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Of Mice and Men
BY JOHN STEINBECK



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Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 1**Editorial Writing**

Objectives: Relating literature to life and social issues
Writing about social issues

Activity

George describes the life of a migrant worker to Lennie.

“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 a ranch an’ work up a stake and then they 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.”

Read the fact sheet about migrant laborers on the next page. Write an editorial expressing a viewpoint you have about using migrant labor in the 21st century. In it, use some of the facts you have learned to back up your opinion. Give the editorial a title. Remember that an editorial does not have the same factual, unbiased format as a news story. Writers of editorials have a point to make, an agenda, and a desire to make the reader see and agree with the opinions expressed in the editorial.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 2

Setting and Description

Objectives: Visualizing details of setting
Writing informative text with detailed description
Writing in an organized manner

Activity

When Steinbeck first wrote *Of Mice and Men* as a novel, his intention was that it could also be performed as a play. The description of the bunkhouse at the start of Section 2 is like a set design, including the sun that comes in through the window in the morning and acts like a spotlight.

1. Reread the first two pages of section 2 and draw a diagram of the bunkhouse; include the important details that are mentioned.
2. Notice the spatial arrangement of the description and the way Steinbeck gives the reader a general impression of the bunkhouse, then directs the reader's attention from the walls, to what is against the walls, then to the center of the room. Pay attention to the way each sentence connects to the previous sentence and directs you to different things, in the way your eyes might naturally travel around a room.

Select a room of interest to you. Write a one-paragraph description of the room, paying careful attention to detail and following a spatial arrangement the same way Steinbeck does. Be sure to connect your sentences with transitions that have smooth continuity in the description.

Remember to:

- Give the general impression of the room.
- Decide how a person might look at the room and what direction his or her eyes would travel.
- List all the detail in a specific order. Notice what connects to what.
- Use a list to plan your writing.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 3**Plot**

Objective: Recognizing rising action in a plot

Activity

Complete the chart on the next page on how each aspect of George's situation has become more intense and what you predict the outcomes may be.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 4

Literary Comparison

Objective: Relating literature to life

Activity

Crooks, in the following remarks, expresses his view on men wanting to own property. Although he is initially negative about the possibility, he is eager to join Candy, George, and Lennie when Candy convinces him they almost have the money.

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' somethin' that was his. Somethin' 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 wasn't none of my harvest."

Read the selection below from the book, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. In it, the narrator explains her confusion about land and her family's feelings on owning it. Compare this selection to the one from *Of Mice And Men*. In your small groups, discuss:

- The desires both selections have in common.
- The differences between them.
- What young people today value and why these specific things are valued.
- How your group feels about owning land.
- Prepare to engage in a discussion with the other groups regarding these topics.

from *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*

I asked him once why he had to go away, why the land was so important. He took my hand and said in his quiet way; "Look out there, Cassie girl. All that belongs to you. You ain't never had to live on nobody's place but your own and long as I live and the family survives, you'll never have to. That's important. You may not understand that now, but one day you will. Then you'll see...."

"Two hundred acres of this place been Logan land for almost fifty years now, the other two hundred for fifteen. We've been through bad times and good times but we ain't never lost none of it. Ain't gonna start now."

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Theme

Objective: Writing statements of theme and supporting your thesis with details from the novel

Activity

For each of the following topics present in the novel, write a thematic statement that includes Steinbeck's point of view on the topic. Then cite incidents or comments from the book that support each thematic statement. An example is provided.

Topic Example: Treatment of Women

Thematic Statement: Steinbeck portrays women as second-class people, without personalities of their own.

Comments from the book that support Topic Example: Treatment of Women: The woman in Weeds falsely accused Lennie of rape, and George believes woman are the cause of evil in the world. Curley's wife has no name or individuality of her own; everything she does is in relationship to him: flirting, the desire to leave him, her past. He tries to control everything she does, but in one moment of strength, she threatens Crooks with a lynching. Her need to speak to a man leads to her own and Lennie's death. Steinbeck refers to her as "jailbait" and "poison." Essentially, the only other women mentioned work in whore houses, or Aunt Clara, who is dead.