors, if any.</td>
<td>Demonstrates a basic understanding of the characters and plot with several errors.</td>
<td>Frequently contains a misunderstanding of the characters or plot.</td>
<td>Minute errors in the understanding of the characters or plot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displays strong understanding of all of the novel’s themes, discussing them easily and using them in various types of assignments.</td>
<td>Displays some understanding of most of the novel’s themes and touches on others.</td>
<td>Displays some understanding of most of the novel’s themes but occasionally leaves out some.</td>
<td>Understands one or two themes but concentrates on other ideas, excluding all others.</td>
<td>Understands one or two themes but concentrates on other ideas, excluding all others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows an understanding of literary devices and how they are used in the novel, applying the knowledge to other assignments.</td>
<td>Shows a limited understanding of literary devices and attempts to apply this knowledge to other assignments.</td>
<td>Shows some understanding of literary devices and how they are used in the novel.</td>
<td>Attempts to use some literary devices but cannot describe how they are used.</td>
<td>Attempts to use some literary devices but cannot describe how they are used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correctly uses higher-level language rules in assignments.</td>
<td>Correctly uses common language rules in assignments with some higher-level examples.</td>
<td>Correctly uses common language rules in assignments.</td>
<td>Frequently misuses common language rules in assignments.</td>
<td>Frequently misuses common language rules in assignments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Class Discussion 20%
- Group Projects
- Individual Assignments/Projects/Activities
- Final Test

- 20%
- 25%
- 25%
- 30%
Now it's time to start reading. Target on Text contains a section-by-section progression of activities to enhance your students’ understanding and enjoyment of *Of Mice andMen*. This guide divides the novel into six sections of roughly the same length. Each section has individual section summaries, target objectives, and a variety of activities to highlight key story and literary elements.

While some of the activities are designed to be done individually, working with peers provides students with the opportunity to practice cooperation and creates richer results as the students build on one another’s ideas.
Section 1 Summary

The novel opens a few miles south of Soledad, near the Salinas River. The reader sees a tree-lined pool of water. Wildlife is skittering into the underbrush as George Milton and Lennie Small approach the secluded pool to rest after a hard, hot walk. They are migrant workers, traveling to their next job. George, the smaller of the two, leads the way.

Lennie’s handicap is immediately evident in his animal movements and four-year-old air. He slurs and snorts the water like a horse and repeatedly forgets where they are going and why. They set up camp for the night before going to report for duty as ranch hands. In an early bit of foreshadowing, George makes Lennie promise that if he gets into any trouble he will come back to the clearing by the river.

George is tired and expresses his frustration and anger about being burdened by Lennie. He is immediately sorry for his words, and Lennie senses that he has the upper hand. Lennie offers to leave George and go live in a cave. To pacify Lennie, George tells him the story of how someday they will own their own ranch and live off the fat of the land. Lennie has the story memorized but never fails to delight in George’s telling of it. As they drift off to sleep, Lennie fantasizes about the rabbits he will be allowed to tend when they get their farm.

Target Objectives

At the end of this section, students are able to:

• describe/visualize the setting
• describe the themes introduced thus far
• engage in a class discussion that calls for critical thinking
• use new vocabulary words correctly

LESSON PLAN DETAILS

SECTION 1

1. Setting—hand out and have students complete in class (20 minutes)
2. Thematic Analysis—hand out and have students complete in class (20 minutes)
3. Literary Analysis: Close Reading—hand out and have students complete in class (45 minutes)
4. Vocabulary: Section 1—hand out and have students complete in class (15 minutes)

Discussion Questions: Section 1 (1 class period)

• = Corresponding remedial activity located on the disk

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Setting

Setting is determining time, place, and tone in fiction. This activity helps you see that the setting at the beginning of each scene establishes the atmosphere for the scene.

Directions: Read the following passage from the beginning of the first section. Circle five examples of descriptive language that develop and establish the atmosphere of the first section. In the space below, explain how the descriptions you circled build atmosphere.

"A few miles south of Soledad, the Salinas River drops in close to the hillside bank and runs deep and green. The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool. On one side of the river the golden foothill slopes curve up to the strong and rocky Gabilan mountains, but on the valley side the water is lined with trees — willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter's flooding; and sycamores with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool. On the sandy bank under the trees the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them. Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covered with the night tracks of 'coons, and with the spread pads of dogs from the ranches, and with the split-wedge tracks of deer that come to drink in the dark."

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

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Section 1
Handout 1
Name __________________________
Date ______________ Hour ________
Thematic Analysis

A theme is a general concept or idea, such as love, justice, or sorrow. One way to help you think of themes is to complete the following sentence: “This is a book about ________.”

As a humanist, John Steinbeck wrote about the themes of dignity and pride. Some characters possess these qualities, while others lack them. This certainly a reflection of the human condition. This activity gives you a chance to more thoroughly explore the characters of George and Lennie.

Directions: Answer the following question as it relates to George and Lennie: How is the section motivated by a sense of dignity and pride — or a lack of it?

George

Lennie
**Literary Analysis: Close Reading**

Close reading is the process of re-examining a short passage and asking critical questions about it. This activity is an especially useful tool when you plan to write an essay, want to trace a theme throughout a novel, or learn more about a character.

**Directions:** Fill in the student answer section in the chart.

**George’s Anger with Lennie**

“Lennie knelt and looked over the fire at the angry George. And Lennie’s face was drawn with terror. ‘An’ whatta I got,’ George went on furiously. ‘You can’t keep a job and you lose me ever’ job I get. Jus’ keep me shovin’ all over the country all the time. An’ that ain’t the worst. You get in trouble. You do bad things and I got to get you out.’”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word/Phrase</th>
<th>Critical Question</th>
<th>Student Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. “knelt”</td>
<td>What do you think about when you picture someone kneeling?</td>
<td>Example: Sorrow or repentance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. “drawn with terror”</td>
<td>Why do you think Lennie is terrified of George?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. “lose me ever’ job I get”</td>
<td>Why is “lose” a good verb to use here?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. “shovin’ all over the country”</td>
<td>What is the feeling behind this phrase?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. “I got to get you out”</td>
<td>What does George think about his responsibility for Lennie based on this phrase?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Vocabulary: Section 1

**Directions:** Fill in the blanks with the correct vocabulary word from the word bank.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Bank</th>
<th>1. Emily ________ about how tired and hungry she was.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mottled</td>
<td>Mark’s face was ________ with red splotches because he was so embarrassed to ask Jennifer out for Friday night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more slowly</td>
<td>The ________ of Elm and Maple streets are often backed up through two streetlights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drowned</td>
<td>His heavy footsteps ________ on the creaky floorboards of the attic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>busily</td>
<td>The Professor ________ hurried me out the door when I walked into the wrong classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imperiously</td>
<td>The bee ________ in Susie’s ear as she tried to weed the asters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yammered</td>
<td>Tom walked out of the calculus class with an ________ look on his face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recumbent</td>
<td>Locked out of the house, Trina tried to ________ the turning of the lock to her young daughter Isabelle, who peered out of the window at her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>junctures</td>
<td>The queen ________ ordered all of her guards to leave the throne room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lumbered</td>
<td>Bret stared ________ at his empty coffee cup as he pondered the best way to get Rachel back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pantomime</td>
<td>Ted was a bit shocked to find the shoe salesman ________ behind a stack of sneakers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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John Steinbeck preferred to write in pencil and used as many as 60 cedar pencils every day! © 2005. Teacher’s Discovery®
Of Mice and Men

Discussion Questions: Section 1

Directions: Use the following questions to review what's happened in Section 1. Use these questions to generate discussion about the author's ideas and techniques.

1. Describe the mood that is established by the imagery in the first two paragraphs of the novel.
   Example: Steinbeck describes the clearing by the river that will figure prominently into George Milton’s instructions to Lennie Small in the final section of the novel. The clearing is beautiful, peaceful, and full of life. This establishing scene creates an atmosphere of simplicity and serenity. This mood will soon be shattered with the arrival of George and Lennie.

2. Why does George get angry with Lennie?
   Example: Because of his mental disability, Lennie behaves like an overgrown child by knowingly destroys George, forgets important details, acts without thinking, and lose jobs for them. Lennie is obviously something of a burden to George, and George lashes out at him for that reason.

3. What does the dead mouse in Lennie’s jacket pocket reveal about Lennie?
   Example: The dead mouse reveals that Lennie does not know his own strength; even though he is child-like, Lennie is not small in stature, nor is he at all gentle. Lennie’s inability to temper his physical strength has — as readers will discover — caused problems for Lennie and George in the past and will seal their fates.

4. Why does George insist that Lennie remain quiet when they meet the boss at the ranch where they’ll be working?
   Example: George’s insistence that Lennie stay silent indicates that he doesn’t fully trust Lennie because of his limited mental faculties. The novel is set during the Great Depression of the 1930s, and at this time in American history, jobs were few and far between. George and Lennie need the money that the job at the ranch can provide, and George cannot allow Lennie to inadvertently rob them of the opportunity to work for an honest wage. George’s anger and the tone of the text indicate that Lennie’s actions have lost them jobs in the past.

5. After George throws away Lennie’s dead mouse, Lennie begins to cry. What does this scene reveal about both men?
   Example: First of all, Lennie’s child-like nature is fully revealed in this scene, he is a little boy who has been punished by his father. Also, George refers to his love, and readers truly see him as Lennie’s caretaker. He says, "I ain’t takin’ it away jus’ for meanness. That mouse ain’t fresh, Lennie; and besides, you’ve broke it pettin’ it," revealing that he has Lennie’s best interests at heart. Moreover, this scene reiterates Lennie’s inability to control his strength.
6. As they prepare the campfire for dinner, Lennie remarks that he likes his beans with ketchup, sending George into a rage. How is George’s tirade revelatory?

Example: It is here that readers learn what happened in Weed that put George and Lennie on the road again. Lennie innocently touched a girl’s red dress, and when she became frightened, he got nervous and latched onto the dress. She screamed, and Lennie and George ran away and hid in an irrigation ditch until they could sneak away under cover of night. Lennie’s attraction to soft, pretty things, innocuous things — mice, rabbits, puppies, a piece of felt, women’s dresses and hair — is the catalyst for the major upheavals in George and Lennie’s life on the road.

7. Is Lennie capable of manipulating George?

Example: Yes. When Lennie suggests that he could live in a cave by himself, George relents in his anger and says that he’ll get him a puppy as soon as possible since mice are too small for him to pet. George has vowed to care for Lennie, and ultimately, he can’t allow him to get it alone.

8. Why does George tell Lennie the story of the rabbits?

Example: The story of the farm placates Lennie. The rabbits in the story come to represent something of a Holy Grail to these men who live from job to job, from season to season. It seems unrealistic to George even as he describes the small farm with the chickens, the vegetable garden, and the rabbits; later on, as he’s trying to get to sleep, George says Lennie will have “red and blue and green rabbits.” This indicates that George isn’t really invested in this vision because it’s not something that ever comes to migrant workers like George and Lennie. Essentially, this vision is the concept of the American Dream, that if one works hard enough, one can achieve a place of one’s own — a home.

George and Lennie hope for something better, but as readers will learn, “the best-laid plans of mice and men” often go astray. The novel borrows its title from the Robert Burns poem “To a Mouse,” which describes how life doesn’t necessarily work out as we want it to, how outside forces often disrupt our “best-laid plans.”

The story also defines George and Lennie’s friendship. They travel together, unlike other migrant workers who travel alone and lead desperately empty lives.

9. Before they go to sleep, George tells Lennie to “hide in the brush” near their campsite and wait for George to come if he gets into any trouble. What prediction can readers draw from George’s instructions?

Example: Based on what happened in Weed and these instructions, it is clear that Lennie will get into some sort of trouble again.

10. Why does Steinbeck describe Lennie in animalistic terms?

Example: Throughout the first section of the novel, Steinbeck refer to Lennie’s hands as paws, to his body and his walk as bear-like, and to his habits — such as drinking from the stream — as animal-like. These descriptions portray Lennie’s simplicity and perhaps his lack of responsibility for his future actions.
Section 2 Summary

George and Lennie arrive at the ranch late the next morning. The teams have already gone out, so George and Lennie acquaint themselves with their new home. The men get a tour of the bunkhouse from an old, one-handed swamper named Candy. With him is his ancient, half-blind dog. When they meet the ranch owner George does all the talking, which makes the boss suspicious. He accuses George of working Lennie and taking his wages. George is forced to admit that Lennie isn’t bright, offering a series of lies about how Lennie was kicked in the head by a horse. He also tells the boss that they are cousins, and he feels obligated to take care of Lennie. He staunchly defends Lennie’s ability to work and asks for a chance to prove it. When asked about their last job, George is forced to lie again, claiming that they left the job because it was finished.

This section introduces Curley. He asserts his power immediately through his clenched fists and surly attitude, indicating that he has a need to fight. After Curley leaves the bunkhouse, Candy tells George and Lennie that Curley is recently married to a woman with questionable morals. He warns them to stay away from Curley because he likes to pick fights with big guys.

Curley’s wife wanders into the bunkhouse looking for her husband. Her flirty nature is instantly apparent, and she fixates on Lennie, the one man in the bunkhouse who seems equally fascinated with her. When she leaves, George takes Lennie aside and tells him to stay away from Curley and his wife. He reminds Lennie where to go should there be trouble.

The end of the section introduces the “Prince of the Ranch,” Slim. He is a tall, jerkline Skinner, an expert driver of the mule teams used on the ranch. The men make way for him and listen to his every word when he is in the room. He appears ageless, with a rugged handsomeness. His fines, yet careful manner commands respect from those around him.

Target Objectives

At the end of this section, students are able to:

- identify key setting descriptions
- analyze characters in the novel
- discuss multiple themes addressed by the author
- discuss questions requiring higher-level thinking skills
LESSON PLAN DETAILS
SECTION 2

1. Imagery—hand out and have students complete in class (15 minutes)
2. Expository Writing: Slim and Curley—hand out and have students complete in class (1 class period)
3. Thematic Analysis: Loneliness—hand out and have students complete in class (40 minutes)

Discussion Questions: Section 2 (1 class period)

* Corresponding remedial activity located on the disk
Imagery

Imagery is language that stirs up one or all of the five senses: seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching. By examining the author’s word choices, you learn more about the ways authors write and why some words are better than others.

Directions: Read the following passage from the beginning of the second section. Circle five descriptive words or phrases. In the space below, explain the importance of each description the author uses.

“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 these 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 stovepipe 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.”

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

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Comparing characters and events helps you identify specific developments in the story and whether or not you feel they are important. This activity allows you to become more familiar with the characters and what they represent.

**Directions:** Write an expository essay comparing and contrasting Slim and Curley. Be sure to include evidence from the text and analysis of the characters.

**Topic:** Compare and contrast Slim and Curley. What is it about Slim that makes him the “Prince of the Rancho”? Why is Curley, the true heir-apparent, so despised?

**Brainstorm Ideas Here:**
Thematic Analysis: Loneliness

A theme is a general concept or idea, such as love, justice, or sorrow. One way to help you think of themes is to complete the following sentence: “This is a book about __________.”

Loneliness is a central theme in Of Mice and Men. Each of the novel’s major characters are motivated in some way by a sense of loneliness, a feeling of separation from others. This activity helps you become more familiar with the characters and what they represent.

Directions: In the space provided, write a journal entry that addresses that feeling of loneliness in the voice of one of the novel’s main characters. Consider the following characters: George Milton, Lennie Small, Curley’s Wife, or Curley.
Discussion Questions: Section 2

Directions: Use the following questions to review what’s happened in Section 2. Use these questions to generate discussion about the author’s ideas and techniques.

1. What does the description of the bunkhouse reveal about the men who sleep there?
   Example: They live simply and they travel light. There are just a few articles on the apple box shelves above the bunks—a few personal items and not much else, some magazines and playing cards to pass their non-working time. They appear to lead simple lives, but Steinbeck shows that these migrant farmhands are as complex as upper-class fictional characters: as readers will learn, they have needs and concerns, and they have dignity.

2. Candy reveals that Whitey, the blacksmith, left one day, that “he…just quit, the way a guy will.” What is the significance of this observation?
   Example: The migrant farmhands Steinbeck describes have wandering spirits; they’re unsettled, and they move on without much, if any, notice. This restlessness is the antithesis of the vision of the rabbit George uses to placate Lennie. This dream is about settling down, about living out the American Dream and having a place of one’s own.

3. What does Candy’s description of the treatment of Crooks, the stable buck, by the boss and the other workers say about the societal microcosm that is the ranch?
   Example: As an African-American in the 1930s, Crooks would normally not be allowed in the bunkhouse. He is often the target of the boss’s rage, or that time Crooks represented something that even outcasts and drifters could look down upon. He was even lower on the social ladder than the vandals.

4. How is Candy’s relationship with his dog reflective of George’s relationship with Lennie?
   Example: George takes care of Lennie; Lennie is George’s responsibility, and like Candy’s dog, Lennie is a primal creature who relies on someone to attend to his daily needs. Additionally, like the dog in Candy’s life, Lennie is George’s escape from the hardships of the migrant worker’s life.

5. When George confronts Candy about eavesdropping, Candy says, “A guy on a ranch don’t never listen nor he don’t ask no questions.” What does this reveal about the lives of the migrant workers?
   Example: There are no—or very few—connections among the men. Each man lives for himself, satisfies his personal needs, and moves on when he deems it necessary. Migrant workers lead lonely, disconnected lives.

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Discussion Questions: Section 2

6. Steinbeck describes Curley's glance as "at once calculating and pugnacious," and he strides about with "his elbows...still bent out a little." How does this description reveal Curley's personality?

Example: A small man, Curley is constantly raining around, itching for a fight to prove that he's a bigger man than he appears to be. As someone who is shrewd in his observations, Curley seeks out the best opportunities to prove his supremacy to others. Candy remarks that Curley can't lose in a fight with a larger man because if he does the larger man, he will be seen as skilled at fighting; if he loses to the larger man, he will be seen as a helpless victim.

7. Why does George warn Lennie to stay away from Curley?

Example: George feels that Curley's got Lennie's number. He wants to fight Lennie and will look for or create opportunities to do so. George doesn't want to lose yet another job because of Lennie. However, Lennie is told to defend himself if he's attacked and to remember the location of their campsite by the river if he gets into trouble.

8. How do George and Lennie react to seeing Curley's wife for the first time?

Example: George is almost immediately angry. He sees her as the tart described to him by Candy; on the other hand, Lennie is mesmerized by her beauty and this means trouble. George warns Lennie to stay away from her.

9. Steinbeck describes Slim as majestic, authoritative, and ageless — "the prince of the ranch." How does Slim convey these qualities?

Example: He's a skilled worker, the best there is at what he does, and he's subtle, unobtrusive. Unlike Curley, Slim lives up to the work and expects the quiet dignity and grace among the ranch hands, providing a listening ear and offering advice only when necessary. He is the only one among the ranch workers who understands George and Lennie's relationship, simply saying, "It's a lot nicer to go around with a guy you know.

10. How is Carlson characterized upon his introduction?

Example: Carlson is a heavy man who sees things simply; he finds the obvious humor in Lennie Small's name ("He's ain't very small.") and offers an easy, almost sadistic, solution for dealing with the fecklessness of Candy's old dog: shoot it and take one of Slim's pups. Carlson's world is black-and-white and without many deep connections.

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Section 3 Summary

George and Lennie settle in quickly to life on the ranch.

Slim questions George about why he saddles himself with Lennie. George tells Slim the truth, trusting him easily. George tells how, when they were younger, everyone, including George himself teased Lennie. He realized one day, after nearly causing Lennie to drown, that he had an intense power over Lennie. It scared George, and he decided to use this power to protect Lennie, rather than hurt him. George also admits the truth about their last job in Weed.

Slim notices Lennie’s fascination with animals and offers him one of his dog’s new pups. Lennie is thrilled and begins spending all of his free time in the barn with the pups. He has to be warned that they are too little to be handled constantly. Lennie doesn’t realize the strength in his large hands.

Curley and Lennie have an altercation, and Lennie crushes Curley’s hand. Slim makes a pact with Curley to say his hand was caught in a machine if he agrees to stay away from Lennie.

Target Objectives

At the end of this section, students are able to:
• demonstrate comprehension of the characters’ development
• analyze the importance of the dream of the farm
• demonstrate comprehension of the story and the setting
• evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of first- and third-person point of view
• discuss treatment of the mentally disabled
LESSON PLAN DETAILS

SECTION 3

- 1. Character Analysis—hand out and have students complete in class (20 minutes)
- 2. Thematic Analysis—hand out and have students complete at home (3 hours)
- 3. Literary Analysis: Point of View—hand out and have students complete in class (20 minutes)
- 4. Creative Writing Assignment—hand out and have students complete in class (25 minutes)

Discussion Questions: Section 3 (1 class period)

* A Corresponding remedial activity located on the disk
Character Analysis

Characterization is the method used by a writer to develop how the character looks, acts and thinks. This activity allows readers to assess both George Milton and Slim based on their conversation at the beginning of Section 3 of Of Mice and Men.

Directions: Read the following passage from the novel and answer the questions that follow it. Refer directly to the passage for support.

“He ain’t no cuckoo,” said George. “He’s dumb as hell, but he ain’t crazy. An’ I ain’t so bright neither, or I wouldn’t be buckin’ barley for my fifty and found. If I was bright, if I was even a little bit smart, I’d have my own little place, an’ I’d be bringin’ in my own crops, instead of doin’ all the work and not getting what comes up outa the ground.” George fell silent. He wanted to talk. Slim neither encouraged nor discouraged him. He just sat back quiet and receptive.

1. Why does George feel that he’s not intelligent?

2. Why does George need to talk?

3. Why does Slim neither encourage nor discourage George from talking?
Thematic Analysis

A theme is a general concept or idea, such as love, justice, or sorrow. One way to help you think of themes is to complete the following sentence: "This is a book about __________." The theme of the American Dream permeates John Steinbeck’s Of Mice and Men; several of the major characters seek a version of the American Dream. By studying previous generations, you gain a better understanding of your own generation.

**Directions:** Research the Great Depression era to ascertain the dreams people pursued in the early part of the 20th century. Use history texts, reference books, reputable online sources, and personal interviews to gather data. Then, explain the significance of the following dreams to the Americans of the 1920s and 1930s, as well as their significance to specific characters from the novel.

1. home ownership
2. a motion picture career
3. social equality
Literary Analysis: Point of View

The point of view is the way that the narrator sees the events in the story. *Of Mice and Men* is written from an objective, third-person point of view. The benefit of this choice is that the reader is aware of everything that happens in the novel. The drawback is that the reader cannot enter into the thoughts and emotions of any one character. Use this opportunity to explore the effects of using a first-person point of view in the story. This activity helps you explore different points of view and actively determine which one is better for the novel.

**Directions:** In the space below, rewrite one page from Section 3 in the first person (use I, me, my). View the scene through the eyes of any of the following characters: George, Slim, Lennie, Curley, Candy, Crooks, or Curley. Add feelings and ideas that are consistent with the character's personality. Include the page reference for the passage you are rewriting. Be prepared to discuss your opinions of third versus first person and which technique you feel best suits the novel.

**First-Person Rewrite:**

[Section 3, Handout 3]
In Section 3, George confides in Slim. He reveals many details about his life with Lennie, including the way he used to treat him. This activity allows you to write in a less restricted format and requires you to extrapolate new ideas based on what you have read. It offers an opportunity to explain your own viewpoints while acting through the character of a mental health worker.

Directions:
Pretend that you are a mental health worker and use these facts to write an imaginary case history of Lennie. In addition to summarizing Lennie’s past, evaluate his mental abilities and make recommendations for his care and treatment. Your writing reflects your own opinions of how we ought to treat people who suffer from mental disabilities.

The File on Lennie Small
Case History:

Professional Evaluation of Mental Abilities:

Recommendations for Care and Treatment:
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Discussion Questions: Section 3

Directions: Use the following questions to review what's happened in Section 3. Use these questions to generate discussion about the author's ideas and techniques.

1. Why does George thank Slim at the beginning of the third section of the novel?
Example: Slim has given Lennie a puppy from his dog’s litter. To Slim this seems rather small, but it means a lot to Lennie, and therefore, it means a lot to George, who struggles to keep Lennie pacified.

2. How does Lennie’s bringing the puppy into the bunkhouse underscore what has been established about him?
Example: Lennie is obsessed with petting soft things, especially animals. Like he doesn’t recognize his own strength, he doesn’t realize that removing the puppy from its mother can be dangerous for the puppy, only his satisfaction is important.

3. What is the significance of Carlson planning to shoot the dog in the back of the head?
Example: Carlson assures Candy that the dog will not suffer when he shoots him. This scene foreshadows the novel’s tragic ending.

4. Like Candy, Whit gossips about Curley’s wife; he calls her “a looloo” and says, “She got the eye goin’ all the time on everybody.” How does this commentary confirm George’s impression of Curley’s wife?
Example: Essentially, George feels that a woman amid a group of men is bad news, that she can’t be trusted.

5. Is there any real evidence that Curley’s wife is “trouble?”
Example: No. Whit confirms that nothing has happened, but Curley is edgy, almost waiting for her to cheat on him with another man. The ranch hands are waiting, too.

6. How do the details of the vision speak to the idea of the American Dream?
Example: The American Dream is to have a place of one’s own, to pull oneself up by one’s own bootstraps, to have a home, and to be able to buy one’s own beer, to have a home, and to be able to pay for oneself and one’s own. The farm with the windmill, the chicken run, the orchard, the alfalfa, and the rabbits is George and Lennie’s deliverance from the life of the migrant worker; and ultimately, it remains a vision — something that is pursued, but never attained. This is all about a sense of belonging, having “our own place where we belonged and not sleep in no bunk house.” Ultimately, the farm represents independence.
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Discussion Questions: Section 3

7. What is the significance of the rabbits to Lennie?  
   Example: The rabbits represent something for which he can be responsible; he will find them and defend them from the cats. These will give him a sense of purpose. Moreover, the rabbits — which are timid creatures — come to symbolize the elusiveness of the vision George and Lennie pursue.

8. Why does Candy say that he should’ve shot his own dog?  
   Example: The dog was his responsibility and no one else’s, just as Lennie is George’s responsibility.

9. How does Slim save George and Lennie’s jobs?  
   Example: He tells Curley to say that he got his hand caught in a machine or he’ll tell everyone what really happened, how Curley lost a fight to the gentle giant of a man. This appeals to Curley’s need for respect, his need to be a notch above everyone else.

10. How does George comfort Lennie?  
    Example: He tells Lennie that he’s done nothing wrong, that he’ll still get to tend the rabbits on the farm. This is the comfort a parent gives a child.
Section 4 Summary

Section 4 begins in Crooks’ room. He is the Negro stable buck who has his own room segregated from the rest of the men. He is isolated in the back of the barn with the animals. Despite his surroundings and treatment, he is proud. He knows his place but has a quiet dignity about him. It is Saturday night and the men, including George, are all in town at the whorehouse. Candy, Crooks, and Lennie are the only remaining hands at the ranch.

Lennie wanders into Crooks’ room, despite his protests. He has been watching the puppies, but is looking for someone to talk to. Crooks asks him to leave but is secretly glad for the attention. Crooks takes the opportunity to exert power over the one person he is capable of hosting. He tells Lennie that he is crazy and asks him what he would do if George never came back for him. Lennie gets upset, mistaking Crooks’ words for a threat. Crooks softens and decides to talk of the farm. He tells Lennie that he has never seen anyone accomplish his dream. He also talks of his loneliness.

Candy comes in looking for Lennie. He is surprised to find him with Crooks. Together they start talking about the reality of the farm, and Crooks asks to work there for nothing, just his keep. He, like Candy, is afraid of what happens when he has outlived his usefulness.

Curley’s wife interrupts their camaraderie, looking for her husband. She knows that he is in town with the men, but she is looking for entertainment. She talks of her arrogant husband and how she knows that a machine didn’t catch his hand. Her dialect slips as she gets excited, rambling on about how she could have been something, instead of wasting her talent there on the ranch.  “Sat’day night. Ever’body out doin’ som’pin’. ” She reminds them that they are nothing and that she could get Crooks hurt just for talking to her. She points out that dreams don’t come true for “bindle stiffs.”

Curley’s wife asks Lennie about the bruises on his face. He stammers on about Curley’s hand being caught in a machine and she knows that he is responsible. She is forced to leave as the men come back to the ranch. She doesn’t want to be caught in a black man’s room.

After her threats, however, Crooks seems deflated, realizing that he as a black man couldn’t be part of their dream.

George chastises Candy and Lennie upon finding them in Crooks’ room. He wonders why they told Crooks about the farm. Candy protests that he told “just Crooks,” as if to say that he lacked importance in their world.
Of Mice and Men

Target Objectives

At the end of this section, students are able to:
- identify plot elements as they pertain to the novel
- participate in discussions on racism and other ethical issues
- describe the role of hopes and dreams in the story
- demonstrate comprehension of the story
- write about the role of authors in society

LESSON PLAN DETAILS

SECTION 4

1. Character Analysis: Crooks—hand out and have students complete in class (20 minutes)
2. Role Play Activity—hand out and have students complete in class (1 class period)
3. Setting—hand out and have students complete in class (30 minutes)
4. Symbolism: Defining the Characters—hand out and have students complete at home (1 hour); have students share papers in class (1 class period)

Discussion Questions: Section 4 (1 class period)

- a Corresponding remedial activity located on the disk

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Character Analysis: Crooks

Characterization is the method used by a writer to develop how the character looks, acts, and thinks. Finding connections is one way to improve your critical thinking skills.

Directions: Read the following passage, then respond to the questions to understand how one character fits into the novel as whole.

Crooks laughed again. “A guy can talk to you an’ be sure you won’t go blabbin’. Couple of weeks an’ them pups’ll be all right. George knows what he’s about. Joe talks, an’ you don’t understand nothing.” He leaned forward excitedly. “This is just a nigger talkin’, an’ a busted-back nigger. So it don’t mean nothing, see? You couldn’t remember it anyways. I seen it over an’ over — a guy talkin’ to another guy and it don’t make no difference.” His excitement had increased until he pounded his knee with his hand. “George can tell you screwy things, and it don’t matter. It’s just the talking. It’s just bein’ with another guy. That’s all.”

1. Do Crooks’ thoughts in this passage reflect any of the thoughts of the novel’s other characters?

2. How does Crooks’ race contribute to his outcast nature?

3. What is the significance of talking to “another guy” to Crooks?

4. Why does Crooks emphasize his race in this passage?

5. What would it take for Crooks to feel any degree of acceptance among the workers?
Of Mice and Men features a number of characters with dreams of changing their lives for the better; however, most of those dreams are thwarted. Assume the role of Curley’s wife, one character who never realizes her goals, and try to understand her hopes and her frustrations. This activity allows you to get into a character’s head and explore her dreams and aspirations.

Directions: Write a three-minute monologue for Curley’s wife. What are her hopes? Her dreams? Her disappointments? Imitate her speech patterns and include references that fit the times. Perform your monologue in groups of four students. The best monologues are then performed for the entire class.
When an object represents a concept or idea, it is called symbolism. There are many symbols in *Of Mice and Men*. This activity demonstrates how places in the novel can symbolize emotions or ideas. Although you may not fully understand everything each place represents until you finish the novel, you should have a fairly good idea at this point in the story. This activity asks you to think about the complex ideas represented by simple places. Considering these elements more carefully increases your appreciation for the novel.

**Directions:** For each place listed below, write down all of the emotions/ideas that you feel it may represent.

1. the bunkhouse as a place of danger for Lennie
2. the clearing by the river as a place of peace
3. the harness room as a place of separation
4. the barn as a place of foreboding or uncertainty
Symbolism: Defining the Characters

A symbol is an object or action that stands for something else. After finishing Section 4, you have learned a great deal about each of the character's personalities. In this assignment, demonstrate your understanding of one character through the use of symbolism (for example, choose an object that represents one aspect of your character and explain the connection to the class). This activity asks you to apply your knowledge of symbolism and of the story. Sharing your ideas with your classmates provides practice with public speaking and enhances everyone's appreciation for the complexity of the characters in the novel.

Directions: Follow the steps below.

Step 1: Choose a character from the novel and write his/her name here: ______________.

Step 2: Consider this character's personality and behavior. Which trait do you feel is the most important one? Write it here:

Step 3: Choose an object that represents the personality trait described above. Think outside the box. You'll need to bring the object in to class, you may bring a picture of large/inaccessible objects. What object will you use to symbolize your character? Write it here:

Step 4: In the space below describe how your object represents the character's personality trait. You may use note form or complete sentences, whatever will make you feel more comfortable when speaking in front of the class. Write your explanation here:
Discussion Questions: Section 4

Directions: Use the following questions to review what's happened in Section 4. Use these questions to generate discussion about the author's ideas and techniques.

1. Why is Crooks rude to Lennie?
   Example: Crooks' loneliness has made him resentful of the other men. He says he's not wanted in the bunk house, so Lennie's not welcome in his room. The isolation has gotten to Crooks, made him mean the way George says loneliness affects people.

2. Why does Crooks tease Lennie?
   Example: Because he can. As the only African-American on the ranch, Crooks may be the most outcast figure in the novel, and he resents the whites who relegate him to the barn. Since Lennie is an easy target, Crooks presses his advantage and tortures him a bit. If anything, Crooks is jealous of the companionship shared by George and Lennie.

3. Why does Curley's wife come to the barn?
   Example: She's lonely, but Candy and Crooks treat her badly; they say that they don't want trouble and that she should go back to the house.

4. How does the promise of the farm embolden Candy and Crooks?
   Example: Candy and Crooks stand up to Curley's wife's derision of their dream. The promise of a place of their own, where no one can tell them what to do, gives them the courage to face her down. Unfortunately, Curley's wife plays the card of her connections to Curley and to the boss: with a false accusation, she could get them fired or worse.

5. Why does Crooks abandon the dream of the farm?
   Example: He comes to believe that it's foolish for a black man to attach himself to such a dream, that there will always be someone to make him feel subhuman. He甚至 says that he wouldn't have wanted to go to a place like the farm Candy, Lennie, and George want to buy.

6. In the end, Crooks returns to putting liniment on his injured back. What does this mean?
   Example: Crooks has completely abandoned the dream he very briefly embraced before Curley's wife came into the room where he was talking to Candy and Lennie; he is returning to life as usual.

7. Why does Crooks tell George that "Lennie's a nice fella"?
   Example: Crooks appreciates even the brief respite he got from the loneliness that define his daily existence.

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Section 5 Summary

Section 5 opens on Sunday afternoon. The men are out playing horseshoes. Lennie is alone in the barn talking to his dead pup. He has been too rough with it and is worried that George won't let him tend the rabbits. He is trying to decide if he should run to the clearing and hide in the brush when Curley's wife sneaks into the barn. Lennie warns her that he is not supposed to talk to her. She sees the dead pup and slips him into talking about the farm and the rabbits. As she slides closer, words tumble out about what kind of life she should have had. She wants to be in the movies. He is a captive audience. She talks and talks of her missed opportunities and obvious talent.

Lennie keeps breaking in about the rabbits. She asks him why he likes them so much, and he tells her, as if in confidence, that he likes to pet soft things. She allows him to touch her hair, but she demands he stop when he gets too rough. He gets scared and holds on tightly, accidentally breaking her neck. He half hides her under the hay and leaves for the clearing.

Candy finds her body and gets George. Together they decide that Candy should alert the men so that they won't think George had anything to do with the killing. The men arrange a search party to look for Lennie. Curley has every intention of shooting or lynching Lennie. George wants to get to Lennie first. When all the men leave, Candy lies down in the hay, covering his face because he knows that his dream is over.

Target Objectives

At the end of this section, students are able to:

- demonstrate comprehension of the story
- discuss the destruction of the characters' dreams
- identify the significance of the barn setting
LESSON PLAN DETAILS
SECTION 5

1. Thematic Analysis: Dreams—hand out and have students complete in class (15 minutes)
2. Thematic Analysis: Power—hand out and have students complete in class (25 minutes)
3. Literary Elements: Foreshadowing—hand out and have students complete in class (20 minutes)

Discussion Questions: Section 5 (1 class period)

• ❈ Corresponding remedial activity located on the disk
Thematic Analysis: Dreams

A theme is a general concept or idea, such as love, justice, or sorrow. One way to help you think of themes is to complete the following sentence: “This is a book about ________.” One of the major themes in *Of Mice and Men* is the elusiveness of dreams; several characters’ hopes have been dashed by the end of Section 5. This activity gives you a chance to explore more deeply the characters’ personalities.

**Directions:** Identify the dream of each of the following characters, and explain how that dream is destroyed. Explain what you can learn from this at the bottom of the page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Dream</th>
<th>How it Dies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George and Lennie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crooks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curley’s Wife</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Lessons Learned**
What message is the author giving the reader? Will anyone’s dream come to fruition? How do you feel after examining this rather depressing theme?
Thematic Analysis: Power

A theme is a general concept or idea, such as love, justice, or sorrow. One way to help you think of themes is to complete the following sentence: "This is a book about __________." Analyze the balance of power in the novel. Who is in control? Who suffers at the hands of others?

This activity asks you to look at the characters in the novel and evaluate their position in relation to others. When you make a determination about their place in life and the justness of their circumstances, it enhances your critical thinking skills and makes you more aware of ethical issues in society.

Directions: Place each character in the appropriate column (powerful or powerless) and write a brief explanation for your decision. After completing the chart below, answer the questions that follow to decide if anything can be done to alter this state of affairs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Powerful Characters</th>
<th>Powerless Characters</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Who determines where the power resides in life?

2. What, if anything, can the characters do to change their position?

3. Explain whether or not you believe this uneven power distribution is necessary in life?
Literary Elements: Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is a technique authors use to drop hints about future events in a novel. Now that you have finished most of the novel, you can look back and notice how the author dropped clues along the way. Examine these events and then make a prediction about how the novel will end.

This activity provides practice with the ways authors employ foreshadowing. Looking at events through hindsight enriches your understanding of the novel's complexity. Examining trends and patterns in the story helps you predict the outcome.

Directions: Connect each event in section one below to the novel as a whole. Why does the author include it in the story? Answer the question in section two before finishing the novel.

Section 1
1. Lennie tells George that his Aunt Clara stopped giving him mice to pet because he killed them.
2. Lennie and George had to leave Weed because Lennie scared a woman in a red dress by holding onto the soft material of the dress.
3. Carlson kills Candy's dog to prevent future suffering.

Section 2
1. How do you think the novel will end, based on the foreshadowing seen thus far?
Discussion Questions: Section 5

Directions: Use the following questions to review what's happened in Section 5. Use these questions to generate discussion about the author's ideas and techniques.

1. What has Lennie done as the section opens?
   Example: Lennie has killed the puppy Slim gave him. Again, he didn't recognize his own strength, and when he smacked the puppy as punishment for nipping at him, he killed it.

2. To console Lennie over the death of his puppy, Curley's wife tells him that he can get another one, that "[t]he whole country is fulla mutts." What is the significance of this line?
   Example: Obviously, Curley's wife is letting Lennie know that he will be able to replace the puppy easily, but moreover, the line applies to everyone who feels outcast, like Crooks, Candy, George, Lennie, Curley's wife, and the other ranch hands. The country is full of people who are longing to be accepted, to belong, to have a home.

3. Why does Curley's wife get angry when Lennie tells her that George said he shouldn't talk to her?
   Example: All she wants is to talk to someone, to have a friend. The men have assigned the status of "tart," and she knows she's done nothing to deserve it. She's simply trying to combat the loneliness of her life on the ranch, and the men only know how to relate to women who serve their needs as prostitutes.

4. What was Curley's wife's dream? She indicates that life with Curley is not what she wanted for herself.
   Example: Curley's wife believed the promises of a man she met at the Riverside Dance Palace who said he'd make her a movie star. She longs for a life of attention, nice clothes, and easy money—the dream of being Greta Garbo, Carole Lombard, or Marlene Dietrich. The movie industry had grown by leaps and bounds in the Depression era, and every little girl longed to be a star of the silver screen. Unfortunately, the reality of Curley's wife's life was that she was not destined for the movies, but for the ranch.

5. Why does Lennie kill Curley's wife?
   Example: In an effort to quiet her, Lennie kills her. It's unintentional; he didn't want her to get him in trouble like the girl in the red dress had done in Weed. Sadly, his strength got the best of him again, and covering her mouth and shaking her breaks her neck.

6. What do Candy and George realize when they're standing over Curley's wife's body?
   Example: The dream of the farm has died with Curley's wife. It was essentially George and Lennie's dream, not Candy's. Without Lennie, there is no reason to pursue it. George will settle for the typical ranch hand's life of working and spending his pay in a saloon or a pool hall.
Of Mice and Men

Discussion Questions: Section 5

7. Why does George want to “discover” the body with the other men?
   Example: He doesn’t want anyone to believe he was in on the murder of Curley’s wife. Curley will be looking for someone to blame.

8. Why does Candy curse Curley’s wife’s body in the barn?
   Example: Essentially, he believes she placed herself in harm’s way and ruined his opportunity to have some happy years in the final part of his life.

9. What is Curley’s reaction to his wife’s death?
   Example: He knows Lennie did it, and he wants revenge, not so much because he loved his wife, but because his position has been taken from him. Lennie will suffer for this transgression, in fact, Curley wants to shoot Lennie in the gut so he will die slowly and cruelly.

10. Why does George take Carlson’s Luger?
    Example: Like Candy’s dog was Candy’s responsibility — that he shirked — Lennie is George’s responsibility. George will make sure Lennie doesn’t suffer; he will not ignore his responsibility.
Section 6 Summary

The story ends with some of the same imagery with which it began. The reader is taken back to the pool where George and Lennie rested before going to the ranch. Lennie is hiding there, in the brush beside the stream. He begins to see visions of the people he has let down. He sees his Aunt Clara and a giant rabbit that glares at him because he has messed up again. Lennie goes over in his mind how George would be better off without him.

George comes out of the brush into the clearing and sits down beside the water with Lennie. They can hear the voices of men in the background getting closer. George begins to tell Lennie the story of the rabbits, all the while raising his hand to the back of Lennie’s head. In his mind he holds a pistol he has stolen from Carlson, the same pistol that shot Candy’s dog. At the last second before the men come crashing into the clearing, George shoots Lennie in the back of the head.

The men think George has wrestled the gun from Lennie and killed him with it. They congratulate him. Only Slim seems to realize what George has had to do, sacrificing the only friend he has.

Target Objectives

At the end of this section, students are able to:

• demonstrate comprehension of the story
• participate in discussions on ethical issues
• discuss Lennie’s death and George’s part in it
• demonstrate understanding of the themes of sacrifice, destruction of dreams, and cruelty of cold reality
Of Mice and Men

LESSON PLAN DETAILS
SECTION 6

1. Symbolism—hand out and have students complete in class (20 minutes)
2. Setting—hand out and have students complete in class (20 minutes)
3. Companion Activity—hand out and have students complete in class (40 minutes)
4. Ethics Activity—hand out and have students complete in class (1 class period)
5. Interview with the Author—hand out and have students complete in class (1 class period)

Discussion Questions: Section 6 (1 class period)

* Corresponding remedial activity located on the disk
Symbols, objects that represent other things, are significant literary elements; they become a type of shorthand for particular ideas or concepts in a piece of literature. This activity helps you to be more aware of symbols in literature and to begin forming your own ideas about what symbols represent.

**Directions:** The following are recurring symbols in *Of Mice and Men*. Explain how the symbols are alike and what they represent.

1. the rabbits as symbols of George and Lennie’s dreams

2. the fate of Candy’s dog as a symbol of Lennie’s ultimate fate and human tragedy

3. the color red as a symbol of danger or trouble

4. the bunk house as a symbol of danger for Lennie

5. Curley’s wife as a symbol of woman of the early twentieth century
There are six major scenes in *Of Mice and Men*, and each scene begins with an extended description of the setting, which establishes both a sense of place and atmosphere. This activity helps you become more aware of specific details in the novel.

**Directions:** Match the settings with the appropriate scene descriptions. Use some settings more than once.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Scene Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the bunkhouse</td>
<td>1. George cooks up some beans for himself and Lennie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the harness room</td>
<td>2. Curley's wife threatens to get Crooks hanged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the barn</td>
<td>3. George shoots Lennie in the back of the head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the clearing by the river</td>
<td>4. Curley attacks Lennie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. There are apple crates on the walls for shelves that are littered with personal items and Western magazines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Crooks taunts Lennie about George's well-being.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. The peaceful spot Lennie must go to if he gets in any sort of trouble.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Whit shows Slim the published letter from Bill Tenner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Lennie attempts to cover the dead puppy with hay.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are two shootings in the novel. Comparing various aspects of the scenes helps to shed new light on each one. Use the similarities and differences to increase your understanding of the characters and the author's message. Use this activity to compare events in the novel for the sake of exploring their meaning and their significance.

Directions: Write a one-page comparison of the shooting of Candy's dog and the shooting of Lennie. How are they alike? How are they different? What does the first shooting foreshadow or reveal about the second shooting?
Ethics Activity

Ethics are the values or beliefs by which we live and make decisions every day. Use this activity to look beyond the text itself and apply the topics to everyday life. It asks you to explore a moral issue that all people face in their lives.

Directions: Was Curley's wife attempting to seduce Lennie? Was she seeking to stir up trouble and manipulate him? Or was she an innocent victim of her own stifled life? Use passages from the novel to illustrate your point. Write a five paragraph, well-organized paper that uses examples from the novel to support and illustrate your point.

Do your pre-writing here:
Interview With the Author

Group Activity

The end of a reading experience can leave you feeling sad, satisfied, or curious. This activity gives you an opportunity to interact with the writer, John Steinbeck! Be as creative, humorous, or serious as you like, but you must ask some fundamental questions regarding *Of Mice and Men* that only Steinbeck could answer.

**Directions:** Write ten questions regarding the novel that you would like to ask John Steinbeck. Use a separate piece of paper to do this assignment. After you write your questions, exchange papers with another student who will answer the questions.
Of Mice and Men

Discussion Questions: Section 6

Directions: Use the following questions to review what's happened in Section 6. Use these questions to generate discussion about the author's ideas and techniques.

1. The novel ends where it began, in the clearing by the river. What is the atmosphere established by the description at the beginning of the final section?
   Example: Like the novel's opening section, the final section begins peacefully with a lush description of the setting.

2. What is the purpose of Aunt Clara's appearance in Lennie's mind's eye?
   Example: Aunt Clara is there to tell Lennie that he's done something terribly wrong, that he should have listened to George. She speaks, of course, with Lennie's voice and words; she is Lennie's chiding of himself for doing something wrong.

3. What does Lennie fear his punishment will be?
   Example: Again, Lennie fears that he won't get to tend the rabbits on the farm. He doesn't understand the moral implications of having killed a human being, and he doesn't realize that there will be a stiffer punishment for him than losing out on the chance to tend the rabbits.

4. Why does the giant rabbit appear to Lennie?
   Example: This vision, too, speaks with Lennie's voice and words. It's an indication of the enormity of his crime, but the punishment will be greater than Lennie reckons.

5. Why does George struggle with the description of the farm when Lennie asks him to recite it to him there, on the river bank?
   Example: George knows what he's about to do; he knows that he's going to have to kill Lennie in the same, more humane manner that Carlson used on Candy's dog. George understands his responsibility, but it's not easily done. He's going to kill his best friend, and Lennie has no idea about it.

6. What is Slim's role at the end of the story?
   Example: Slim is George's counselor and his conscience. He confirms for George that George did what he had to do, that he was saving Lennie from greater suffering.

7. What is the significance of Carlson asking George if Lennie had his gun and supplying the story that George wrestled the gun away from Lennie and shot him?
   Example: First of all, it provides George with a way to stay in good standing with the other men. Also, it provides the sort of romantic, pulp-magazine adventure that the ranch hands secretly long for. The white hat defeated the black hat.

8. When George — obviously upset — and Slim go for a drink, Carlson remarks, "Now what the hell ya suppose is eatin' them two guys?" Why doesn't he understand?
   Example: Like most of the men, Carlson lives in a black-and-white world: if you kill someone, you pay for it. There is an underlying, unspoken sense of owing — of being in debt. The men seem to feel that they have chosen their way of life, and that there is an obligation to their own methods of doing things, so that if one man is killed, the system as a whole is somehow affected.

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Reflect on Reading

The following activities require students to work with the novel as a whole. This includes discussion questions, activities, a pre-reading question review, and a final test.

LESSON PLAN DETAILS

Discussion Questions (2 class periods)
1. The Dust Bowl—hand out and have students complete in class (3 class periods)
2. Art Activity—hand out and have students start the assignment in class (1 class period); have students complete at home (1 hour)
3. Ethics Activity—hand out and have students complete in class (2 class periods)
4. Pre-Reading Question Review—hand out and have students complete in class (1 class period)

Final Test—hand out and have students complete in class (1 class period)
Of Mice and Men

Discussion Questions

Directions: Use the following questions to review what’s happened in the novel and to discuss ideas and themes.

1. Lennie and George travel and work together. What are some other ways people combat loneliness?
   Example: Students may discuss such things as joining clubs and civic organizations, attending church services and activities, frequenting bars, etc.

2. Why does George choose to camp out the night before and arrive late the next day, when most of the workers are already at their jobs?
   Example: George may have felt he needed to take the extra time to prepare Lennie for the new situation to keep him from losing another job.

3. How does Slim convey a sense of trustworthiness?
   Example: He listens, rather than barking orders. He has a quiet confidence that invites others to share their experiences with him.

4. Relate George and Lennie’s friendship to another unusual relationship you’ve encountered in a novel or in a film.
   Example: Students may look at their own lives for examples, but they may also consider the friendships and partnerships of Jack Nicholson and Helen Hunt in “As Good as It Gets” or Peter Parker and Mary Jane Watson in the Spider-Man comics and movies.

5. Why does Candy feel that his usefulness is gone?
   Example: He’s old and he’s lost a hand.

6. Is the boss a fair and honest man? Why or why not?
   Example: He seems to be; he suspects that George may be trying to take Lennie’s money and is ready to step in and defend Lennie if necessary.

7. Is Curley’s wife a victim or a catalyst?
   Example: Arguments can be made for both. Her constant appearances in the bunkhouse seem to encourage the trouble she encounters, but she dies as a result of trying to combat her loneliness, which is a product of the life Curley has given her.

8. What is the purpose of Lennie’s visions at the novel’s end?
   Example: Because of his lack of intelligence, Lennie cannot chastise and correct himself, but he can imagine others doing so.

9. Why is the letter in the Western magazine significant to Whit?
   Example: Typically the ranch hands had a come-and-go sort of life, a migrant life. This is the rare opportunity that they hear from someone who has moved on.

Reflect on Reading

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10. How does Candy's dog's condition reflect the condition of his owner? Example: Candy's dog is old and feeble, which is how Candy perceives himself.

11. How does Candy's dog's fate reflect Lennie's fate? Example: Candy's dog is killed and put out of his misery. If Curley catches Lennie, he will kill him slowly and cruelly by shooting him "in the guts." By killing Lennie, George is saving his friend from misery.

12. Why does Crooks fear the wrath of Curley's wife? Example: The story takes place in a time of racism. A cry of rape from Curley's wife would surely get Crooks imprisoned or, worse, hanged.

13. Does George truly believe in the vision of the farm he uses to placate Lennie? Example: Arguments can be made for both. Once Candy joins in the dream with his money, the dream becomes very real to George.

14. Why does George want to keep the dream of the farm a secret from the other men? Example: He's not convinced that it's a possibility, and he wants a place of his own with Lennie and Candy. He doesn't want another glorified bunkhouse situation.

15. Why doesn't Lennie's fight with Curley affect the dream of the farm? Example: Slim appeals to Curley's insecurities and vanity and tells him that he will let everyone know what happened to his hand and humiliate him.

16. What is George's moral dilemma at the novel's end? Do such dilemmas exist in real life? Example: Should he or shouldn't he kill Lennie? Lennie will suffer by Curley's hand, and George has a chance to save him from that.

17. Why does George's fight with Curley affect the dream of the farm? Example: Lennie is too focused on the dream of the little farm and the rabbits. He trusts George implicitly; it would never occur to him that George would cause him harm.

18. Is George a heroic figure? Example: Arguments can be made on both sides. George could've run away with Lennie yet again, but he heroically makes the decision to save Lennie from future misery.

19. Why doesn't Lennie's fight with Curley affect the dream of the farm? Example: Slim appeals to Curley's insecurities and vanity and tells him that he will let everyone know what happened to his hand and humiliate him.

20. Why does George want to keep the dream of the farm a secret from the other men? Example: He's not convinced that it's a possibility, and he wants a place of his own with Lennie and Candy. He doesn't want another glorified bunkhouse situation.
Dust Bowl
Group Activity

Use this activity to practice researching skills and demonstrate what you learned in a coherent presentation. It helps develop understanding and empathy for other people's situations.

**Directions:** In groups of three, research the Dust Bowl era. Focus on how the trials and tribulations of this time period affect the American migrant worker. In the space below, decide who will conduct each aspect of the research (for example, which books, online sources, etc. you will use). After gathering your information, work together to create a PowerPoint presentation that explains what you have learned about life in this time period. Provide interesting facts and anecdotes. Be creative and make the plight of migrant workers come alive for your audience.

**Brainstorm ideas here:**
Of Mice and Men

There are many ways to express what you have learned from reading this novel. One way is to create a visual representation of an idea. This activity gives you a chance to creatively express your understanding of the novel.

**Directions:** Choose one of the topics below as a basis for your assignment. Magazines, newspapers, glue sticks, scissors, colored paper, and watercolor paints will be provided to you to complete this project.

1. Using the medium of your choice, represent isolation as a visible emotion.

2. Choose a character from the novel. Create a collage using pictures, news clippings, or magazine ads that represents the character's personality and motivations.

3. Illustrate a key scene from the novel, one that you believe epitomizes the author's message to the reader.

4. Depict one of the novel's themes using imagery alone.
Ethics Activity

Group Activity

Analyzing the killings of Curley’s wife and of Lennie will lead you to a better understanding of Steinbeck’s message to his audience. Some class debates help you crystallize your viewpoint.

This activity is designed to allow you to look beyond the text itself and examine how you feel about issues of life and death, justice and mercy. The research/debate format asks you to consult scholarly opinions and combine what you’ve learned with your own viewpoint. An exercise in public speaking prepares you for the future.

Directions: The class will be divided into four groups. The first debate consists of Groups A and B. Group A will argue that Lennie was not liable for the murder he committed, and Group B will provide reasons he should be held accountable. The second debate is comprised of Groups C and D. Group C will propose that George was right to kill Lennie, and Group D will say his actions are unjustifiable.

Spend approximately one hour researching your assigned position individually. Consult legal documents, psychology textbooks, historical papers, and great ethical writers to help you develop a coherent position. Then, gather with your teammates to combine ideas and prepare statements.

Your teacher is the moderator for each debate, the one you participate in and the one you observe. A post-debate class discussion allows for an even greater exchange of ideas.

Write your research notes here:
**Pre-Reading Question Review**

Take out the pre-reading questions that you filled out before you read *Of Mice and Men*. Determine if the novel has changed your beliefs.

**Directions:** Complete the chart below in preparation for a discussion with your classmates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Reading Question</th>
<th>Answers Before Reading</th>
<th>Answers After Reading</th>
<th>Changes? (Yes or No)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How does society treat people with mental handicaps?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. How important is friendship in our lives?</td>
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<td>3. Explain whether or not men continue to treat women as objects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Define the American Dream.</td>
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<td>5. Explain whether or not writers have a responsibility to address social concerns.</td>
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The following test assesses your knowledge and understanding of *Of Mice and Men*.

**Directions:** Read all the directions and questions carefully.

**Multiple Choice**

**Directions:** Circle the letter of the correct answer. (1 pt. each)

1. When George sends Lennie for firewood
   a) George tries to abandon Lennie
   b) Lennie runs away and hides in a cave
   c) Lennie comes back with the dead mouse
   d) George hails a driver to take them to the ranch

2. The clearing by the river is described by John Steinbeck as
   a) forbidding
   b) peaceful
   c) dangerous
   d) eerie

3. Crooks, the stable-buck, is best described as
   a) fearful
   b) proud
   c) friendly
   d) unintelligent

4. Crooks’ quarters are in the barn because he’s
   a) the blacksmith
   b) black
   c) a loner
   d) intimidating to the other men

5. Curley picks on men who are
   a) bigger than him
   b) especially handsome
   c) less intelligent than him
   d) weaker than him

6. If Lennie gets in trouble, George wants him to
   a) hide in the barn
   b) return to Weed
   c) hide in a cave in the hills
   d) hide in the brush near the river

7. The dream of the ranch comes to be represented by Lennie’s hope of tending
   a) mice
   b) rabbits
   c) puppies
   d) John Ambrose Clara

8. The body of Curley’s wife is first discovered by
   a) Crooks
   b) George
   c) Carley
   d) Candy

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9. Curley’s wife dreams of being a
   a) dancer         c) movie star
   b) mother         d) student
10. George can’t trust Lennie to carry his own
     a) bus ticket    c) work card
     b) job application d) suitcase
11. The first of the ranch hands to join George and Lennie in the pursuit of their dream is
     a) Crooks        c) Candy
     b) Slim          d) Carlson
12. George kills Lennie with a gun that had belonged to
     a) Slim          c) Curley
     b) the boss      d) Carlson
13. George briefly gives in to the suspicion that Curley’s wife is having an affair with
     a) Candy         c) Crooks
     b) Slim          d) Carlson
14. George feels that he and Lennie are different from the other ranch hands in that they have each other and
     a) money saved up c) a home to go back to
     b) a future      d) wives
15. George confesses that his pranks almost caused Lennie to
     a) cry           c) run away
     b) go to jail    d) drown

Matching

Directions: Choose the letter that fits the description. (1 pt. each)

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<td>1. the jerkline skinner</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2. the vengeance-seeker in the novel’s final pages</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3. a simple-minded man who doesn’t know his own strength</td>
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<td>5. took on the responsibility of caring for Lennie from Aunt Clara</td>
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6. a former boxer
7. "the prince of the ranch"
8. promised a career in motion pictures
9. tells Candy that his dog is feeble and foul-smelling
10. likes to pet soft things
11. taunts Lennie with the idea that George may not return from town
12. puts up $350 to help George and Lennie get the farm
13. touched a girl's red dress in Weed
14. met Curley at the Riverside Dance Palace
15. confides in Slim about what happened in Weed

Event Sequencing
Directions: Order the following events chronologically from 1 to 10. (1pt. each)

a. George puts Lennie out of the potential misery he will know when Curley finds him.
b. Lennie touches the girl's red dress in Weed, which leads to George and Lennie hiding in an irrigation ditch and leaving under cover of darkness.
c. Slim gives Lennie a puppy at George's request.
d. Carlson puts Candy's dog out of his misery, causing Candy to become more aware of his feebleness.
e. To fend off Curley's attack, Lennie crushes Curley's fist in his hand.
f. In an effort to quiet her, Lennie accidentally kills Curley's wife.
g. Crooks teases Lennie about George's well-being and his return.
h. Candy promises George and Lennie $350 toward buying the farm.
i. Lennie sees visions at the riverside, where he waits for George.
j. The boss suspects that George could be cheating Lennie out of his pay.
Short Answer

Directions: Write your answer to each question on a separate piece of paper. Use complete sentences. (4 pts. each)

1. Why do George and Lennie travel together?
2. What indications are there that Lennie doesn't know his own strength?
3. List the settings for the novel's scenes.
4. What does George tell Lennie to do if he gets in trouble?
5. Why does George confide in Slim?
6. How does Curley's wife feel that her life could have been different?
7. What gives Candy the courage to stand up to Curley's wife when she comes into Crooks' quarters?
8. How does Curley's wife's loneliness lead to her ultimate catastrophe?
9. Why does Lennie have visions at the end of the novel?
10. Does Lennie understand what he's done at the end of the novel?

Essay Questions

Directions: Choose one of the three essay questions listed below to answer. The length needs to be approximately 350 words. Make sure your response is well-organized and grammatically correct. Use a separate piece of paper. (20 pts.)

1. Compare and contrast George with the other ranch hands in the novel. How is he similar to them? How is he different? What do the similarities and differences reveal about him?
2. Of Mice and Men is said to be circular in structure: it ends where it begins. Explain the significance of the structure.
3. Choose three of the novel's major symbols and analyze their meanings as well as how they contribute to the novel's central message.
Of Mice and Men

Answer Key

This section provides answers to activities and the test in the order in which they appear in the guide.

Novel Road Map to Success
Before We Start
Handout 4

Section 1
1. Steinbeck describes the clearing by the river. It is beautiful, peaceful, and full of life. This
establishing scene creates an atmosphere of simplicity and serenity.
2. Lennie is obviously something of a burden to George, and George lashes out at him for that
reason.
3. The dead mouse reveals that Lennie does not know his own strength.
4. George's insistence that Lennie stay silent indicates that he doesn't fully trust Lennie because of
his limited mental faculties.
5. George is truly seen as Lennie's caretaker. He has Lennie's best interests at heart.
6. Yes. When Lennie suggests that he could live in a cave by himself, George relents in his anger
and says that he'll get him a puppy as soon as possible since mice are too small for him to pet.
7. Obviously, George has described this farm and lifestyle to Lennie many times in the past
because it placates him.
8. Based on what happened in Weed and these instructions, it is clear that Lennie will get into
some sort of trouble again.
9. These descriptions portray Lennie's simplicity and perhaps his lack of responsibility for his
future actions.
10. The first chapter introduces the novel's protagonists, George and Lennie, and establishes the
nature of their relationship. This relationship is the emotional core of the novel.

Section 2
1. Lennie's silence — and George's answering for him — makes the boss suspicious: he thinks that
George is trying to cheat Lennie, whom he determines to be mentally challenged after he hears
Lennie speak, out of his jaw.
2. The boss is unaccustomed to seeing two farmhands traveling together; he doesn't understand
the bond between George and Lennie because the men who work for him come and go
without much concern for one another, without connections.
3. He treats them like hired hands.
4. George knows that the boss has his eye on him and Lennie at this point, and it makes him
uncomfortable. He fears that any small infraction could lose them their jobs.
5. George seems to want that there were a tangible explanation for Lennie's simplicity, but there
isn't. Lennie was simply born with his handicap, and in many ways, that's more difficult to
explain in a time when such things were viewed in defects that elicited no sympathy.
6. Candy has had the dog for many years, and he says that the dog was a good sheep dog when he
was younger. Without a doubt, Candy feels useless and old, like his dog. The dog is his
constant companion.
7. George takes care of Lennie; Lennie is George's responsibility, and like Candy's dog, Lennie is

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Of Mice and Men

a primal creature who relies on someone else to attend to his daily needs. Additionally, like the dog in Candy’s life, Lennie is George’s reprieve from the loneliness of the migrant worker’s life.

8. There are no — or very few — connections among the men. Each man lives for himself, satisfies his personal needs, and moves on when he deems it necessary. Migrant workers lead lonely, disconnected lives.

9. A small man, Curley is constantly strutting around, itching for a fight to prove that he’s a bigger man than his physicality would indicate.

10. The ranch workers believe Candy’s wife has somehow weakened Curley, that she’s lost some degree of masculinity, as well as their respect. This gossip also establishes the men’s view of Candy’s wife as sexual object. In their eyes, she’s a tart, low-worthy-of-respect than the prostitutes they visit on payday.

Section 3

1. Recognizing Lennie’s gullibility, George vowed never to do such a thing again.

2. George reveals that the girl in the red dress accused Lennie of rape.

3. This scene is about responsibility. George will not shirk his responsibility. He will deal with Lennie, rather than allow someone else to do so.

4. Obviously, he wants Carlson to bury the dog after he shoots him, but moreover, he wants him to finish the job, to see the responsibility through.

5. Old Susy’s place is what the men call “a cathouse,” a brothel — a house of prostitution.

6. He really can’t bear to see the gun; it reminds him not only of the loss of his dog, but the responsibility he shirked.

7. Candy’s years of usefulness have nearly come to an end, like his dog’s years of usefulness, and the farm is a place where he can live out his remaining years with a sense of belonging.

8. The dog was his responsibility and no one else’s, just as Lennie is George’s responsibility.

9. Slim understands that Curley is essentially accusing him of having something to do with his wife when Curley asks if Slim has seen her; he feels that it’s Curley’s responsibility to keep up with his wife.

10. Candy attacks Lennie because he thinks Lennie was laughing at him or her, also, it’s a chance for him to prove his strength and his courage in front of the men whose respect he doesn’t have.

Section 4

1. His race keeps him separated from the other men.

2. Most of the men have gone to the cathouse, and Lennie was in the barn, playing with his puppy, when he saw the light in Crooks’ room. He just wanted to sit with Crooks for a while.

3. Crooks’ loneliness has made him resentful of the other men. He says he’s not wanted in the bunk house, so Lennie’s not welcome in his room. The isolation he’s gotten from Crooks, made him mean the way George says loneliness affects people.

4. He describes Lennie as “just nuts.” He thinks that Lennie is stupid and incapable of making sense of anything that anyone, especially George, tells him.

5. He makes him fear that George might not be returning to the ranch.

6. As Lennie gets agitated, he becomes a threat to Crooks, and Crooks has to reassure Lennie that George is fine. Then, Crooks explains that he’s just a bit jealous and lonely.

7. She knows that he didn’t get his hand caught in a machine, and she strongly suspects — because of the bruises on Lennie’s face — that Lennie caused Curley’s injuries.

8. She laughs. She’s never seen a man break out of the lifestyle of the migrant worker, and certainly doesn’t feel that Crooks, Candy, and Lennie will be the ones to do so.

9. The promise of a place of their own, where no one can tell them what to do, gives them the courage to face her down.

10. He comes to believe that it’s foolish for a black man to attach himself to such a dream, that
Of Mice and Men

Section 5

1. Lennie has killed the puppy Slim gave him. Again, he didn’t recognize his own strength, and when he smacked the puppy as punishment for nipping at him, he killed it.

2. Lennie fears that George will not allow him to tend the rabbits on the farm, that he will be punished. His reaction is a child’s reaction to the anger he anticipates from a parent.

3. She tells Lennie that she’s lonely, that she longs for someone to talk to—even someone as simple as Lennie. She also admits that she doesn’t really like Curley, that he’s not nice to her.

4. The country is full of people who are longing to be accepted, to belong, to have a home.

5. The men have assigned her the status of “tart,” and she knows she’s done nothing to deserve it; she’s simply trying to combat the loneliness of her life on the ranch.

6. Curley’s wife believed the promises of a man she met at the Riverside Dance Palace who said he’d make her a movie star. She longs for a life of attention, nice clothes, and easy money.

7. He tells her he enjoys touching soft things, like rabbits and puppies, and giving him the opportunity to stroke her hair makes Curley’s wife feel glamorous.

8. Curley’s wife doesn’t understand why Lennie won’t stop, and since he doesn’t know his own strength, he gets a bit rough for her comfort.

9. In an effort to quiet her, Lennie kills her. It’s unintentional; he didn’t want her to get him in trouble like the girl in the red dress had done in Weed. Sadly, his strength gets the best of him again, and covering her mouth and shaking her breaks her neck.

10. In his simple mind, Lennie equates the two deaths. If they only find the girl, it’s not as bad as finding the girl and the puppy, and it’s easier to carry the puppy under his coat.

Section 6

1. Like the novel’s opening chapter, the final chapter begins peacefully with a lush description of the setting.

2. Aunt Clara is there to tell Lennie that he’s done something terribly wrong, that he should have listened to George. She speaks, of course, with Lennie’s voice and words; she is Lennie’s chiding of himself for doing something wrong.

3. Again, Lennie fears that he won’t get to tend the rabbits on the farm. He doesn’t understand the moral implications of having killed a human being, and he doesn’t realize that there will be a stiffer punishment for him than losing out on the chance to tend the rabbits.

4. This vision, too, speaks with Lennie’s voice and words. It’s an indication of the enormity of his crime, but the punishment will be greater than Lennie reckoned.

5. George knows what he’s about to do; he knows that he’s going to have to kill Lennie in the same, more humane manner that Carlson used on Candy’s dog. George understands his responsibility, but it’s not easily done. He’s going to kill his best friend, and Lennie has no idea about it.

6. Slim is George’s counselor and his conscience. He confirms for George that George did what he had to do, that he was saving Lennie from greater suffering.

7. First of all, it provides George with a way to stay in good standing with the other men. Also, it provides the sort of romantic, pulp-magazine adventure that the ranch hands secretly long for. The white hat defeated the black hat.

8. Like most of the men, Carlson lives in a black-and-white world: if you kill someone, you pay for it. There is no subtlety; there are no shades of gray.
Of Mice and Men

Vocabulary: Section 1

Handout 4

1. Yammered
2. Mottled
3. Junctures
4. Lumbered
5. Brusquely
6. Droned
7. Anguished
8. Pantomime
9. Imperiously
10. Morosely
11. Recumbent

Character Analysis

Section 1

Handout 1

1. He works other people’s land for low wages; he doesn’t own any land. He feels this makes him inferior and, therefore, feels less intelligent.
2. Human beings are innately social creatures, a fact that is at odds with George’s life as a migrant worker. He has no room or connections with extended family and friends; he has no confident. When Slim is willing to listen, George can’t stop himself from talking.
3. Slim is non-judgmental. He doesn’t invite George’s confidence, but he won’t discourage it either because he recognizes George’s loneliness.

Thematic Analysis

Section 3

Handout 2

1. Home ownership: As Americans spread out to the suburbs, owning a home became a status symbol. During the 1930s, the Great Depression caused many people to lose their homes, an event which only served to heighten the significance of home ownership.
2. A motion picture career: Hollywood stars were approaching the golden age of film making. Americans began to idolize movie stars, dreaming of their glamorous lifestyle as an antidote to their own ordinary (or, in the case of the 1930s, impoverished) lives.
3. Social equality: There were great strides in gender equality in this era though racial equality was still far away. Crooks is shut out from life on the ranch and his isolation is intensified because of his race. Social equality would allow him to make something out of his life.

Character Analysis: Crooks

Section 4

Handout 3

1. Several characters reveal their need to talk. Carley’s wife is continually wandering around the ranch looking for companions. George talks to Slim, eager to reveal things he usually keeps hidden. Candy talks to George about their dream after Carlson shoots Candy’s dog.
2. Crooks is automatically considered a lower class citizen. Laws of the time and emotions of the era prevent him from being accepted by society. He lives in fear of what white people can do to him.
3. Because Crooks must live his life apart from the other ranch hands, he never has an opportunity to talk to another guy. Crooks enjoys speaking to Lennie the same way George enjoys speaking to Slim, each man had a captive audience, a man who listened but did not judge.
4. He points out his race to emphasize the reason he is separated from the other ranch hands. This is also an opportunity for the author to comment on racism, revealing Crooks’ humanness in the face of unjustifiable prejudice.
5. To feel accepted, Crooks would have to be brought into the bunkhouse and allowed to participate in farm activities with the ranch hands, but in this time and place, Crooks has no hope of being accepted.

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Of Mice and Men

Thematic Analysis: Dreams
Section 5
Handout 1

George and Lennie
Dream: To “live off the fatta the lan’” and control their own destiny, to own property and decide how they will spend their days rather than working for someone else.
How it Dies: After Lennie kills Curley’s wife, he cannot live (either through George’s actions or through Curley’s actions). Despite the trouble Lennie caused George, he was an integral part of their plan. George will continue his nomadic lifestyle rather than pursue the dream alone.

Crooks
Dream: To join George, Lennie, and Candy in having some land of their own and also to have the respect he deserves.
How it Dies: When Curley’s wife enters Crooks’ room, she reminds him that her word is sufficient to hang him. He pulls back from his lofty idea of having a place in the world and returns to the prejudiced world that is his reality. He must keep quiet and remain on the fringes of life if he hopes to keep his life.

Candy
Dream: To have a place to go where he can be useful as he ages and to contribute his savings to own some land with George and Lennie.
How it Dies: When George kills Lennie, there is no hope of buying the land. George controlled that dream and its destruction is out of Candy’s hands.

Curley’s Wife
Dream: To be praised, admired and loved, perhaps as a film star.
How it Dies: Obviously, her dreams die for good when she dies, but they were dead long before that. When she married Curley, she lost the opportunity to pursue other avenues to happiness. Lessons Learnt: The motif of lost dreams is depressing, but rather than focusing on abandoned hopes, it is possible to examine the root causes and look for better solutions. For example, the poor economic times that led George and Lennie into the life of migrant workers contribute to the loss of their dreams. The inequalities between blacks and whites as well as men and women shape the events that destroy Crooks’ and Curley’s wife’s dreams. Overall, the author seems to be pointing out that dire circumstances ruin people’s dreams and suggesting that society try to fix these problems.

Setting
Section 6
Handout 2

1. the clearing by the river
2. the harness room
3. the clearing by the river
4. the bunkhouse
5. the bunkhouse
6. the barn
7. the harness room
8. the clearing by the river
9. the bunkhouse
10. the barn

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Final Test

Reflect on Reading

Multiple Choice


Matching

1. e  2. b  3. g  4. f  5. d  6. c  7. a  8. h  9. b  10. b  11. b  12. f  13. g

Sequencing

a. 10  b. 1  c. 4  d. 3  e. 6  f. 8  g. 7  h. 9  i. 9  j. 2

Short Answer Questions

1. They travel together because George promised Lennie's Aunt Clara he'd take care of him. Moreover, George doesn't want to be lonely, and Lennie, simple as he is, provides George with some level of company.
2. He kills the mouse he is petting in his pocket. He kills the puppy he is playing with in the barn. He kills Curley's wife when she tries to pull away from him.
3. The clearing by the river, the bunk house, the harness room, and the barn.
4. George tells Lennie to hide in the brush by the river and wait until George gets there.
5. Slim is both quiet and authoritative; he seems superior to other men, above the small concerns and bits of gossip that dominate their lives. George feels that he can trust Slim because of the jerkline skinner's friendly nature.
6. She could've been in movies if the guy at the Riverside Dance Palace had made good on his promise.
7. Candy feels independent because the dream of the farm is quickly becoming a reality. His coming freedom from the ranch hand's life gives him the courage to face her down, but she quickly reminds him that he's feeble and that a black man, a mentally challenged man, and an old man can't accomplish anything.
8. Her loneliness drives her to Lennie, who is incapable of understanding her life and her experiences. She is incapable of understanding Lennie and his disability, and problems ensue when she tells him to stroke her hair.
9. Lennie is incapable of confronting his emotions directly, so the visions chastise him and induce guilt.
10. No. Lennie equates the death of Curley's wife with the death of the puppy. He hides the puppy so he will only get in trouble for one thing and fears that the worst that can happen is a tongue-lashing from George and the loss of the opportunity to tend the rabbits.

Essay Questions

1. Students will deal with the fact that George wants a simple life, a carefree life, but he has the responsibility of Lennie and a goal (the ranch). The essays should look at the characters' dreams, as well as their predilections to sink their own ships by wasting their money on prostitutes and alcohol.
2. Students' essays will examine the idea of the novel beginning and ending in the clearing, as well as how George and Lennie's efforts to hold down jobs and pursue a dream inevitably end in similar ways.
3. Students may develop essays that include analysis of the rabbits, the peaceful clearing, Candy's dog, Carley's wife's lack of a name, etc.
Publication Evaluation

Our goal has always been to offer the best, most useful classroom materials. To help make this possible, please rate this publication on content, appropriateness, quality, compatibility with curriculum, and overall usefulness. Please use the scale of A, B, C, D, F. Your opinion is appreciated and benefits future publications.

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What would you change in this publication?

What are the strengths of this publication?

Additional Comments:

How long have you been teaching?

What grade(s) do you teach?

☐ School  ☐ Home

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Remedial Activities

The remedial activities are the same as in the book, but the language and content are simplified. The remedial activities are designated with a star before each handout number and were carefully selected to give the student a variety of activities that focus on literary devices in the novel.
LESSON PLAN DETAILS

SECTION 1

1. Setting—hand out and have students complete in class (20 minutes)
3. Literary Analysis: Close Reading—hand out and have students complete in class (45 minutes)
Setting

Setting is determining time, place, and tone in fiction. Authors create atmosphere by describing the settings using words that can make us imagine how it feels to be in that setting. This activity helps you see that the setting at the beginning of each scene creates the atmosphere or feeling for the scene.

Directions: Read the following passage from the beginning of the first part of the novel. Circle three examples of descriptive words that help show the atmosphere at the beginning of the story. In the space below, explain how the descriptions you circled build atmosphere.

“A few miles south of Soledad, the Salinas River drops in close to the hillside bank and runs deep and green. The water is warm too, for it has slipp'd twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool. On one side of the river the golden foothill slopes curve up to the strong and rocky Gabilan mountains, but on the valley side the water is lined with trees—willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter's flooding, and sycamores with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool. On the sandy bank under the trees the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them. Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covered with the night tracks of 'coons, and with the spread pads of dogs from the ranches, and with the split-wedge tracks of deer that come to drink in the dark.”

1.

2.

3.
**Literary Analysis: Close Reading**

Unlike reading a book for enjoyment, when you do close reading you re-read a short passage and ask thoughtful questions about it. This activity is helpful for you when you plan to write an essay, follow a theme throughout a novel, or learn more about a character.

**Directions:** Read the quote below then fill in the student section in the chart.

**George’s Anger at Lennie**

“Lennie knelt and looked over the fire at the angry George. And Lennie’s face was drawn with terror ‘he’s what I got,’ George went on furiously ‘I got you! You can’t keep a job and you lose me ever’ job I get. Joe keep me drivin’ all over the country all the time. An’ that ain’t the worst. You get in trouble. You do bad things and I got to get you out.’”

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<th>Word/Phrase</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. “knelt”</td>
<td>What do you think about when you picture someone kneeling?</td>
<td>Example: Sorrow or repentance</td>
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<td>2. “drawn with terror”</td>
<td>Why do you think Lennie is afraid of George?</td>
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<td>3. “lose me ever’ job I get”</td>
<td>Why is “lose” a good verb to use here?</td>
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LESSON PLAN DETAILS

SECTION 2

3. Thematic Analysis: Loneliness—hand out and have students complete in class (40 minutes)
Thematic Analysis: Loneliness

A theme is a general concept or idea, such as love, justice, or sorrow. One way to help you think of themes is to complete the following sentence: “This is a book about __________.”

Loneliness is a main theme in *Of Mice and Men*. The novel’s major characters behave the way they do because of a sense of loneliness. They feel alone and separated from others. This activity helps you become more familiar with the characters. It also shows you how characters’ behavior reveals themes in the novel.

Directions: In the space below, write a journal entry as one of the novel’s main characters about feeling lonely. Consider the following characters: George Milton, Lennie Small, Curley’s Wife, or Curley.
LESSON PLAN DETAILS

SECTION 3

1. Character Analysis—hand out and have students complete in class (20 minutes)
2. Literary Analysis: Point of View—hand out and have students complete in class (40 minutes)
Characterization is how the writer develops how the character looks, acts and thinks. This activity allows readers to better understand George Milton through his conversation with Slim at the beginning of Section 3 of *Of Mice and Men*.

**Directions:** Read the following passage from the novel and answer the questions that follow it. Refer directly to the passage for support.

> "He ain't no cuckoo," said George. "He's dumb as hell, but he ain't crazy. An' I ain't so bright neither, or I wouldn't be buckin' barley for my fifty and found. If I was bright, if I was even a little bit smart, I'd have my own little place, an' I'd be bringin' in my own crops, instead of them all the work and not gettin' what comes up outa the ground." George fell silent. He wanted to talk. Slim neither encouraged nor discouraged him.

1. Why does George feel that he's not "even a little bit smart"?

2. Why does George need to talk?
Literary Analysis: Point of View

The point of view is the way that the narrator sees the events in the story. *Of Mice and Men* is written from a third-person point of view. This choice makes the reader aware of everything that happens in the novel. Unfortunately, the reader cannot enter into the thoughts and emotions of any one character. Use this opportunity to imagine the effects of using a first-person instead of a third-person point of view in the story. This activity helps you look at different points of view and decide which one is better for the novel.

Directions: In the space below, rewrite half a page from Section 3 in the first person (use I, me, my). View the scene through the eyes of any of the following characters: George, Slim, Lennie, Carlson, Candy, Crooks, or Curley. Add feelings and ideas that fit with the character’s personality. Include the page number for the passage you are rewriting. Be prepared to discuss your opinions about which point of view you feel best suits the novel.

First-Person Rewrite:

Between 1990–1992, *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck is second on the list of *Banned in the U.S.A.* by Herbert N. Foerstel.
LESSON PLAN DETAILS
SECTION 4

1. Setting—hand out and have students complete in class (30 minutes)
2. Symbolism: Defining the Characters—hand out and have students complete at home (2 hours), have students share papers in class (1 class period)
Setting

When an object represents an idea, it is called symbolism. There are many symbols in Of Mice and Men. This activity shows how places in the novel symbolize emotions or ideas. You may not fully understand everything each place represents until you finish the novel. However, you have a fairly good idea at this point in the story about what some of the places symbolize. This activity asks you to think about how simple places represent more complicated ideas. When you give more thought to how an author uses such ideas, your appreciation for the novel increases.

Directions: For each place listed below, write down all the emotions/ideas that you feel it may represent.

1. the bunkhouse as a place of danger for Lennie

2. the clearing by the river as a place of peace
Symbolism: Defining the Characters

A symbol is an object or action that stands for something else. After finishing Section 4, you have learned a great deal about each of the characters' personalities. In this assignment, you show your understanding of one character through the use of symbolism. Choose an object that represents something about your character and explain the connection. This activity asks you to use your knowledge of symbolism and of the story.

Directions: Follow the steps below.

Step 1: Choose a character from the novel and write his/her name here: ________________.

Step 2: Think about this character's personality and behavior. Which personality trait or behavior do you feel is the most important one for this character? Write it here:

Step 3: Choose an object that represents the personality trait described above. Think outside the box. What object will you use to symbolize your character? Write it here:

Step 4: In the space below describe how your object represents the character's personality trait. You may use note form or complete sentences. Write your explanation here:

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LESSON PLAN DETAILS
SECTION 5

1. Thematic Analysis: Power—hand out and have students complete in class 
   (40 minutes)
2. Literary Elements: Foreshadowing—hand out and have students complete in class 
   (20 minutes)
Thematic Analysis: Power

A theme is a general concept or idea, such as love, justice, or sorrow. One way to help you think of themes is to complete the following sentence: "This is a book about _________." Analyze the balance of power in the novel. Who is in control? Who suffers at the hands of others?

This activity asks you to look at the characters in the novel and consider their position as compared to others. When you come to an opinion about a character’s life and the fairness of his or her situation, you become more aware of important issues in society. It also builds your critical reading and thinking skills.

Think about the balance of power in the novel. Who is in control? Who suffers at the hands of others? Complete the chart below. Then answer the questions that follow to decide if anything can be done to change the situation.

**Directions:** Decide which characters are powerful and which are powerless. Write their names in the appropriate column below along with a short explanation for your decision. After completing the chart below, answer the questions that follow to decide if anything can be done to alter the state of affairs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Powerful Characters</th>
<th>Powerless Characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. What, if anything, can the characters do to change their position?

2. Are there more people with power than there are that are powerless? Explain whether or not you think this is necessary.
Of Mice and Men

Section 5

Name _________________________________

Date ________________ Hour ___________

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Literary Elements: Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is a technique authors use to drop hints about future events in a novel. Now that you have finished most of the novel, you can look back and notice clues the author dropped along the way. Examine these events and then make a prediction about how the novel will end. This activity provides practice with the ways authors use foreshadowing.

Directions: Connect each event in section one below to the novel as a whole. Why does the author include it in the story? Answer the question in section two before finishing the novel.

Section 1
1. Lennie tells George that his Aunt Clara stopped giving him mice to pet because he killed them.

2. Lennie and George had to leave Weed because Lennie scared a woman in a red dress by holding onto the soft material of the dress.

3. Carlson kills Candy’s dog to prevent future suffering.

Section 2
1. How do you think the novel will end based on the foreshadowing seen thus far?

---

55

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3. Comparison Activity—hand out and have students complete in class (40 minutes)
Comparison Activity

There are two shootings in the novel. Comparing different parts of the scenes helps to make each scene more understandable. Use the similarities and differences to increase your understanding of the characters and the author’s message.

Directions: Compare the shooting of Candy’s dog and the shooting of Lennie in the space below. How are they alike? How are they different? What does the first shooting foreshadow or reveal about the second shooting?
Of Mice and Men

**Bonus Handouts**

These handouts serve as supplements. The bonus handouts are labeled in the same way as the handouts found in the book (example: section number, handout number). These handouts continue in numerical order making it easy to incorporate the bonus activities into the correct section of the unit.
5. Geography—hand out and have students complete in class (2 class periods)
6. Character Analysis—hand out and have students complete in class (1 class period)
7. Imagery Analysis: Similes and Metaphors—hand out and have students complete in class (1 class period)
Setting is determining time, place, and tone in fiction. Migrant workers such as George and Lennie in *Of Mice and Men* traveled wherever the jobs were. The location of the novel, therefore, is an essential element of the plot. In this activity, you study aspects of geography to gain a better understanding of the novel’s setting.

**Directions:** Work with a partner to answer the following questions about the geography of the novel. Research is needed to develop your answers.

1. In what state does the novel take place?

2. What is the climate of this state?

3. Describe the agricultural production of this state.

4. What was this state’s significance to the Great Depression era?

5. Could the novel have taken place in any other part of the United States? Why or why not?
Characterization is the method used by a writer to develop how the character looks, acts, and thinks. This role-playing activity puts readers into the minds of George Milton and Lennie Small; it allows readers to analyze the characters’ motives and decisions.

**Directions:** In pairs, assume the roles of George Milton and Lennie Small, and make notes on the characters’ decisions and responses. After gathering information, engage in conversations as George and Lennie to capture the dynamic of their relationship. The most intriguing conversations are performed for the entire class.

**George Milton’s responses, behaviors and motivations:**

**Lennie Small’s responses, behaviors and motivations:**
Imagery Analysis: Similes and Metaphors

Imagery is language that stirs up one or all of the five senses: seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching. Steinbeck does an excellent job of helping the reader envision each scene. One way to create these visual images is through the use of similes and metaphors. A metaphor suggests a comparison between two objects, e.g., when Romeo says Juliet is the sun. A simile serves a similar purpose and uses the words like or as, e.g., My jacket felt as cold as ice. This activity helps you engage with the text and also provides an opportunity to exercise your own linguistic creativity.

Directions: Examine Section 1 for metaphors and similes that help bring the story to life.

The Author’s Imagery
Directions: Describe three similes or metaphors the author uses in Section 1.

1. 

2. 

3. 

My Imagery
Directions: Rewrite each simile or metaphor in a new way that conveys similar information.

1. 

2. 

3. 

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LESSON PLAN DETAILS

SECTION 2

4. Character Analysis—hand out and have students complete in class (10 minutes)
5. Ethical Issues: Nothing but the Truth—hand out and have students complete in class (1 class period)
6. Theme Analysis: Many Motifs—hand out and have students complete in class (45 minutes)
7. Vocabulary: Section 2—hand out and have students complete in class (30 minutes)
Character Analysis

Characterization is the method used by a writer to develop how the character looks, acts, and thinks. This activity gives you the opportunity to explore the differences between the major characters in Section 2.

Directions: Match the characters in the left-hand column with the descriptions in the right-hand column.

____ 1. George Milton
   a. always looking for a fight; seems especially focused on Lennie

____ 2. Lennie Small
   b. not allowed in the bunk house with the other men

____ 3. Candy
   c. the prince of the ranch

____ 4. the boss
   d. complains that Candy's dog is lame and stinks

____ 5. Carlson
   e. finds Curley's wife to be “purty”

____ 6. Curley
   f. an old man who lost a hand and works at sweeping out the bunk house

____ 7. Curley's wife
   g. wonders if George is trying to take advantage of Lennie

____ 8. Slim
   h. says that it would be a good thing if Lennie had been kicked by a horse

____ 9. Crooks
   i. came to the bunk house looking for Curley
Ethics are the values or beliefs by which we live and make decisions every day. In Section 2, George lies to the new boss about who Lennie is and why George cares for him. This activity encourages you to speak in front of your peers while supporting your own ideas. Because you write your thoughts down first, you won’t feel “put on the spot” and can choose when to participate in the discussion.

Directions: Engage in a graded discussion with your peers to determine your own opinion about whether or not complete honesty is required to be a morally correct person. The instructions and questions are given below.

Instructions for a Graded Discussion
1. Take five minutes to respond to each question below. Include every idea that comes to mind.
2. The teacher is the moderator, ensuring that each student has an opportunity to contribute his/her own ideas. The teacher calls on students who raise their hands and chooses students who have not yet spoken before calling on those who have already added to the discussion.
3. You are graded on the number of valid contributions you make. Answering one of the primary questions, offering opinions in response to a follow-up question, or making a thoughtful comment on another student’s observation all count as valid contributions. Repetitive, off-topic or derogatory comments about another student’s answer are invalid.

Questions for the Graded Discussion
1. How can George best protect and care for Lennie?
2. Explain whether or not you believe George was wrong to lie to the boss.
3. Do you believe “white lies” are acceptable? Why or why not?
4. How could George have kept their jobs without lying to the boss?
Theme Analysis: Many Motifs

Group Activity

A theme is a general concept or idea, such as love, justice, or sorrow. One way to help you think of themes is to complete the following sentence: "This is a book about _________."

At this point, several themes have been introduced in the story. Working in groups and with a partner allows you to bounce your ideas off of other people and gain insight from their thoughts. Finding evidence for your assigned themes provides practice in supporting your opinions and ideas.

Directions: As a class, brainstorm potential themes from the first two sections. Afterwards, along with your partner, examine the theme assigned by your teacher in more depth and present it to the class.

Novel Themes

In the box below, write down all of the themes you think of as a group.

Evidence for a Theme

After your teacher assigns you one theme from the box above, find evidence from characters or events that demonstrate the theme. Work with a partner.

Our assigned theme is ________________________.

We found the following examples of our theme (be sure to include page numbers):

1.

2.
Of Mice and Men

Vocabulary: Section 2

Directions: Fill in the blanks with the correct vocabulary word from the word bank.

Word Bank:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Splotch</th>
<th>Liniment</th>
<th>Grizzled</th>
<th>Pugnacious</th>
<th>Ominously</th>
<th>Derogatory</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mourned</td>
<td>Occupant</td>
<td>Skeptically</td>
<td>Cesspool</td>
<td>Modified</td>
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1. It was impossible to clean the spaghetti ___________ from her blouse.
2. Mrs. Tuttle ___________ for her deceased husband for over a year.
3. Tony stared ___________ at Mademoiselle Sylvie when she told him he would be speaking French in just a few short lessons.
4. Old Jim applied ___________ to his sore back.
5. The clouds scudded by ___________, promising an afternoon storm.
6. Stephanie picked up her feet ___________ to avoid the muddy patches on the playground.
7. John rubbed his ___________ beard in confusion as he stared at the pirate-shaped crop circle in his cornfield.
8. Her tone was quite ___________ when she told me that the dress didn’t come in extra-large.
9. The baby eagle cried ___________ for his mother to bring his dinner.
10. The health inspector suggested Farmer Brown build a ___________ in his back yard to contain the excess sewage standing in his yard.
11. Earl didn’t want his mother to see the ___________ of the shoe box tucked under his arm.
12. Tanya decided to ________ her term paper and start over.
13. After forgetting to put anchovies on her pizza, the pizza delivery man ________ Casey by giving her a free order of bread sticks.
14. Since he always wanted to fight, Chris’ classmates avoided him and his ___________ nature.
5. Journal—hand out and have students complete in class (15 minutes)
6. Vocabulary: Section 3—hand out and have students complete in class (15 minutes)
7. Character Journal—hand out and have students complete in class (40 minutes)
In the quietness of the bunkhouse in Section 3, George confides in Slim. Step into Slim’s mind and write a journal entry that explains his reaction to the information George provided. While you need to add some facts from the novel, use the majority of the entry to describe how Slim feels about what he has heard. This activity helps you understand Slim’s character better by allowing you to act as he does. It lets you do creative writing that is based on the facts of the book, a practice that improves your understanding of the story and your critical thinking skills.

**Directions:** Write an entry in Slim’s journal explaining how he feels after becoming George’s confidant. Use the pronoun “I” because you are writing from Slim’s perspective.
Vocabulary: Section 3

Matching Directions: Match each word to its correct definition.

1. Derision a. to shake with a slight, rapid, tremulous movement
2. Quiver b. a pair of eyeglasses
3. Entranced c. filled with delight, wonder, or enchantment
4. Spectacles d. contemptuous or jeering laughter; ridicule
5. Scuttled e. any of several pathological conditions of the muscles, tendons, joints, bones, or nerves, characterized by discomfort or disability
6. Rheumatism f. scrapped or discarded

Fill-in-the-blank Directions: Write the word that fits best on the line.

1. Mr. Haun was hardly _________ to suggestions for change.
2. Walter’s actions were slow and _________ as he made his way across the flooded creek.
3. The Emperor’s human rights violations were _____________.
4. The early morning light twinkling off the newly fallen snow _________ me.

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Character Journal

Characterization is the method used by a writer to develop how the character looks, acts and thinks. This activity gives you practice in looking at the text more than once and in choosing the best quotes for the purpose. It also reinforces the individuality of each character.

Directions: In the following chart, write two quotes from Section 3 that describe each character.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Quotes to Describe Appearance/Personality</th>
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© 2005. Teacher’s Discovery®
5. Plot Analysis: Charting a Story—hand out and have students complete in class (40 minutes)

6. Journaling Activity—hand out and have students complete in class (30 minutes)

7. Expository Writing Topic—hand out and have students complete in class (1 class period)
Plot Analysis: Charting a Story

Plot is the series of events that make up the story. Every story contains four basic plot elements: exposition, rising action, climax and resolution. Once the author introduces the characters (exposition), the story really gets going. Major conflicts and problems (the rising action) begin to occur. Now that you’ve finished reading Section 4, you’re familiar with most of the issues that will arise. This activity helps you conceptualize the elements of the plot and apply these terms to Of Mice and Men. It also helps you separate major plot points from minor episodes.

Directions: Together with a partner, create a visual representation of the plot structure thus far according to the instructions below.

Three Elements of the Rising Action
Decide with your partner which three events are the most important in the storyline thus far. Write a brief summary of each one below (be sure to include the page number):

1.

2.

3.

Draw the Plot
Make a poster that illustrates the plot action up to this point. The basic plot diagram is shown below. Begin by naming each character and writing a three-word description of each one in the “exposition” section. Then, explain and label the three rising action events described above. Mark the climax point and resolution line. After you finish the novel, you can return to your poster and fill in those blanks.
Journaling Activity

George and Lennie have a dream that they are willing to go to any lengths to achieve. This journaling activity asks you to empathize with the characters and make personal connections to the text. This helps you apply the themes of the novel to everyday life.

**Directions:**
What is your big dream for life? What is your plan to achieve your dream?
Write a journal entry in the space below that includes connections between the novel and your personal experience.
Expository Writing Topic

Expository writing helps you synthesize what you have learned regarding a character, theme, literary device, or social issue. By developing a coherent thesis that argues your personal viewpoint and offering textual evidence to support your claims, you learn the basic skills of crafting an argument. This activity helps you develop a cohesive argument that demonstrates your understanding of the topic and displays your writing skills.

Directions: Below is a writing topic that asks you to evaluate the author based on his novel and a quote from him. Based on what you have read thus far, evaluate whether or not Steinbeck meets his own criteria for writers in the novel Of Mice and Men. Use examples from the book to demonstrate whether or not he has captured “man’s proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit.” Agree or disagree that this is indeed every writer’s responsibility.

Writing Topic
In his acceptance speech for the 1962 Nobel Prize in literature, Steinbeck said, “…the writer is delegated to declare and to celebrate man’s proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit—for gallantry in defeat, for courage, compassion and love. In the endless war against weakness and despair, these are the bright rally flags of hope and of emulation. I hold that a writer who does not passionately believe in the perfectibility of man has no dedication nor any membership in literature.”
4. Literary Devices—hand out and have students complete in class (35 minutes)
5. Setting—hand out and have students complete in class (20 minutes)
6. Role Play Activity—hand out and have students complete in class (1 class period)
Literary Devices

Directions: Examine the following literary devices. Find examples of each from the text, and explain how they help you understand the story.

This activity allows you to demonstrate your understanding of various literary devices and their uses in the novel. It also asks you to give your opinion as to how effective these techniques are.

Imagery
Find one example of imagery.

Do you think this was a good way to describe the event? Why or why not?

Similes/Metaphors
Find one simile or metaphor.

Do you think this was a good way to describe the person or thing? Why or why not?

Diction/Word Choice
Find one interesting word choice.

Do you think this word was a good way to describe the person or thing? Why or why not?
Of Mice and Men

Setting

Setting is determining time, place, and tone in fiction. Analyze the setting of Section 5 and determine how well it fits with the events that follow. Consider the author’s word choice and the tone he creates. Then compare the facts of the case with the scene of the crime to evaluate the effectiveness of this section.

Directions: Read the following passage from the beginning of Section 5. Circle words and phrases that set the mood, and then answer the questions that follow.

"It was Sunday afternoon. The resting horses nibbled the remaining wisps of hay, and they stamped their feet and they bit the wood of the mangers and rattled the halter chains. The afternoon sun sliced in through the cracks of the barn walls and lay in bright lines on the hay. There was the buzz of flies in the air, the lazy afternoon humming."

1. What tone does the author establish at the beginning of this scene?

2. What words or phrases are especially important in creating this feeling?

3. What kind of setting would you have used for the scene where Curley’s wife dies?

4. Why do you think the author chooses to place the event in this particular setting?
Role Play Activity

Group Activity

*Of Mice and Men* features a number of characters who represent opposite sides of an issue or situation. Looking at both sides of an issue helps to clarify ideas and crystallize viewpoints. Complete the activity below to sharpen the contrast between two opinions.

**Directions:** In pairs, write a dialogue between characters who represent two opposing viewpoints in the novel. (Example: Carlson and Candy) Can these characters reach any sort of understanding, or must they remain at odds? The dialogue needs to be based on the information about the characters as it is presented in the novel.

**Brainstorm ideas here:**
6. Role Play Activity—hand out and have students complete in class (1 class period)
7. Thematic Analysis—hand out and have students complete in class (20 minutes)
8. Creative Writing—hand out and have students complete in class (1 class period)
Role Play Activity

*Of Mice and Men* concludes with Lennie's death at George's hand. Some may view it as a murder, while others may see it as a mercy-killing. Choose one side and elaborate on the justness of your opinion in the activity below. This activity asks you to take one side of a controversial issue and propound your viewpoint with evidence and with eloquence.

**Directions:** Step into the role of a lawyer presenting a closing argument in a murder case against George. Choose to be the prosecuting attorney, who wants a guilty verdict, or the defense attorney, who thinks George is not guilty. Use events from the novel to support your point.
Thematic Analysis

A theme is a general concept or idea, such as love, justice, or sorrow. One way to help you think of themes is to complete the following sentence: “This is a book about __________.”

As John Steinbeck develops the characters and conflicts in *Of Mice and Men*, it becomes clear that most characters have a sense of morality. They may not be elegant, but they have a vision of right and wrong as it applies to their lives and situations.

**Directions:** Write the name of the character next to the characteristic that defines his or her sense of morality.

1. hands down his judgment on Lennie’s death by telling George that it was what had to be done
2. chastises himself for having “done a bad thing”
3. condemns Curley’s wife for flirting in spite of visiting old Suey’s place
4. feels he should have taken the responsibility of shooting his dog
5. morally unaffected by Lennie’s death
6. views Curley’s aggressive nature as unjust since he can get sympathy for both beating or being beaten by bigger guy
7. regrets the jokes he once played on Lennie and protects him from harm
Creative Writing

This activity gives you a chance to think creatively about the characters and how they relate to others in the world.

Directions: Write a story from the viewpoint of someone who is completely misunderstood by those around him. How does your character communicate? How does he/she view the world? Your short story needs to contain the plot elements of exposition, rising action, a climax, and resolution, as well as characters and conflict.
Reflect on Reading

LESSON PLAN DETAILS

5. Expository Writing Topics—hand out and have students complete in class (1 class period)
6. Symbols—hand out and have students complete at home (1 week); have students collaborate in class (1 class period)
7. Life-Sized Character Posters—hand out and have students complete in class (2 class periods)
Expository Writing Topics

Expository writing is one method that allows students to synthesize what they have learned after studying a novel. It requires students to take a broader look at a theme or idea throughout the book, develop a thesis that argues their personal viewpoint, and use evidence from the text to support their claims. Below are two topics to assign to your students.

1. The author uses many symbols throughout the novel. Choose two, explain what they represent, and provide an evaluation of their usefulness in the story. Did the author choose the best ones possible? Would another symbol have been better? Why?

2. Trace one theme, such as good vs. evil, civilization, human nature, or anarchy, throughout the novel and discuss what the author is attempting to tell the reader. Use supporting evidence and analysis.
Symbols
Group Activity

Symbolism plays an important role in the novel. Characters and things are used to represent key ideas that the author wishes to convey. Understanding these messages is crucial to developing a deeper appreciation for the novel. Completing this symbolism project reinforces the abstract ideas that each symbol represents and allows you to share your interpretations with your peers.

Directions: In a small group (three students), choose a symbol from the story that can be supported by the text. Create a visual representation of one of the many symbols in the novel. There are no guidelines for the type of visual aid. Dolls, action figures, papier-mâché, etc. are all acceptable starting places. Whatever you begin, though, be sure to make the object uniquely your own by applying your own ideas and images.

Once you have created the object, decide how to convey its symbolic meaning: pasting or hanging words on it, adding small images, etc. The choice is yours. Remember that the symbol needs to be displayed easily, and people who are not familiar with the story need to be able to discern what the object represents.
Throughout your study of the novel, you carefully observed the characters' personalities and behavior. Now it is time to bring them to life by creating life-sized posters that reveal who and what these people are. In this activity you highlight the essence of each character and demonstrate how well you understand their motivations.

**Directions:**
Your teacher assigns a character to your small group (three students).

First, trace the outline of one member of your group onto a large piece of butcher paper. This is the foundation for your poster. Decorate the body so that it reflects your character's physical attributes.

Then, brainstorm a list of adjectives that describes your character's personality. Add important events that involve your character. Discuss your character's role in the novel and what he represents. Find ways to display this information on your poster. Write words, attach images, etc. When someone looks at your finished work of art, they need to be able to gain a thorough understanding of the character.
Of Mice and Men

Answer Key

This section provides answers to activities and the test in the order in which they appear in the guide.

Character Analysis
Section 2

Handout 4

Vocabulary: Section 2

Section 2

Handout 7

Vocabulary: Section 3

Section 3

Handout 6

Matching

Fill-in-the-blank

Setting

Section 9

Handout 1

1. The scene is one of peace and tranquility. There is a calmness that is different from the generally hectic work week.
2. “Sunday” is associated with a day of rest, particularly in the “afternoon” as opposed to the morning when people generally attend church. The horses aren’t working; instead they are “nibbling” on “wisps” of hay, word choices that suggest softness and gentleness. The “lazy afternoon” underscores the relaxed atmosphere. Even the word “humming” suggests a quiet happiness.
3. I see two options. The scene as written serves as a stark contrast to the killing. That makes the event stand out even more; it increases the shock and the violent feel. The other option is to make the scene seem dark and foreboding, the typical “B” movie scene. While this would add an element of fear and trepidation, it also would remove some of the shock.
4. The calm barn seems like a refuge, a place where the animals are sheltered, where Crooks is safe from prying white eyes, where Lennie can play with his puppy. Placing the event here sets it apart, almost like looking at a red blood stain on a white carpet.
Thematic Analysis
Section 6
Handout 7
1. Slim
2. Lennie
3. Whit
4. Candy
5. Curley and Carlson
6. Candy and Carlson
7. George