

Name: _____ Period: _____

***Of Mice and Men* Study Guide**

Advanced Placement in English Literature Developed Questions

Directions: Provide *thorough* responses for each question in complete sentences. This study guide is created to develop your critical thinking and reading skills; therefore, your responses should require an in-depth analysis of the novella.

Chapter One

1. Reread the first paragraph in the novel. How does this passage function? What purpose does Steinbeck fulfill by beginning the novel in this way?
2. In the section of text from page 3 to 4, Steinbeck uses several animal images to describe Lennie. Cite two examples of images that are used and explain their effect on Lennie's characterization.
3. When Lennie and George sit at the river to rest, what do they talk about? What does Steinbeck achieve through the conversation? What can we learn about George?
4. Why does Steinbeck mention on page 7 that George and Lennie had problems in Weed but then not develop the story?
5. Why does George tell Lennie to remember the spot where they were camping? What might this conversation foreshadow?

6. By the end of chapter 1, there are two themes that are easily identified. Using specific examples, describe these themes.

Chapter Two

1. In this chapter, Steinbeck again begins with a description of the setting. Explain how this description is different from the description at the beginning of the previous chapter. What does this description tell us about George and Lennie's life?
2. In the scene between the boss, George, and Lennie that begins on page 22, how does the boss misinterpret what is going on between George and Lennie? What does the boss think is taking place? What does the reader know about the conversation between the three men?
3. What is suggested about Curley's character when he reacts to George and Lennie the way he does?
4. What does the reader learn about Curley's wife? Why might this be important in the story?
5. How does the following passage serve as foreshadowing in the novel?
"If he tangles with you, Lennie, we're gonna get the can. Don't make no mistake about that. He's the boss's son. Look, Lennie. You try to keep away from him, will you? Don't never speak to him. If he comes in here you move clear to the other side of the room" (Steinbeck 29).

Chapter Three

1. Throughout the novel to this point, Steinbeck has used several occasions to comment on the relationship between George and Lennie. How does Steinbeck comment on the relationship at the beginning of this passage? Why do you think he feels that it is necessary to revisit the nature of relationships between men in the Depression?

2. Read the following passage found on page 48. This is just one of the several images of silence that Steinbeck uses:

“His voice trailed off. It was silent outside. Carlson’s footsteps died away. The silence came into the room. And the silence lasted.”

Why does silence play an important role at this point of the novel? Who is literally being silenced? Who is metaphorically being silenced, and what role does each man play in the silence?

3. On page 51, Whit asks George if he has seen Curley’s wife. What do you believe is Steinbeck’s purpose in re-introducing her to the narrative?
4. How does Lennie, sensitive by nature, reveal a violent streak while George tells the story of their future ranch? How does his statement add to the violent nature of the novel?
5. Why do Lennie and George continue to talk about their dream? Who is also interested in the story of George and Lennie’s dream? Why?

6. Why will Curley keep quiet about what Lennie did to him and not try to get George and Lennie fired? How does this reflect Curley's character?

Chapter Four

1. Explain why Steinbeck did not give Curley's wife a name.
2. When Curley's wife comes to Crook's door, how is her initial response to the men parallel (the same) to the way in which Crooks initially responds to Lennie?
3. Characterize Curley's wife as she is presented in the novel. How is the reader supposed to feel about her?
4. How is the theme of power and powerlessness developed at the beginning and in the final section of this chapter?
5. Why does Steinbeck diverge (move away from) his narration to focus on two different characters in the novel, Crooks and Curley's wife?

Chapter Five

1. Despite the descriptive setting of the barn and the quiet Sunday afternoon, Chapter Five begins with an accident. Explain what happened and why Lennie is so worried. What are the larger implications that Steinbeck wants the reader to consider (in other words, why do you think this event is significant)?
2. How is Curley's wife described when she comes into the barn? Why do you think Steinbeck describes her in this way?
3. Why does Curley's wife become angry at Lennie?
4. Compare the events in the beginning of this chapter with the events that happen at the end of this chapter.
5. What do the men suppose happened to Carlson's gun? Why is this hard to believe? What is the greater implication of the missing gun?
6. Steinbeck could have concluded the chapter with the men headed off in search of Lennie. Instead, Steinbeck returns to the barn where Candy is staying with the dead body. Why do you think Steinbeck chose to close the chapter in this way?

Chapter Six

1. Compare the beginning of chapter six with the beginning of the novel. Explain why Steinbeck would begin this chapter in the same way that he began the first?
2. What delusion (vision) does Lennie experience as he is waiting for George? Why do you think he remembers this experience?
3. How does the reader know that Lennie does not realize that he has done something wrong?
4. The story of the ranch seems to embody the main theme of the novel. What does Steinbeck emphasize through the dream of the ranch?
5. How does George's responsibility in killing Lennie parallel the situation between Candy and his dog?
6. Who ultimately understands what happened between Lennie and George? Why are the other men unable to understand?
7. Explain the significance of the final statement in the novel.