

Of Mice and Men Ch. 3 Study Guide

Focus on Vocabulary

- _____ 1. **Dusk** can be a dangerous time to drive because the light isn't very good. (p. 38)
- _____ 2. If the harvest is good this year, we'll need to hire a few more **hands** to help work in the fields (p. 39)
- _____ 3. My grandmother can hardly walk anymore because of her **rheumatism**. (p. 44)
- _____ 4. When Tracy saw her husband laying on the couch watching television, she **sarcastically** asked him if he was getting a lot of work done. (p. 53)
- _____ 5. Wow! Your new stereo is really cool. How much did it **set you back**? (p. 53)
- _____ 6. When my uncles catch salmon, they usually **smoke** it so they don't have to eat it all right away. (p. 57)
- _____ 7. Glen needs to build a new hutch for his rabbits because one of the **does** just had babies, and the old hutch isn't big enough anymore. (p. 58)
- _____ 8. The teacher **crouched** down by the child's desk so she could see what he was drawing. (p. 64)
- _____ 9. When the thunderstorm started, Anita's dog hid under the bed and stayed there, **cowering**, until it was over. (p. 64)
- _____ 10. Bonnie's cat had a **litter** of five kittens last week. (p. 58)

Definitions

- a. a group of baby animals born to one mother
- b. cost
- c. a disease causing pain and stiffness in the joints or muscles
- d. female rabbits
- e. in a manner that indicates a person doesn't believe what he or she is saying
- f. lowered the body by bending the knees and back
- g. preserve meat and give it a special flavor
- h. time of fading light between day and evening
- i. to bend down in a protective manner or draw back in fear
- j. workers, especially farm workers

Specialized Vocabulary

string along together (p. 39) - go around together, stick together

scairt (p. 41) - scared, this is an example of Steinbeck spelling a word the way it is pronounced by a character

lynch (p. 42) - to hang a person without having a trial first or giving the person a chance to defend him- or herself

Luger (p.47) - a type of handgun

San Quentin (p.56) - a state prison in California

people (p.41) - family

Before You Read

Looking Ahead. A conflict is a struggle or battle. In stories, conflicts generally show a person struggling with him-or herself, with other people, with society, or with nature. Writers, movie makers, and other storytellers use conflict to make their stories interesting.

Read the following list of conflicts that might develop in Chapter 3 of *Of Mice and Men*. Check the ones you think might happen in Chapter 3. Write down any other conflicts you think might develop that aren't on the list below.

Candy vs. himself:

Candy will have a conflict with himself about what to do with his old dog.

Curley vs. his father:

Curley and his father will argue about how Curley supervises the ranch hands.

Curley vs. Lennie:

Curley will pick a fight with Lennie because Curley is too scared to have a fight with Slim or Carlson.

George vs. himself:

George will have a conflict with himself over whether to tell the boss what really happened in Weed.

Slim vs. Curley:

Slim and Curley will have a fight about Curley's wife.

Slim vs. George:

When Slim learns why George and Lennie had to leave Weed, Slim and George will have an argument about Lennie.

Others:

While You Read

Part 1

- ▷ Start on page 38.
- ▷ Stop on page 53 after you read:
"Well, a guy got to have some fun sometime," said Whit."

Questions:

1. What do you learn about George and Lennie's past history?

2. What happens to Candy's dog?

Part 2

- ▷ Start on page 53 with the sentence:
"The door opened and Lennie and Carlson came in together."
- ▷ Stop on page 65 at the end of the chapter.

Questions:

1. What does Candy do when he hears about George and Lennie's dream? How do they respond?

2. What happens when Curley picks a fight with Slim? What happens when he picks a fight with Lennie?

A. Write a Title. Write a title for Ch. 3 that will capture the interest of the readers while also giving them some idea about the content of the chapter.

B. Look at the Big Picture. Read the following quotations from Chapter 3. Which ones best represent the main ideas and events from Chapter 3? Choose the three that you think are the most important, and, explain why you chose them.

1. Slim: Guy don't need no sense to be a nice fella. Seems to me sometimes it jus' works the other way around. Take a real smart guy and he ain't hardly ever a nice fella. (p. 40)
2. George: I ain't got no people. I seen the guys that go around on the ranches alone. That ain't no good. They don't have no fun. After a long time they get mean. (p. 41)
3. Carlson: He [the dog] ain't no good to you, Candy. An' he ain't no good to himself. Why'n't you shoot him, Candy? (p. 44)
4. George: She's gonna make a mess. They's gonna be a bad mess about her. She's a jail bait all set on the trigger. That Curley got his work cut out for him. Ranch with a bunch of guys on it ain't no place for a girl, specially like her. (p. 51)
5. Candy: 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, an' I can't get no more jobs. (p. 60)
6. Lennie: When we gon'ta do it, George?
George: In one month. Right squack in one month. Know what I'm gon'ta do? I'm gon'ta write to them old people that owns the place that we'll take it. An' Candy'll send a hunderd dollars to bind her. (p. 61)
7. Candy: I ought to of shot that dog myself, George. I shouldn't ought to of let no stranger shoot my dog. (p. 61)
8. George: Lennie was jus' scairt. He didn't know what to do. I told you nobody ought never to fight him. (p. 65)

Look at What Happened. Chapter 3 is a long chapter with a lot of people coming and going and many things happening. Write a summary of the events in this chapter. Bring to class Monday, 2/18.

For Discussion and Reflection

Slim says that smart people are often not as nice as others. Do you agree with this? Why? Compare the relationship between George and Lennie with the relationship between Candy and his old dog. How are the relationships similar and how are they different? Should Candy have let Carlson shoot his dog? Did he have a choice? Why? What role did Slim play in the killing of Candy’s dog? Do you think he did the right thing? Why? Later in the chapter, Candy says that he should have shot his own dog. Why did he say this? Do you agree? Why?

Focus on Literary Concepts

Conflict

In the “Before You Read” section you were told that a conflict is a struggle between opposing forces. You were also told that writers rely on conflict to make their stories interesting. In fact, all stories are based on conflict; a story without conflict would be too boring to read! Often a novel is built on many conflicts; however, it is usually possible to identify a couple of conflicts that are the most important and central to the story. Conflicts can generally be divided into four types:

- Person vs. Himself / Herself. A person struggles with his or her own conscience or with parts of his or her personality.
- Person vs. Person. A person struggles with another person or a group of people.
- Person vs. Society. A person struggles or rebels against the forces of society which may be represented by government, laws, social rules and conventions, etc.
- Person vs. Nature. A person struggles against the forces of nature.

Putting Ideas Into Practice

Identifying Conflict. Identify examples of different types of conflict in Of Mice and Men. Don’t worry if you can’t think of an example for every type of conflict.

Of Mice and Men

Person vs. Self	_____
Person vs. Person	_____
Person vs. Society	_____
Person vs. Nature	_____

Focus on Social Issues

The Elderly in American Society

In *Of Mice and Men*, Steinbeck uses the character of Candy to focus on the situation faced by the elderly poor in American society. Unlike some of the other social issues Steinbeck addresses, the issue of aging and how to care for the elderly eventually affects every member of the society directly if they live long enough.

For Discussion and Reflection

1. What are Candy's prospects for the future, and how does he feel about them?
2. What is the attitude toward the elderly in your culture? How are the elderly treated and cared for in your country?
3. How are the elderly treated and cared for in the U.S.?

Learn More

A. Visit National Organizations. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) is an organization which promotes the interests and concerns of people in the United States who are 50 years or older. Visit the AARP's website to learn more about the services the AARP provides and the issues that concern senior citizens in the U.S.

- a. What services does the AARP provide to its members?
- b. What issues are of concern to the AARP?

B. Social Security. Do some research in the library or on the internet to find out the following information: What was the Social Security Act and when was it passed? How did the Social Security Act affect the lives of older Americans?

C. The Elderly Poor in the Early 20th Century. In *Understanding Of Mice and Men, The Red Pony, and The Pearl*, Claudia Durst Johnson summarizes the situation of the elderly poor around the time that the events in *Of Mice and Men* were taking place. Read the following excerpt from her book.

For the elderly poor--those without family to take care of them--there seemed little hope for a decent old age until the passage in 1935 of the Social Security Act as part of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. But for elderly and poor agricultural workers like Candy, there was no relief even then, for agricultural workers were systematically excluded from the benefits of every measure passed to assist the poor. The year 1883, however, saw the passage of the County Government Act in California, and in 1901 the Indigent Act was passed. This is what Candy is probably referring to when he speaks of being put out on the county. Aid was usually given in the form of food, though sometimes payments of up to \$30 a month were made. For those aged who had no place to live, there were county hospitals and almshouses in which the poor who were sick, aged, and mentally defective were all housed together. After 1925, the State Department of Public Welfare began

placing sick and healthy old people in separate homes and institutions which were licensed by the state. In 1928 the average amount provided by the state to those who were destitute and old was under \$15 a month. Most of those who applied for assistance were old men who had worked in the gold mines, the lumber camps, or the wheat fields of California. In 1930 California passed the Old Age Security Law to help needy citizens. Eligibility was simple and open to migrant farm workers within the state of California as long as they were at least seventy years old, citizens of the United States for fifteen years, residents of California for fifteen years, a resident of the county for one year, and had no children or other person able to take care of them. Aid was limited to a total of one dollar a day. Over the years, the occupation of those who were among the poorest old people, having no other assistance except what they received from the state, was agricultural worker.