

Of Mice and Men

John Steinbeck

A Before Reading

- 1 *Of Mice and Men* shows the life of men who travelled from farm to farm (or ranch to ranch) to work in 1930s America. What do you think that their life was like? Consider:



The work they had to do	<i>hard farm work, for example...</i>
Their living conditions and lifestyle	
Their pay	
Their relationship with their bosses	
Their free time activities	

As you start reading, compare your ideas with the lives of the workers in the story.

- 2 Find words from the story in the wordsearch to match the definitions. The first letter of each word is given, and words may appear forwards or backwards in the grid. The first one is done for you.

H	D	R	O	W	N	W	O	C	E
E	R	S	P	E	S	I	U	R	B
J	A	K	U	B	E	H	A	U	M
T	W	Q	P	A	U	S	J	E	C
E	O	N	P	I	S	T	O	L	P
D	C	L	Y	E	P	A	R	G	E
O	X	A	C	H	V	B	A	R	N
A	U	A	M	D	Z	L	P	B	L
Y	W	H	A	R	V	E	S	T	G

Another word for a gun is: a *pistol* _____

Two buildings found on farms, where animals may live: a b _____, a s _____

To gather crops (eg corn, barley) when they are ready: to h _____

To attack and force someone to have sexual intercourse: to r _____

Causing pain or unhappiness to people or animals (adjective): c _____

A dark mark on skin where it has been hit: a b _____

A young/baby dog: a p _____

Someone who is not brave enough to do what they should do: a c _____

To die in water: to d _____

- 3 Read the back cover of the book and try to make predictions about the story. What do you think will happen? How will the characters be affected? And how might the story end?
- Then, as you read the book, look back at your predictions to see how accurate they were.

B While Reading

- 4 Look at the pictures of some of the main characters in the story below. Choose descriptions from the box which you think best fit each character. You do not need to use them all. Use your Macmillan Dictionary to help you if necessary.

childlike	lonely	optimistic	pessimistic	bitter	attractive	gentle	old
intelligent	hard-working	cowardly	strong	aggressive	a dreamer	weak	
a bully	a flirt	a criminal	a killer	ambitious	an outsider	an animal lover	

- Add any other descriptions of your own for each character.
- 5 Which of the characters in question 4 do you find most interesting? Write a paragraph to describe this character using the ideas from the table above.
- 6 a Many of the characters in the story dream of better things. As you read, use the table on page 3 to keep a record of what the characters dream of and whether or not their dreams come true.

Who?	Their dream(s)	Does it come true?
Lennie	<i>Dreams of having mice, puppies and coloured rabbits on the ranch.</i>	<i>A puppy – yes. Rabbits on the ranch – no.</i>
Lennie and George		
Candy		
Curley's wife		

- b** How important is it to have dreams? What are your own dreams? How will you try to make them come true?

C After Reading

- 7 a** At the beginning of the story George says, 'Men like us, who work on ranches, are the loneliest men in the world. They have no family and no home... They have nothing to think about in the future.' (p11)

Which characters in the story are lonely? Why is each one lonely?

- b** During most of the story, Lennie and George have each other's friendship, but at the end George is left alone. How do you think his life will change? Will it be the 'easier life' he once imagined?

- c** Can you think of any jobs nowadays which might be lonely? Write a list.

Example: a security guard working nights.

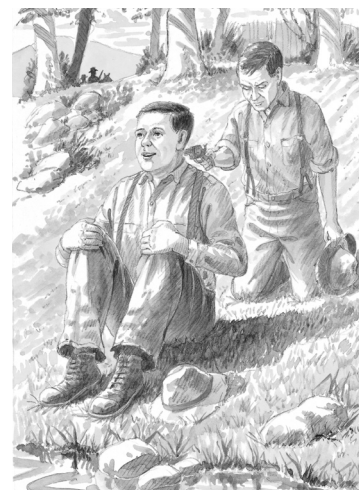
- 8 a** 'You had to do it, George,' said Slim. (p84)

Do you agree that George had to kill Lennie? Would it have been better to let him live? Could he have taken Lennie to the police to be put in prison or in a psychiatric hospital? Should he have let Curley kill him? Should he have tried to run away with Lennie again?

Write a paragraph giving your opinion, explaining your reasons.

- b** Imagine you are George. On returning to the ranch you try to explain to Candy that you have shot Lennie and your reasons for doing this. Write your explanation, starting with the following words:

Candy, I found Lennie by the pool, as I knew I would...



- 9** Imagine you are a film director making a film of the story, preparing your actors for an important scene of your choice. Choose a scene from the book, then make notes to give the actors on the following:

- where the scene takes place and what the film set will look like
- what happens in the scene, what each character does and how each character is feeling
- what the camera will focus on
- any music you will be using to accompany the scene.