

Of Mice and Men Essay Questions

1. In this novel the “dream” of having their own place is very important to George and Lennie. How does the writer use their dream to tell us about the reality of their lives?
2. In a letter John Steinbeck wrote of Curley’s wife: “She is a nice girl and not a floozy”. Discuss and explain your own impressions of Curley’s wife.
3. In George the writer has created a character with flaws. What are his weaknesses and strengths? Refer closely to episodes and relationships in your answer.
4. What do we learn about life on the ranch from the portrayal of Crooks?
5. Some readers might consider this book violent. Write about whether you consider that the violent events make an important, or necessary, contribution to the book.
6. Slim says of Lennie “He’s a nice fella” and most of the readers of this novel would probably agree with him: and yet, Lennie kills a puppy and, finally, a human being. Explain how the writer has created a character of such contradictions.
7. Many of characters in this novel feel a sense of loneliness. What things in their private and working lives contribute to this feeling? In your answer you should refer to at least **two** people to whom you think the statement applies.
8. Why do you think that Slim is held in such high esteem by the other characters?
9. Slim is clearly a very important character on the ranch. How important is the part he plays in the novel, in your opinion?
10. What impressions does this novel give us of migrant American labourers who have to live out their lives in a “bunk-house society” such as the one at the ranch? Refer closely to the text in your answer.
11. How successfully does the opening of the novel foreground the main themes and issues?
12. ‘Of Mice and Men’ has been described as a pessimistic novel. Do you agree? What can you find in the novel that might be called hopeful or optimistic?
13. Explain the reasons why George thought it was right to kill Lennie.
14. What is it about George and Lennie that arouses interest and suspicion in others? You may like to include some or all of the following in your answer:
15. From what you learn about Candy in the novel, why do you think that he was keen to join George and Lennie’s dream?
16. How does Steinbeck use symbolism in the novel to establish the themes and issues?
17. “All the characters have dreams; all doomed to fail.”
How far is this bleak view of the future reflected in the lives of the characters on the ranch? (2007)
18. “George may seem a straightforward character, but he is in fact very complex.”
Do you agree that the writer presents George in this way? (2007)
19. In Chapter Four Crooks says “A guy goes nuts if he ain’t got nobody.”
How does the writer explore the themes of isolation through Crooks and **ONE** other character in this book? (2006)
20. Some readers of this book may feel that George and Lennie’s relationship is entirely one-sided and that George offers Lennie support and friendship but gains nothing in return. Do you agree that this is how the relationship is presented (2006)
21. What do you consider to be the role of Curley and the role of Curley’s wife in this book? (2008)
22. “Slim stands out as a positive role model for those around him.” To what extent do you agree with this statement? (2008)