

# Of Mice and Men Classroom Questions: Exploring the Themes and Characters

John Steinbeck's poignant novella, "Of Mice and Men," continues to captivate readers and students alike. This thought-provoking tale examines the complexities of human nature, the power of dreams, and the harsh realities of life. To facilitate a thorough understanding and analysis of the novel, this article offers a comprehensive set of classroom questions that explore its key themes, characters, and literary devices.

1. **The American Dream:** How does the novel depict the American Dream? What are the obstacles that George and Lennie face in achieving their dream? How does the ending of the story comment on the elusive nature of the American Dream?
2. **Loneliness and Isolation:** Explore the themes of loneliness and isolation in the novel. How are these themes reflected in the characters' relationships and interactions? How does the setting contribute to the sense of isolation?
3. **Friendship and Loyalty:** Discuss the nature of George and Lennie's friendship. How is their friendship tested throughout the novel? What are the limits of loyalty, and how are they tested in "Of Mice and Men"?
4. **Power and Oppression:** Analyze the power dynamics in the novel. How does society's hierarchy affect the characters? How do the characters resist or succumb to oppression?
5. **Naturalism and Determinism:** Examine the role of naturalism and determinism in the novel. How do the characters' circumstances and

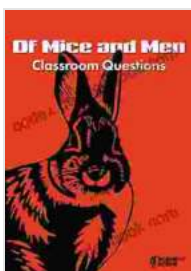
backgrounds influence their actions? To what extent do the characters have control over their destinies?

1. **George Milton:** Describe George's character. Discuss his strengths and weaknesses, his motivations, and his relationship with Lennie. How does George's character evolve throughout the novel?
  2. **Lennie Small:** Analyze Lennie's character. How does his intellectual disability shape his actions and interactions? How does he cope with the challenges he faces? What is the significance of Lennie's childlike innocence?
  3. **Curley:** Discuss Curley's character. How does his insecurity drive his actions? What are his motivations and how do they conflict with the dreams of George and Lennie?
  4. **Candy:** Examine Candy's character. How does his disability affect his life and his relationships with others? What is the significance of his old dog, and how does its death impact the novel?
  5. **Slim:** Analyze Slim's character. How does he represent an ideal of masculinity and leadership? How does he interact with the other characters, and what is his role in the story?
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1. **Foreshadowing:** Identify instances of foreshadowing in the novel. How does Steinbeck use foreshadowing to create suspense and build towards the tragic ending?
  2. **Symbolism:** Discuss the use of symbolism in the novel. What do symbols such as the rabbits, the farm, and the river represent? How do these symbols contribute to the novel's themes and characters?

3. **Irony:** Analyze the use of irony in the novel. How does Steinbeck use irony to highlight the characters' flaws, the harshness of life, and the futility of dreams?
4. **Characterization:** Examine Steinbeck's use of characterization in the novel. How does he create complex and memorable characters through their actions, dialogue, and interactions?
5. **Setting:** Discuss the role of setting in the novel. How does the setting influence the characters' actions and contribute to the overall atmosphere of the story?

The classroom questions presented in this article provide a comprehensive framework for exploring the rich themes, characters, and literary devices of John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men." By delving into these questions, students can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of human nature, the challenges of societal norms, and the enduring power of literature.

In addition to enhancing students' comprehension, these questions encourage critical thinking, foster lively discussions, and promote empathy for the characters' struggles. They serve as a valuable resource for educators seeking to engage their students in a meaningful and enriching study of this classic American novel.



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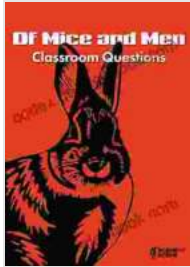
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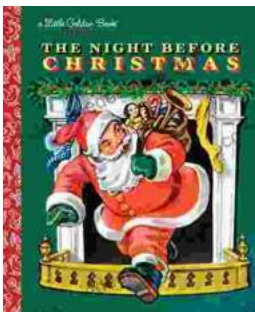
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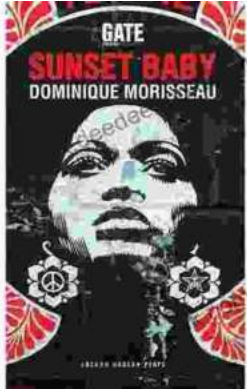
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