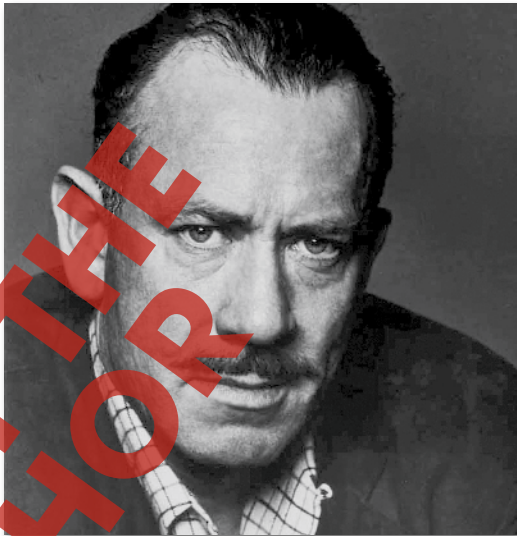




## John Steinbeck

**J**ohn Ernst Steinbeck, Jr. was born in Salinas, California on February 27, 1902. He was the third of four children and the only boy. The town is very close to the Pacific Coast and to the fertile land of the Salinas Valley, which was often the setting of his writing. Steinbeck's father worked various jobs—he managed a flour plant, owned a feed and grain store, and later served as treasurer for California's Monterey County. Steinbeck's mother, Olive Hamilton Steinbeck, was a schoolteacher. Steinbeck had a happy childhood, was shy but smart, and developed a love of the written word early on.



While in high school, Steinbeck professed a goal of becoming a writer and would work in the office of his Salinas home at night on stories and poems. He sent out many stories to magazines with a false name and without a return address, later saying he was scared to receive a rejection letter. Steinbeck enrolled in Stanford University after graduating high school in 1919. At Stanford, Steinbeck attended creative writing courses, studied world history and biology, but left in 1925 without earning a degree.

After spending a period in New York City, where he earned little money as a journalist and laborer, Steinbeck traveled back to Lake Tahoe, California and completed his first novel—*Cup of Gold*—in 1929. Based on the life of Henry Morgan, the book was unsuccessful. During this time, Steinbeck met and married Carol Henning and worked on his next novel, *To a God Unknown*, published in 1933. He followed up with his first success *Tortilla Flat* in 1935. In the coming years, Steinbeck ingrained himself in the history of American literature with *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. The stories helped make him one of the most celebrated American authors of all time. He continued to write up until his death in December 1968.

### Did You Know?

• The title *Of Mice and Men* comes from the Robert Burns poem "To a Mouse." The poem originated the saying that "the best laid schemes of mice and men often go awry".

• *Of Mice and Men* was based on author John Steinbeck's own experiences as a migrant worker in the 1920s.

• The novella has been adapted into a movie several times, including a 1992 film starring Gary Sinise and John Malkovich. It has also been adapted for radio and stage productions.



## Section Two (Part One)

(From "The bunk house was a long, rectangular building." to "Seen my old man?" he asked.")

Answer the questions in complete sentences.

- At the end of the last Section, Lennie says he remembers not to say a word when the pair go to the ranch. Predict whether he'll really remember not to speak.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- George tells Lennie to come back to the pond if he gets in trouble. Do you believe this could be foreshadowing future events? Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Vocabulary

Complete each sentence with a word from the list.

satisfied  
stocky

relish  
hearty

littered  
sore

whitewashed  
skeptically

- Inside, the walls were \_\_\_\_\_ and the floor unpainted.
- In the middle of the room stood a big square table \_\_\_\_\_ with playing cards.
- "He was \_\_\_\_\_ as hell when you wasn't here to go out this morning."
- "I ain't so sure," George said \_\_\_\_\_.
- Finally George seemed \_\_\_\_\_.
- "Drink \_\_\_\_\_ boys. Christmas comes but once a year."
- He paused in \_\_\_\_\_ of the memory.
- A little \_\_\_\_\_ man stood in the open doorway.



## Section Three (Part One)

(From "Although there was evening brightness showing..." to "I give him one of them pups.")

1. Put a check mark (✓) next to the answer that is most correct.

- Where were Lennie and George both born?
  - A Chicago
  - B Weed
  - C Auburn
  - D Lubbock, Texas
- Which game do George and Whit play?
  - A 52 pickup
  - B Solitaire
  - C Hide and seek
  - D Euchre
- What game is going on outside the bunk house as George and Slim talk?
  - A Horseshoes
  - B Hide and Seek
  - C Red rover
  - D None of the above
- What is Candy asking for when he says "I gotta gut ache."
  - A A slug in the face.
  - B A splash of liniment oil.
  - C Some pain pills.
  - D A slug of whisky.
- Which river does George tell Slim Lennie almost drowned in?
  - A The Salinas River
  - B The Colorado River
  - C The Sacramento River
  - D The Mississippi River



## Section Four (Part One)

(From "Crooks, the negro stable buck..." to "Maybe I better go see.")

Answer each question with a complete sentence.

- Where does Crooks stay on the ranch? Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Why is Crooks described as more "permanent" than the other men?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Why do you think Crooks doesn't want Lennie in his room initially? Use evidence.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Why does Crooks eventually relent and tell Lennie to sit down? Use evidence.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Why do you believe Crooks takes so much delight in "torturing" Lennie with his questions supposing George doesn't come back?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Crooks mentions that "a guy needs somebody to be near him." How does this relate to the themes of the story? Use evidence to support your answer.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



### Journaling Prompt

In this Section it is mentioned that Crooks has a copy of the California civil code for 1905. The code is made up of statutes that outline the obligations and rights of people within the state. Research civil rights at the turn of the 20th century and describe what you find in a few paragraphs. Why might Crooks have this book? What importance would it have for him, if any? Discuss your findings with a partner.



## Sections 1 to 2 (Part 1)

### Sense of Place

One of the most noticeable aspects of Steinbeck's writing is his ability to quickly establish a sense of place with depth—sights, sounds, smells—that pull the reader into the story.

Go back through the book so far and make note of some of the ways the author is able to build that sense of place. Think—as mentioned above—of the sights, sounds and smells of a scene, but also of the way characters speak and react.

Choose 10 different sentences or paragraphs that help to create a realistic world within the story. For each sentence or paragraph, discuss in detail why it's effective in establishing a sense of place and what drew you to it.

Each description should be about 100 words.



## Sections 1 to 3 (Part 1)

### A Poem

Poetry has been used for centuries to convey emotion and complex concepts. Now it's up to you to try to capture the essence of George and Lennie's relationship through poetry.

Your piece can be any type of poetry you wish—free verse, haiku, limerick, or ballad—as long as you're able to establish a sense of the relationship between the two characters. Length isn't as important as making sure the poem accurately depicts Lennie and George's friendship.

Be sure to establish what type of poem you're writing at the top of your page and stick to the style.

For example, in haiku the story could go like this:

Bound by loneliness	}5 syllables
Seeking a place to call home	}7 syllables
To have our own land	}5 syllables



## Word Search Puzzle

Find the following words from the story. The words are written horizontally, vertically, diagonally, and some are written backwards.

anguished	hearty	misery	sore
basins	hoosegow	morosely	thuds
bunk	imitated	obvious	toneless
clangs	jarred	ominously	torque
dignity	jeering	rapily	twinking
ego	lanced	rosy	whimpering
flopped	meager	scoffed	
gradually	mended	slats	

b	v	l	f	s	n	z	j	z	r	u	b	a	w	d	a	g	g	l	y	p	e	a	w	
s	n	i	s	a	b	m	a	r	a	h	m	k	f	a	x	i	d	a	r	x	l	y	h	
i	j	e	y	f	u	r	n	b	k	e	o	e	h	z	m	k	x	n	e	q	p	k	i	
a	n	g	u	i	s	h	e	d	s	a	r	x	n	w	y	g	c	g	j	k	r	m		
t	j	q	r	o	s	y	w	m	l	r	o	r	c	d	i	n	k	e	a	r	l	z	p	
o	b	c	i	a	e	b	f	k	b	t	s	o	q	e	c	e	d	e	z	u	g	e		
r	f	i	d	q	d	d	n	t	q	y	e	a	i	q	j	d	o	h	m	p	g	e	r	
t	p	w	e	c	j	u	v	f	v	c	l	v	f	d	k	m	y	x	i	j	q	h	i	
u	z	d	o	w	b	n	a	u	m	a	y	s	b	x	h	s	a	f	u	l	a	m	n	
r	i	b	s	b	d	r	q	l	g	e	g	h	p	e	d	x	t	g	d	n	s	p	g	
e	q	e	c	h	v	t	u	t	o	p	p	e	d	k	h	p	d	a	u	r	d	y		
w	j	p	o	c	b	i	c	t	w	y	s	g	q	l	w	m	s	l	e	o	t	l	k	
m	o	g	n	v	l	x	o	m	b	n	j	v	c	b	e	a	g	p	z	r	f	k	l	
i	a	p	t	p	j	a	r	u	g	e	d	n	w	b	x	w	n	e	n	j	r	c	o	
s	r	a	d	h	u	z	n	h	s	y	v	g	f	l	h	o	c	c	g	i	y	a	q	
e	h	a	z	y	t	r	g	d	d	i	r	l	o	z	d	a	o	i	m	a	l	j		
r	o	c	p	v	l	g	n	h	s	e	j	v	c	x	e	f	p	w	o	f	k	y	p	
y	o	t	y	t	v	i	r	m	w	t	u	t	r	h	o	h	y	s	y	c	n	s	d	
b	s	o	r	e	l	s	i	q	i	a	e	y	k	n	s	u	o	t	m	p	c	e	u	
s	e	s	u	k	e	y	r	m	p	t	s	l	a	t	s	h	i	r	u	q	f	r	x	
w	g	t	n	q	l	a	w	k	n	i	d	u	r	j	k	n	h	z	l	f	j	v	o	
f	o	i	r	x	t	w	v	z	s	m	u	o	g	e	g	b	x	a	o	y	i	m	n	
z	w	j	e	e	r	i	n	g	w	i	h	x	t	i	h	m	k	c	v	n	s	t	s	
t	y	z	v	s	s	e	l	e	n	o	t	u	d	g	y	l	s	u	o	n	i	m	o	



## Comprehension Quiz

Answer each question in a complete sentence.

- Why were George and Lennie run out of the last place they worked?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Name the important themes or motifs of the story.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is the name of the river mentioned early in the story?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How does George feel about Lennie at the beginning of the story?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is the significance of the piece of land George and Lennie talk about?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Name two characters who abuse the ranch hands in different ways.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Who first suggests Candy put down his dog? Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_

29

2

3

1

4

2

2

3

SUBTOTAL: /17

## Setting and Mood

In this organizer you'll list the various setting descriptions and describe how they establish the mood of the story. Setting plays a significant role in the book. Imagine if, rather than set in the hard times of the Dust Bowl outside of Soledad, California, the novel was set in the jungles of the Congo—it would be much different. Use this organizer to jot down some of the detailed setting descriptions and describe how that setting helps establish the mood of the story.

<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>
<b>Social Conditions</b>	<b>Mood</b>

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

After You Read 



## Section Two (Part One)

(From "The bunk house was a long, rectangular building," to "Seen my old man?" he asked.)

Answer each question with a complete sentence.

1. Why do you think George would lie about why Lennie is how he is?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What does the ranch hand's treatment of the stable buck tell you about the time period? Explain your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What did the boss bring to the bunk house at Christmas?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you believe George was justified in saying Lennie speaking almost cost them the job? Explain your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What job does George tell the boss Lennie and he had in Weed? Why would he tell the boss this?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What does Lennie's response to George's lie tell you about Lennie's character?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Journaling Prompt

Throughout the first few Sections, the author has talked about many of the tools or other things Lennie and George carry with them, such as their bindles. Research such belongings and create an overview or outline of what a typical migrant worker in the time period would have been traveling with.

1.

Answers will vary, but may include: George gives an excuse to why Lennie is the way he is so the boss will give them a chance. Once he sees Lennie work, it won't matter why he's the way that he is.

2.

Answers will vary, but may include: during this time period, people of another color were not as respected as others.

3.

The boss brought a gallon of whisky to the bunk house at Christmas.

4.

Answers will vary, but may include: It could be argued Lennie's talking didn't impact the situation. The boss had already identified the fact that Lennie wasn't speaking and would have wondered why in any case. Therefore George's own plan of having him not talk could have had as big an impact.

5.

George tells the boss they were digging a cesspool. He lied about the job in fear that the boss would find out why they really left Weed.

6.

Lennie's reaction to George's lie illustrates that Lennie doesn't understand why George is lying and furthers his depiction as an unintelligent man.

### Vocabulary

#### Across

- 1. pugnacious
- 6. plaintively
- 7. Candy
- 9. disengage
- 12. basins
- 13. derogatory
- 14. scraps
- 15. flounced
- 16. gingerly
- 17. archly

#### Down

- 2. calculating
- 3. George
- 4. Lennie
- 5. contorted
- 7. crouch
- 8. Slim
- 10. gossip
- 11. brusquely
- 12. brilliant

1.

a) basins

b) crushed  
c) Stetson

d) blue

e) jeans  
f) denim  
g) jacket

h) majesty  
i) royalty

j) master  
k) craftsmen  
l) prince  
m) leaders

n) bull  
o) whip

p) gravity  
q) profound

r) authority

s) Slim

t) ageless



1.

The swamper, Candy, says Curley keeps his hand in a glove full of vaseline to keep it soft for his wife.

2.

Answers will vary, but may include: Curley has been noted to be prone to fighting, while his wife could stir up trouble by talking to the ranch hands, thus stoking Curley's jealousy.

3.

Answers will vary.

4.

George is playing solitaire in the bunk house.

5.

Carlson says Candy's old dog smells and should be put down. He says the pup could replace the old dog.

6.

It's established that Curley often picks fights. His actions suggest Curley is insecure in his small stature.

EASY MARKING ANSWER KEY