



## Background Check

Name:

Class:

Date:

*Research the following topics using the Internet. Each answer should be written in paragraph format. Type your responses and submit them to [turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com). Copy/paste **the website that you get your information from at the end of each paragraph**. DO NOT COPY ANY SOURCES WORD-FOR-WORD.*

1. The geographic setting in the novel *Of Mice and Men* is the farm country of California's Salinas valley. Research the climate of this area. Write your findings below. 5 sentences.
2. The time period of this novel was written in the days following the Great Depression. What was life like during this time period? Give at least five details. 5 sentences.
3. What are "Migrant Workers"? 4 sentences.
4. Where did the title *Of Mice and Men* come from? 1 sentence.
5. The author of this novel is **John Steinbeck**. Write a short biography of him (5 sentences minimum).

### Character Chart: Of Mice and Men

Character	Physical Description	Relationship with Other Characters	Personal Thoughts
Lennie Small			
George Milton			
Slim			
Candy			
Crooks			
Carlson			
Curley			
Curley's Wife			

For each chapter, you must complete the following note-taking chart **on your own paper**. It will be due on top of your class cabinet when class begins the following day.

Label Chapter Number: Make up a Title for the Chapter. <i>Sample:</i> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chapter 1: Meeting George and Lennie</b></p>	
<b>Question</b>	In this space, write the names of the characters involved, as well as where and when the story is taking place. Next, write down questions you have about the story or characters, and any questions about the reading that you did not understand and/or would like your teacher to clarify.
<b>Predict</b>	In this space, write down your prediction for what you think will happen next in the story.
<b>Connect</b>	In this space, write down anything that you found familiar: either a situation you have experienced, a character that reminds you of someone, or an event from the story that is similar to something you have already read.
<b>Summarize</b>	Re-tell, in your own words, the main plot and important details of your reading. Your summary should not be more than about one paragraph, or 5-7 sentences, long.
<b>Reflect</b>	In this space, write down any quotes, sayings, or moments that affect you in some way. So far, what do you think is the reason the author wrote this book? Are there any themes you recognize? Do you like the book so far? Why or why not? What changes could be made so that you understand or connect with the novel better?

### Chapter 1: QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER AFTER READING

1. Describe how George feels about Lennie, and how Lennie feels about George.
2. What is George's dream like without Lennie, and why do you feel George feels ashamed of his dream life without Lennie?
3. Compare and contrast the mental and physical characteristics of Lennie and George.
4. Why do you think George creates a place for Lennie to remember, in case there is trouble?
5. Has Lennie's obsession with soft things caused him trouble in the past? How? Speculate what future events may be foreshadowed with Lennie's obsession with soft things.

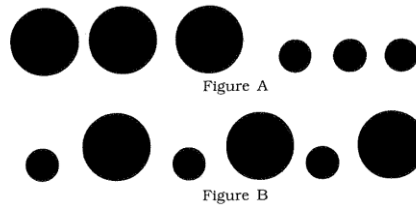
### CHAPTER 1 ACTIVITY

Solve the following puzzles with a partner. Their details give you all the information you need to know, but the information is not readily apparent.

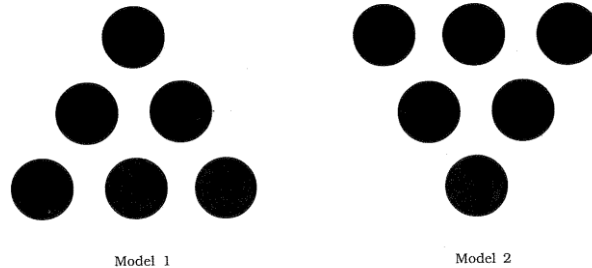
**PUZZLE 1** Sally has to get her two infant children, Sara and Roger, as well as the family cat, out to the car. Sally has one more problem. She recently broke her arm, and so she can carry only one child at a time or the cat. Sally has yet another problem. Neither child can be left alone with the cat. Sara pulls the cat's tail, causing general havoc, and the cat sheds hair on Roger's brown pants. How can Sally get all three to the car in as few trips as possible?

**PUZZLE 2** Albert needs to ferry Geraldine the goose, Fred the fox, and one bag of corn to his island, but he has room in his small boat for one at a time. Albert knows he can't leave Geraldine alone with the corn, and he certainly can't leave Fred with Geraldine, so he must figure out how to get all three safely to the other side. How can he do it?

**PUZZLE 3** Change the six coins pictured in figure A to the new arrangement shown in figure B. This must be done in only three moves. You may move only two adjacent coins at a time.



**PUZZLE 4** Use some coins to reproduce model 1. Move only two coins to make model 2. Look carefully at the two models, and find a common element between them to help you find the solution.



**Reflection:** These puzzles are similar to life in regard to the approach and reasoning that a person brings to a situation may be quite different from that of another person in the same situation. Write a well-developed paragraph reflecting on the process of solving these puzzles with a partner, making sure to comment on how the process of solving these puzzles with a partner was similar to life experiences.

## Chapter 2 Discussion: QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER AFTER READING

1. The setting in chapter one is in direct contrast with the setting in chapter two. Describe the contrast Steinbeck gives his reader and why you might think he is providing this contrast of scenes.
2. Steinbeck is giving the reader a description of the typical migrant worker during the 1930s in his descriptions characters. Using the descriptions and characteristics of the characters described so far, give examples from the text that show you Steinbeck's view of migrant workers.
3. Many are suspicious of George and Lennie traveling together, each with a different reason for suspicion. Give the reasoning behind each of the following characters' suspicion of George and Lennie: Boss, Curley, Slim.
4. The suspicion of George and Lennie's traveling arrangements gives insight into the character's personality and character. Describe the insight given into the following character's personality and character: Boss, Curley, Slim.

## CHAPTER 2 ACTIVITY

One of the unique aspects of *Of Mice and Men* is the use of dialogue. **Dialogue** is a conversation between two or more characters. Since this novel was originally written as a play, dialogue, rather than descriptive narration, helps the reader to understand the characters and plot. In drama, it is the actions and dialogue of the characters that tell a story. Dialogue serves many purposes. It develops characters as it allows readers to experience the character's own words, it creates the setting through regional characteristics like dialect or slang, it reveals important information about the plot and conflicts, it allows the reader to experience the action as the character experiences it, and it generates an impression of reality.

**To help you understand the differences between dialogue and narrative form, complete the activity below. For each excerpt in dialogue form, convert it to narrative form following the sample below. Then explain the purpose served by each excerpt of dialogue.**

Dialogue Form	Narrative Form	Specific Purpose
Lennie looked timidly over to him. "George?" "Yeah, what ya want?" "Where we goin', George?" The little man jerked down the brim of his hat and scowled over at Lennie. "So you forgot awready, did you? I gotta tell you again, do I? Jesus Christ, you're a crazy bastard!"	<b>Lennie looked over timidly at George. With a strange, confused uneasiness, he asked where they were headed. Angry and irritated over hearing the same question at least ten times, George snapped and yelled at Lennie.</b>	<b>By the way George scolds Lennie, the reader can see that George easily loses his patience with Lennie. There is also evidence of a dialect, although the reader may not be completely clear what dialect it is.</b>

#1. Dialogue Form	Narrative Form	Specific Purpose
<p>"Ain't a thing in my pocket," Lennie said cleverly.</p> <p>"I know there ain't. You got it in your hand. What you got in your hand-hidin' it?"</p> <p>"I ain't got nothin', George. Honest."</p> <p>"Come on, give it here."</p> <p>Lennie held his closed hand away from George's direction. "It's only a mouse, George."</p> <p>"A mouse? A live mouse?"</p> <p>"Uh-uh. Jus' a dead mouse, George. I didn' kill it. Honest! I found it. I found it dead."</p>		
#2. Dialogue Form	Narrative Form	Specific Purpose
<p>"O.K. Now when we go in to see the boss, what you gonna do?"</p> <p>"I... I," Lennie thought. His face grew tight with thought. "I... ain't gonna say nothin'. Jus' gonna stan' there."</p> <p>"Good boy. That's swell. You say that over two, three times so you won't forget it."</p> <p>Lennie droned to himself softly. "I ain't gonna say nothin'... I ain't gonna say nothin'... I ain't gonna say nothin'."</p>		
#3. Dialogue Form	Narrative Form	Specific Purpose
<p>"George," very softly. No answer. "George!"</p> <p>"Whatta you want?"</p> <p>"I was only foolin', George. I don't want no ketchup. I wouldn't eat no ketchup if it was right here beside me."</p> <p>"If it was here, you could have some."</p> <p>"But I wouldn't eat none, George, I'd leave it all for you. You could cover your beans with it and I wouldn't touch none of it."</p>		

#4. Dialogue Form	Narrative Form	Specific Purpose
Lennie spoke craftily, "Tell me—like you done before." "Tell you what?" "About the rabbits." George snapped. "You ain't gonna put nothing over on me." Lennie pleaded, "Come on, George. Tell me. Please, George. Like you done before." "You get a kick outta that, don't you? Awright, I'll tell you, and then we'll eat our supper..."		

### Chapter 3 Discussion: QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER AFTER READING

1. In chapter three, a minor character, Whit, is brought to the forefront. What purpose does this character serve in Steinbeck's portrayal of migrant workers?
2. Chapter three uses foreshadowing heavily. Examine the following events and speculate what the statements may be foreshadowing: Whit's comments on her appearance; Curley's suspicion of her whereabouts and whom she is with; the excitement of other workers of the possibility of a fight; George's demeaning names for her and his experience with girls like her.
3. What reasons does Carlson give for killing Candy's dog? Do you feel his reasons are valid and he is justified for his action? Why or why not?
4. In Chapter three, Steinbeck tries to balance gloomy events with more uplifting events. How do you think this is done?
5. Identify three examples of the theme of "loneliness" found within chapters 1-3.
6. List the benefits George and Lennie see in having a home of their own.
7. The main goal for Lennie and George is to be able to live off the "fatta the lan." Describe what this statement means, and also explain what it means today.

### CHAPTER 3 ACTIVITY

Match the characters in with the character traits you believe them to possess. Then write responses to questions 9-15 in complete sentences on your own paper.

Character	Most Obvious Characteristics
_____ 1. George Milton	A. reserved, cautious
_____ 2. Lennie Small	B. brutish, cocky, arrogant
_____ 3. Slim	C. aged, lonely
_____ 4. Candy	D. responsible, moral
_____ 5. Crooks	E. pragmatic (practical), realistic
_____ 6. Carlson	F. hulking, loyal, affectionate
_____ 7. Curley	G. flirtatious, self-centered, coy
_____ 8. Curley's Wife	H. sympathetic, perceptive

9. How many characters would you describe as lonely? Name them.
  10. Which character do you like best? With whom would you probably become friendly?
  11. Which character seems the angriest about the circumstances of his life?
  12. Which character seems most accepting?
  13. About which character do you believe John Steinbeck revealed the most?
  14. Which character remains the most remote, the one about which we know the least?
  15. Do we know as much as we need to know about each character to develop the plot, or are there questions that need answers? What are they?
16. Justify the choices you made in the matching section above with evidence from the novel in a well-developed paragraph on your own paper. Find dialogue or narrative that helped you infer the traits you assigned each character. Include MLA citations with the page numbers in addition to direct quotes.

#### **Chapter 4 Discussion: QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER AFTER READING**

1. How are Crooks, Candy, Lennie, and Curley's wife all victims of the attitudes of the society they live in? Give a reason for EACH CHARACTER of how they are victims.
2. Give a reason why the dream of owning property and home may become a reality.
3. How does Curley's wife feel about her husband? Why is she disgusted that she was left on the ranch while the men went into town? What do you think Curley's wife's dreams are for her future?
4. Why is Candy so bold in his defense of his dream when Curley's wife continually puts down the idea?
5. Slim is one of the only characters in the story that is not handicapped in some way. Why do you think Steinbeck creates this character this way?
6. Describe the handicaps of the following characters. Write at least one sentence for each character: George, Lennie, Curley, Curley's Wife, Crooks

#### **CHAPTER 4 ACTIVITY**

**Conflict** is the struggle between opposing forces in a story. Three common types of conflict:

- **Character versus character** is when a character struggles against a character or a particular problem that another character has caused.
- **Character versus self** is when a character struggles with himself about a problem of his own; usually a moral/ethical issue or a physical obstacle.
- **Character versus nature** is when a character faces a force such as the weather or an adverse setting or environment.
- **Character versus society** is when a character is forced to face a struggle because of common beliefs of society.

In *Of Mice and Men*, conflict surrounds the plot and is a major part of the action. Several conflicts emerge at the same time and ultimately cause the plot to materialize into an interesting and suspenseful story.

**Directions:** For each situation from Chapters 1-4 on the next page, identify the type of conflict the situation represents. Then identify the effect that the conflict has had on the plot so far. An example has been done for you.



Conflict	Type of Conflict	Effect
George gets frustrated and irritated with the fact that Lennie has trouble remembering things, and often scolds him for forgetting.	Character versus character	George has to take care of Lennie as if he were a child, like carrying his work card for him, and speaking on his behalf.
1) Lennie likes to pet soft things, such as mice, but tends to pet them too hard or kill them, unaware of his own strength.		
2) George complains that if he didn't have to take care of Lennie he would have a better life, and would be able to do the things he always wanted to do.		
3) George and Lennie dream of one day being able to own their own farm, and to work only for themselves, but for now they must work to survive.		
4) Curley, who has been known to pick fights with bigger men, picks a fight with Lennie.		
5) Curley is jealous and suspicious of his wife, who seems to flaunt herself in front of other men.		
6) Hoping to avoid any trouble, Lennie suggests that he and George leave the ranch.		
7) Crooks lives apart from the other men, ostracized, merely because he is African-American.		

**Chapter 5 Discussion: QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER AFTER READING**

1. Curley's wife tries to console Lennie on the death of the puppy by saying, "Don't worry none. He was jus' a mutt. You can get another one easy. The whole country is fulla mutts." Curley's wife is talking about more than just the death of the puppy... what do you think she is comparing the puppy to? Give examples from the story to support your answer.
2. Why do you think Steinbeck does not give Curley's wife a name?
3. Upon seeing the dead girl, Georges' response was, "I should of knew, I guess maybe way back in my head I did." Explain his response.
4. What is Candy's response to the loss of his dream?

**CHAPTER 5 ACTIVITY**

In varying degrees, the characters in *Of Mice and Men* reveal their loneliness. Complete the chart below by finding in the novel narrative or dialogue revealing the loneliness of each of the characters listed below. Write two direct quotes from the book for each character. Be sure to cite your quotes and explain how they show loneliness (two sentences per quote).

	Cited Evidence	Explanation
George	1.	1.
	2.	2.
Lennie	1.	1.
	2.	2.
Slim	1.	1.
	2.	2.

Curley's wife	1.          2.	1.          2.
Crooks	1.          2.	1.          2.
candy	1.          2.	1.          2.

### Chapter 6 Discussion: QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER AFTER READING

1. In chapter six the story ends where it began, but the setting has changed. Compare the setting in chapter one to the setting in chapter six. How are they similar? How are they different? What does the change in setting symbolize for Lennie and George?
2. Compare the shooting of Candy's dog to the shooting of Lennie.
3. Why do you feel George killed Lennie?
4. The reaction of Slim, Curley, and Carlson to the death of Lennie provides a balanced ending to the story. How do you think Steinbeck accomplishes this balance?
5. Why do you think George lied about Lennie's death? Should George be held accountable for his death?

**Connecting to the novel:** *Consider the following questions and how you feel about them. These may be assigned as journal topics.*

1. Why do we have friends? What makes a friend?
2. How important is it for human beings to have a place where they belong, where there are people who know them and love them?
3. Why do dreams sometimes fail?
4. Who is your favorite character in this book? Give your reasons for choosing him or her.

**Discussion Questions – End of the Book:** Review the questions below for the test; they may appear as essay questions, or they may be assigned after the test.

1. Discuss the novel's view of relationships between men.
2. Analyze Steinbeck's portrayal of Curley's wife as the lone female on the all-male ranch.
3. Discuss George's actions at the end of the novel. How can we justify what he does to Lennie? How can we condemn it?
4. Analyze the characters of Slim, Crooks, and Curley. What role does each character play?
5. What do you think the future holds for the following characters: **George, Curley, Crooks, Candy?**