

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_



## *Of Mice and Men*

## English I - Summer Reading Assignment

Prepare by reading the passage below:

### **About the Author: John Steinbeck (1902-1968)**

John Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California. His native region of Monterey Bay was later the setting for most of his fiction. Steinbeck's father was a county treasurer. From his mother, a teacher, Steinbeck learned to love books. Among his early favorites were Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and *Le Morte d'Arthur*.

Steinbeck attended the local high school and worked on farms and ranches during his vacations. Between 1920 and 1926, he studied marine biology at Stanford University, but did not obtain a degree in that field— he always planned to be a writer. Several of his early poems and short stories appeared in university publications. After spending a short time as a laborer and reporter in New York City for the *American*, Steinbeck returned to California. While writing, Steinbeck took odd jobs. He was apprentice painter, caretaker of an estate, surveyor, and fruit-picker. In 1950 Steinbeck married Elaine Scott. His son John was hospitalized for codeine addiction at age seven, and he also had many problems in later years with drugs and alcohol. In *The Other Side of Eden*, John Steinbeck IV wrote about his famous father:

"Artists by nature are not particularly gifted as parents. They can be very self-centered, very abusive, and dysfunctional when it comes to raising children. So the kid has to raise himself. Dad never had to be a parent except on his time and on his terms, and then he was very good at that, very good. Very Huck Finny. Had he had to do it day in, day out, he would have failed miserably."

In later years, Steinbeck did much special reporting abroad, dividing his time between New York and California. He went to Vietnam to report on the war, and the New York *Post* attacked him for betraying his liberal past. Steinbeck died of a heart attack in New York on December 20, 1968.

***OF MICE AND MEN* (1937), a story of shattered dreams** became Steinbeck's first big success. Steinbeck adapted it also into a three-act play, which was produced in 1937. **George Milton and Lennie Small**, two traveling ranch hands, dream of one day owning their own small farm. George acts as a father figure to Lennie, who is large and simple-minded. Lennie loves all that is soft, but his immense physical strength is a source of troubles and George is needed to calm him. The two friends find work from a farm and start saving money for their future... **You have to read the rest to find out what happens!**

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## ASSIGNMENTS

**READ ALL OF THE DIRECTIONS:** Work must be neat and legible or points will be deducted. All **writing elements** of this assignment **must be** completed in **blue or black ink**. **NO PENCIL!**

**Step 1:** Read the novella.

**Step 2:** Complete the Character Chart. (Homework Grade - 10 POINTS)

**Step 3:** Complete the attached Project Sheet according to the directions below. (Project – 100 points = 10% of **OVERALL GRADE**)

A. Choose **ONE** of the (3) themes listed below that you feel is expressed through this character.

Themes: 1) **Loneliness & Isolation**, 2) **Hopes & Dreams**, 3) **Violence**

B. Choose **ONE of the characters** from the novella.

C. Create a **SYMBOL** (drawings, graphics, photos, etc.) that you feel **strongly represents the character** you have chosen. **Must be creative & colorful!** **SYMBOL:** an **OBJECT** (something concrete) that stands for something else (something abstract such as a feeling or an idea)

D. Also, **include a quote (with a page number)** that relates to your symbol and **an explanation** of how the object you chose **represents the character** and **relates to the theme** you have selected. (If you need more space, you may continue your explanation on the back side of the project sheet.)

E. Choose **TWO quotes from two different chapters** that **relate to the character and theme** you have chosen, then, write a brief explanation of each quote, and how it conveys the theme.

**NOTE:** Assignment will be **collected on the FIRST DAY** of school. Students **will also be tested** on the novel.

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**CHARACTER CHART**

<b>Character</b>	<b>Physical Description AND Personality Traits</b> • <b>THREE</b> bullet points minimum	<b>What is the <u>significance</u> of his/her role in the novel?</b>	<b>Plot Events</b> <b>(Include page # with your answer)</b>
<b>Lennie Small</b>			Who and what does Lennie kill throughout the novel?
<b>Candy</b>			What happens to Candy's dog? (Be specific.)
<b>Curley</b>			What happens to Curley's hand?
<b>Curley's wife</b>			What is Curley's wife's shattered dream?
<b>Slim</b>			What does Slim give to Lennie?
<b>Carlson</b>			Who/what does Carlson kill?
<b>Crooks</b>			Why doesn't Crooks sleep in the bunkhouse with the other men?

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**PROJECT SHEET**

**(A) THEME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**(B) Character:** \_\_\_\_\_

**(C) Symbol:** \_\_\_\_\_

Illustration



**(D) Quote & Explanation:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Pg. \_\_\_\_\_

**(E) Quote #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Pg. \_\_\_\_\_

**Explanation:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Quote #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Pg. \_\_\_\_\_

**Explanation:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_