

Of Mice and Men – John Steinbeck

Of Mice and Men is centred around two **itinerant** workers, George and Lennie, in California in the 1930s as they start work on a **ranch** in a place called Soledad (a Spanish word meaning 'solitude') While at the ranch, George and Lennie meet other characters, who emphasise the loneliness and difficulty of life for the people living and working in these places.

Main Characters:

George Milton - George is a protective man, who has been caring for his friend Lennie for a long time. The two men are not related but have been friends since they were children, so as well as enjoying his company, George also feels responsible for his welfare. George often talks to Lennie about their dream.

Lennie Small - Lennie is George's friend and the two travel together. Lennie has a mental disability, making him dependent upon George to manage day to day life in the difficult environment in which they live and work.

Curley's Wife - Curley's wife is the only female character who is directly featured in the novel. Many of the male characters on the ranch feel threatened by her, calling her jailbait because she is flirtatious and her husband is jealous and violent. They perceive her to be a tart because of the way that she acts around all of the men on the ranch.

Candy - Candy is an old ranchworker who has lost a hand in a work accident and now works as a swamper, or cleaner, on the ranch. He feels that as he is ageing he is useless and does not have any value as a person. This is reflected in the way that his dog is shot by Carlson. Before his death, Candy's dog is his only real companion. This leads to him asking to be involved in George and Lennie's dream of owning their own farm; he is willing to give all of his savings to these men who he has just met so that he can feel a part of something.

Crooks - Crooks is the only black man on the ranch and experiences a significant amount of racism and discrimination. He is lonely and isolated, making him resentful and bitter towards the other characters, as seen when he tries to torment Lennie about George abandoning him.

Themes
Dreams
Loneliness
Companionship
The nature of human existence
The American Dream



Literature

Paper 1 Section A

40 marks

Part a: analyse use of language, form and structure in the extract (AO2).

Part b: explore a theme or character in the rest of the play and link to context (AO1&AO3).

Vocabulary

Subject terminology:

Animal imagery
Simile
Metaphor
Symbolism
Adjective
Verb
Noun
Emotive language
Repetition
Third person narrator
Omniscient narrator
Foreshadows
Cyclical structure
Colloquial language

Key terms:

Protagonist
Antagonist
Effect
Suspense
Tension
Reader
Theme
Novel

	Success criteria
Part A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant quotations selected from the extract. Keyword analysis. Layers of meaning. Link to the effect on the reader. Relevant subject terminology. Analysis of language (the words the writer has used). Analysis of structure (the way the extract is laid out) Analysis of form (the type of text it is).
Part B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant quotations from the rest of the text. Keyword analysis. Layers of meaning. Link to the effect on the reader. Link to relevant context – what was life like when the novel was written? How might a modern day reader respond compared to a reader of the time?

Context (AO3)

The Great Depression– The novel is set in 1930's America, during the Great Depression which started in 1929 after the Wall Street Crash. During this time America saw significant levels of poverty and unemployment.

Steinbeck's life – Steinbeck was born in 1902 in Salinas, California. This region was the setting for much of his writing, including *Of Mice and Men*. While growing up he spent many summer working as a farmhand at ranches.

The American Dream – In 1931, James Truslow Adams defined the American Dream as : "life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement" . The idea comes from the Declaration of Independence which states that "all men are created equal."

"Jim Crow Laws" – Racial segregation (the separation of black people and white people) in public was enforced in many U.S states. This meant that black and white people could not mix together in places including schools, hospitals and parks. There were race riots throughout the 1920s.

Treatment of women – After WW1 (1914-1918) women began to play an increasingly larger role in public life. Between 1920 and 1929 the number of working women increased by 50%. Women were paid less than men for doing the same jobs. Women were increasingly criticized for the way they dressed and acted.

The roaring twenties – 1920s America was a time of great prosperity. There was a consumer boom and luxury products such as cars, radios and washing machines became more readily available. People were able to buy more than they could previously as a result of "hire-purchase." The Wall Street Crash came as a great shock.