

AC English 2 Summer Reading Assignment

[*Of Mice and Men*](#) by John Steinbeck (ISBN: 978-0140177398)

- You must use a hard copy of the text for this assignment

Of Mice and Men

This year in AC English 2 we're going to explore major themes of American Literature. One of our primary guiding questions will be what do the terms "America" and "American" mean in various literary contexts? *Of Mice and Men* helps us penetrate this question.

- Read and annotate your book. Don't summarize or simply underline. Interact with the text. Make connections. This is a very short novel. You're expected to thoroughly engage with it. [Here's](#) a sample from last year's summer reading. Not every page needs to look like this. But most should.
- Think about these two questions: 1) In what ways does this particular story address a more universal concern? 2) Ultimately, is the story optimistic or pessimistic?

Articles on Steinbeck and *Of Mice and Men*

- Download or print Louis Owens's "[Of Mice and Men: The Dream of Commitment](#)" and Marilyn McEntyre's "[Natural Wisdom: Steinbeck's Men of Nature as Prophets and Peacemakers.](#)" Then read and annotate both articles.
- Identify each author's thesis and the major evidence they use to support that thesis. You should be able to write a one-paragraph summary referencing their theses and evidence in detail. In other words, be very familiar with these two essays.

Assessment of Summer Reading

- 1) You will have a summer reading quiz on the second day of classes. This quiz will be composed of approximately 20-30 advanced reading comprehension questions and 2-3 short answer questions (paragraph length).
- 2) On the third day of class you will write an argumentative, thesis-driven essay in class. The essay must have at least an effective, arguable thesis statement and two complete body paragraphs. You may use your notes and annotations as a part of this exercise. This is your chance to show your analytical writing skills from English 1 and your understanding of this particular text. After the first couple weeks of discussions on *Of Mice and Men*, you will expand the in-class essay into the semester's first full-length major writing assignment.