

**ENGLISH I – COLLEGE PREP/HONORS –
SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT**

Dear English I College Prep/Honor Students,

Welcome to a brand new school year. At Carroll, we are looking forward to a wonderful and challenging year for all of you. As part of your preparation for next year, you are assigned one novel to read this summer. This thought-provoking novel and the related assignment will provide you with the necessary practice to sharpen and maintain your critical reading skills.

Of Mice and Men is a novella written by John Steinbeck. Published in 1937, it narrates the experiences of George Milton and Lennie Small, two displaced migrant ranch workers, who move from place to place in California in search of new job opportunities during the Great Depression in the United States. (Amazon.com)

Please purchase a paperback copy of the novel. Also, please read and carefully follow the instructions for the assignment which are designed to help prepare you for the first quarter of the school year. The assignment will be collected on the first day of school, without exception.

Have a fun, relaxing summer, enjoy your reading selection, and we'll see you in August!

Many blessings,

Archbishop Coleman Carroll High School
English Department

SUMMER ASSIGNMENT ON *Of Mice and Men*

PLEASE MAKE SURE TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY AS NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THEM WILL BE REFLECTED IN YOUR GRADE

- Please purchase a black and white **composition notebook** in which to answer the discussion questions on the novel. You must **hand write your answers (NO TYPED WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED)**. You may answer in cursive or print, but please make sure that your writing is legible. Your notebook must be turned in on the second week of class.
- **This assignment will count as three (3) homework assignments.**



- Please answer each question in a complete sentence with details to support your answer. Use the questions to frame your answers. Also, eliminate the use of personal pronouns as much as possible (I, me, he, him, her, she, it, you, them, they). Use the character's name instead to identify who you are talking about. Remember that capitalization and punctuation rules apply and will be considered when grading your notebook.
- The key component in reading comprehension is being able to answer what we call the 5 W's and an H: Who, what, when, where, why and how. The discussion questions will address these reading comprehension building blocks. As you finish reading each chapter of the novel, you should complete the discussion questions for that chapter.
- Do not read the book and then go back and try to answer the questions. Answer them while the chapter is fresh in your mind!
- Please be prepared to discuss and be tested on the novel you have read.

Of Mice and Men – Discussion Questions

Chapter 1.

1. Look back at the first paragraph. In your own words, describe the setting. What is the narrator's tone? What mood is established? Write down one line from the opening paragraph and explain how it supports your conclusion about either the tone or mood.
2. Physically describe Lennie and George. What's interesting about this contrast?
3. What's the name of the town where George and Lennie last worked? What happened that caused the two men to run away from this town?
4. How are George and Lennie different than other ranch workers? Cite a line of text from the chapter that supports your statement. (Write down the entire sentence from the chapter and include the page number citation.)
5. Why did Aunt Clara give Lennie a rubber mouse? Why didn't he like it?
6. Describe activities that show George acting as Lennie's parent/guardian.
7. Describe activities that show Lennie behaving as an animal.
8. Frustrated, George yells at Lennie and says, "...if I was alone I could live so easy. I could go get a job an' work, an' no trouble." Why, do you suppose, George hasn't left Lennie? Does George really want to be rid of Lennie? Explain your answer.

Chapter 2.

1. The last guy who slept in George's bunk just up and "quit, the way a guy will." What does this show us about the lifestyle of the ranch men?
2. What was the boss' Christmas gift to the men? What did they do for fun that night? What's the significance of this?
3. Why does Curley, the boss' son, automatically hate Lennie?
4. Why do you suppose Curley chose his wife to marry? What's the irony of this decision?
5. What happened to Lulu's puppies? How is this significant?
6. What is Carlson's problem with Candy's dog?
7. Of the new characters in this chapter, which one do you like the best and why?

Chapter 3.

1. What is Susy's place? What does the popularity of Susy's place show us?
2. When talking to Slim about Lennie, George says, "Funny...I used to have a hell of a lot of fun with 'im. Used to play jokes on 'im 'cause he was too dumb to take of 'imself. But he was too dumb even to know he had a joke played on him...Tell you what made me stop that. One day a bunch of guys was standin' around up on the Sacramento River. I was feelin' pretty smart. I turns to Lennie and says, 'Jump in.'" An' he jumps. Couldn't swim a stroke. He damn near drowned before we could get him. An' he was so damn nice to me for pullin' him out. Clean forgot I told him to jump in. Well, I ain't done nothing like that no more." What does this passage show us about Lennie? About George? About Slim?
3. What are the two card games that George half-heartedly plays during this chapter? Assign some symbolic significance to either or both of the card games in the chapter.
4. Carlson wants to put Candy's dog out of its misery. Candy wants the dog to remain alive. Who's right? Why? Also, symbolically connect the dog to Candy himself.
5. How much money does Candy have? Where did he get the money? Why is Candy so keen to join George and Lennie on their dream farm?
6. Why does Curley attack Lennie? Look closely at the scene. At what point does Lennie react/defend himself? What 's the significance of this?
7. Lennie has just maimed the boss' son. What does Slim do to ensure that George and Lennie won't get fired?

Chapter 4.

1. How is the setting different in this chapter? How do your feelings change because of the difference?
2. Why does Crooks have more items than most of the other men? Take a look at his belongings. Choose three specific items and explain what they show about this character.
3. Despite the racial segregation of the time, Crooks asks to join Candy and Lennie on the dream farm. Later, he says he was "jus' foolin'. I wouldn't want to go no place like that." What causes his change of heart?

4. "I could get you strung up on a tree so easy it ain't even funny." Who says this line? Discuss the power structure of the ranch. Which characters have power? Which don't? Where does Crooks rate in terms of power on the ranch?
5. Why is George unhappy when he returns to the ranch? Is he right to be upset? Explain your answer.
6. The idea of loneliness is a key part of this book. Write two lines spoken by Crooks, include page number(s), where he directly talks about his feelings of loneliness.

Chapter 5.

1. List the reasons that Lennie gives to explain how the puppy is responsible for its own death. Are Lennie's arguments valid? Why or why not?
2. Explain what happened to Curley's wife that led her to meet and quickly marry Curley.
3. I know that you want to despise Curley's wife, but this chapter helps us to see her in a slightly different light, changing her from a static character to one who is more dynamic. Now that you know a bit of her background, how have your feelings about this character changed? Explain your answer.
4. When Lennie runs away, he takes the dead puppy with him, saying, "I'll throw him away...It's bad enough like it is." What does this show us about his mental state?
5. When all of the ranchers enter the barn, which one of them inspects Curley's wife's neck? What does this show us?
6. Now that you've finished the chapter, explain what the death of the puppy foreshadows. Also, the puppy can be seen as a symbol. How so?

Chapter 6.

1. Other than the death of the puppy at the beginning of chapter 5, what clues have there been throughout the book that lead up to Lennie's killing of Curley's wife?
2. As Lennie is hiding in the brush waiting for George, he has two hallucinations. Describe the two separate hallucinations and explain how each are meaningful to Lennie and the reader.
3. Look carefully at the dialogue between George and Lennie right before the shooting. What's interesting about the way George is talking?
4. Slim says, "You hadda, George...I swear you hadda." Is this true? What would have happened if George had waited another five minutes?
5. At what point did George decide he was going to have to kill Lennie? Look back over the end of chapter 5 for clues.

6. Why can't Candy and George still get the dream farm? Explain why George turns away from Candy in chapter 5.
7. What's interesting about the last paragraph?
8. What do you think will happen to George now?