

Of Mice and Men - Study Questions



The following questions are all testable material. When answering be specific and precise; no generalizations. When writing about poems, movies, and novels, use present tense. E.g. "Lennie's feelings are hurt because..."

CHAPTER 1 - Comprehension

1. In what part of the country does the novel take place? Time period?
2. List words that describe Lennie. To what animal is he compared?
3. List words that describe George. To what animal would you compare George?
4. What orders does George give to Lennie to follow once they arrive at the ranch? Why?
5. What does George take away from Lennie? Why does Lennie have it?
6. How does George imagine he would live without the burden of Lennie? (Summarize his thoughts.)
7. Why were George and Lennie run out of Weed? (What got them "in hot water"?)
8. When Lennie's feelings are hurt by George, what does Lennie say he'll do?
9. What does the phrase, "live off the fatta the lan'" mean?
10. What does George tell Lennie to do if he gets in trouble?

CHAPTER 1 - Interpretation

1. What is George's attitude toward Lennie in this section? Why does he stay with Lennie?
 2. Explain the connection between Lennie's mouse and what happened in Weed.
 3. What suggests that the dream of the farm is unrealistic?
 4. Give examples of foreshadowing in this section.
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CHAPTER 2 - Comprehension

1. The old man at the bunkhouse has an odd physical characteristic. What is it?
2. What unusual habits did Whitey have? (Summarize)
3. Why is the stable buck set apart from the other men? (partly race but other reasons too)
4. The boss is "a pretty nice fella". What's the proof?
5. Look up the following words in relation to ranch/farm work: (a) skinner (b) buckner
6. Why does George answer all the questions directed to Lennie?
7. The boss is suspicious of George's friendship with Lennie. Why? What does the boss suspect?
8. What excuse does George give for Lennie's slowness?
9. Briefly describe Curly. What type of person is he? Why does he act a certain way toward Lennie?
10. What odd item does Curley wear? Why?
11. What does "she got the eye" mean?
12. Briefly describe Curly's wife's physical appearance.
13. What uneasy feeling does George have about Curley's wife?
14. Why does George twist Lennie's ear?
15. At the end of the chapter, what does Lennie hope for?

CHAPTER 2 - Interpretation

1. What is ironic about Lennie's family name?
2. What qualities does the description of Slim suggest? What type person is he? Additionally, pick eight words from the novel that best capture Slim's qualities.
3. What is the significance of Slim's and Carlson's remarks about the dogs? What is Steinbeck trying to imply?
4. What are the sources of tension in this chapter that may foreshadow future conflicts?

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CHAPTER 3- pages 38-65- **Comprehension**

1. What kind act does Slim do for Lennie? Why?
2. Describe how Slim's approach enables him to learn so much about George's relationship with Lennie.
3. How did George used to treat Lennie? Why did he change?
4. George mentions a benefit of having Lennie around. What is this benefit that makes George a better person?
5. When Lennie enters the bunkhouse, why does he wear his coat "like a cape"?
6. List words from the novel that describe Candy's dog from Carlson's point of view.
7. What is Carlson's solution to the 'problem' of the dog?
8. What does George mean when he says that a ranch is, "no place for a girl"?
9. Curley was "in the finals for the Golden Gloves". What does that mean?
10. What role does Candy play in helping George and Lennie achieve their dreams?
11. Why does Curley attack Lennie? What happens to Curley?
12. What lie does Slim convince Curley to tell about his hand?



CHAPTER 3- **Interpretation**

1. Why do you think George told Slim about the trouble in Weed?
2. Analyze Carlson's reasons **for** and Candy's reasons **against** shooting Candy's dog. How do they touch on the larger issues of the novel? (Hint: Consider Slim's words on the matter.)
3. Once Carlson exits with the dog, why does Steinbeck emphasize the silences?
4. How does George's description of the farm connect to a romantic Eden?
5. What does Lennie's fight with Curley show the ranch hands?
6. Pick out examples of foreshadowing.

CHAPTER 4 - pages 66-83- **Comprehension**

1. Consider the items on the pegs on Crooks wall. What is one of his jobs on the ranch?
2. Why does Crooks have many more personal items than other men on the ranch?
3. Why is Crooks' name appropriate?
4. What is Crooks' first reaction when seeing Lennie?
5. Why has Lennie entered Crooks' space?
6. Who is the "old lady" whom Crooks mentions?
7. What does Crooks say happens to a guy if he gets too lonely?
8. According to his wife, what is Curley's main topic of conversation?
9. Explain Curley's wife's dream life.
10. In what way does this chapter end as it begins?

CHAPTER 4 - **Interpretation**

1. How does Crooks frighten Lennie? (summarize in a sentence or two) What does Lennie's reaction reveal about his relationship with George?
2. In what ways are Crooks and Lennie similar?
3. Why does Crooks allow Lennie to enter his room?
4. What is Crooks' first reaction to the dream of the farm?
5. What does, "It was difficult for Crooks to conceal his pleasure with anger" (75) mean?
6. Curley's wife reacts to the idea of the dream farm much like Crooks' earlier opinion when he first hears about it. What similar opinions about men, money, and land does she have?
7. What motives does Steinbeck suggest for Curly's wife's cruel behavior?
8. How is Curley's wife's nature as a destructive character clearly revealed? Explain and include a quotation.
9. At the end of the chapter, why does Crooks tell Candy, "Jus' foolin'. I wouldn't want to go no place like that."?

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CHAPTER 5- pages 84-98 - Comprehension

1. What is happening outside while Lennie is in the barn?
2. Lennie didn't kill the puppy on purpose. Why/how did he kill it?
3. How does Curley's wife feel about her husband?
4. What were Curley's wife's reasons for marrying Curley?
5. What did Lennie used to have that he loved to touch but lost?
6. What does Candy claim that Curley will do to Lennie?
7. After finding Curley's wife, what is Candy's greatest fear?
8. Whom does Candy blame for the murder?

CHAPTER 5- Interpretation

1. At the beginning of this chapter, what is the contrast between the environments outside and inside the barn? (Think of mood and tone, not physical differences.)
 2. How is Lennie's treatment of his dead puppy typical of his character?
 3. Is Curley's wife's dream any more realistic than George and Lennie's? Why/why not?
 4. For a while, Lennie and Curley's wife are talking comfortably. What are Curley's wife's critical errors? Note three of her actions that lead to her death.
 5. How does she entice Lennie into touching her?
 6. How does Lennie react to what he has done? Are you surprised? Why/why not?
 7. How does George's reaction to the murder relate to his belief in the dream?
 8. Where is Carlson's Luger? How do you know? Think carefully.
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CHAPTER 6 – pages 99-107 - Comprehension

1. While he is waiting for George in the clearing, what two hallucinations does Lennie have?
2. What does George tell Lennie to calm him down?
3. How do Curley and Carlson assume that Lennie met his death?

CHAPTER 6 - Interpretation

1. The two hallucinations are a reflection of Lennie's...
2. The description of Lennie's death matches another event in the novel. What is it?
3. What does this parallel event reveal about George's motives for killing Lennie? Why did he do it?
4. Explain George's last words to Lennie.
5. Why does Slim treat George kindly?
6. Explain the significance of the last line in the novel.