**Of Mice and Men Study Questions**

**Chapter 1**

1. **Setting** is the place that the story takes place. It includes the physical location as well as the time. Describe the setting of Chapter 1, including the mood of the place.
2. **Characterization**: How do you see the two characters in Chapter 1, George and Lennie? Compare them **physically**, **mentally**, and **emotionally**. Find examples in the text to support your characterizations; for example, what does the incident with the mouse tell you about Lennie?. Do you see any irony in the contrast?
3. At one point, George says, "I could get along so easy and so nice if I didn't have you on my tail." Why does he stay with Lennie?
4. You'll see rabbits and mice mentioned frequently. What is their importance to the men?
5. George and Lennie are coming from the town of Weed. Steinbeck doesn't tell us directly what happened in Weed, but we can figure it out from the dialog. Explain why they left Weed.
6. After dinner, Lennie tells George, "Tell me...about the rabbits." It's a story he's heard before, many times. It's their dream for the future--summarize what they plan to do.
7. **Foreshadowing** is when we get a clue about something that might be happen in the future. George tells Lennie, "Look, Lennie. I want you to look around here. You can remember this place, can't you? The ranch is about a quarter mile up that way....if you jus' happen to get in trouble like you always done before, I want you to come right here an' hide in the brush." What might this **foreshadow**? That is, what do you predict might happen in the next few chapters?

**Chapter 2**

1. Steinbeck's characters use a lot of slang and colloquial expressions. If you don't understand something, underline it and discuss it in group (or ask the teacher).
2. **Setting**: Where and when does Chapter 2 take place? Describe the place physically. How much time has passed since Chapter 1?
3. **Characters:** In this chapter we meet the characters below. For each one, write a short physical description (a phrase or two), his/her personality. and his/her job. You might want to make note of the characters in the front of your book so that you can remember them later.
   * Candy
   * Candy's dog
   * (Whitey)
   * The Boss
   * Curley
   * Curley's wife
   * Slim
   * Carlson
4. The Boss and Slim both ask George questions about Lennie. Their reactions are different. Summarize the reactions of the two men to George and Lennie's relationship.
5. What advice does George give Lennie about Curley? Why does he feel is it necessary to do this?
6. Write a short paragraph from the **point of view** of either George or Lennie, and describe your meeting with Curley's wife, including your opinions of her. You can begin, "When I met Curley's wife, she...." Include phrases like, "I think...", "She seems to me to be...."
7. One theme in the book is loneliness. Of the characters we have met, which ones would you characterize as "lonely"? Give examples to illustrate their loneliness.

**Chapter 3**

1. **New Characters:** Add these to your list, with a few words of description:
   * Carlson
   * Whit
   * Crooks
2. **Setting:** What is the time and place of this chapter, compared to Chapter 2?
3. As Slim and George are talking, George reveals some of his life story to Slim. From Slim's reaction to this story, how do you characterize Slim? After reading about Candy's dog, does your opinion of Slim change? How does he resolve the conflict between Curley and Lennie?
4. Explain about the puppy that Lennie brings in to the bunkhouse.
5. Explain about Candy's dog.
6. After most of the other men leave, Lennie asks George to tell him the story of their dream. Go back to Chapter 1 of your journal (question 6) and add details to the dream. What purpose does this dream serve in their lives? What does Candy think of their dream? What happens?
7. Why do you think Curley attacks Lennie? Lennie is so much bigger that it seems the outcome of a fight with him would be predictable. What is the outcome? Are you surprised by Curley's promise, "I won't tell"?
8. In this chapter, Steinbeck reveals more about the relationship between George and Lennie. It is not hard to see why Lennie stays with George, but why does George stay with Lennie? Find examples to illustrate the kind of relationship they have.
9. We see here the understood obligations that a person has to his buddy (or dog). Compare the relationship between Candy and his dog with the relationship between George and Lennie. What parallels can you find?

**Chapter 4**

1. **New Character:**
   * Crooks
2. **Setting**: When and where does this chapter take place? Compare Crooks' sleeping area with the bunkhouse where the other men sleep. What kinds of things does Crook have in his room, compared to the other men?
3. Why do you think Crooks teases Lennie? What happens when he carries the teasing too far?
4. More people arrive, much to the discomfort of Crooks! What happens with Candy, Crooks, and Lennie?
5. Then Curley's wife arrives. What is the conflict between her and Crooks? Who is the winner? What is the response of the loser?
6. In this chapter, we learn more about Lennie, Crooks, Candy, and Curley's wife. What similarities do these three characters share?
7. In this chapter, we see how some people can be cruel to other people. Find two or three examples--why do the characters need to be so cruel in these examples? Or, are they just ignorantly prejudiced and not really being consciously cruel?

**Chapter 5**

1. The setting of Chapter 5 is in a new location. Describe it and tell what other characters are doing who are not in this area.
2. What had happened to the puppy before the chapter began? Why is this not surprising?
3. We have learned the details of George and Lennie's dream, which sustains them in their lives. Now we learn about the dreams of Curley's wife. Tell about her dreams--what happened to them, and are they possible?
4. Why does Curley's wife have such a long conversation with Lennie, who doesn't comprehend or care what she's talking about? What is Lennie thinking about? Why does she let Lennie touch her hair? What happens?
5. Once again Slim is a voice of reason. What is his opinion about what should happen to Lennie?
6. At the end of the chapter, Candy says, "Poor bastard." Do you think he is talking about Lennie or George? Explain your answer.
7. **Foreshadowing:** Find examples (more than one) of foreshadowing in the book and explain how they hint at what happened in Chapter 5. What do you predict is going to happen in Chapter 6 (answer this BEFORE you read Chapter 6).

**Chapter 6**

1. Setting: Steinbeck takes us back to the setting of Chapter 1. What is the mood at the beginning of this chapter? Re-read chapter 1, and compare Lennie's demeanor and actions with those in Chapter 6.
2. While Lennie is alone there, he has two apparitions: his old Aunt Clara, who raised him, and a gigantic rabbit. Why did Steinbeck put them here? What are they trying to tell Lennie and how does he respond? How does he perceive the seriousness of what he has done?
3. All the men left the ranch to look for Lennie. How and why does George manage to arrive there alone?
4. Re-read the episode with Candy's dog in Chapter 3. What parallels do you see with this episode in Chapter 6? What is your response to the killings, in both cases?