Teacher Notes
Debbie Dix & Ruth Myers

1 Context

2 Chapter notes
• Test your knowledge (6 tests)

26 Characters

28 Themes

30 Structure

31 Activity sheets
• Activity sheet 1: Dreams
• Activity sheet 2: Inevitability
• Activity sheet 3: Characters
• Activity sheet 4: Hierarchy
• Activity sheet 5: Structure
• Activity sheet 6: Framing

45 Exam practice

47 Recommended websites

© Cross Academe Limited 2010
ISBN: 978-1-907251-23-8
Design by:
Oxford Designers & Illustrators
Published by:
Cross Academe Limited
St John’s House
5 South Parade
Oxford OX2 7JL
www.crossacademe.co.uk
Starter activity
In pairs, students could discuss what they know about the Depression in 1930s America and the Wall Street Crash of 1929. What do they know about the stock markets of today or the credit crunch? They should feed back their main points to the class.

Alternatively, students could refer to the ‘Context’ section and summarise it, aiming for five main points.

Answer to Activity 1
(a) The description shows the fairly comfortless and austere lives of the men. They must have very few personal possessions and little privacy, yet we see from the soap, combs, ties, etc. that they pay some attention to personal hygiene and appearance. The medicines show that they make some effort to look after themselves.

(b) Answers will vary, though obviously the object is to show that most students will be better off than the ranch hands. Many will have a television, computer games, i-Pods, etc., whereas the ranch hands have only cards and magazines to pass the time.

(c) Some migrant agricultural workers in Britain live in conditions not entirely unlike these.
CHAPTER 1

Answers to activities

Activity 1
LOOKING AT LANGUAGE
Answers may vary, but below are some of the words and phrases that might be identified from the passage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sight</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Touch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>deep and green</td>
<td>crisp</td>
<td>the water is warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twinkling</td>
<td>skittering</td>
<td>slipped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yellow sands</td>
<td>footsteps on crisp sycamore leaves</td>
<td>in the sunlight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrow pool</td>
<td>noiselessly</td>
<td>damp flats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>golden foothill slopes curve</td>
<td></td>
<td>a path beaten hard by boys coming down from the ranches to swim in the deep pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fresh and green</td>
<td></td>
<td>the limb is worn smooth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mottled, white, recumbent limbs</td>
<td></td>
<td>little wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>branches that arch over the pool</td>
<td></td>
<td>shade climbed up the hills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leaves lie deep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gray, sculptured stones</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green pool</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity 2
CHARACTER ANALYSIS
Note that if students have seen a stage production or film version of the novel, it would be helpful to discuss the casting. Students who have seen the 1992 film (directed by Gary Sinise), for example, may wish to compare John Malkovich’s portrayal of Lennie, or Sherilyn Fenn’s playing of Curley’s wife, with their own perception of these characters.

(a) Answers will vary. Students may mention that George would need to be small and thin. His face would be weather-beaten and he would have a thin, bony nose.
The actor playing Lennie would be in stark contrast to George. He would be tall, big boned with a big face and large, pale eyes.

(b) George might be constantly looking around him, always aware of his surroundings: he has to remain alert to ensure that he and Lennie survive in a difficult world. (Note his caution when they drink at the pool.) Lennie might walk dragging his feet, stooped over, his arms hanging loosely down by his sides.

(c) Students might suggest that George is always in the lead and that Lennie always follows. Lennie might always look to George for what to do, where to go, how to behave. George might talk to Lennie as if he were a child and use a parental tone of voice. Lennie might copy some of George’s actions.

Activity 3
LOOKING AT LANGUAGE

Answers may vary, but students may use quotes from the text such as, ‘a huge man, shapeless of face’, or draw on clues from the text and describe him as bear-like or observe that he is often compared with an animal. He might also be likened to a child. Some descriptions refer to him as ‘simple-minded’.

Students may feel that it is important to convey his size, his childlike qualities, his innocence, his reliance on George and the way that he looks up to George as a father figure, and his lack of knowledge of the world. A subtler point that some students might make is the fact that Lennie shows intelligence of a sort at times, for example in the way he gets George to retell the story. Nor is he entirely honest: he tries to conceal the dead mouse.

Students often find it hard to select language that is appropriate and avoid descriptions that might be offensive when discussing Lennie. It is a useful technique for students to learn that, if in doubt about language use, they should refer to the text and draw directly from it.

Activity 4
FOCUS ON THEMES

(a) Answers will vary, but students may refer to the fact that Lennie said he had been told it before and that, given what we have learned of Lennie’s memory, he must have heard it a number of times in order for him to be able to remember it. He must also attach some significance to the story to be able to remember it.

The fact that George ‘repeated his words rhythmically as though he had said them many times before’ is a clue, as is Lennie’s delighted response and prompting. Lennie’s increasing excitement throughout the recital tells us that this is a familiar story and that it provides them with hope and some meaning to their lives. The dream serves a purpose and gives them something to aim for, a reason for working and a way to cope with the hard conditions.

(b) Repeated stories have a bonding effect, linking members of family, friendship group or community.
CHAPTER 2

Answers to activities

Activity 1
LOOKING AT LANGUAGE
(a) Possible answers:
• It is associated with fire, and therefore with both heat and danger. Most other associations stem from this.
• Red traffic lights – a ‘danger’ sign.
• Often perceived as a sexual colour, for example used in brothels and red light districts. It is associated with passion and promiscuity.
• Attention-grabbing. Red clothes make people ‘stand out from the crowd’.
• Anger – an emotion Curley’s wife displays later in the novel. She also indirectly evokes anger in others, especially Curley.
• Blushing can be associated with embarrassment and high emotional states but also with flirting and sexuality.
• Red can also be associated with blood.

Answers may include the associations listed above, with particular reference to danger and sexuality.

(b) Answers will vary, but students may refer to:
• The careful descriptions of her dress – ‘She had full, rouged lips… Her fingernails were red. Her hair hung down in little rolled clusters, like sausages. She wore… red mules, on the insteps of which were little bouquets of red ostrich feathers’ (p. 32) – indicate that she has taken great care to dress herself up and prepare her hair and make-up, which is totally inappropriate to the outdoor life on a farm and would only be done to attract attention to herself.
• ‘Lennie’s eyes moved down over her body, and though she did not seem to be looking at Lennie she bridled a little’ – refers to her awareness of her sexuality and the effect she is having on men (p. 32).
• “If he ain’t, I guess I better look some place else,” she said playfully… “Bye, boys” – indicates a flirtatious, playful nature and a realisation of the impact she is having on men (p. 33).

Activity 2
LOOKING AT LANGUAGE
(a) Answers could include the words and phrases italicised below (pp. 34–35):
• ‘he moved with a majesty only achieved by royalty and master craftsmen’;
• ‘the prince of the ranch’ (both quotes imply a ‘royal’ status on the ranch);
• ‘He was capable of killing a fly on the wheeler’s butt with a bull whip without touching the mule’ (implying a mastery of his work);
• ‘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’ (which implies wisdom);
• ‘He looked kindly at the two in the bunkhouse’ (he has the confidence to be kind to strangers in a tough, masculine environment).

(b) Answers may include:
• Experience – he has been on the ranch a long time.
• A natural physical ability which means that he is very good at his job.
• He does not chatter away unnecessarily but instead listens carefully to others and uses his words sparingly, making concluding announcements rather than debating an issue.
• Because he is good at his job, others have developed respect for him, which has led to the development of his sense of personal dignity.
• He has become a confident, self-assured character who stands out in a world of lonely, desperate people who have fallen on hard times.

(c) Answers may include reference to quotes such as:
• ‘his hands, large and lean, were as delicate in their action as those of a temple dancer’ (this implies a mastery of movement and the word ‘temple’ implies a mystical quality);
• ‘his slow speech had overtones not of thought, but of understanding beyond thought’ – (which implies a wise, knowing quality).

Activity 3
CHARACTER ANALYSIS
(a) Possible answers:
Curley’s wife – ‘Her voice had a nasal, brittle quality’.
Slim – ‘It’s brighter’n a bitch outside’, he said gently’ and ‘His slow speech had overtones not of thought, but of understanding beyond thought.’

Although Curley’s wife is described as ‘good lookin’ ’ and physically pretty, her voice is not attractive – hinting that there are other, less attractive, aspects of her character. Slim is portrayed as an authority figure to whom the men look for advice and who speaks slowly, deliberatively and with certainty.

(b) Answers may include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curley’s wife</th>
<th>Slim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘full, rouged lips’</td>
<td>‘His voice was very gentle.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘wide spaced eyes, heavily made up’</td>
<td>‘His tone was friendly.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Her fingernails were red.’</td>
<td>‘Slim stood up slowly and with dignity.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘She smiled archly.’</td>
<td>‘Carlson stepped back to let Slim precede him’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘purty’ (means pretty)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers should indicate that we are meant to admire Slim and dislike Curley’s wife, towards whom caution is required.

(c) Answers will vary according to which celebrities are popular with the students.

Activity 4
FOCUS ON THEMES
There is no one ‘correct’ answer and answers will vary according to students’ perceptions; however, it is important that their explanations correlate with the positions in the hierarchy they
assign to each character. This activity is likely to excite a good level of debate as nearly all characters can be argued to be either powerful or not powerful in different ways. For example, Lennie has little power because of his lack of intellectual understanding and his dependence on George, but he has a lot of physical power. Similarly, Curley’s wife has little power on the ranch in terms of what she is allowed to do, but she has a lot of sexual power over men.

**SPEAKING AND LISTENING**
Because it is likely to inspire debate, this activity might also be used as a Speaking and Listening assessment activity. Students could take on the roles of the characters and speak in the first person about their position in the hierarchy. Alternatively, this could be a group discussion in which students put forward different views.
CHAPTER 3

Answers to activities

Activity 1
CHARACTER ANALYSIS

(a) Students may refer to Slim’s reassurances about giving Lennie a puppy and his insistence that George does not need to thank him for it. Slim goes on to compliment Lennie’s commitment to work and his physical strength. Instead of defaulting to his normal defensiveness when anyone refers to Lennie, George drops his guard and is lulled into a sense of security by Slim’s positive comments about Lennie.

Slim does not ask direct questions, but makes a statement: ‘Funny how you an’ him string along together’ (p. 40). This allows George to disclose more information if he wishes to. When George gets defensive, Slim responds in a calm manner, providing a rationale for his observation.

Later on, Slim uses silence as a way of encouraging George to continue. There is a suggestion that George wants to confide in someone about Lennie, and that Slim is the right person: ‘He wanted to talk’ (p. 40). Slim does not interrupt or comment on what he is saying. George sees how attentive Slim is being – ‘George looked over at Slim and saw the calm, Godlike eyes fastened on him’ – and is encouraged to continue (p. 41). When Slim does interject, it is with a further compliment – ‘He’s a nice fella’ – that confirms George’s belief that he has chosen the right person in whom to confide (p. 41). Slim agrees with comments that George makes and echoes back what he says until George is then able to divulge what took place in Weed.

George panics about the possibility that Slim might tell somebody about the events in Weed, but reassures himself that Slim would not betray his confidence. Steinbeck describes Slim’s manner on a number of occasions as calm, level, slow. Slim’s measured response allows George to ‘off load’ and to trust Slim.

(b) As a narrative device, this conversation enables Steinbeck to reveal the ‘back-story’ of what happened in Weed without having to give a direct authorial account of it – which might move us away from focusing on the characters in the present moment. This back-story is important because it foreshadows what happens later in the novel. It tells us that Lennie has the capacity for inciting misunderstanding and violence by his innocent liking for soft things, especially when women are involved.

Activity 2
LOOKING AT LANGUAGE

‘I didn’t mean no harm, George.’ Lennie’s intentions are made apparent and the reader sees him as a big child, excited about tending the puppies. ‘He’s jes’ like a kid, ain’t he?’ (p. 44). George’s confirmation that ‘There ain’t no more harm in him than a kid neither’ helps us to perceive him as innocent, vulnerable and too childlike to be fully responsible for his own actions (p. 44).
Activity 3

LOOKING AT LANGUAGE

Answers may vary.

**Terrier** – small, persistent, yapping bark, tenacious, ankle-biter

**Paws** – bear-like, soft, furry, padded

**Rat** – small, carries disease, hides in dark places, scurries out of the light, scavenges for food, vicious bite, unpopular

**Fish** – cannot escape once hooked, cannot survive out of water

**Whimpering** – distressed animal, pathetic, hurt, crying, small child

*Example*

Curley is described as stepping ‘over to Lennie like a terrier’ (p. 62). The use of the word terrier conjures up an image of a small, persistent, yapping ankle-biter. By likening Curley to a terrier, Steinbeck is encouraging us to perceive him as small, aggressive, and unwilling to let things go.
CHAPTER 4

Answers to activities

Activity 1

FOCUS ON THEMES

Answers might include:

- ‘a mauled copy of the California civil code for 1905.’ This shows that Crooks has made an attempt to be aware of his rights (even though it is out of date). It also indicates his acute awareness that he is the only black person on the ranch and may need to defend his rights.
- Crooks’s ‘bunk was a long box filled with straw, on which blankets were flung.’ This shows the very basic way in which he lives and his lack of comforts.
- ‘broken harness in the process of being mended.’ There are lots of descriptions of his work materials and tools, indicating that Crooks’s life is his work and that he has little time (or possibly money) for outside interests.
- ‘his apple box over his bunk, and in it a range of medicine bottles, both for himself and for the horses.’ This reminds us of the medicines he needs for his back and how his life merges with the horses’ lives. The apple box also adds to the perception of his poverty.
- ‘Crooks possessed several pairs of shoes, a pair of rubber boots, a big alarm clock, and a single-barrelled shotgun.’ The passage indicates that because he was a stable buck and disabled, he was more permanent than most men on the ranch and had acquired more possessions. The gun could indicate a perceived need to defend himself or just be part of life on a ranch at that time.

Activity 2

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

(a) Phrases might include (p. 71):

- ‘His voice grew soft and persuasive. “S’pose George don’t come back no more.”
- ‘Crooks pressed forward some kind of private victory.’
- Crooks’s ‘face lighted with pleasure in his torture.’
- ‘Crooks bored in on him… “They’ll tie ya up with a collar, like a dog.”’

(b) Steinbeck seems to be indicating something about human nature. Not only do the strong oppress the weak but also the disenfranchised Crooks (himself in a weak and lowly position on the ranch because he is black and disabled) does not use his experiences of being oppressed to act in a better, different way, such as by showing kindness and compassion towards Lennie. Instead, Crooks takes pleasure in ‘torturing’ Lennie with the idea that George will not come back. Here the weak are seen oppressing the weaker. Ironically, Crooks himself is ‘tortured’ and oppressed by Curley’s wife shortly afterwards.

(c) Crooks is a ‘representative’ black character. He has no black community around him and so is very much alone. He is very aware of his rights (he has a copy of the California civil code in his room) and says to Lennie near the start of the chapter, ‘You got no right to come in my room. This here’s my room. Nobody got any right in here but me’ (pp. 67–68).
Crooks is aware of his racial segregation from the others: ‘They play cards in there, but I can’t play because I’m black. They say I stink. Well, I tell you, you all of you stink to me’ (p.68). We get a sense that his isolation has made him bitter and unforgiving.

Crooks is also aware that his isolation has had an effect on his character and he remarks about the importance of friendship and having company:

‘I seen it over an’ over – a guy talkin’ to another guy and it don’t make no difference if he don’t hear or understand… It’s just bein’ with another guy. That’s all.’ (pp.70–71)

Curiously, although Crooks recognises the importance of friendship and companionship, he still ‘tortures’ Lennie with the notion that George has deserted him.

Activity 3
LOOKING AT LANGUAGE

• ‘They left all the weak ones here.’ (She lets Crooks, Candy and Lennie know that she considers them to be the weakest males on the ranch – so weak that they have been left behind.)

• ‘You’re all scared of each other, that’s what.’ (She insults all of the men on the ranch for sticking together and excluding her.)

• (about Curley) ‘Swell guy, ain’t he? Spends all his time sayin’ what he’s gonna do to guys he don’t like, and he don’t like nobody.’ (She admits to relative strangers that she does not like her husband.)

• ‘Curley started som’pin’ he didn’ finish. Caught in a machine – baloney!… Who bust him?’ (She shows that she does not believe her husband and the story of his hand being caught in a machine. She wants to know who put Curley in his place.)

• ‘You bindle bums.’ (She is aware of their low social status.)

• ‘An’ what am I doin’? Standin’ here talkin’ to a bunch of bindle stiffs – a nigger an’ a dum-dum and a lousy ol’ sheep – an’ likin’ it because they ain’t nobody else.’ (She insults them by commenting on Lennie’s intelligence and Crooks’ ethnicity as if that makes them inferior to her, but she is also admitting defeat by acknowledging that her life has got to this low point. By ‘they ain’t nobody’ she means ‘there isn’t anybody’.)
CHAPTER 5

Answers to activities

Activity 1
CHARACTER ANALYSIS
Curley's wife:
• ‘What you got there, sonny boy?’ (Her tone implies dominance and a social standing above Lennie)
• ‘George giving you orders about everything?’ (She is taunting Lennie, trying to get a reaction. She is possibly unaware that he is unable to understand taunting at this level.)
• ‘If Curley gets tough, you can break his other han’. (She is possibly smug, letting Lennie know that she knows what happened to Curley's hand. She is also spiteful and unsupportive of her husband.)
• ‘Why can’t I talk to you? I never get to talk to nobody. I get awful lonely.’ (She admits her loneliness and her need for company. She could also be frustrated.)
• ‘What you got covered up there?’ (She is curious to see what Lennie is hiding.)
• ‘Don’t you worry none. He was jus’ a mutt.’ (She consoles and comforts Lennie, recognises he is worried and tries to help him get a sense of perspective.)
• ‘Wha’s the matter with me?’ (She is angry that George told Lennie not to talk to her and that she is discriminated against and isolated.)
• ‘I ain’t doin’ no harm to you.’ (She tries to convince Lennie she means no harm and just wants some company.)
• ‘Well, a show come through, an’ I met one of the actors. He says I could go with that show. But my ol’ lady wouldn’ let me.’ (She is angry and frustrated at her missed opportunities. Her dream has gone and now she is stuck on the ranch.)

Lennie:
• ‘God damn you… Why do you got to get killed? You ain’t so little as mice.’ (He feels anger and fear that George will find out he killed the puppy.)
• ‘He picked up the pup and hurled it from him.’ (He is frustrated at the pup’s death and fails to understand his own strength.)
• ‘Now I won’t get to tend the rabbits’… He rocked himself back and forth in his sorrow.’ (He feels utter disappointment and is struggling to cope with it.)
• ‘I di’n’t know you’d get killed so easy.’ (He feels regret and cannot understand the pup’s death.)
• ‘This here God damn little son-of-a-bitch wasn’t nothing to George.’ (He is angry and tries to rationalise the situation and convince himself that George will still let him tend the rabbits.)
• ‘Well, I ain’t supposed to talk to you or nothing.’ (Lennie realises that he has done wrong by killing the puppy and is keen not to get into any further trouble.)
• ‘George ain’t gonna let me tend no rabbits now.’ (Lennie’s straightforward mind keeps returning to this point. It is the part of their dream that matters the most to him.)
Activity 2

LOOKING AT LANGUAGE

Answers could include:

(a) Words and phrases that show it was an accident:
   - ‘I don’t want ta hurt you.’
   - ‘For a moment he seemed bewildered.’

(b) Words and phrases that show Lennie’s fear and confusion:
   - ‘panic’
   - ‘His face was contorted.’
   - ‘Lennie began to cry with fright.’
   - ‘“Oh! Please don’t do none of that,” he begged.’
   - ‘He shook her then, and he was angry with her.’
   - ‘he whispered in fright’

Activity 3

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Answers will vary greatly as this is essentially a creative writing extension task and depends on readers’ interpretations of characters and depth of understanding of the novel. However, we could expect Slim to have a relatively balanced, perceptive and accurate view of events while we might expect Curley to have a blaming approach which allows him to target Lennie and repay him for the earlier incident involving his hand. Candy might concentrate on how Curley’s wife’s death has ruined their chances of owning their own farm and living out their dream.
CHAPTER 6

Answers to activities

Activity 1
LOOKING AT LANGUAGE
(a) The fact that Lennie has gone to the brush as arranged suggests that he recognises that he has done something serious enough to warrant them leaving the ranch in this clandestine manner. He is expecting George to be angry with him and that George may not want to be with him anymore. The hallucination suggests that Lennie is aware enough of his actions to have a conscience that is embodied in the image of his Aunt Clara. The reprimands that he repeats through Aunt Clara suggest that he has learned these by heart as well as the dream of living off the fat of the land. The rabbit’s repeated threat that George will leave Lennie is a further indication that Lennie has a sense of the enormity of his actions and is conscious that George might abandon him – the ultimate punishment imaginable to Lennie.

(b) Lennie has previously been presented as clumsy and noisy. Students may compare how Lennie approached the pool and drank from it in the first chapter, with now, when he ‘knelt down and drank, barely touching his lips to the water’. George is not even there to reprimand him and remind him how to conduct himself.

Though still likened to a bear, this time he comes out of the brush ‘as silently as a creeping bear moves’. This time he is an animal in a different mode of being.

Activity 2
CHARACTER ANALYSIS
The shooting of Candy’s dog and Lennie are both depicted as mercy killings and both are shot in the same place, at the base of the skull. In addition to this, both shootings are sanctioned by Slim.

Carlson had quite a public discussion about shooting Candy’s dog – he initiated the idea and then persisted with it. George consulted with no one, but planned it all ahead. He used the same gun that Carlson had used on the dog, but unlike Carlson, George threw the gun away immediately after the shooting. We do not actually see Carlson shoot the dog, though we hear the shot.

Activity 3
FOCUS ON THEMES
(a) George and Lennie’s dream provides them with hope and gives some meaning to their lives. The dream serves a purpose and gives them something to aim for, a reason for working and a way to cope with the hard conditions. It is something they can share together and acts as a bond between them, setting them apart from others.

Curley’s wife’s shattered dream of being a Hollywood star allows her to seek sanctuary from her loveless marriage to Curley.

Crooks and Candy share briefly in George and Lennie’s dream, giving their lives some sense of purpose and some respite from the loneliness and friendlessness that they endure on the ranch. It also gives them a sense of self-worth.
CHAPTER 1
Test your knowledge

1. Where is the novel set?

2. At what time of day does the novel open?

3. Which character do we meet first?

4. What kind of an animal is Lennie likened to when we first meet him?

5. ‘Then he replaced his hat, pushed himself back from the river, drew up his knees, and embraced them’ (p.5). What does Lennie do after George carries out the actions described?

6. What has Lennie got in his side pocket?

7. What work will the men be doing the next day?

8. Why does George get frustrated over supper?

9. Why did Aunt Clara stop giving mice to Lennie?

10. Where does Lennie say he will go and live if George does not want him?
CHAPTER 1

Answers

1. A few miles south of Soledad, California

2. Late afternoon

3. George

4. A bear

5. Imitates him

6. A dead mouse

7. Bucking sacks of barley (heaving them onto a cart)

8. Lennie wants ketchup on his beans, and they do not have any. George says Lennie always wants whatever they do not have.

9. He always killed them.

10. A cave
CHAPTER 2
Test your knowledge

1. How many puppies does Slim’s dog have?
2. How many of those puppies does Slim drown and why?
3. What does Candy say the boss did at Christmas?
4. Which relation of Lennie’s does George pretend to be when questioned by the boss?
5. How does George explain Lennie’s lack of intellect to the boss?
6. Why does George say ‘we don’t want no pants rabbits’ (p. 20)?
7. Who said, ‘Ain’t many guys travel around together... I don’t know why. Maybe ever’body in the whole damm world is scared of each other’ (p. 36)?
8. Who is described as follows: ‘His glance was at once calculating and pugnacious’ (p. 27)?
9. Whose ‘hatchet face’ was ‘ageless’ (p. 35)?
10. Why does Curley enter the bunk house at the end of Chapter 2?
CHAPTER TWO

Answers

1. 9

2. 4 because his dog, Lulu, could not feed 9 puppies

3. He gave the men a gallon of whisky.

4. His cousin

5. ‘He got kicked in the head by a horse when he was a kid.’ (p. 24)

6. He finds a treatment to kill ‘lice, roaches and other scourges’ on the shelf above his mattress when first entering the bunk house and is worried their bunks are infested.

7. Slim, commenting on the rarity of George and Lennie’s friendship

8. Curley, when meeting and sizing up George and Lennie

9. Slim

10. He was looking for his wife.
CHAPTER 3
Test your knowledge

1. What game is being played at the beginning of this chapter?

2. Fill in the gaps: ‘Slim and ________ came into the ________ bunk house together.’

3. What trouble is George anticipating with Lennie?

4. Who says, ‘I seen the guys that go around on the ranches alone. That ain't no good. They don't have no fun’?

5. What happened in Weed?

6. Who was Bill Tenner?

7. Who shoots Candy's dog?

8. What is said to ‘invade’ the room while the men wait for a gunshot?

9. What in particular provokes Curley to attack Lennie?

10. What kind of dog is Curley compared to?
CHAPTER 3
Answers

1. Throwing horseshoes

2. ‘Slim and George came into the darkening bunk house together.’ (p.39)

3. That he will want to sleep in the barn with the pups

4. George (p.41)

5. Lennie touched a girl's red dress and frightened her so she screamed and Lennie panicked and held on to her dress. She accused him of rape.

6. A previous rancher who had had a letter printed in a magazine. Whit remembered him with particular fondness.

7. Carlson

8. The silence

9. He is still smiling at the thought of the ‘dream farm’; Curley thinks Lennie is laughing at him.

10. A terrier
CHAPTER 4
Test your knowledge

1. What does Crooks keep in the apple box over his bunk?

2. Fill in the gaps. ‘The room was swept and fairly neat, for Crooks was a ________, ________ man.’

3. What was Lennie’s reason for entering Crooks’s room?

4. From the text can you work out what a ‘nail keg’ is?

5. Who says, ‘I was born right here in California. My old man had a chicken ranch’?

6. Who says, ‘Ain’t nobody goin’ to talk no hurt to George’?

7. How is Curley’s wife described when she first enters the barn?

8. When Curley’s wife turns on Crooks, how does he react?

9. Who says, ‘You know what I can do to you if you open your trap?’

10. How does Candy finally persuade Curley’s wife to leave?
CHAPTER 4
Answers

1. A range of medicine bottles both for himself and for the horses

2. ‘The room was swept and fairly neat, for Crooks was a **proud, aloof** man.’ (p. 67)

3. He says, ‘Just come to look at my puppy. And I seen your light.’

4. Small barrel Lennie sits on in Crooks’s room

5. Crooks (p. 70)

6. Lennie (p. 72)

7. ‘Her face was heavily made up. Her lips were slightly parted. She breathed strongly, as though she had been running.’ (p. 76)

8. He is described as growing smaller, reducing himself to nothing: ‘There was no personality, no ego – nothing to arouse either like or dislike.’ He simply answers her with, ‘Yes, ma’am’ (p. 80).

9. Curley’s wife to Crooks (p. 80)

10. He says he has heard the guys coming back and if she leaves immediately, they will not tell Curley she was there (p. 80).
CHAPTER 5
Test your knowledge

1. What impression does Steinbeck create of the atmosphere in the barn at the start of the chapter?

2. What is Lennie's first mention of the dead puppy and what does it imply?

3. When Curley’s wife enters the barn, Lennie says he is not supposed to speak to her. How does she persuade him that it will be alright to talk to her?

4. Fill in the gaps: ‘‘Nother time I met a guy, an’ he was in ________ . Went out to the Riverside ________ Palace with him. He says he was gonna put me in the ________ .’

5. What reason does Curley's wife give for marrying Curley?

6. How does Steinbeck describe the final body movements of Curley's wife before she dies?

7. Who else is described as moving like this elsewhere in the book?

8. How is the description of Curley's wife after her death different from how she is described earlier in the novel when she is alive?

9. After the discovery of Curley's wife's body, what is Candy's greatest fear?

10. After Lennie has left, what is the implication of Slim saying to George, ‘An’ suppose they lock him up an’ strap him down and put him in a cage. That ain’t no good, George’? (p.96)
CHAPTER 5

Answers

1. A lazy, sunny, Sunday afternoon – a calm atmosphere

2. ‘Why do you got to get killed. You ain’t so little as mice. I didn’t bounce you hard’ (p. 84). It implies that he has been rough with the puppy and did not realise his own strength.

3. She tells him the others are preoccupied with the horseshoe tournament and nobody will notice (p. 85).

4. ‘’Nother time I met a 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.’ (p. 87)

5. She was angry because she believed her mother had stolen a letter from a man who was going to put her in the movies. We get the impression that she married Curley to spite her mother.

6. ‘…her body flopped like a fish.’ (p. 90)

7. Curley is described as, ‘flopping like a fish on a line’, when he has the fight with Lennie in Chapter 3.

8. She is described as a young, innocent girl, ‘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.’ (p. 91)

9. They will not be able to buy their own farm. He says to George, ‘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?’ (p. 93)

10. Slim is implying that prison would be unbearable for Lennie – that it would be better if Lennie were to die.
CHAPTER 6
Test your knowledge

1. What time of day is it at the beginning of this chapter?

2. Fill in the gaps. ‘A water snake ________ ________ up the pool, twisting its ________ head from side to side; and it swam the length of the pool and came to the legs of a ________ ________ that stood in the shallows.’

3. What animal is Lennie likened to when he first arrives?

4. When was he first likened to this animal?

5. What two forms do his hallucinations assume?

6. What is the first thing that George says to Lennie?

7. Fill in the gaps. ‘George shook himself. He said ________, “If I was alone I could live so easy.” His voice was ________, had ________ ________.’

8. What does George especially want Lennie to know?

9. Who tells George, ‘I swear you hadda’?

10. How does Carlson show his insensitivity at the end of the novel?
CHAPTER 6

Answers

1. Late afternoon

2. ‘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.’ (p. 98)

3. A bear

4. Chapter 1, when George and Lennie first appear out of the brush. He drags his feet a little, ‘the way a bear drags his paws.’ (p. 4)

5. Aunt Clara and a giant rabbit

6. ‘What the hell you yellin’ about?’ (p. 101)

7. ‘George shook himself. He said woodenly, “If I was alone I could live so easy.” His voice was monotonous, had no emphasis.’ (p. 102)

8. George wants Lennie to know that he was never ‘mad’ at him (angry with him).

9. Slim

10. He says, ‘Now what the hell ya suppose is eatin’ them two guys?’ (p. 106). He cannot understand why George should be upset at the death of Lennie, or why Slim should sympathise with George.
Starter activity
Match up the characters to the groups in society that you think they might represent.

Answers to activities

Activity 1
(a) It could be argued that George acts irresponsibly, and perhaps out of anger, when he tells Lennie to ‘get’ Curley. He knows how strong Lennie is, and that Lennie will not know when to stop, and therefore he knows that Lennie may seriously injure Curley. Perhaps Curley deserves this, but it could lead to George and Lennie losing their jobs, or to Lennie going to prison. On the other hand, he cannot just watch Lennie getting beaten up, and it would go against the social code of the ranch for him to intervene. This could also draw more attention to Lennie’s mental weakness, which could help to lose them their jobs.

(b) Curley wants to fight Lennie because he resents his size. Slim might temporarily have been able to put Curley in his place, but this would probably have left Curley feeling resentful and still feeling he had ‘unfinished business’ with Lennie.

Activity 2
(a) George says, ‘Get him, Lennie. Don’t let him do it.’ Then, ‘Get ’im Lennie!’ and ‘I said get him.’ As soon as Lennie begins to crush Curley’s hand, George says, ‘Leggo of him, Lennie. Let go.’

(b) Answers will vary, but it may be that George simply feels he cannot stand by and watch his friend get savagely beaten up, especially when there is no justification for it.

Activity 3
(a) It could be argued that the boss treats them unfairly, though he is not especially bad by the standards of the time. Curley’s wife victimises Crooks.

(b) According to Candy, the boss takes his anger out on Crooks simply because he is black. Curley’s wife is particularly vicious in her threat to get Crooks lynched.

(c) Candy seems to feel that he is lucky to have a job. However, we see some underlying bitterness in him when he joins in the taunting of Curley in Chapter 3. Crooks tries to stand up to Curley’s wife, but shrinks defensively into himself when she threatens him.

(d) They feel that they are better off if they do not complain, because society as a whole will not support them.
Activity 4
(a) The words ‘quietly, ‘touched her cheek’ and ‘fingers explored’ could suggest intimacy and romance.

(b) The phrase evokes the respect the men have for Slim, and the sense of suspense present while they wait to find out if Curley’s wife is dead.

(c) The fact that it is Slim who does this suggests that he is like a doctor and a priest rolled into one: he has the calm and expertise to know whether she is dead, but he is also the one to whom this task automatically falls. Here, touching the dead somehow gives him an unspoken authority. He also does this with his usual gentleness and sensitivity.

Activity 5
Answers will vary, but they could include the fact that Curley and his wife had been married for only a short time, that they already seemed unhappy together (by her account), and that Curley is angry rather than grief-stricken when she dies.

Activity 6
Answers will vary, but perhaps the least responsible is Lennie himself. It could be said that Curley’s wife is foolish to be alone in the barn with Lennie, and to let him touch her hair. This could be seen as flirtatious, and she already knows that Lennie is very strong and not entirely in control of his own actions. Curley himself could be blamed for not looking after his wife. George could be blamed for not looking after Lennie.

Activity 7
Answers will vary but should describe the manhunt, include the fact that it is Carlson’s Luger pistol that is used to kill Lennie (Carlson thinks that Lennie stole it), and demonstrate Carlson’s lack of sensitivity.

Extension activity 1
Despite the predatory way in which Curley’s wife is portrayed throughout the novel, Steinbeck wrote in a letter to the actress playing this character in its first stage production that though Curley’s wife may appear harsh and sexually confident, she is actually quite naïve. Steinbeck explains in his letter that she is ‘a nice, kind girl and not a floozy.’ Use evidence from the novel to write a positive obituary for Curley’s wife.

Extension activity 2
Choose two other characters and, imagining yourself as Steinbeck, write letters offering advice on how to interpret and play these characters.
Starter activities
(a) Dreams are a major theme in *Of Mice and Men*. Discuss the following questions:

- do people need dreams?
- do dreams help people accomplish great things?
- do you think all people who accomplish great things in life have strong guiding dreams?

(b) In pairs, discuss what you believe to be the main themes in *Of Mice and Men*. Gather evidence from the text to support your ideas.

Answers to activities

Activity 1
George and Lennie have their dream of owning a smallholding and being self-sufficient. Candy becomes a part of this dream. Crooks briefly allows himself to entertain the idea of becoming part of this dream but then changes his mind and returns to his normal pessimism. Curley’s wife has dreams of Hollywood stardom. Her dream is even less likely to come true than that of George and Lennie.

Activity 2
Candy is isolated by age and disability, Crooks by his race, and Curley’s wife by her gender and a bad marriage.

Activity 3
George benefits from Lennie’s strength and hard work, and looking after Lennie gives him a purpose in life and perhaps makes him feel needed. Lennie benefits from George’s intelligence and care.

Activity 4
Steinbeck’s hints help to give the reader a sense of tragic inevitability, so that they can accept the novel’s outcome. They also reinforce the idea that the characters are essentially helpless to alter their situation in life.

Activity 5
Answers will vary. However, it might be observed that racism, ageism and sexism still exist, albeit often in subtler forms.
Activity 6

Dear John,

I have very much enjoyed reading your manuscript of *Of Mice and Men*. It is a well-told and very moving story, with excellent characterisation. However, I do feel that in these difficult times you have an opportunity to do a little more for the underprivileged in your novel.

We know that workers are exploited by greedy and heartless bosses, yet the boss on your ranch is portrayed quite sympathetically. Your character Candy calls him ‘a pretty nice fella’ and we hear that at Christmas he generously gives his men a gallon of whisky to get drunk on. When he meets George and Lennie, he seems worried that George may be exploiting Lennie – taking his pay. Surely we should see the boss exploiting them! Could we perhaps have a scene in which the boss refuses to pay the men, or increases their working hours?

I also feel that you make too little of the injuries sustained by Candy and Crooks. After all, they have both been seriously injured at work, yet Crooks appears to have received no compensation, and Candy very little. Neither man complains very much. Could we see more of their suffering, and perhaps of the boss’s harshness?

Now, regarding the question of working conditions. You describe the bleakness of the bunk house admirably. But what about the work itself? You never take us into the fields to see the hard, gruelling work that the men have to do, bucking barley for hours on end. Surely we need to see their working conditions to get a real grasp of their hardships. I know you want the book to be easily adapted for the stage, but could the men at least talk about how hard the work is?

Lastly, Crooks. You show his loneliness very well, but we see very little real racism towards him, except from Curley’s wife, who herself is treated badly. Could you perhaps take the incident described by Candy, when another man fought Crooks, and bring it into the action of the novel? This would be an excellent opportunity to see racism in a more overt form.

I hope you will not be offended by these suggestions. I know that, as a left-wing sympathiser, you will want your novel to be a real force for good in these troubled times.

Extension activity 1: Plans that go awry
Discuss a time when you have made simple or complex plans which have not gone the way you expected. What sort of things have interceded and spoilt the original plans? Was it someone’s fault or no one’s fault? Have things turned out better or worse as a result of the unplanned interferences?

Extension activity 2: Dreams
Imagine that you are one of the following characters from the novel: George, Candy or Curley’s wife. Write down a wish your character might make while alone which asks for help to achieve their dream. Use your imagination and try to express how they would see their dream unfolding in their life and remember to use authentic language for your chosen character.
Starter activity
Brainstorm the alternative title *Something that Happened*. Do you prefer this title or *Of Mice and Men*? Give your reasons.

Activity 1
Possible chapter titles:
1. The Pool in the River
2. First Day at the Ranch
3. The Fight
4. Crooks has Visitors
5. The Death of Curley's Wife
6. A Mercy Killing

Activity 2
(a) Deaths: the mouse; Candy's dog; Lennie's puppy; Curley's wife; the water snake; Lennie.
(b) and (c) Answers will vary.
### ACTIVITY SHEET 1

## Dreams

In Chapter 3, read from ‘George’s hands stopped working the cards. His voice was growing warmer’ (p. 57) to ‘George sat entranced by his own picture’ (p. 59). In this passage George and Lennie discuss their dream in detail. After reading the passage, fill in the table below.

| Make a list of at least ten things which Lennie and George dream will happen when they get their own farm. |  |
| Which descriptions of their farm make it seem idealised and unrealistic? |  |
| How does Lennie react to the imagined threat from the cats to the rabbits and how does this foreshadow events that happen later in the novel? |  |
### ACTIVITY SHEET 1

**Suggested answers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make a list of at least ten things which Lennie and George dream will happen when they get their own farm.</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Students could easily choose 10 examples from many.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which descriptions of their farm make it seem idealised and unrealistic?</td>
<td>Answers could include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• having smoked salmon for breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• cream so thick they have to cut it with a knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• selling eggs to buy whisky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• keeping a little fat iron stove going all day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• keeping a few pigeons to fly around the windmill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does Lennie react to the imagined threat from the cats to the rabbits and how does this foreshadow events that happen later in the novel?</td>
<td>He says he will break their necks, which foreshadows the way he kills Curley's wife in Chapter 5.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACTIVITY SHEET 2

Inevitability

One of the themes in *Of Mice and Men* is that of inevitability. There are hints about how the novel will end throughout the text. There are a number of clues in Chapter 3 that suggest Candy’s dog is going to die. Fill in the table below, showing what the extracts help to predict.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract from the text</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Candy, the swamper, came in and went to his bunk, and behind him struggled his old dog.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The thick-bodied Carlson came in out of the darkening yard.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I [Carlson] don’t know nothing that stinks as bad as an old dog. You gotta get him out.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He [Candy] reached over and patted the ancient dog, and he apologized.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why’n’t you shoot him, Candy?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The old man squirmed uncomfortably.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Carlson was not to be put off… he leaned over and pointed, ‘– right there, why he’d never know what hit him.’

Carlson insisted…‘I’ll shoot him for you. Then it won’t be you that does it.’

He [Candy] scratched the white stubble whiskers on his cheek nervously.

The skinner had been studying the old dog with his calm eyes…‘I wisht somebody’d shoot me if I got old an’ a cripple.’ Candy looked helplessly at him, for Slim’s opinions were law.

He [Carlson] continued to look down at the old dog. Candy watched him uneasily.

Candy looked a long time at Slim to try to find some reversal. And Slim gave him none. At last Candy said softly and hopelessly, ‘Awright – take ‘im’.
### ACTIVITY SHEET 2

**Suggested answers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract from the text</th>
<th>Prediction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Candy, the swamper, came in and went to his bunk, and behind him struggled his old dog.</td>
<td>The use of the verb ‘struggled’ suggests that the dog is unwell and uncomfortable. This is emphasised by describing the dog as old and indicating that it came in behind Candy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The thick-bodied Carlson came in out of the darkening yard.</td>
<td>The description suggests brute strength and the reference to the darkening yard is ominous, foreshadowing things to come.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I [Carlson] don’t know nothing that stinks as bad as an old dog. You gotta get him out.</td>
<td>It reveals a negative attitude towards the dog and a forceful statement, insisting that the dog is to be got rid of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He [Candy] reached over and patted the ancient dog, and he apologized.</td>
<td>There is exaggeration of age through the word ‘ancient’. The apology is ambiguous. Is it to Carlson or to his dog?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why’n’t you shoot him, Candy?</td>
<td>Implanting the idea of putting something (one) out of its misery. Second person pronoun indicating that Candy should take responsibility for his dog. Is this where George gets the idea from that he would have to do it himself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The old man squirmed uncomfortably.</td>
<td>This shows Candy’s reluctance to acknowledge what might be better for the dog. It hints at Candy’s selfishness and sense of denial. A contrast to George’s character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlson was not to be put off… he leaned over and pointed, ‘– right there, why he’d never know what hit him.’</td>
<td>This is where George does shoot Lennie, in the most humane way possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlson insisted…‘I’ll shoot him for you. Then it won’t be you that does it.’</td>
<td>Again, contrasting Candy with George. George considers that he is the only person able to shoot Lennie. Later on, Candy regrets not carrying it out himself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He [Candy] scratched the white stubble whiskers on his cheek nervously.</td>
<td>Continuing the portrayal of Candy as not facing up to his responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Skinner had been studying the old dog with his calm eyes…‘I wisht somebody’d shoot me if I got old an’ a cripple.’ Candy looked helplessly at him, for Slim’s opinions were law.</td>
<td>Does George see this as justification for shooting Lennie later on? On the ranch, ‘Slim’s opinions were law.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He [Carlson] continued to look down at the old dog. Candy watched him uneasily.</td>
<td>Continuing the portrayal of Candy as weak. Carlson continues to look at the dog – he is perhaps less interested in what is best for the dog than in an excuse to use his gun. Steinbeck later provides us with a lengthy description of Carlson cleaning his gun. This might also suggest that people like Carlson would never just let Lennie be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy looked a long time at Slim to try to find some reversal. And Slim gave him none. At last Candy said softly and hopelessly, ‘Awright – take ‘im’.</td>
<td>Again, reinforcing the role that Slim plays as the Law. That Slim ‘gave him none’ suggests that there is no other option; as with Lennie, it was inevitable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# ACTIVITY SHEET 3

## Characters

In Chapter 3, the issues surrounding Candy’s dog are discussed by the characters below. What do you think the selected quotations convey about each character?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carlson</td>
<td>That stink hangs around even after he’s gone… He ain’t no good to you Candy. An’ he ain’t no good to himself. Why’n’t you shoot him, Candy? (p. 45)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slim</td>
<td>Carl’s right, Candy. That dog ain’t no good to himself. I wisht somebody’d shoot me if I get old an’ a cripple. (p. 46)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Candy     | You wouldn’t think it to look at him now, but he was the best damn sheepdog I ever seen. (p. 45)  

Maybe tommor. Le’s wait til tommor. (p. 48) | |
| George    | I seen a guy in Weed that had an Airedale could herd sheep. Learned it from the other dogs. (p. 45) | |
## ACTIVITY SHEET 3

### Suggested answers

In Chapter 3, the issues surrounding Candy’s dog are discussed by the characters below. What do you think the selected quotations convey about each character?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carlson</td>
<td>That stink hangs around even after he’s gone… He ain’t no good to you Candy. An’ he ain’t no good to himself. Why’n’t you shoot him, Candy? (p. 45)</td>
<td>Carlson is concerned about his own comfort and does not show any tact in the way he expresses himself. He does not comprehend why Candy would want a dog that serves no practical purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slim</td>
<td>Carl’s right, Candy. That dog ain’t no good to himself. I wisht somebody’d shoot me if I get old an’ a cripple. (p. 46)</td>
<td>Slim shows genuine concern for the dog and helps Candy to empathise with the dog’s condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy</td>
<td>You wouldn’t think it to look at him now, but he was the best damn sheepdog I ever seen. (p. 45) Maybe tomorra. Le’s wait til tomorra. (p. 48)</td>
<td>Candy is in denial and is trying to delay the inevitable. He may also be worried that by endorsing the dog’s death, this may impact on perceptions of his worth on the ranch as an old and crippled man. He has fond memories of and attachments to his dog, and it might suggest that he is living more in the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>I seen a guy in Weed that had an Airedale could herd sheep. Learned it from the other dogs. (p. 45)</td>
<td>This shows George’s emotional detachment from the situation. He is not involved with the internal politics of the ranch, unlike the others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACTIVITY SHEET 4

Hierarchy

Look at the list of characters below.

George, Lennie, the Boss, Slim, Candy, Crooks, Curley, Curley's wife, Carlson

Some characters have power because of their position on the ranch while other characters are disempowered because they belong to marginalised groups, reflecting their position in wider society.

Put the characters in the grid below with who you consider to be the most powerful character at the top, descending to the least powerful at the bottom. Give reasons for your choices. There are a number of possible combinations, with no single ‘right’ answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACTIVITY SHEET 4

Suggested answers

Answers will vary, but generally you would expect Slim to appear near the top and characters such as Crooks, Curley’s wife and Candy to appear near the bottom. Slim commands respect and has high status but is still an employee. Curley is the boss's son but commands little or no respect. Lennie has physical strength but little intelligence.
ACTIVITY SHEET 5

Structure

Fill in the grid below listing the setting and three main events which happen in each of the six chapters. In each chapter, the death of an animal or human occurs. Record the deaths that happen in each chapter. (Notice how the deaths become more significant as the novel progresses.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
<th>Chapter 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting:</td>
<td>Setting:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events:</td>
<td>Events:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death(s):</td>
<td>Death(s):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 2</th>
<th>Chapter 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting:</td>
<td>Setting:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events:</td>
<td>Events:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death(s):</td>
<td>Death(s):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 3</th>
<th>Chapter 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting:</td>
<td>Setting:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events:</td>
<td>Events:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death(s):</td>
<td>Death(s):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ACTIVITY SHEET 5**

**Suggested answers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
<th>Chapter 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting: the pool beside the river</td>
<td>Setting: the harness room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events:</td>
<td>Events:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. George and Lennie arrive by the river</td>
<td>1. Lennie enters Crooks's room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. They discuss their dream</td>
<td>2. Candy, Lennie and Crooks share the dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. They arrange that if anything goes wrong, Lennie is to return to this spot</td>
<td>3. Curley's wife threatens Crooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death(s): mouse</td>
<td>Death(s): none</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 2</th>
<th>Chapter 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting: bunk house</td>
<td>Setting: the barn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events:</td>
<td>Events:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Candy shows them the bunk house</td>
<td>1. Lennie accidentally kills the puppy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. George and Lennie are interviewed by the boss</td>
<td>2. Lennie kills Curley's wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. They meet Curley's wife andSlim</td>
<td>3. A lynch mob is formed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death(s): Slim drowns some pups</td>
<td>Death(s): Lennie’s pup and Curley’s wife</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 3</th>
<th>Chapter 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting: bunk house</td>
<td>Setting: the pool beside the river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events:</td>
<td>Events:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Candy's dog is shot</td>
<td>1. Lennie hallucinates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Curley picks a fight with Lennie</td>
<td>2. George shoots Lennie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Slim and the others agree on a story that covers up why Curley's hand is ‘busted’</td>
<td>3. The rest of the men arrive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death(s): Candy’s dog</td>
<td>Death(s): Lennie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACTIVITY SHEET 6

Framing

Compare the start of Chapter 1 (first three paragraphs) to the start of Chapter 6 (first four paragraphs). Fill in the grid below, noting the differences in the setting in each chapter. Once you have completed the grid, consider why Steinbeck varies his description of the setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
<th>Chapter 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ACTIVITY SHEET 6

**Suggested answers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
<th>Chapter 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trees</td>
<td>Several references, but the one that most stands out is ‘willows fresh and green with every spring’ – suggesting new beginnings and promise</td>
<td>‘A far rush of wind sounded and a gust drove through the tops of the trees like a wave’ – suggesting a build-up of energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
<td>Rabbits, deer, dogs, lizard, raccoons (heron and water snake are mentioned later in the chapter)</td>
<td>Water snake eaten by a heron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of day</td>
<td>Late afternoon</td>
<td>Late afternoon – suggesting events have come full circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Hot, sunny and still</td>
<td>Rush of wind; hilltops rosy in the sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to water</td>
<td>‘The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool’ – the use of sibilance suggests tranquillity that is not echoed in Chapter 6</td>
<td>‘The deep green pool of the Salinas River was still in the late afternoon.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An A* response to the following question.

Read the passage in Chapter 5 from ‘George turned and went quickly out of the barn’ to ‘...jus’ said “ta hell with work,” an’ went to her’ (p.94). How much sympathy do you feel for Candy at this point? Give your reasons.

I feel a certain degree of sympathy for Candy, who has been living a hopeless existence, is disabled and has been demoted to ‘swamper’ with little chance of achieving very much. He has saved some money but with no purpose until Lennie and George arrive. With them comes the ‘dream’. Candy finally has something to look forward to and something worthwhile that he can invest in. Instead of being lonely and isolated, separated from the other workers because of his inability to equal them in the manual tasks they carry out, he finds allies in Lennie and George. Their friendship eventually extends to encompass him. He is part of something, united by the dream, and has some purpose: ‘I could of hoed in the garden and washed dishes for them guys.’

I sympathise with Candy in his realisation that the dream cannot now be fulfilled. I think it is worse to have had hopes dashed than to have had no hopes in the first place. He becomes conscious of what he has lost. Steinbeck describes him as ‘Old Candy’, conjuring up images of weakness, frailty and dependence: ‘He sniveled and his voice shook.’ The implication here is that Candy has lost his self-control. He has become consumed by ‘his anger and his sorrow’. Lennie was an integral part of the dream and George has no interest in pursuing it without him. It is interesting that Candy does not express his bitterness towards Lennie, but instead towards Curley’s wife.

Steinbeck uses Curley’s wife to reveal a common attitude towards women and expose the hypocrisy that allows Curley to visit whorehouses, but denies his wife the opportunity just to talk to other men. Candy says to her, ‘You gotta husban’. You got no call foolin’ aroun’ with other guys, causin’ trouble.’ This type of accusation suggests that Candy considers himself to be on the moral high ground and Curley’s wife’s superior. This scrabble to avoid occupying the lowest rung in the social ladder evokes some pity.

Steinbeck uses a number of characters to represent groups of people and Curley’s wife is Steinbeck’s vehicle to explore men’s oppression of women and the way that they are treated as inferior. Curley’s wife is the only developed female character. The others, such as the women in the brothel, provide a service for men and are presented through their function rather than as people; their identities are irrelevant. Even with Curley’s wife, Steinbeck deliberately maintains a degree of anonymity, never revealing her name.
Soon after the dream first becomes a possibility for Candy, Curley’s wife arrives and cruelly portrays Candy, Lennie and Crooks as they might appear to others, as ‘a bunch of bindle stiffs – a nigger an’ a dum-dum an’ a lousy ol’ sheep’. Her description of him as a ‘lousy ol’ sheep’ presents Candy as useless and at this point in the novel I felt some sympathy for Candy along with the other two characters under attack. 

Candy goes on to boast that getting them sacked would not matter as they have their own farm. She does not believe him. Then later, in an ironic twist, Curley’s wife’s death ensures that they cannot, in fact, get their own place.

Candy is in a vulnerable position on the ranch. As he has only one arm, it is difficult for him to find work and he is particularly dispensable. He and the others assert themselves and declare their independence from Curley and his family. I sympathise with Candy finding himself again reliant on Curley’s family’s charity as a result of Curley’s wife’s death.

However, I find it difficult to sympathise wholly with a character who reveals himself to be such a misogynist. In the extract, Candy calls Curley’s wife a ‘tramp’ and a ‘tart’, derogatory terms that are only applicable to women. Candy’s words are direct and vicious; he repeatedly uses the second person pronoun ‘you’, making his tone accusing and pinpointing his anger specifically on her. The misogyny extends beyond namecalling and perhaps this is representative of the men’s general sentiment towards her.

Furthermore, Candy blames Curley’s wife for wrecking his dream, expressing his hatred for her: “You God damn tramp,” he said viciously. “You done it, di’nt you?” I do not believe that Curley’s wife can be held responsible for her own death and feel that Steinbeck always presents her as the underdog at the bottom of the hierarchy, not having her own name and simply referring to her as one of Curley’s possessions. I feel that it is easier for Candy to blame her for the loss of the dream. George is Lennie’s best friend and it is difficult for Candy to focus his blame on Lennie in George’s presence. Instead, an ungenerous spirit is revealed as Candy directs his anger and misery at the dead body in front of him: ‘You wasn’t no good. You ain’t no good now.’

‘He looked helplessly back at Curley’s wife, and gradually his sorrow and his anger grew into words.’ Candy’s mourning for the loss of his dream and the chance of a happier life is pitiful, but his inability to see beyond his own selfish desires, and the weakness in his character that prevents him from expressing anything but violent hatred towards Curley’s wife, make it difficult to feel much more than pity for him.
Recommended websites

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english_literature/prosemicemen

www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/lange

http://louisville.libguides.com/lange

www.Steinbeck.org