



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

OF MICE AND MEN

BY JOHN STEINBECK



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Edited by Paul Moliken

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 1**Description**

Objectives: Visualizing a scene
Recognizing the use of concrete detail in descriptive writing

Activity

Steinbeck opens the novel with a description of a deep, green pool.

1. List all the concrete details that are included in the description. For instance, willow and sycamores are described in detail. Steinbeck mentions the wildlife around the pool “A stilted heron labored up into the air and pounded down river”; and “A water snake slipped along the pool, its head held up like a little periscope.”
2. List some ideas that come to mind as you read Steinbeck’s description.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 1**Characterization**

Objectives: Recognizing how character traits are revealed
Inferring meaning about a character by contrasting him or her with other characters

Activity

George and Lennie are frequently presented as opposites. Use the chart on the next page to contrast their physical and mental characteristics, personalities, and attitudes.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 2**Narrative Technique**

Objective: Interpreting the impact of the narrative device of a choral character

Activity

In Greek drama, a group of characters, or *chorus*, would comment on the action of the play and provide any background information the audience needed. In more modern times, some plays include “choral characters” who comment on the action, provide information, and interpret the situations for the audience.

In *Of Mice and Men*, Candy functions as a choral character; when George and Lennie arrive at the ranch, Candy tells them about the people on the ranch. Steinbeck uses this device to make the situation on the ranch clear to the reader.

Complete the chart on the next page on Candy's role so far.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 2**Inference**

Objectives: Understanding characters by interpreting their thoughts and language
Inferring character traits

Activity

In this section, the boss, Curley, and Slim reveal their character to the reader by their reactions to George and Lennie. Each of the three responds to situations in different ways. Their interpretations reflect their own character and concerns.

Complete the chart on the next page that contrasts the reactions of the boss, Curley, and Slim to George and Lennie.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 3

Inference and Persuasive Writing

Objectives: Drawing inferences about the relationship between events in a literary work
Responding to the philosophical position put forth in a story
Using persuasive techniques

Activity

1. In small groups, consider the section in *Of Mice and Men* when Lennie crushes Curley's hand. Some view this event as an inevitable result of a chain of events that Lennie could not control. Complete the chart on the next page showing the causal chain.
2. George makes a choice to let Lennie hurt Curley, knowing how powerful Lennie is. When Curley starts hitting Lennie, George said, "Get him." Slim jumps up to stop Curley, but George holds Slim back, repeating, "Get him, Lennie." What is your view of this? Do you think George should be held responsible? Write a letter to Curley (from any other major character) and explain your feelings to him.
3. List the internal forces that Curley is experiencing, considering the psychological issues he already appears to have. Do you think Curley is responsible for striking out at Lennie? State your position and list your reasons.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 3**Plot**

Objective: Recognizing rising action in a plot

Activity

Complete the chart on the next page on how each aspect of George's situation has become more intense and what you predict the outcomes may be.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Sections 1 – 6**Journalistic Style**

Objective: Writing an article, editorial, and headlines for a paper

Activity

After re-reading the following scenes from *Of Mice and Men*, prepare a newspaper story and a headline for one scene and an editorial and headline for a different scene out of the four below. Be sure to include who, what, when, where, and why in your news story. Remember that a news story is objective, unbiased, and presents only the facts as they happened. An editorial, however, allows you to express your own opinion. Make sure, though, that your opinions are supported by facts in the novel.

- The incidents at Weed
- Curley's wife's death
- Lennie's death
- The scene of Lennie crushing Curley's hand

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Theme

Objective: Writing statements of theme and supporting your thesis with details from the novel

Activity

For each of the following topics present in the novel, write a thematic statement that includes Steinbeck's point of view on the topic. Then cite incidents or comments from the book that support each thematic statement. An example is provided.

Topic Example: Treatment of Women

Thematic Statement: Steinbeck portrays women as second-class people, without personalities of their own.

Comments from the book that support Topic Example: Treatment of Women: The woman in Weeds falsely accused Lennie of rape, and George believes woman are the cause of evil in the world. Curley's wife has no name or individuality of her own; everything she does is in relationship to him: flirting, the desire to leave him, her past. He tries to control everything she does, but in one moment of strength, she threatens Crooks with a lynching. Her need to speak to a man leads to her own and Lennie's death. Steinbeck refers to her as "jailbait" and "poison." Essentially, the only other women mentioned work in whore houses, or Aunt Clara, who is dead.