

Of Mice and Men Vocabulary

Chapter 1

acres (n.): An **acre** is an area of land equal to 4,840 square yards or 43,560 square feet. For comparison, a football field is 45,000 square feet, so one acre is a little smaller than a football field.

anguished (adj.): **anguish** is a feeling of great physical or mental pain. The look on Lennie's face would show the mental pain he feels at the thought of George leaving him.

bank (n.): the part of land that meets a body of water /'

bundle (n.): a small bundle of items rolled up inside a blanket and carried over the shoulder or on the back; a bedroll.

brusquely (adv.): quickly; bluntly; abruptly; almost rudely

bucking (v.): To **buck** in this instance is to throw large .bags of grain on a truck. Barley is poured into large burlap bags (75 or more pounds) and passed brigade-style (in a line) to the truck.

carp (n.): a freshwater fish.

cat house (n.): whore house; house of prostitution

contemplated (v.) To **contemplate** something is to think about it. Lennie is thinking about running away.

'coons (n.): raccoons.

current (n.): the strong flow of water in a definite direction

debris (n.): remains. In this case, the "**debris** of the winter's flooding" would be drops of water falling from the leaves of the tree.

elaborate (adj.): expressed in great detail

flats (n.): level, flat ground

heron (n.): a wading bird (that is, a bird that is often found wading in the water, usually in a search for food) with a long neck, beak, and legs.

junctures (n.): A **juncture** *is* where two things come together. The **juncture** of a willow leaf is where the two sides of the leaf meet in the center.

mimicking (v.): imitating

morosely (adv.): in a sad, gloomy manner

mottled (adj.): having a variety of hues or colors; variegated, like marble

periscope (n.): a device that, through a series of mirrors and prisms, allows one to view something not directly in the line of sight. **Periscopes** are used on submarines to allow the sailors to see above the waterline.

rabbit hutch (n.): A type of cage for keeping rabbits.

recumbent (adj.): still; without movement

reeds (n.): tall grass with hollow stems, often found in or near water.

single file (n.): a line of people, animals, or things moving one after the other. Instead of walking side by side, George and Lennie walk in **single file**; George first, then Lennie behind him.

stake (n.): an amount of money

stilted (adj.): In the instance, **stilted** refers to the legs of the **heron** which are very long and thin, like stilts.

sycamores (n.): a type of shade tree with leaves resembling the leaves of a maple tree.

thrashin' machines (n): Thrashing machines, sometimes called threshers or threshing machines; are used on farms to separate the grain or seed from the straw of such plants as barley or wheat.

tramps (n.): In this case, **a tramp** is a person who travels about on foot, usually doing odd jobs for a living

unslung (v.): removed; took off **wearily** (adv.): tired; in a tired way **willows** (n.): a type of tree with narrow leaves and strong, flexible twigs and branches.

Chapter 2

abruptly (adv.): suddenly; almost rudely

apprehensive (adj.): anxious; fearful

archly (adv.): playfully

axles (n.): bars connecting two opposite wheels

bale (n.): a large bundle of something that has been compressed and tied together. Grains such as hay, wheat, and barley are often made into **bales** after they're harvested.

barley (n.): a type of cereal grass. The grain from the barley plant is often used for making malts and for animal feed.

bitch (n.): a female dog

blacksmith (n.): a person who works with iron, especially in the making of horseshoes.

bridled (v.): to pull one's head back in anger or pride; especially when one feels one has been offended

bristled (adj.): stiff and prickly

bristly (adj.): stiff and prickly

brusquely (adv.): roughly; abruptly

buckers (n.): people who **buck** grain bags

bunk house (n): a building that provides sleeping quarters for workers on a ranch or farm.

bunks (n): beds

burlap (n.): a coarse, inexpensive, woven fabric; often used for making grain sacks

calculating (adj.): shrewd; scheming

cesspool (n.): a deep hole in the ground into which sewage from sinks, toilets, etc. is drained.

cockier (adj.): To be **cocky** is to be conceited, overbearing, and aggressive.

complacently (adv.): in a pleased, satisfied manner

cultivator (n.): a large farm machine used for cultivation (the preparation of the earth for planting).

derogatory (adj.): belittling and insulting

disengage (v.): free

dousing (n): to **douse** is to be drenched with liquid. **A dousing** refers to someone having been covered with a liquid, in this case water, during a washing.

dragfooted (adj.): lame; dragging a lame foot

gingerly (adv.): in a careful, cautious way

grain teams (n.): A **team** is two or more horses harnessed to a wagon or other drawn vehicle. **Grain teams** would be the **teams** (horses and wagons) used to haul, grain in from the fields.

graybacks (n.): lice; parasites. Lice are small, wingless insects that live off the blood of other animals.

grizzled (adj.): gray

handy (adj.): clever with one's hands; especially, in this case, in terms of fighting

harness (n.): the leather straps and metal pieces by which a horse or mule is fastened to a vehicle.

hatchet face (n): a **lean**, sharp face

heavy-laden (adj.) heavily loaded

insteps (n.): the parts of the shoes between the toe and the ankle

jercline skinner (n.): A **skinner** is the driver of a team of mules. A **jercline skinner** is the main driver of a mule team who handles the jercline (reins).

laboring (adj.): working, particularly work that involves physical labor.

lamely (adv.): To be **lame** is to be crippled; especially to have an injured leg or foot.

lashed (v.): swung around quickly

lean (adj.): thin

leaves (n.): pages

lightweight (n.): a boxer who weighs between 127 -135 pounds

liniment (n.): a medicated liquid rubbed on the skin to ease sore muscles and sprains

mollified (adj.): soothed; pacified

mules (n): a type of shoe or slipper than does not cover the hear.

muzzle (n.): the projecting part (the part that sticks out) of a dog's head that includes the mouth, nose, and jaw.

ominously (adv.): in a threatening way

peered (v.): To **peer** is to look closely or **squint** at something to see it more clearly

pocket (n.): in this instance, a **pocket** would be a hollow or cavity in the land filled with gold ore

precede (v.): go before or ahead of

pugnacious (adj.): eager and ready to fight

rouged (adj.): colored red, as with lipstick

scourges (n.): a **scourge** is anything that inflicts discomfort or suffering; in this case, any variety of insects and pests

scowled (v.): a **scowl** is an angry look achieved by frowning and scrunching the eyebrows together.

shepherds (n.): dogs bred to herd sheep.

skeptically (adv.): To be **skeptical** is to doubt or question something. George is doubting that the bunk house, and especially his mattress, is really clean

slough (v.): get rid of **soiled** (adj.): dirty; stained

spurs (n.): sharp, pointed metal devices worn on the heels of a boot, used to urge on horses when riding.

stable buck (n.): a **stable** is a building where horses are kept. A **buck**, in this case, is a **derogatory** word for a black man. A **staple buck**, then, would be a black man who works in a stable.

stocky (adj.): heavily and solidly built

swamper (n.): a handyman; someone who performs odd jobs often involving cleaning

tart (n.) a woman of loose morals; one who is prone to be sexually unfaithful

tick (n.) mattress covering

ticking (n.): the cloth case for a mattress. In this instance, the cloth case was made from **burlap**.

trace chains (n): the chains that connect a horse's harness to a vehicle

tramp (n.): In this case, a tramp is a woman of loose morals who is sexually promiscuous

vials (n.): small bottles

viciously (adv.): cruelly; in a mean way

wheeler (n.): the horse harnessed nearest to the front wheels of a vehicle

Chapter 3

alfalfa: a plant widely grown for animal feed. See a picture of a field of alfalfa.

barrel: the long part of a gun through which the bullet travels when it is fired

bemused: preoccupied; deep in thought

bleated: A bleat is the cry usually associated with a goat, sheep, or calf. In this case, Lennie cries out with terror in an animal-like way.

candy wagon: a crew bus or truck used for transporting people

cowering: To cower is to shrink and tremble from fear.

derision: To **deride** someone is to make fun of that person. The sound of voices of **derision** would be the sound of people making fun of, or laughing at, another.

does (n.): female rabbits

receptive: able and willing to listen to and accept information, new ideas, etc. Slim is willing to listen to what George is about to tell him.

reprehensible: To **reprehend** someone is to reprimand or criticize that person. Something that is **reprehensible** is something that is deserving of criticism.

rheumatism: a painful condition involving the joints and muscles

run: an enclosure for animals in which they can exercise, feed, etc.

Chapter 4

aloof (adj.): distant; removed; cool

appraised: judged

arouse: to excite; bring about

contemptuously: full of contempt or **scorn**

ego: sense of self; self-awareness

hame (n.): the piece along the side of a horse collar to which the **trace chains** are attached

meager (adj.): of poor quality or small amount

persuasive (adj.): convincing

riveter (n.): a tool used to fasten rivets. Rivets are small metal bolts or pins used to attach fabric and leather pieces together

rummy (n.): a card game

scornful: **Scorn** is a feeling of contempt for someone or something; the belief that a person or thing is worthless. Crooks is **scornful** of Lennie because he thinks Lennie's plan is nothing more than a dream.

spectacles (n.): eyeglasses

subsided: became less excited; calmed down

twict: a sharp, sudden punch

whinnied: the low, gently sound (sometimes called a "neigh") that a horse makes

Chapters 5 and 6

craftily (adv.): in a sly, cunning manner

darkly (adv.): deeply; richly; secretly

drawn (v.): To **draw** someone out is to get that person to talk. Curley's wife cannot get Lennie to talk to her.

dugs (n.): nipples; teets

jack-pin (n.): Also known as a belaying pin, a **jack pin** is a removable wooden or metal pin inserted in the rail of ships around which ropes can be fastened

monotonous (adj.): flat, with no expression

sulkily (adv.): in a gloomy manner

sullenly (adv.): sadly; in a depressing and gloomy way

taloned (adj.): A **talon** is a finger-like claw. A **four-taloned** fork would be a fork with four “claws”

wisps (n.): tiny, slight strands or pieces

writhed (v.): twisted