

# G.C.S.E. Coursework Assignment

## *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

### ESSAY TITLE

Look at George and Lennie's dream. Do you think that the dream had any chance of coming true? What made it likely the dream would fail?

### Paragraph 1 - Introduction

State where and when the book is set. Describe the two main characters - George and Lennie. Who are they? What do they do? What do they look like? Describe their personalities.

### Paragraph 2

Describe where they are at the start of the book. Where are they going? Show how the dream was just like a story told to a child rather than a real hope. (For example, Lennie reciting bits he knows off by heart.) They have no money - why? (Pages 14-15)

### Paragraph 3

Explain that Steinbeck is referring to 'the American Dream.' The AD was a belief in the U.S.A. that everyone could be successful and own their own house / land if they worked hard enough.

### Paragraph 4

For George and Lennie the dream could be seen as 'wishful thinking' - they could never own a farm. Look at pages 59-61. Pick out the points which show how the dream was:

- wanting to re-create happier times, when they were young and lived in a family;
- a kind of paradise with lots of food - a cosy life;
- better working conditions - not getting 'canned', not working if they didn't want to;
- basic needs of a human being - a home of their own, company - friends could stay.

### Paragraph 5

The dream is only make believe but at the ranch it could come true - introduce Candy. Who is he? What has happened to him / his dog? How can he make the dream come true? (Pages 62-3)

### Paragraph 6

Look closely at the character of Lennie. Show how Lennie's personality and behaviour will get him into trouble:

- his strength and panic (killing the mouse, killing the pup, crushing Curley's hand, the incident in Weed, - all point to what happens to Curley's wife.);
- Lennie does not and cannot learn from his mistakes;
- Lennie has little sense of what is right and wrong;
- If George is away from Lennie he gets into trouble - Curley's wife;
- Lennie's incredible strength gets him into trouble - Curley's hand;
- Lennie panics, is out of control - hanging onto the girl's dress in Weed, Curley's hand and Curley's wife.

### Paragraph 7 - Conclusion

Show how Steinbeck sets up the inevitable failure of their plans. Link to the title - "The best laid plans of Mice and Men..." (The poem by Robert Burns.)

Well done!