TITUS SALT SCHOOL REVISION GUIDES
Of Mice and Men

Context
This novel is set in the mid to late 1930s, in California, America. This was a significant time in American history and is called the Great Depression. In the 1920s, America experienced a financial boom. As a result of this, a lot of money was invested in the stock market, small independent banks thrived and farmers were producing bumper crops. However, there came a point where there was so much surplus stock because companies and farms had produced so much extra, prices of goods dropped dramatically. Farmers and companies started losing money and tried to take out their savings all at once from the small independent banks. The banks could not cope with so much money being taken out all at once and went bust. This caused companies to go bankrupt, leaving share prices to drop and people who had invested a lot of money in shares (a share is a small ownership or percentage of a company, if a company is doing well, the price of a share goes up, and if it is doing badly, it goes down) found they were left with useless bits of paper for companies that no longer existed.

Just like we have experienced in England over the past two or so years, America was plunged into a Depression. However, this one was much worse and that is the reason it is given the title of the Great Depression. Thousands of people lost their homes and lived in shanty towns and a total of 13million people were unemployed - to put into context, our government is worried because we have 2million unemployed at the moment. This led to people getting work wherever they could, which was the birth of the migrant worker. Thousands of men, either single or with families somewhere to provide for, roamed from state to state looking for work, anything they could get their hands on, to earn money to live. It was a very lonely existence: it was hard to make friends, you were always living in fear of being sacked, the work was often long hours and back-breaking for little pay and there was very little contact with normal life. This is the life that is described in Of Mice and Men.

Events Grid

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<th>CHAPTER NUMBER</th>
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| 1              | Thursday evening | The pool          | Lennie, George     | Character introductions
|                |               |                   |                     | We see Lennie as the child and George as the “father”                                                                                                   |
|                |               |                   |                     | We hear about the dream                                                                                                                               |
|                |               |                   |                     | We know that there is something mysterious about Lennie’s past                                                                                       |
|                |               |                   |                     | We know they are about to start work                                                                                                                  |
| 2              | Friday morning | The bunkhouse     | All characters except Crooks | We meet all other white characters                                                                                                                   |
|                |               |                   |                     | Both the boss and Curley mark the men out as trouble                                                                                                 |
|                |               |                   |                     | George tells Lennie to stay away from Curley’s jailbait Wife                                                                                         |
|                |               |                   |                     | Lennie predicts the unhappy ending - “it’s mean here”                                                                                              |
| 3              | Friday evening | The bunkhouse     | George, Slim, Whit, Carlson, Candy, Lennie, Curley | Carlson bullies Candy into shooting his dog                                                                                                          |
|                |               |                   |                     | Candy joins in on Lennie and George’s dream                                                                                                           |
|                |               |                   |                     | Curley fights with Lennie                                                                                                                             |
|                |               |                   |                     | Lennie crushes his hand and Curley is forced to lie about the injury                                                                               |
| 4              | Saturday night | Crooks’ room in the stables | Crooks, Lennie, Candy, Curley’s Wife (George) | Crooks talks to Lennie about land                                                                                                                     |
|                |               |                   |                     | Crooks taunts Lennie and he flips                                                                                                                   |
|                |               |                   |                     | Crooks talks about loneliness and racism                                                                                                            |
|                |               |                   |                     | Candy joins in                                                                                                                                       |
|                |               |                   |                     | Curley’s wife comes in and taunts them                                                                                                               |
|                |               |                   |                     | They all leave Crooks alone                                                                                                                         |
| 5              | Sunday afternoon | Stables            | Lennie, Curley’s Wife, Candy, George, All others except Boss | Lennie is mourning his pup                                                                                                                           |
|                |               |                   |                     | Curley’s Wife tells Lennie her own dream                                                                                                             |
|                |               |                   |                     | Lennie kills Curley’s Wife by accident                                                                                                               |
|                |               |                   |                     | Lennie flees                                                                                                                                         |
|                |               |                   |                     | Candy finds her and tells George                                                                                                                     |
|                |               |                   |                     | George steals Carlson’s gun whilst Candy tells the others - the dream is dead                                                                    |
|                |               |                   |                     | Curley sets up a lynch mob                                                                                                                           |
| 6              | Sunday evening | The pool          | Lennie, George, Slim, Curley, Carlson | Lennie has hallucinations about the bad things he’s done                                                                                              |
|                |               |                   |                     | George finds him and reassures him                                                                                                                    |
|                |               |                   |                     | George shoots him in the head                                                                                                                        |
|                |               |                   |                     | Slim comforts George                                                                                                                                |
|                |               |                   |                     | Carlson can’t understand what the fuss is about                                                                                                      |
Chapter One Summary

The chapter begins with Steinbeck setting the scene of the local area, a quiet pool and the Gabilan mountains in the distance. Then two men walk up to the pool, disturbing the peace and wildlife. One is small and quick (George) while the other is big and clumsy (Lennie). Several things become apparent:

- George is the leader of the two men and Lennie has the mental capabilities and understanding of a five-year-old.
- They have known each other for a long time and although George is sometimes overly harsh to Lennie, he has a soft spot for him. Lennie copy everything George does and hero worships him.
- They are running away from some trouble on another ranch that involved a woman.
- Lennie is very forgetful and cannot remember why they had to move jobs.
- George is annoyed because the bus driver dropped them ten miles short of the ranch and as a consequence they will be late for work tomorrow morning. Lennie asks what their dream is and George tells him:
  - They are going to live off the “fatta the lan’”
  - Lennie is going to tend rabbits

The men eat dinner and go to sleep by the pool. It is a beautiful place, but it’s sort of a bit of a creepy place. This is important because it shows that not everything is as good as it seems. There are troubles hiding in the background. The men eat beans with no ketchup, a metaphor for their lives— all work and no luxury.

Lennie is in some ways better off than George. He lives in the present. At the moment, he’s happy. George however bears the burden of knowing their homeless and friendless situation.

George catches Lennie petting something and it turns out to be a dead mouse. Lennie likes soft things, but he has a heavy hand and ends up killing things. George chucks the mouse away, but this is an ominous sign for what is to come later in the novel.

Chapter Two Summary

This chapter is very much about introductions. Each character in the novel is introduced to us, one by one. The bunkhouse layout is described and the men get their own beds. The boss, who is grumpy and suspicious, makes George and Lennie late for work. All the action in this chapter happens in there. (Structure point: the author makes George and Lennie late for work as it is easier from a plot development point of view to introduce all the new characters in one place. Curley’s Wife, for example, would not have been introduced if the men were working out on the fields.)

The boss is grumpy and suspicious. He takes his anger out on Crooks, showing that he is racist. There are some redeeming qualities to him, such as his generosity at Christmas. He doesn’t like George answering all the questions and thinks he is taking advantage of Lennie. His speech is very aggressive and confrontational. Curley, the boss’ son, walks in after his father has left. He is also grumpy, but his whole manner and the way he reacts to the people around him make him more dangerous. He quizzes Lennie and George aggressively and takes an instant dislike to Lennie. We are told about his prowess at boxing and his slightly weird “vaselined” hand, that is supposed to use on his wife, e.g.

The other ranch hands are, in contrast, quite friendly:

- Candy is helpful and interested in his new workers. We are given the impression that Slim is a born leader, much more than both the Boss and Curley. Carlson is a bit of a creep, but he doesn’t go out of his way to be nice.
- Crooks is talked about, but we do not hear anything from his own mouth. This shows us his status on the ranch—he is even lower than Curley’s Wife because of his colour.

The combination of all these new people makes George anxious. He’s suspicious of the Curley and defensive of the aggressive questioning. He is extremely worried about both Curley and Curley’s Wife, whereas Candy and George are friendly and make sure that Lennie and Lennie are not annoyed by their presence.
Chapter Four Summary

During this chapter, we are introduced to the outsiders in much more detail than before. Each character has its own issues and obstacles they deal with in ranch life. The action takes place in Crooks’ room.

Lennie visits Crooks. At first Crooks is unwelcoming and tries to make Lennie leave. Gradually though, he sees the benefits of having Lennie to listen to what he says. Rooks is the only black worker on the ranch and his isolation and the latent racism makes it almost impossible to interact with the other characters. Lennie, on the other hand, does not understand the concept of racism and so Crooks is able to get all of his anger and bitterness off his chest without worrying about the repercussions.

We learn things about Crooks:
He is the only worker on the ranch with his own room
He is an intelligent man who spends a lot of his time reading due to his lack of social interaction with the others
He is the only ranch that has personal possessions, a rare thing in those times
Came from a family that owned land, but it was lost and therefore he had to find work
He is crippled because of being kicked in the back by a horse some years ago

Crooks abuses his power over Lennie and bullies him into thinking George is going to leave him. He enjoys seeing someone miserable, but stops quickly when he sees the danger of pushing Lennie too far. It is important to realise here that Crooks isn’t a really bad person; he’s only being mean because he is jealous.

Candy joins them and they discuss the dream. Even though Crooks is sceptical at first, he too gets swept up in the optimism and asks if he can join in.

Curley’s wife, however, spoils the optimistic mood. Her entrance is a shock (Steinbeck doesn’t introduce her at all, just has her speak – the reader is a shocked too) and the men clam up. It’s as if she has been listening in the darkness and decided that she would like to join in the optimistic conversation too. She is angry at the men’s sudden silence – she is obviously not worthy enough to be talked to – and rants about men and how disappointing they are. She threatens Crooks and Candy sticks up for him.

The scene is all about power amongst the powerless:
Crooks bullies Lennie about his attachment with George
Curley’s wife threatens Crooks with an accusation of rape (this would mean hanging if it stuck)
Candy disrespects Curley’s wife so she will go away

At the end of the chapter the men return and reality is restored. Crooks returns to his miserable self and the white men go back to the bunkhouse.

Chapter Three Summary

This chapter is the turning point in the novel. Just like Mercutio’s death in Romeo and Juliet, Candy’s dog being shot sets the ball in motion towards a tragic ending.

Firstly, George and Slim have a chat. George warms to Slim because of his easy-going nature and is able to open up to him. He tells us the back story to how he and Lennie ended up travelling together. George also tells us that he had not always been so responsible – at one point he persuaded Lennie to jump in a river and Lennie almost drowned because of it. He also tells Slim about the incident in Weed, how the woman had accused Lennie of rape and how this was not the case.

Whit, a ranch hand, is used as a plot device. He gives us information that we need to know, explaining about life on ranches and how the men spend their free time. He talks to George, remembers an old worker with affection and gives us the rundown of the local “cat houses”.

Carlson becomes a bit of a whiner in this chapter. He complains constantly about Candy’s dog and forces Candy into a position he cannot move from – Carlson shows no remorse or feeling about the way he hounds (see what I did there?) Candy into killing his only companion and goes about it in a very insensitive way.

After this, Candy is absolutely devastated – Candy and his dog are synonymous; they are both old and not much use. The only thing is, no one would shoot Candy to put him out of his misery.

Candy’s dog also represents the way that Lennie is killed in Chapter 6. Think about it – Lennie is taken away from the bunkhouse (where the majority of the action in the novel takes place), he is told to sit and then shot in the back of the head. George, who represents Candy, is left devastated.

George tells Lennie about the dream again and Candy overhears. Candy has money stashed away (compensation money from his accident) and he offers to put in if he can share the dream too. This is probably the happiest and most optimistic part of the whole novel. The reader starts to believe their dream is possible. You know it’s a great idea and forget it’s a dream. Even George starts to believe. He sees an escape from their situation and grasps onto it.

The dream episode is sandwiched between two unhappy events. Firstly, Candy’s dog, then Lennie’s fight with Curley. Curley feels ridiculed by his wife’s inability to stay at home and be the trophy他 wants her to be. Therefore, he picks a fight with Lennie, who he thinks is an easy target. Lennie doesn’t fight back until George tells him to and ends up crushing the bones in Curley’s hand. Slim and Carlson make Curley lie about what happened, protecting Lennie and showing how little he is liked and respected on the ranch. However, tension and conflict is prominent at the end of the chapter.
Chapter 5 Summary

This is the beginning of the end. Steinbeck writes this chapter like a chain of events that are all rolling to one inevitable point:

We start in the barn with Lennie cradling his dead pup. He has been too rough with it and killed it. He’s terrified that George won’t let him look after the rabbits now.

Curley’s Wife finds him in the barn and tries to talk to him. She comforts him and in doing so finds the same comfort in talking to Lennie about her issues as Crooks did in the chapter before.

She tells him about her dream of becoming a movie star and that she only married Curley to get away from her mother.

She lets Lennie stroke her hair, but it is not long before he becomes too rough. He panics as she starts struggling and screaming and ends up breaking her neck.

ALL DREAMS ARE SHATTERED.

Lennie runs off and hides by the pool like he and George decide in chapter one. Candy finds Curley’s Wife’s body. He gets George and they hatch a plan to “discover” her so that George doesn’t look like he was in it.

Curley instantly wants revenge. He doesn’t touch his wife, but instantly rallies the men into a lynch mob.

Slim on the other hand goes up to Curley’s Wife and touches her cheek. This shows that Slim could possibly have had a real affection for her (whereas Curley does not). It also emphasises the impact of Lennie’s actions – his rough touch is contrasted with Slim’s gentle stroke.

All dreams are over:

- George is unable to envisage the dream without Lennie. He also needs Lennie’s strength to work on the farm.
- Curley’s Wife’s dream shatters as she dies.
- Lennie knows that George won’t let him tend the rabbits now.
- Candy breaks down in tears as his one shot at a happy retirement is snuffed out.

George plans to kill Lennie. He knows that he has to find Lennie before the other men do and he steals Carlson’s luger pistol (though Carlson thinks it’s Lennie who stole it).

NOTE: It is only in death that Curley’s Wife gets her dream. She is finally beautiful and innocent, with the men giving her all the attention. How sad...

Chapter 6 Summary

The beginning of the novel is repeated with Steinbeck describing the setting of the pond. This time, it is more sinister. A heron eats a snake head first without the snake realising the heron was there. This is symbolic of what happens to Lennie at the end of the novel. It is a place of death and destiny.

Lennie feels guilty and two hallucinations come to visit him.

His Aunt Clara. Very much an authority figure, she is also maternal and chides him like a child. She defends George and reminds him of how good George has been to him. She accuses Lennie of being careless and letting George down.

A giant rabbit. The rabbit is mean and cutting. He berates Lennie with his worst fears: George will not let him tend rabbits, then George will beat him and then leave him.

These visions show us that on some level Lennie understands that he has lost his dream too.

George finds Lennie and saves him by shooting him in the back of the head. It is an act of kindness that leads George to this action – Lennie has no idea what is happening.

George recites the dream with Lennie to lead up to the execution. Lennie tells more of it than at any other point of the novel. His enthusiasm is completely over the top and this makes the reality – the bullet in the back of his head – much more difficult for the reader to stomach.

Lennie is shot like an animal. He is shot like Candy’s dog.

The characters react differently to the death.

George is completely devastated. We know that he really loved Lennie as he told him that he was never mad really, just before he died. He has lost his best friend and the only person who “gives a damn” about him. Sniff sniff…

Slim understands straight away what has happened and goes to comfort George.

Curley at first whoops with triumph as if it was his bullet that killed Lennie. Then it sort of dawns on him what George has done and he is a bit awed. George shot Lennie at point blank range, it would take a lot of guts to do this and Curley is aware of it.

Carlson is completely oblivious to why George and Slim are so down. He doesn’t understand the attachment between Lennie and George. He has no dreams.
Firstly, George is the polar opposite of Lennie. Look at the physical description below and on a piece of paper, note the difference between the two characters, comparing it to Lennie on the next page.

“The first man was small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, strong features. Every part of him was defined: small, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose.”

Without Lennie, George would be both better and worse off. With Lennie, he has a friend, comfort and someone to share a dream with. However he is constantly nervous about what he is going to do next and still carries the guilt of tricking him to jump in the river and nearly drown. This brings a sense of loyalty to George’s treatment of Lennie. Without Lennie, he does not need to worry about him doing “bad things” and has much more freedom to live his life how he wants. He has no family ties and no money, so technically he could do whatever and go wherever he wants. Nevertheless, until the end of the novel where George is forced to choose, George seems unsure as to which life would be better, although in his heart of hearts, he knows he loves Lennie like a brother. It causes George to have major mood swings where one minute he’s yelling at Lennie, the next he’s being nice. Look at the extract below to make up your own mind about how George really feels about Lennie.

“Lennie said. ‘I thought you was mad at me, George.’

‘No,’ said George. ‘No, Lennie, I ain’t mad. I never been mad, an’ I ain’t now. That’s a thing I want ya to know.’

Lennie shivered and looked at the gun, and then he threw it from him, back up on the bank.”

George is a very cautious and defensive guy. His eyes are “restless”, which means he’s always looking for trouble. He is instantly defensive when the Boss starts asking questions and almost loses the job before they even start because of this. He takes an instant dislike to Curley and his Wife; him for his aggressiveness, her for her friendliness. This lasts for the whole novel. When Candy overhears him and Lennie talking about the dream, he is defensive at once and it is only when Candy mentions how much money he has saved that he opens up. Finally, he is suspicious of Crooks - it is unsure whether this is because he is protective of the dream or whether George is racist like most white people at the time.

The only person George can talk to and open up to is Slim. He is wary at first when he makes a slip about what happened in Weed, but Slim encourages George’s confidence and slowly George opens up about that and more. Through this conversation, Steinbeck is setting the other men apart from Slim and George - we already know Slim is the “Prince of the ranch” and this confidential talk sets the two men up as good guys. This is reinforced when Slim comforts George at the end of the novel. If there was ever an Of Mice and Men 2, I hope it would be about Slim and George’s dream realised.

“Course he ain’t mean. But he gets in trouble alla time because he’s so God damn dumb. Like what happened in Weed - ’ He stopped, stopped in the middle of turning over a card. He looked alarmed and peered over at Slim. ‘You wouldn’t tell nobody?’

‘What’d he do in Weed?’ Slim asked calmly.

‘You wouldn’t tell?... No, ‘course you wouldn’”

Although he says that it is mainly for Lennie, George secretly lives for the dream. Looking at the extract below, pick out or underline all the words that show George’s enthusiasm for the farm. Just like all the men, George is lonely and homesick for something he has never really experienced: a place of his own. When Candy joins the dream and this confidential talk sets the two men up as good guys. This is reinforced when Slim comforts George at the end of the novel. If there was ever an Of Mice and Men 2, I hope it would be about Slim and George’s dream realised.

“His voice was growing warmer...George sat enthralled with his own picture...They looked at one another, amazed. This thing they had never really believed in was coming true. ‘Jesus Christ! I bet we could swing her.’

‘The first man was small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, strong features. Every part of him was defined: small, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose.”

Through the years of being a migrant worker, George has become bitter and cynical. He is frustrated with his lack of control over what he does - he has to obey orders all the time from people he doesn’t like or respect, working and making money for someone else instead of himself, he sometimes feels constricted by Lennie and having to look after him all the time, he is dislikes having to work for the sake of living and he is forced to live in primitive conditions to survive. Look at the extract below and underline all the things that frustrate him.

“well we ain’t got any,’ George exploded. ‘Whatever we ain’t got, that’s what you want. God a’mighty, if I was alone I could live so easy. I could go get a job an’ work, an’ no trouble. No mess at all, and when the end of the month come I could take my fifty bucks and go into town and get whatever I want. Why, I could stay in a cat house all night. I could eat any place I want, hotel or any place, and order any damn thing I could think of. An’ I could do all that every damn month. Get a gallon of whisky, or set in a pool room and play cards or shoot pool.’ Lennie knelt and looked over the fire at the angry George. And Lennie’s face was drawn with terror. ‘An’ whatta I got,’ George went on furiously. ‘I got you! You can’t keep a job and you lose me ever’ job I get. Jus’ keep me shovin’ all over the country all the time. An’ that ain’t the worst. You get in trouble. You do bad things and I get to get you out.’ his voice rose nearly to a shout. ‘You crazy son-of-a-bitch. You keep me in hot water all the time.”
Lennie

- Steinbeck uses different animals to describe Lennie. A bear - he is big and strong and aggressive if provoked. A horse - big and stupid, but also a very efficient and hard worker. A terrier - essentially a pet and obedient, but likes to play and be mischievous. A deer - when on the run, he is very wary and flinches at every little sound.

“Behind him walked his opposite, a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with wide, sloping shoulders; and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws. His arms did not swing at his sides, but hung loosely… His huge companion dropped his blankets and flung himself down and drank from the surface of the green pool; drank with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse”

- Lennie’s innocence is a blessing and a curse. Unlike George, Lennie would never have become a bitter and cynical old man because he doesn’t think that way. He works hard and takes orders without thinking about them, which makes him very employable. George can tell him any secret or confession and he will either not understand or forget (Crooks finds this comforting too). He has simple and cheap pleasures, therefore he is an advantageous person for George to team up with and earn money. However, Lennie doesn’t know his own strength, and what considerable strength it is! He gets easily scared and reacts in a way grown men don’t usually do, which is why he gets himself in trouble. He does not know how to properly show his anger without getting physical, which is why the pup and Curley’s Wife end up dying. What we must remember, though, that all of Lennie’s aggression is done out of lack of understanding and innocence, which makes him different from the other aggressive characters of the novel - we feel sorry for Lennie in a way that we don’t feel sorry for Curley.

- Lennie identifies with animals. They are simpler and uncomplicated creatures, which makes them easier for Lennie to befriend than actual people. The animals he chooses are usually soft and “prey” - defenceless animals that he usually kills. He is very possessive over his animals and wants to keep them close to him, maybe as a child does a cuddly toy nowadays. However, he is not very good at hiding things from George and he rumbles Lennie every time he tries to sneak something past him. Plus, animals seem to know he is tame and friendly. The mother of the pup allows him to play about with him and the others without being threatened.

- He is completely dependent on George. Without George, Lennie would be unable to survive on his own and would have probably starved after the death of his Aunt Clara. He copies George constantly and relies on him to make his decisions for him. He takes comfort in knowing that George knows everything about him and he feeds off George’s attention. George also goes some way to stimulating his mind by reinforcing the idea of the dream. Lennie knows this off by heart and keeps it almost as a comfort blanket, yet only truly enjoys it when George tells the story. Look at the two extracts below and explain to yourself how they illustrate the relationship between Lennie and George.

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- Lennie looks helplessly at George, and then he got up and tried to retreat... Lennie gave a cry of terror. Blood welled from his nose. ‘George,’ he cried. ‘Make ‘um let me alone, George.’ He backed until he was against the wall, and Curley followed, slugging him in the face. Lennie’s hands remaining at his sides; he was too frightened to defend himself... Lennie covered his face with his huge paws and bleated with terror. He cried, ‘Make ‘um stop, George.’

- Lennie took his hands away from his face and looked about for George, and Curley slashed at his eyes. The big face was covered with blood. George yelled again, ‘I said get him.’ Curley’s fist was swinging when Lennie reached for it. The next minute Curley was flopping like a fish on a line, and his closed fist was lost in Lennie’s big hand.”

- However harmless Lennie seems, we cannot forget that he is a killer. He is what we call a dichotomy (something made of two very different parts), the gentlest and the most dangerous at the same time. From the very first chapter we know that he has a dangerous streak and as the novel progresses the body count stacks up: mice, pups, women… Look at the extract below and using two colours, highlight Lennie’s harmless and dangerous sides.

- “Lennie, who had been watching, imitated George exactly. He pushed himself, drew up his knees, embraced them, looked over to George to see whether he had it just right. He pulled his hat down a little more over eyes, the way George’s hat was.”

- “Then Curley’s rage exploded. ‘Come on, ya big bastard. Get up on your feet. No big son-of-a-bitch is gonna laugh at me. I’ll show ya who’s yella.’

- Lennie looked helplessly at George, and then he got up and tried to retreat... Lennie gave a cry of terror. Blood welled from his nose. ‘George,’ he cried. ‘Make ‘um let me alone, George.’ He backed until he was against the wall, and Curley followed, slugging him in the face. Lennie’s hands remaining at his sides; he was too frightened to defend himself... Lennie covered his face with his huge paws and bleated with terror. He cried, ‘Make ‘um stop, George.’

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- Lennie takes his hands away from his face and looked about for George, and Curley slashed at his eyes. The big face was covered with blood. George yelled again, ‘I said get him.’ Curley’s fist was swinging when Lennie reached for it. The next minute Curley was flopping like a fish on a line, and his closed fist was lost in Lennie’s big hand.”

- However harmless Lennie seems, we cannot forget that he is a killer. He is what we call a dichotomy (something made of two very different parts), the gentlest and the most dangerous at the same time. From the very first chapter we know that he has a dangerous streak and as the novel progresses the body count stacks up: mice, pups, women… Look at the extract below and using two colours, highlight Lennie’s harmless and dangerous sides.

- “He scooped a little hollow and laid the puppy in it and covered it over with hay, out of sight; but he continued to stare at the mound he had made. He said, ‘This ain’t no bad thing like I got to go hide in the brush. Oh! No. This ain’t. I’ll tell George I found it dead.’

- He unburied the puppy and inspected it, and he stroked it from ear to tail. He went on sorrowfully, ‘But he’ll know. George always knows. He’ll say ‘you done it. Don’t try to put nothing over on me.’ An’ he’ll say, ‘Now jus’ for that you don’t get to tend no rabbits!’

- Suddenly his anger rose. ‘God damn you,’ he cried. ‘Why do you got to get killed? You ain’t so little as mice. He picked up the pup and hurled it from him. He turned his back on it. He sat bent over his knees and he whispered, ‘Now I won’t get to tend the rabbits. Now he won’t let me.’ He rocked himself back and forth in his sorrow.”

- Lennie realises he has “done a bad thing” at the end of the novel, which shows he has some mental understanding of right and wrong. He also displays some sense of guilt at his actions too in the form of the hallucinations in chapter six. They take the form of two prominent characters in his life: Aunt Clara and a rabbit. From what we can understand, Aunt Clara seems to be a formidable woman and the law enforcer of his youth. Lennie turns into an actual child when she tells him off. The rabbit symbolises the dream and Lennie, on some level, knows the dream cannot happen when the rabbit rejects him.
Candy
• Candy's character acts as part plot device and part developed character. He allows Steinbeck to introduce and develop the characterisation of the other characters on the ranch without having to go into loads of detail. He also symbolises the end product that a life working on the ranches produces. He has only one hand due to an accident, he is not much use and soon to be sacked without a second thought to scrounge whatever living he can until he dies. His name itself is also ironic - it is clear that Candy's life is far from sweet. Look at the description of him from chapter two - what can you tell about his life from it?
  “The door opened and a tall, stoop-shouldered old man came in. He was dressed in blue jeans and he carried a big push-broom in his left hand.”
• Regardless of his hard life, Candy is not as bitter and cynical as George is. He is still friendly and quite upbeat when we meet him. He is patient with George's mood swings and kind to Lennie. Although he is angry with her, he understands that Curley's Wife didn't deserve to die that way.
• Nevertheless, Candy is also desperate. He is old and weak and clings onto the idea of the dream so that he can live his final days in peace. He even offers to put in most of the money and to leave the place to George in his will just to get out of his inevitable fate - and he's only known them for a day!
• At the end, he is left behind with Curley's dead wife, his dead dream, a dead dog which would remind him of his own dead dog and a dead future.
• Candy is devastated when his dog is shot. Not only was it his only companion, however useless (a bit like Lennie when you think about it), but he also symbolised Candy himself, only no-one will shoot him when he is no good any more. Look at the extract to see how his cheery personality has been changed by this incident.
  “A shot sounded in the distance. The men looked quickly at the old man. Every head turned toward him.
  For a moment he continued to stare at the ceiling. Then he rolled slowly over and faced the wall and lay silent...He said miserably, 'You seen what they done to my dog tonight? They says he wasn't no good to himself nor nobody else. When they can me here I wisht somebody'd shoot me. But they won't do nothing like that. I won't have no place to go, and' I can't get no jobs... I ought to of shot that dog myself, George. I shouldn't ought to of let no stranger shoot my dog.'”

Crooks
• Until the Black Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, it was acceptable and common for black people to be treated badly. Crooks is no different. Although he has skills no other worker on the ranch has - he has an actual trade rather than just being able to do unskilled manual labour and he is best at the horseshoes game - he is at the bottom and excluded from most things. He is only present in chapter four with the other “rejects” (Candy, Lennie and Curley's Wife).
• Crooks has his own room. This is because he is crippled and has stayed at the ranch much longer than the other men, his job is different from the other man, but mainly he is separated because of his colour. Crooks has the illusion of power by having many possessions and privacy, but these things only isolate him further. Look at the extract and explain to yourself what it tells you about his situation and character.
  “And scattered about the floor were a number of personal possessions; for, being alone, Crooks could leave his things about, and being a stable buck and a cripple, he was more permanent than the other men, and he had accumulated more possessions than he could carry on his back.”
  “His body was bent over to the left by his crooked spine, and his eyes lay deep in his head, and because of their depth seemed to glitter with intensity. His lean face was lined with deep black wrinkles, and he had thin, pain-tightened lips which were lighter than his face.”
• We see two sides of his personality depending on who he is talking to. With Lennie, we see him using and abusing his power over him by teasing and taunting Lennie. We are angry at this behaviour, but we should also remember that this is probably the same behaviour he receives from the white men all the time. On the other hand, with Curley's Wife, she has the clear power by threatening him with lynching. We see a very different reaction.
  “Crook’s face lighted with pleasure in his torture. ‘Nobody can tell what a guy’ll do,’ he observed calmly.
  ‘Le’s say he wants to come back and can’t. S’pose he gets killed or hurt so he can’t come back...Crooks bored in on him. ‘Want me ta tell ya what'll happen? They'll take ya to the booby hatch. They'll tie ya up with a collar like a dog.”
  “Crooks stood up from his bunk and faced her. ‘I had enough,’ he said coldly. ‘You got no rights comin’ in a coloured man’s room. You got no rights messin’ around in here at all. Now you jus’ get out, an’ get out quick. If you don’t, I’m gonna ast the boss not to ever let you come in the barn no more.
  She turned on him in scorn. ‘Listen, nigger,’ she said. ‘You know what I can do to you if you open your trap?’
  Crooks stared hopelessly at her, and then sat down on his bunk and drew into himself.
  She closed on him. ‘You know what I could do?’
  Crooks seem to grow smaller, and he pressed himself against the wall. ‘Yes ma’am.’
  “Well, you keep your place then, Nigger. I could get you strung up on a tree so easy it ain’t even funny.’
  Crooks had reduced himself to nothing. There was no personality, no ego - nothing to arouse either like or dislike. He said, ‘Yes, ma’am,’ and his voice was toneless.”
• Crooks talks a lot about loneliness. His experience and sadness is intensified by how much he enjoys the little conversation he has with Candy and Crooks. We feel sympathy for his character, his situation and his treatment. Steinbeck was making a point about racism when writing this character - he exposes the bad treatment of Crooks without sounding racist himself, which shows he thought it was wrong.
• Crooks is very cynical about dreams. He has seen too much and his life has made him too bitter to truly believe and Curley's Wife delivers him a sobering reality check. Sadly, in the end he was right.
Curley's Wife

- She is the only actual woman we meet within the novel and she gets a really hard time of it. The men either fancy her or hate her and they have plenty of negative things to say about her. Look at these three extracts: one where she is introduced to us, one where she is left with the other rejects and one when she is dead - what does Steinbeck want us to think about her in each extract?

  “Both men glanced up, for the rectangle of sunshine in the doorway was cut off. A girl was standing there looking in. She had full, rouged lips and wide-spaced eyes, heavily made-up. Her fingernails were red. Her hair hung in little rolled clusters, like sausages. She wore a cotton house dress and red mules, on the insteps of which were little bouquets of red ostrich feathers. ‘I’m lookin’ for Curley,’ she said. Her voice had a nasal, brittle quality.”

  “Any you boys seen Curley?”

  They swung their heads toward the door. Looking in was Curley’s wife. Her face was heavily made up. Her lips were slightly parted. She breathed strongly, as though she had been running... She stood still in the doorway, smiling a little at them, rubbing the nails of one hand with thumb and forefinger of the other.”

  “Curley’s wife lay with a half-covering of yellow hay. And the meanness and the plannings and the discontent and the ache for attention were all gone from her face. She was very pretty and simple, and her face was sweet and young. Now her rouged cheeks and her reddened lips made her seem alive and sleeping very lightly. The curls, tiny little sausages, were spread on the hay behind her head and her lips were parted.”

- She is a very disruptive influence. She gets herself into trouble and drives Curley mad by wandering around the ranch all the time. We get the impression that there is some truth in the men’s accusation of “jailbait” and “rattrap”, but we also know that “Curley ain’t a nice fella” and she is clearly regretting marrying him after only two weeks. We feel sorry for her as she is like Crooks - isolated and separate by her situation and treatment. Curley makes it no secret he has joined the men at the brothel yet she has to stay at home by herself.

- She also has a dream. Although different, her dream of being a famous movie star is just as, if not more, impossible than the men’s dream. She seems bitter in the novel, but that is because her realisation that her dream is dead has already come to pass when she married Curley. It is her desire to share her dream that gets her killed.

- It is ironic that she is killed at her kindest moment. By opening up to Lennie and sympathising with him about the dead pup, she allows him to stroke her hair.

- She’s not stupid. She knows she is attractive and uses this to get attention and power. She is well aware that she has more power on the ranch than Candy and Crooks and seems to enjoy inflicting pain just like Crooks did to Lennie. She also hints at understanding men and what they want. However, she is the only one without a name.

Curley

- Curley sets himself out as an enemy to everyone from the very start. He is aggressive to Lennie and George at the beginning and the way Candy, Carlson and Slim talk to him it is clear that he has no friends on the ranch. Look at the extract below and analyse his character from the words used.

  “At that moment a young man came into the bunk house; a thin young man with a brown face, with brown eyes and a head of tightly curled hair. He wore a work glove on his left hand, and like the boss, he wore high-heeled boots...His eyes passed over the new men and he stopped. He glanced coldly at George and then at Lennie. His arms gradually bent at the elbows and his hands closed into fists. He stiffened and went into a slight crouch. His glance was at once calculating and pugnacious.”

- Curley is rubbish at relationships. He flauts his sexual relationship with his wife using the “glove fulla Vaseline,” but he clearly shows no affection towards her and spends half his time making sure she is not cheating on him. In fact the only time we ever see them together is when she’s dead. The men don’t respect him and although he is supposedly a celebrated boxer, none of the men are afraid to stand up to him.

- Although he wears high-heeled boots like his dad the Boss, no one respects him and all they do is highlight his insecurity and isolates him from the bunkhouse men even further.

- Curley never gets what he wants. He has a disastrous marriage, he gets made a fool of by Lennie, he doesn’t even get to shoot Lennie.

- He is small and fast, and has a complex about this, so picks on “big guys”. He also wants to be admired and accepted and tries to get this from fighting Lennie. Look at these two before and after extracts that show how wrong this goes.

  “The door opened. Slim came in, followed by Curley and Carlson and Whit. Slim’s hands were black with tar and he was scowling. Curley hung close to his elbow.

    Curley said, ‘Well I didn’t mean nothing, Slim. I just ast you.’

    ...Curley whirled on Carlson. ‘You keep outta this les' you wanta step outside.’

    Carlson laughed... ‘You come for me, an’ I'll kick your God damn head off.

    Candy joined the attack with joy. ‘Glove fulla Vaseline,’ he said disgustedly. Curley glared at him.

    His eyes slipped on past and lighted on Lennie; and Lennie was still smiling with delight at the memory of the ranch.”

  “Curley sat down on the floor, looking in wonder at his crushed hand...Slim smiled wryly. He knelt down beside Curley. ‘You got your senses in hand enough to listen?...I think you got your han’ caught in a machine. If you don’t tell nobody what happened, we ain’t going to. But you jus’ tell an’ try to get this guy canned and we’ll tell ev’rybody, an’ then will you get the laugh.’"
**Slim**

- Like Crooks, Slim is the only other one of the ranch workers that has an actual trade and skill. He is a jerkline skinner, which means he controls a team of horses. Therefore he is the top dog in the bunkhouse and he is respected for his authority, his friendliness and the fact he is also one of the bunkhouse gang too. He is easy-going and his work team is the best to work on; even Curley’s Wife likes him and he is the only one she calls by name. He treats Crooks with respect.

- Look at the extract below. Slim gets the biggest character introduction of all the characters in the novel. Highlight all the words that you think are important and explain what they show you.

  “A tall man stood in the doorway. He held a crushed Stetson hat under his arm while he combed his long, black, damp hair straight back. Like the others he wore blue jeans and a short denim jacket. When he had finished combing his hair he moved into the room, and he moved with a majesty only achieved by royalty and master craftsmen. He was a jerkline skinner, the prince of the ranch, capable of driving ten, sixteen, even twenty mules with a single line to the leaders. He was capable of killing a fly on the wheeler’s butt with a bull whip without touching the mule. There was a gravity in his manner and a quiet so profound that all talk stopped when he spoke. His authority was so great that his word was taken on any subject, be it politics or love. This was Slim, the jerkline skinner. His hatchet face was ageless. He might have been thirty-five or fifty. His ear heard more than was said to him and his slow speech had overtones not of thought, but of understanding beyond thought. His hands, large and lean, were as delicate in their action as those of a temple dancer.”

- He plays a supportive role to many key events in the novel, although he is never at the centre of them. He gives Carlson the nod of approval when he shoots Candy’s dog. He cleans up the mess at the end of the fight and protects Lennie and George. He checks that Curley’s Wife is dead when she is discovered. He comforts George after he shoots Lennie.

  “Slim came directly to George and sat down beside him, sat very close to him. ‘Never you mind,’ said Slim. ‘a guy got to sometimes...You hadda, George. I swear you hadda”

- Slim is set apart from the other men by the way he is described. The language used is much more emotive and elegant compared to the straightforward descriptions used throughout the rest of the novel. Steinbeck calls him “godlike” and “ageless” which gives him a mystical and spiritual element to his character. We know very little about his life and what he has done to be working at the ranch - we clearly get the impression he is better than it. We wonder why he doesn’t have a place of his own, which makes us ask the questions: maybe he doesn’t want his own? Maybe he can’t see the point of trying?

- Slim is certainly not cruel, but he is very practical. He does or agrees to certain cruel things because he knows it is best. For example, he allows Carlson to shoot Candy’s dog because he knows it’s the kindest thing for it. His judgement is not clouded by affection like Candy’s. He drowns four of his dog’s pups, otherwise they would have all died because she wouldn’t have been able to support them. He understands George had to kill Lennie, but tries his best to comfort him afterwards.

- Slim is the only one who treats Curley’s Wife as a human being. He calls her “good lookin’” although we get no inclination that there is anything other than a casual admiration for each other. It is at the end, however, that we get a sense of affection. The way that Slim touches her body betrays a certain sentiment, though this maybe perfectly innocent. Look at the extract below and make up your own mind.

  “Outside the noise of the game stopped. There was a rise of voices in question, a drum of running feet and the men burst into the barn. Slim and Carlson and young Whit and Curley, and Crooks keeping back out of attention range. Candy came after them, and last of all came George. George had put on his blue denim coat and buttoned it, and his black hat was pulled down low over his eyes. The men raced around the last stall. Their eyes found Curley’s wife in the gloom, they stopped and stood still and looked.

  The Slim went quietly over to her, and he felt her wrist. One lean finger touched her cheek, and then his hand went under her slightly twisted neck and his fingers explored her neck. When he stood up the men crowded near and the spell was broken.”

**Carlson**

- Carlson is important to the novel, because he is a catalyst (he makes other things happen). He plays an active role in the shooting of Candy’s dog, the build up to Lennie and Curley’s fight, the shooting of Lennie and he has the last word of the whole book. Is this a coincidence?

- Although not outwardly aggressive, Carlson seems to enjoy the conflict around him. He pushes Candy into killing his dog by constantly moaning and stirs up Curley by calling him “yella as a frog belly” and a “God damn punk”. Although not outwardly aggressive, Carlson seems to enjoy the conflict around him. He pushes Candy into killing his dog by constantly moaning and stirs up Curley by calling him “yella as a frog belly” and a “God damn punk”.

  Look at the extract below where Carlson stirs up trouble. What can you tell about his character?

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  Look at the extract below where Carlson stirs up trouble. What can you tell about his character?

  “God awmighty, that dog stinks. Get him outta here, Candy! I don’t know nothing that stinks as bad as an old dog...Got no teeth... he’s all stiff with rheumatism. He ain’t no good to you Candy... Why’n’t you shoot him, Candy? ...The way I’d shoot him, he wouldn’t feel nothing. I’d put the gun right there.’... Slim said ‘You know what to do.’

  ‘What ya mean, Slim?’

  ‘Take a shovel,’ said Slim shortly.”

- Carlson is very insensitive. We do not know how long he has worked on ranches, though we get the impression that he doesn’t think about others’ feelings because he’s shut down his own to protect himself from loneliness. He cleans his gun right in front of Candy, he points at the dog with his boot and never apologises for bullying him into to killing his only friend. We also see the same insensitivity towards George for killing Lennie when he says “now what the hell ya suppose is eating them two guys?” He does not comprehend that, just like Candy, George could be sad about killing the only friend he had in the world.
Whit

- Whit, in some ways, is the most tragic of all characters in the novel because he is naïve. He is too young to understand that he is doomed to live a life of work and loneliness and yet shows the early signs of succumbing to his fate.
- He acts as a plot device because he supplies information about ranch life and the culture. He is unaware that he could one day become Candy.
- He is peppy and enthusiastic. He is keen to enter into conversation with Slim and tries to keep his attention for as long as possible.
- He shows signs he is already doomed from his “sloping shoulders” that are still carrying invisible grain bags and he clings onto the letter by Bill Tanner. He will probably never meet this guy again and didn’t know him very well then, but he is so happy to know someone outside of the bunkhouse and ranch that it highlights just how lonely he is already. He is possessive of this shred of friendship. Look at the extract below and find evidence of this.

“A young labouring man came in. His sloping shoulders were bent forward and walked heavily on his heels, as though he carried the invisible grain bag. He went to his bunk and put his hat on his shelf. Then he picked a pulp magazine from his shelf and brought it to the light over the table. ‘Did I show you this, Slim?’ he asked.

… The young man turned to the back of the magazine, put it down on the table and pointed with his finger. ‘Right there, read that.’ Slim bent over it. ‘Go on,’ said the young man. ‘Read it aloud.’

‘Dear Editor,’ Slim read slowly… Slim looked up questioningly. ‘What you want me to read that for?’

Whit said, ‘Go on. Read the name on the bottom.’

Slim read, ‘Yours for success, William Tenner.’ He glanced up at Whit again. ‘What you want me to read that for?’

Whit closed the magazine impressively. ‘Don’t you remember Bill Tenner? Worked here about three months ago?’

‘You think he’s the guy wrote this letter?’

I know it. Bill and me was in here one day. Bill had one of them books that just come. He was lookin’ in it and he says, ‘I wrote a letter. Wonder if they put it in the book!’ But it wasn’t there. Bill says, ‘maybe they’re savin’ it for later.’ An’ that’s just what they done. There it is.’

…George held out his hand for the magazine. ‘Let’s look at it?’

Whit found the place again, but he did not surrender his hold on it. He pointed out the letter with his forefinger. And then he went to his box shelf and laid the magazine carefully in. ‘I wonder if Bill seen it,’ he said. ‘Bill and me worked in that patch of field peas. Run cultivators, both of us. Bill was a hell of a nice fella.’

- Although unaware of his future, he understands the dramas of the ranch very well. He can sense the tension between Slim and Curley and he likes to get in and observe the action. He runs off after Curley when there’s a promise of a fight.

Ranch Life and Culture

- Obviously, it’s a very male environment, one of the reasons why Curley’s Wife is so misplaced. The men play competitive games, they drink whisky and disregard each other’s emotional girly sides.
- Loneliness is even shown in the very fabric of the novel. George keeps playing the card game solitaire, which mirrors him making himself solitary at the end of the novel. The ranch is in a town called Soledad which means loneliness in Spanish.
- America is traditionally a very religious country, yet we see no religion on the ranch. We see no religious values either. The closest thing you get to anything spiritual is Slim and his “godlike” eyes. The men do not go to church and only dress up to go out on a Saturday night to drink and pay for sex. Maybe Steinbeck is hinting that these men are doomed in this life and the next?
- Talking about brothels and paying for sex is a normal and accepted part of their life. They speak more freely because it is all boys together and they do not have any female influence to judge them, except for Curley’s Wife, but they all ignore her anyway. This acceptance of paying for sex is odd for a modern reader and we look down on it and only dress up to go out on a Saturday night to drink and pay for sex. Maybe Steinbeck is hinting that these men are doomed in this life and the next?
- All the men know their place and there is a strict hierarchy. The Boss wears spurs and has a horse. He has the power to hire and fire and reward. Curley, being the Boss’ son, also wears spurs and is second in command. However, none fo the men like him and he is only in that position of power because of his connections with the Boss. He is a bit of a liability. Slim is respected and effectively the leader of the men. However, Slim is also dependent on the Boss as he still has the ability to fire him. After that, it depends on how old, healthy and new the character is to the ranch. Whit, Carlson and George are on a par, because they are all intelligent workers who all can stand up for themselves. Candy, Crooks and Lennie are the bottom rungs because they all have something wrong with them and other factors, such as age, intelligence and race also contribute to their lack of status.
- One of the main messages of the novel is that ranch life is not healthy. It can end in the destruction of dreams, in injury and even in death. They end up being turned into machines and robots and Steinbeck is very clear on showing us how bad life turns out with men who have been turned into a machine (Lennie) or a robot (Carlson).
Themes
Below are a list of themes within the novel. Using a piece of paper, write them down and think about who you think they relate to, at what time in the novel and what it says about that character or event. Be as detailed as possible.

- Dreams
- Loneliness
- Darkness and Light
- Animal imagery
- Battle of the sexes

Parallels
First, we need to look at the different parallels within the novel. Usually a key event mirrors a more significant point or event Steinbeck is making. Have a look at the table below. Can you think of any others? Fill in the bottom of the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Parallel</th>
<th>How do they parallel?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candy’s dog</td>
<td>Candy</td>
<td>They are both old and not really wanted around any more. They are both useless in terms of work. They are both considered to be “disposable”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy’s dog</td>
<td>Lennie</td>
<td>Linked by animal imagery. Lennie is led out to a safe place, told to sit and shot in the back of the head. They are both let go by their loved ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dead mouse</td>
<td>Pup</td>
<td>Both animals have been killed by Lennie’s heavy petting. Lennie is unaware of his own strength. He doesn’t know how to punish an animal without hurting it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dead mouse</td>
<td>Curley’s Wife</td>
<td>She is petted too hard. Lennie kills her without meaning to. Realises he has done a bad thing and tries to keep it from George.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman in Weed</td>
<td>Curley’s Wife</td>
<td>Allows Lennie to get too close. Scare Lennie when they panic. Both wear red - provocative colour. Both get a lynch mob to go after Lennie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The beginning of the novel</td>
<td>The end of the novel</td>
<td>It's the same time of day and the same place. Steinbeck starts off describing the nature. George and Lennie have the same talk about the dream.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dream</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Curley</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crooks</td>
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Dreams
There are several different dreams in this novel. They all represent the same thing: hope, and their destruction brings the same despair for each character. Look at the extracts below. From the information that it gives you, what does it tell us of the character whose dream it is? What is it that breaks their dream?

Chapter one - Lennie and George
“Ok. Someday - we’re gonna get the jack together and we’re gonna have a little house and a couple of acres an’ a cow and some pigs and … we’ll have a big vegetable patch and a rabbit hatch and chickens. And when it rains in the winter, we’ll just say the hell with goin’ to work, and we’ll build up a fire in the stove and set around it an’ listen to the rain comin’ down on the roof - Nuts! … I ain’t got time for no more.”

Chapter three - Candy
“I ain’t much good with on’y one hand. I lost my hand right here on this ranch. That’s why they give me a job swamin’. An’ they give me two hundred an’ fifty dollars ‘cause I los’ my hand. An’ I got fifty more saved up right in the bank, right now. Tha’s three hundred, and I got fifty more comin’ the end a the month. Tell you what… s’pose I went in with you guys. Tha’s three hundred an’ fifty bucks I’d put in. I ain’t much good, but I could cook and tend the chickens and hoe the garden some… I got hurt four years ago,” he said. ‘They’ll can me purty soon. Jus’ as soon as I can’t swamp out no bunk houses they'll put me on the county. Maybe if I give you guys my money, you’ll let me hoe in the garden even after I ain’t no good at it. An’ I’ll wash dishes an’ little chicken stuff like that. But I’ll be in our own place, an’ I’ll be let to work on our own place.”

Chapter four - Crooks
“Crooks interrupted brutally. “You guys is just kiddin’ yourself. You’ll talk about it a hell of a lot, but you won’t get no land. You’ll be a swamper here till they take you out in a box. Hell, I seen too many guys. Lennie here’ll quit an’ be on the road in two, three weeks. Seems like ever’ guy got land in his head.’

Candy rubbed his cheek angrily. “You God damn right we’re gonna do it. George says we are. We got the money right now.”

“Yeah?” said Crooks. ‘An’ where’s George now? In town in a whore house. That’s where your money’s goin’. Jesus, I seen it happen too many times. I seen too many guys with land in their head. They never get none under their hand.”

“Candy cried, ‘Sure they all want it. Everybody wants a little bit of land, not much. Jus’ som’thin’ that was his. Some-thin’; he could live on and there couldn’t nobody throw him off of it. I never had none. I planted crops for damn near ever’body in this state, but they wasn’t my crops, and when I harvested ‘em, it was none of my harvest. But we gonna do it now, and don’t make no mistake about that. George ain’t got the money in town. That money’s in the bank. Me an’ ‘lennie an’ George. We gonna have a room to ourself. We’re gonna have a dog an’ rabbits an’ chickens. We’re gonna have green com an’ maybe a cow or a goat.’ He stopped, overwhelmed with his picture.

Crooks asked, ‘You say you got the money?’

‘Damn right. We got most of it. Just a little bit more to get. Have it all in one month. George got the land all picked out, too.’

Crooks reached around and explored his spine with his hand. ‘I never seen a guy really do it,’ he said. ‘I seen guys nearly crazy with loneliness for land, but ever’ time a whore house or a blackjack game took what it takes.’ He hesitated. ‘If you… guys would want a hand to work for nothing - just his keep, why I’d come an’ lend a hand. I ain’t so crippled I can’t work like a son-of-a-bitch if I want to… (in between these two points, Curley’s wife appears and is really aggressive towards Crooks)... Candy and Lennie stood up and went toward the door. Crooks called, ‘Candy!’

‘Huh?’

‘Member what I said about hoein’ and doin’ odd jobs?’

‘Yeah,’ said Candy. ‘I remember.’

‘Well, jus’ forget it,’ said Crooks. ‘I didn’t mean it. Jus’ foolin’. I wouldn’t want to go no place like that.’

‘Well, OK, if you feel like that. Goodnight.”

Chapter five - Curley’s Wife
“I tell you I ain’t used to livin’ like this. I coulda made somethin’ of myself… well, a show came through an’ I met one of the actors. He says I could go with that show. But my ol’ lady wouldn’t let me. She says because I was on’y fifteen. But the guy says I coulda. If I’d went, I wouldn’ be livin’ like this, you bet…’nother time I met this guy, an’ he was in pitchers. Went out to the Riverside Dance palace with him. He says he was gonna put me in the movies. Says I was a natural. Sonn’s he got power. Back to Hollywood he was gonna write to me about it… I never got that letter…well, I ain’t told this to nobody before. Maybe if I give you guys my money, you’ll let me hoe in the garden even after I ain’t no good at it. An’ I’ll wash dishes an’ little chicken stuff like that. But I’ll be in our own place, an’ I’ll be let to work on our own place.”

Chapter Five - George and Candy after Curley’s Wife’s death
“Now Candy spoke his greatest fear. ‘You an’ me can get that little place, can’t we, George? You an’ me can go there an’ live nice, can’t we, George? Can’t we?’

Before George answered, Candy dropped his head and looked down at the hay. He knew.

George said softly, ‘I think I knowed from the very first. I think I knowed we’d never do her. He usta like to hear about it so much I got to thinking maybe we would.’

‘Then - it’s all off?’ Candy asked sulkily.”
Loneliness
Steinbeck was giving us a big hint when he called his town Soledad, meaning loneliness in Spanish. This sets up the idea of loneliness and the causes and effects of loneliness as one of the main, if not the main ideas in the novel.

- Firstly, everyone is lonely. The bunkhouse men are all single without a chance of finding a partner because of their lifestyle and livelihood - you can’t roam the country looking for ranch work with a wife and children in tow. Steinbeck plays around with the idea that the men are like orphans. George says they “got no family” or “no-one who gives a damn”, which increases the idea of their loneliness. They have nothing good to look forward to apart from a life of hard labour. This is why dreams are also so important in the novel. Although Lennie and George look after each other, George still feels lonely and homesick for something he hasn’t really experienced before (a place of his own). Also, George has to take all the responsibility for their relationship and the things that he and Lennie do, which we know from the things he says in the novel that it wears him down at times and seems more trouble than it’s worth.

- Although we rarely sympathise with Curley, we must acknowledge that he is lonely. Yes, he has something all the other men don’t have - a wife - but it is clear that they are both very unhappy with their decision and so this makes him lonely still. He has failed miserably by his rash decision and the “glove fulla Vaseline” is more for him, his only trophy he can wear so the other guys know he is better than them (it implies that he is getting it where the others aren’t) as his “trophy wife” is far from what he wants her to be. The only time we see him with his wife is when she is dead, the rest of the novel they spend looking for each other. Even then, he refuses to stay with her and chooses instead to go find Lennie.

- Curley’s Wife is not happy. She bitterly regrets marrying Curley and being made to live in her father-in-law’s house. She has only married him in the first place to get away from her mother who was supposedly stopping her from being a star, so without realising it until it was too late, she has put herself in the same situation with Curley. She tries to get a bit of companionship with the men who are equally as lonely, but because she doesn’t know how to talk to them without being flirtatious, she drives them away even further. This has made her bitter and mean, especially where she calls Lennie and Candy names and threatens to get Crooks hanged in Chapter Four. The only time she succeeds in having a proper conversation with somebody is when she gets killed. Finally, the fact that she never even gets a name isolates her from the others.

- Crooks is forced to live alone because of the racist sentiments held by most people in America at the time. He has surrounded himself with possessions, more than he could carry, which shows he has a stability and a sense of home that the other men don’t have. However, he shares his living space with his work bench so he can never get away from his job, unlike the bunkhouse. The other men shun him because they believe him to be beneath them, but in return he also shuns them and returns their bitterness. Not being allowed in the bunkhouse, his only time for interaction is during horseshoe tournaments, which he is good at. It seems that he prefers his loneliness at first, when he tries to get rid of Lennie, but as they get into conversation and once Candy arrives, he finds it hard to “hide his pleasure”, showing him that he craves it just as much as all the others.

- However lonely all these men are, there seems to be no cure. The men spend their money on drink and sex but this doesn’t stop them being lonely. Dreams help the men to hope, but there is an underlying feeling that they are only dreams and that they are never really going to happen. Lennie and Candy both try to solve their loneliness with animals, but we know how that didn’t work. Lennie’s need to pet and to cuddle soft things is a way of him expressing his loneliness without him having the words to do it.

Below are two extracts that show how loneliness is explored in the novel. Read through and see if you can pick out any short but effective quotations to learn for the exam.

“Crooks said gently, ‘Maybe you can see now. You got George. You know he’s goin’ come back. S’pose you didn’t have nobody. S’pose you couldn’t go into the bunk house and play rummy ‘cause you was black. How’d you like that? S’pose you had to set out here an’ read books. Sure you could play horseshoes till it got dark, but then you got to read books. Books ain’t no good. A guy needs somebody - to be near him.’ He whined, ‘A guy goes nuts if he ain’t got nobody. Don’t make no difference who the guy is, long’s he’s with you. I tell ya,’ he cried, ‘I tell ya a guy gets too lonely an’ he gets sick….I didn’t mean to scare you. He’ll come back. I was talking about myself. A guy sets alone out here at night, maybe readin’ books or thinking’ or stuff like that. Sometimes he gets to thinking’ an he got nothing to tell him what’s so an’ what ain’t so. Maybe if he sees something’, he don’t know whether it’s right or not. He can’t turn to some other guy and ast him if he sees it too. He can’t tell. He got nothing to measure by. I seen things out here. I wasn’t drunk. I don’t know if I was asleepe. If some guy was with me, he could tell me I was asleepe, an’ then it would be all right. But I jus’ don’t know… I remember when I was a little kid on my old man’s chicken ranch. Had two brothers. They was always near me, always there. Used to sleep right in the same room, right in the same bed - all three.”

“Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don’t belong no place. They come to the ranch an’ work up a stake and go inta town and blow their stake, and the first thing you know they’re poundin’ their tail on some other ranch. They ain’t got nothing to look ahead to…..We got someone to talk to that gives a damn about us, we don’t have to set in no bar room blowin’ our jack jus’ because we got no place else to go to. If them other guys get into jail they can rot for all anyone gives a damn but not us.”
Darkness and Light
Dark and Light imagery are used often in the novel to give the reader clues about certain characters and events. Below are a set of quotations that use light and dark imagery. Can you fill in the boxes on the right with what they show us?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>What do these quotes tell us about certain chapters?</th>
<th>What do they tell you about certain characters?</th>
<th>What do they tell you about the novel as a whole?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the pool.&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>It makes the place sound positive. A lovely place to sit and be peaceful. It also sounds safe and inviting.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;The day was going fast now. Only the tops of the Gabilan mountains flamed with the light of the sun that had gone from the valley. A water snake slipped along on the pool, its head held up like a little periscope.&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;At about ten o’clock in the morning the sun threw a bright dust-laden bar through one of the side windows, and in and out of the beam flies shot like rushing stars.&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Both men glanced up, for the rectangle of sunshine in the doorway was cut off. A girl was standing there looking in.&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Although there was evening brightness showing through the windows of the bunkhouse, inside it was dark.&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;He led the dog out into the darkness.&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;In the stable-buck’s room a small electric globe threw a meagre yellow light.&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Crooks’ eyes “lay deep in his head and because of their depth seemed to glitter with intensity.”</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;The afternoon sun sliced through the cracks of the barn walls and lay in bright lines on the hay.&quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Their eyes found Curley’s Wife in the gloom, they stopped and stood still and looked.&quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;The light climbed out of the valley.&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Already the sun had left the valley to go climbing up the slopes of the Gabilan mountains, and the hilltops were rosy in the sun.&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Animal Imagery
Below is a jumble of 25 points about animals and creatures in the novel. Match up each point to one of the coloured headings at the top. There should be five for each.

PINK - Lennie’s relationship with animals
ORANGE - Working animals on the ranch
BLUE - Candy’s dog
YELLOW - Descriptions of Lennie comparing him to animals
GREEN - by the pool or in the brush

1. Slim kills at birth several of his dog’s puppies, showing the practical attitude to animals on the ranch as these puppies are not needed and Lulu cannot feed them all.
2. Candy is upset that he has allowed someone else to kill his dog. This links with the novel’s ending when George musters the courage to kill Lennie, ensuring that he dies happy and unafraid.
3. In the opening paragraphs of the novel, Steinbeck creates a picture of the natural world being disturbed by humans as the animals flee to safety.
4. Steinbeck describes Lennie as being like a horse when he drinks. Like an animal, he is simply answering a basic need.
5. At the end in the clearing, the heron eats a water snake, demonstrating Nature’s way of survival of the fittest.
6. Carlson is the most forthright with his views on Candy’s dog. He can see no use for it, stating that it is unkind to let it live.
7. Because he is black, Crooks is treated on the ranch little better than an animal. He is made to live in the barn with the horses and the smell of their manure.
8. When a mule splits its hoof, Crooks and Slim tend to it. This attention is needed for practical, unsentimental reasons to keep it as a useful, working creature on the ranch, unlike Candy’s dog.
9. Another piece of animal imagery for Lennie is when Steinbeck describes his as a terrier because he is tenacious, always unwilling and unable to release his hold.
10. When Lennie explains early in the novel how he always unintentionally killed the mice his Aunt Clara gave to him, Steinbeck is giving the reader an indication of how he is unable to control his strength.
11. Lennie kills the puppy with his heavy-handed petting and clumsy shows of affection.
12. Candy’s dog has for many years provided companionship for him, regardless of the fact that it has long since stopped being a useful and skilful sheepdog.
13. In the barn, as Curley’s Wife’s body is discovered, Steinbeck emphasises the ranch animal noises that accompany this scene.
14. Steinbeck’s simile that compares Lennie to a bear conveys a mixture of brute strength and innocence.
15. When Lennie tries to sneak the puppy into the bunkhouse, his low animal mentality is immediately obvious to George. This incident shows that Lennie cannot help but get into trouble.
16. Steinbeck’s detail of the noise that the lizards make adds sounds to the opening scene.
17. The dog’s mercy-killing is paralleled by the ending. Both the dog and Lennie are crippled, one physically and the other mentally: both are shot with the same gun.
18. When Lennie claims that he will go and live in a cave, and George states that someone will shoot him, the author is suggesting Lennie’s similarity with a wild animal.
19. In his description of the carp’s movement, Steinbeck stresses how Nature is full of strange forces.
20. Lennie yearns to tend rabbits so that he can pet and protect them. His childlike character is shown by the fact he wants different coloured ones.
21. Steinbeck again likens Lennie to a bear with paws during the confrontation with Curley. Here, Lennie shows only an animals’ sense of self-protection. He is not aggressive though it is interesting to note that Curley is compared to a rat and a fish.
22. The importance of rabbits to Lennie, the killing of Curley’s Wife and the muddle in his brain about being in trouble all join at the end of the novel to make him hallucinate a giant rabbit.
23. The fact that the dog is near the end of its life suggests the same idea about Candy.
24. The dove symbolises peace, conveying the tranquillity of the scene before George and Lennie appear at the beginning.
25. Slim is a jerkline skinner who controls the mules with a skill that makes him respected and admired on the ranch.

Although this story is all about people, more specifically men, and how they interact with each other in a strange and hard situation, animals still play a key role within the novel. Without repeating the points above, here is a little more information on the role of the animal in OMAM. Firstly, we as the reader like characters that like animals. Lennie has a special bond with animals and Slim and Candy both have dogs of their own. We are told that Slim looks after the horses and mules that are in his charge with care and attention.

Furthermore, those people who end up causing trouble are less kind. We dislike Carlson for his very abrupt and insensitive way of killing Candy’s dog and we also dislike Curley’s Wife when she brushes aside Lennie’s dead pup, calling it a “mutt”. Curley’s Wife also makes the horses restless when she is dead and when she sneaks up on Crooks and the others in Chapter 4. Steinbeck adds this little detail to show that even the animals are uneasy and spells out trouble.

Finally, the beginning and the ending need a more detailed explanation. The pool at the beginning of the novel talks about rabbits, dear, lizards, water snakes, etc. which are all prey animals; harmless and defenceless. Lennie and George scare away a heron - the only predator - making the place safe and unthreatening. However, at the end, the heron is back and eats a water snake head first. This shows how the tables have turned, showing that the pool is no longer the safe place it once was and is now in fact a place of danger. Steinbeck is setting up the dramatic ending to his novel. The way the water snake is eaten - head first - also mirrors the way Lennie is shot, in the back of the head.
Battle of the Sexes
There are three types of women in OMAM and they stand for very different things. Using three different colours, underline each of the statements depending on whether they describe CURLEY’S WIFE, AUNT CLARA or SUSY.

- She is virtually powerless and so uses her only weapon, her sexuality. The men fancy her, but are very wary of her because she spells trouble.
- She represents a female authority figure for Lennie.
- Her over-flirtatious behaviour drives the people around her away.
- She runs the local brothel in Soledad.
- She haunts the ranch like a ghost - no one pays attention to her and she is always roaming.
- Lennie respects her and is quite afraid of her.
- It is hinted that Slim has a soft spot for her, and her for him.
- She is respected by the men because she does not take advantage of them by charging too high a price.
- She is not respected by any of the men, and they call her “tramp”, “jailbait” and “tart”.
- The impression we get from Lennie and George is that she was a mixture of kindness and strictness.
- She married her husband to get away from her mother - she does not love him and he does not love her.
- She keeps her establishment tidy and her girls clean.
- She has her own impossible dream of being a movie star, which shows how naïve she is.
- To Lennie, she is someone who makes him feel bad, inadequate and dependent on George.
- She’s like the men in a way - dreaming of another life and frustrated by the reality of her own.
- She has a sense of humour and she doesn’t put pressure on the men.
- She proves that she can be both a bully and kind when she talks to Lennie and Crooks.
- The relationship is nothing to do with sex.
- With this relationship, it’s no-strings attached pleasure, business-like.
- This relationship is dangerous and sexy. She is a demanding, “real” woman that men struggle to deal with.

In the novel, men stereotype women and women stereotype men. They put each others’ dreams down and make it hard for the other to achieve anything. They have such a bad opinion of each other that they are blind to each other’s positive sides.

It is safe to say that Steinbeck’s focus for his novel was not women, but the relationships between men. Having grown up in Soledad himself as a child, Steinbeck had first hand experience of working on ranches and so that is why the characters and the theme of loneliness in OMAM are so authentic. Therefore, he relies on three stereotypes of women in his novel to show how they affect men differently. Firstly, Aunt Clara. Although we never meet the real Aunt Clara, only Lennie’s projection of her in Chapter Six, she is the typical strong mother figure. It is clear from the things George says in Chapter One that she was kind and cared for Lennie a great deal. He has a respect for her that has lasted right into his adulthood and he tells Lennie off for forgetting who she is. We also get the impression she was a force to be reckoned with (another way of saying a battle axe or really strict), there is no mention of an Uncle or a male influence on their childhoods (except from a passing comment about George’s grandfather’s farm), so we have to assume that manners and behaviour were learnt from her. She is a safe character and a woman that poses no threat to the men and they are free to think of her fondly.

Secondly, Curley’s Wife. Unlike Aunt Clara, she does not really fit the stereotype of the homely wife. We expect her to be quiet, polite, frumpy, passive and does what she is told. Really, if she followed the stereotype of what people expected from married women at the time in America, we would have probably never met her in the novel. Instead, she represents the stereotype of the dangerous woman. She is young, pretty and wears provocative and sexy clothes. She flirts and tempts the men in a way that is wrong for a woman in her position. She ignores Curley’s wishes and roams the ranch at will. Because of this, the men do not know how to take her: she is supposed to be one thing, but comes across as something else entirely. This creates hostility and anger towards her - she is not a safe character and a man could get in trouble by getting too close. Her behaviour is attention seeking and crude (by that, I mean she is too young and inexperienced to really know how to talk to the men without being a threat) and the more the men ignore her, the more outrageous her behaviour becomes. Her death is dramatic and it fits with her character.

Susy’s brothel is a place of comfort for the men. She sells them more than sexual pleasure, she offers them conversation, jokes, time and patience. She is a practical business woman who has a no nonsense attitude and takes pride in her establishment. Whit compares hers to the other brothel in Soledad and he admires her attention to her customers and her sexual cleanliness rather than the actual sexual acts that are performed there. This is important, because although she should be a threatening and dangerous character like Curley’s Wife, she poses no threat because there is a clear set of rules that the men can follow. Firstly, it’s a place where you can pay for sex, so that gives the men chance for a certain type of intimacy without the hassle of an actual relationship (remember, the men shut of their emotions to a certain extent to protect themselves from the loneliness). Secondly, she allows the men to sit socially without pressurising them into buying one of her girls, this encourages social interaction with women in an environment that is non threatening. Thirdly, the men obviously respect her because she talks to them, makes them laugh and gives them the attention they crave without asking for anything in return. In contrast, Curley’s Wife can be compared to Lennie, who “don’t know no rules”, she presents a relationship without rules or boundaries, so the men stay away.

Nevertheless, regardless of how much the men enjoy their time at Susy’s place, they are still lonely and still crave more companionship and closeness. They are caught in an impossible situation.
Chapter One
“A few miles south of Soledad, the Salinas River drops in close to the hillside bank and runs deep and green. The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool. On one side of the river the golden foothill slopes curve up to the strong and rocky Gabilan mountains, but on the valley side the water is lined with trees - willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter’s flooding; and sycamores with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool. On the sandy bank under the trees the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them. Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covered with the night tracks or ‘coons, and with the split-wedge tracks of deer that come to drink in the dark.”

Chapter Two
“The bunk house was a long, rectangular building. Inside, the walls were whitewashed and the floor unpainted. In three walls there were small, square windows, and in the fourth, a solid door with a wooden latch. Against the walls were eight bunks, five of them made up with blankets and the other three showing their burlap ticking. Over each bunk there was a nailed apple box with the opening forward so that it made two shelves for the personal belongings of the occupant of the bunk. And these shelves were loaded with little articles, soap and talcum powder, razors and those Western magazines ranch men love to read and scoff at and secretly believe. And there were medicines on the shelves, and little vials, combs; and from nails on the box sides, a few neckties. Near one wall there was a black cast-iron stove, its stovepipe going straight up through the ceiling. In the middle of the room stood a big square table littered with playing cards, and around it were grouped boxes for the players to sit on.”

Chapter Three
“Although there was evening brightness showing through the windows of the bunk house, inside it was dusk. Through the open door came the thuds and occasional clangs of a horseshoe game, and now and then the sound of voices raised in approval or derision.

Slim and George came into the darkening bunk house together. Slim reached up over the card table and turned on the electric light. Instantly the table was brilliant with light, and the cone of shade threw its brightness straight downward, leaving the corners of the bunk house still in dusk. Slim sat down on a box and George took his place opposite.”

Chapter Four
“Crooks, the negro stable buck, had his bunk in the harness room; a little shed that leaned off the wall of the barn. On one side of the little room there was a square four-paned window, and on the other, a narrow plank door leading into the barn. Crooks’ bunk was a long box filled with straw, on which his blankets were flung. On the wall by the window there were pegs on which hung broken harness in process of being mended; strips of new leather; and under the window itself a little bench for leather-working tools, curved knives and needles and balls of linen thread, and a small hand riveter. On pegs were also pieces of harness, a split collar with the horsehair stuffing sticking out, a broken hame, a trace chain with its leather covering split. Crooks had his apple box over his bunk, and in it a range of medicine bottles, both for himself and for the horses. There were cans of saddle soap and a dirty can of tar with its paint brush sticking over the edge. And scattered about the floor were a number of personal possessions; for, being alone, Crooks could leave his things about, and being a stable buck and a cripple, he was more permanent than the other men, and he had accumulated more possessions than he could carry on his back.”

Chapter Five
“One end of the great barn was piled high with new hay and over the pile hung the four-taloned Jackson fork suspended from its pulley. The hay came down like a mountain slope to the end of the barn, and there was a level place as yet unfilled with the new crop. At the sides the feeding racks were visible, and between the slats the heads of horses could be seen.

It was Sunday afternoon. The resting horses nibbled the remaining wisps of hay, and they stamped their feet and they bit the wood of the mangers and rattled their halter chains. The afternoon sun sliced in through the cracks of the barn walls and lay in bright lines on the hay. There was the buzz of flies in the air, the lazy afternoon humming.”

Chapter Six
“The deep green pool of the Salinas River was still in the late afternoon. Already the sun had left the valley to go climbing up the slopes of the Gabilan mountains, and the hilltops were rosy in the sun. By the pool among the mottled sycamores, a pleasant shade had fallen.

A water snake glided smoothly up the pool, twisting its periscope head from side to side; and it swam the length of the pool and came to the legs of a motionless heron that stood in the shallows. A silent head and beak lanced down and plucked it out by the head, and the beak swallowed the little snake while its tail waved frantically.

A far rush of wind sounded and a gust drove through the tops of the trees like a wave. The sycamore leaves turned up their silver sides, the brown, dry leaves on the ground scudded a few feet. And row on row of tiny wind waves flowed up the pool’s green surface.”
Quotations
The trick to having effective and memorable quotations to learn for the exam is to keep them short and sweet. The next two pages are for you to make a list of good quotations for the different elements of the novel to learn. Don't make them long, sometimes a word is enough. Look through your class book and through this booklet at the many extracts on characters, setting and themes.
**Different ways of Revising**

Here is a list of different ways of making your notes more memorable. Not all of these are English-only, you can use them in other subjects too. Oooh, look how useful I’m being!

- Colour code your notes: eg, pink for Curley’s Wife points, grey for the theme loneliness etc.
- Flash cards - have key words, phrases, ideas, events etc on coloured card
- Posters - make posters to stick around your house with key information on. Eg, the toilet.
- Storyboards
- Make a collage of key words, pictures and images for characters or themes
- Brainstorms
- Word-picture association - link key ideas or phrases with a picture to help you memorise
- Flow diagram - showing sequences of ideas/events/consequences etc.
- Tape yourself talking about everything you know about a topic/key information/character/theme/event and listen to yourself as you travel or as you exercise, or even as you go to sleep, it’s amazing how much the unconscious brain can absorb.
- Write key words on scraps of paper, fold them up and put them into a hat. Pick each one out at a time and either write down or explain out loud to yourself as much as you know about the topic.
- Write out key phrases three times and test yourself regularly until you’ve got them memorised.
- Mind maps
- Practise exam questions - they are on Moodle

**How to Revise**

When revising, it is a really good idea to:

- Make a timetable for yourself
- Get up and go to bed at the same time every day, eg. Get up at 8 and go to bed at 11.
- Break up your time into hour slots so you don’t overload your brain
- Vary the topics you study - you have more than one subject to revise for and so you should share out your time appropriately.
- If it’s sunny, go and study outside. It'll give you a welcome change of scenery, you’ll get some fresh air and you can soak up some good old vitamin D at the same time!
- Breaks are important - after each hour session, give yourself 5 minutes to make a brew, have something to eat or have a walk around. However, make sure you don’t end up having more breaks than revision…
- Spend the first five minutes of a session going through what you did last time to refresh your memory.
- Get your parents to test you on your knowledge.
- Be a bee - study with a friend so you can share your ideas and cross-pollinate your knowledge. However, make sure you stay focussed or you will waste your time.
- Have a chillout at least one day a week. Go and do something fun with your mates or just sit and veg in front of the tv - it doesn’t matter what you do, just remember that all work and no play makes GCSE students frazzled stress heads. It’s ok to go have some fun!

**What the Exam Will Look Like**

You will have two literature papers, both split into two sections. For OMAM, you will have an extract to read and a question to answer on it. For Foundation, it may split the question in two, maybe asking you to talk about one character per question and having 5 marks per part. For Higher it will be one question and will usually be based on a character’s words and actions. This will be 10 marks.

The exam paper tells you to spend twenty minutes on the first question. That means you have to understand the question, read the extract and pick out important points and write your answer in the time! So, read the question first. Then you know what you’re looking for. As you read the extract, highlight or underline important evidence to help you answer the question. When writing, work down the text methodically - from top to bottom - then your answer will look more organised.

The second question is worth 20 marks and you should spend 40 minutes answering it. You will have a choice between two questions and you have to choose which one you want to answer. Usually, there will be a question on a character and then a question about the novel as a whole, or how Steinbeck explores a theme. This is true for both foundation and higher, however, for foundation they give you a set of handy bullet points to guide you on the things you say.

So, seems as though you have 40 minutes and you have no text to guide you, spend 5 minutes planning. You should write down your key points so that you have a clear focus for each of your paragraphs, then I would recommend writing down any quotes you can remember that fit the question. Then you don’t have to worry about getting halfway through your answer and panicking because the quote you thought you knew has suddenly flown out of your brain.

Always check through your answers. This is a way for picking up any silly little mistakes. Although you do not get marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar, the marking guidelines all ask for clear, developed or sophisticated answers, which means sentences that make sense and a clear order to your points.