



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

Of Mice and Men

based on the book by  
John Steinbeck

Written by  
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ISBN 978-1-60249-222-6

## TABLE OF CONTENTS - *Of Mice and Men*

Introduction	5
Unit Objectives	8
Reading Assignment Sheet	9
Unit Outline	10
Study Questions (Short Answer)	13
Quiz/Study Questions (Multiple Choice)	20
Pre-reading Vocabulary Worksheets	31
Lesson One (Introductory Lesson)	43
Nonfiction Assignment Sheet	49
Oral Reading Evaluation Form	50
Writing Assignment 1	44
Writing Assignment 2	56
Writing Assignment 3	66
Writing Evaluation Form	57
Vocabulary Review Activities	64
Extra Writing Assignments/Discussion ?s	59
Unit Review Activities	68
Unit Tests	71
Unit Resource Materials	97
Vocabulary Resource Materials	109

## A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE AUTHOR JOHN STEINBECK

STEINBECK, John (1902-68). Winner of the 1962 Nobel prize for literature, the American author John Steinbeck is best remembered for his novel 'The Grapes of Wrath'. Steinbeck's story of a family of farm workers migrating from Oklahoma to California describes the hopelessness of the Great Depression era.

John Ernst Steinbeck was born on Feb. 27, 1902, in Salinas, Calif. He took classes at Stanford University for several years but left without a degree. He worked as a laborer to support himself while he wrote. Steinbeck's first novel was published in 1929, but it was not until the publication of 'Tortilla Flat' in 1935 that he attained critical and popular acclaim.

He followed this success with 'In Dubious Battle' (1936) and 'Of Mice and Men' (1937). 'The Grapes of Wrath' (1939) earned for Steinbeck a Pulitzer prize. In these works Steinbeck's proletarian themes are expressed through his portrayal of the inarticulate, dispossessed laborers who populate his American landscape. Both 'Of Mice and Men' and 'The Grapes of Wrath' were made into motion pictures.

In 1943 Steinbeck traveled to North Africa and Italy as a war correspondent. Some of his later works include 'Cannery Row' (1945), 'The Pearl' (1947), 'East of Eden' (1952), 'The Winter of Our Discontent' (1961), and 'Travels with Charley' (1962). He also wrote several motion-picture scripts, including adaptations of two of his shorter works-'The Pearl' and 'The Red Pony'. Steinbeck died in New York City on Dec. 20, 1968.

---- Courtesy of Compton's Learning Company

## INTRODUCTION

This unit has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck. It includes fifteen lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The **introductory lesson** introduces students to one main theme of the novel (friendship) through a bulletin board activity. Following the introductory activity, students are given an explanation of how the activity relates to the book they are about to read.

The **reading assignments** are approximately thirty pages each; some are a little shorter while others are a little longer. Students have approximately 15 minutes of pre-reading work to do prior to each reading assignment. This pre-reading work involves reviewing the study questions for the assignment and doing some vocabulary work for 8 to 10 vocabulary words they will encounter in their reading.

The **study guide questions** are fact-based questions; students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. These questions come in two formats: short answer or multiple choice. The best use of these materials is probably to use the short answer version of the questions as study guides for students (since answers will be more complete), and to use the multiple choice version for occasional quizzes. If your school has the appropriate machinery, it might be a good idea to make transparencies of your answer keys for the overhead projector.

The **vocabulary work** is intended to enrich students' vocabularies as well as to aid in the students' understanding of the book. Prior to each reading assignment, students will complete a two-part worksheet for approximately 8 to 10 vocabulary words in the upcoming reading assignment. Part I focuses on students' use of general knowledge and contextual clues by giving the sentence in which the word appears in the text. Students are then to write down what they think the words mean based on the words' usage. Part II nails down the definitions of the words by giving students dictionary definitions of the words and having students match the words to the correct definitions based on the words' contextual usage. Students should then have a thorough understanding of the words when they meet them in the text.

After each reading assignment, students will go back and formulate answers for the study guide questions. Discussion of these questions serves as a **review** of the most important events and ideas presented in the reading assignments.

After students complete extra discussion questions, there is a **vocabulary review** lesson which pulls together all of the fragmented vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of all of the words they have studied.

Following the reading of the book, two lessons are devoted to the **extra discussion questions/writing assignments**. These questions focus on interpretation, critical analysis and personal response, employing a variety of thinking skills and adding to the students' understanding of the novel. These questions are done as a **group activity**. Using the information they have acquired so far through individual work and class discussions, students get together to further examine the text and to brainstorm ideas relating to the themes of the novel.

The group activity is followed by a **reports and discussion** session in which the groups share their ideas about the book with the entire class; thus, the entire class gets exposed to many different ideas regarding the themes and events of the book.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading, or having students express personal opinions. The first assignment is to inform: students compose a "want ad" in which they advertise to find a friend. This assignment pulls in the theme of friendship and the skills necessary to write a "want ad." The second assignment gives students the opportunity to express their personal ideas: students choose a hope or dream that they have for the future and make a plan they can follow to help make their dreams come true. The third assignment is to give students a chance to persuade: students pretend to be defending or prosecuting George for Lennie's murder and write their closing arguments to a jury.

In addition, there is a **nonfiction reading assignment**. Students are required to read a piece of nonfiction related in some way to *Of Mice and Men*. After reading their nonfiction pieces, students will fill out a worksheet on which they answer questions regarding facts, interpretation, criticism, and personal opinions. During one class period, students make **oral presentations** about the nonfiction pieces they have read. This not only exposes all students to a wealth of information, it also gives students the opportunity to practice **public speaking**.

There is an optional **class project** (Project Homeless) through which students gain first-hand knowledge of the situation of the homeless people and have some part in helping to do something about this problem.

The **review lesson** pulls together all of the aspects of the unit. The teacher is given four or five choices of activities or games to use which all serve the same basic function of reviewing all of the information presented in the unit.

The **unit test** comes in two formats: all multiple choice-matching-true/false or with a mixture of matching, short answer, and composition. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **extra activities packet** includes suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the novel, and extra vocabulary worksheets. There is a list of **bulletin board ideas** which gives the teacher suggestions for bulletin boards to go along with this unit. In addition, there is a list of **extra class activities** the teacher could choose from to enhance the unit or as a substitution for an exercise the teacher might feel is inappropriate for his/her class. **Answer keys** are located directly after the **reproducible student materials** throughout the unit. The student materials may be reproduced for use in the teacher's classroom without infringement of copyrights. No other portion of this unit may be reproduced without the written consent of Teacher's Pet Publications, Inc.

## UNIT OBJECTIVES - *Of Mice and Men*

1. Through reading Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, students will gain a better understanding of the theme of comradeship and the importance of an individual's dreams.
2. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical and personal.
3. Students will define their own viewpoints on the aforementioned themes.
4. Students will be exposed to a different era of American life, showing many of today's conflicts are not new; they are rooted in our American past.
5. Students will create a plan for achieving at least one of their hopes or dreams.
6. Students will be given the opportunity to practice reading aloud and silently to improve their skills in each area.
7. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *Of Mice and Men* as they relate to the author's theme development.
8. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the novel through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with the novel.
9. The writing assignments in this unit are geared to several purposes:
  - a. To have students demonstrate their abilities to inform, to persuade, or to express their own personal ideas  
Note: Students will demonstrate ability to write effectively to inform by developing and organizing facts to convey information. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to persuade by selecting and organizing relevant information, establishing an argumentative purpose, and by designing an appropriate strategy for an identified audience. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to express personal ideas by selecting a form and its appropriate elements.
  - b. To check the students' reading comprehension
  - c. To make students think about the ideas presented by the novel
  - d. To encourage logical thinking
  - e. To provide an opportunity to practice good grammar and improve students' use of the English language.

READING ASSIGNMENT SHEET - *Of Mice and Men*

Date Assigned	Reading Assignment (Chapters)	Completion Date
	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
	6	



UNIT OUTLINE - *Of Mice and Men*

<b>1</b> Introduction  Writing Assignment 1	<b>2</b> Materials  PVR Ch. 1	<b>3</b> Study ?s Ch. 1  PVR Ch. 2	<b>4</b> Writing Assignment 2  PV Ch. 3	<b>5</b> Study ?s Ch. 2  Read Ch. 3  PVR Ch. 4
<b>6</b> Study ?s Chs. 3-4  PVR Chs. 5-6	<b>7</b> Study ?s Chs. 5-6  Writing Conf. Grammar Wksht	<b>8</b> Grammar Review  Working Session	<b>9</b> Extra Discussion Questions	<b>10</b> Extra Discussion Questions
<b>11</b> Vocabulary Review	<b>12</b> Writing Assignment 3	<b>13</b> Nonfiction Discussion	<b>14</b> Review	<b>15</b> Test
<b>16</b> Project Homeless	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>

Key: P = Preview Study Questions    V = Vocabulary Work    R = Read

## LESSON ONE

### Objectives

1. To introduce the *Of Mice and Men* unit
2. To distribute books and other related materials
3. To introduce the theme of "people need friends"
4. To give students the opportunity to write to inform by developing and organizing facts to convey information

NOTE: Prior to Lesson One you need to have assigned for students to bring to class pictures showing things that friends do for each other. Also, you should have an empty bulletin board with just background paper and the title: OF MICE AND MEN; A STORY ABOUT FRIENDSHIP.

### Activity #1

Tell students to get out the pictures they were assigned to bring to class. Have each student post his picture(s) on the bulletin board and, as he does so, to explain to the class what trait of friendship his picture exemplifies.

TRANSITION: Explain to students that *Of Mice and Men*, the book they are about to read, is a story about friendship--about what it really means to be someone's friend and to have a friend.

### Activity #2

Distribute Writing Assignment #1 and discuss the directions in detail. Give students the remainder of this class period to work on this assignment. While students are working on this assignment, distribute/assign the books to students. (If you wish, you may also distribute the other materials which students will need for the unit. There is, however, time planned for distributing materials in Lesson Two. If your students tend to lose materials or tend to forget to bring what they need to class, you might wait to give the materials out in Lesson Two when you will also need students' attention to tell them how these materials are to be used.)

## WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 - *Of Mice and Men*

### PROMPT

Loneliness is a common emotion that everyone feels once in a while--some more often than others. The ranch hands in *Of Mice and Men* were drifters; they had no families close by and didn't stay in one place long enough to make lasting friends. Theirs was a lonely lifestyle. Two fellows, George and Lennie, found friendship early in their lives and traveled together. From them we can see what it means to be a friend and what it means to have a friend. Friendship has great rewards, but being a friend isn't always easy.

Your assignment is to design an advertisement -- "WANTED: A FRIEND". Your advertisement should carry all the usual information in a "want ad": what you want, a job description, the requirements and the rewards. Your ad must fit on an 8 1/2" X 11" sheet of paper. Be as creative as you like, but remember your ad must contain the information requested above and remember that you are striving for an effective advertisement.

### PREWRITING

The first thing you need to do is to jot down ideas you have about what a friend's job description would contain. What does it mean to be a friend? What qualities are necessary for a person to have to be a good friend? What are the positive aspects of being a friend? What are the difficult parts of the job?

Put down all of your thoughts, and then go back and sort through them. Combine ideas that are essentially the same. Organize your thoughts into categories: job description, qualifications/requirements, and rewards. From there you can begin to design your ad.

### DRAFTING

You need to make a few basic decisions: Are you going to have any graphics (drawings) in your ad? What will be the attention-getter in your ad? How can you make all of your most important information fit on one page? How will you lay-out or design your ad? (How will it look on the page?) Once you have decided these things, you can put pencil to paper and make a rough draft of your ad.

### PROMPT

After you have finished a rough draft of your ad, revise it yourself until you are happy with your work. Then, ask a student who sits near you to tell you what he/she likes best about your work, and what things he/she thinks can be improved. Take another look at your ad keeping in mind your critic's suggestions, and make the revisions you feel are necessary.

### PROOFREADING

Do a final proofreading of your paper double-checking your grammar, spelling, organization, and the clarity of your ideas.