

## Of Mice and Men Essay Prompts

5 paragraph essay - 1" margins - 12 point font - Times New Roman - MLA

Please open a Google Doc and share it with Ms. Van Dop and send a separate email indicating which number essay prompt you will be pursuing.

1. Dreams: What is the importance of dreams in *Of Mice and Men*? What role do they play in people's lives? How do people use dreams, and how do various characters' dreams affect them?
2. Discrimination: Look at the various examples of discrimination in *Of Mice and Men*. How does discrimination affect different characters? How do characters respond to discrimination, and how does it affect their lives, and the outcome of the story?
3. Friendship. How does Steinbeck portray friendship in *Of Mice and Men*? How does its presence or absence affect different characters, in their actions and in their relationships? What does it require of people, and what does it offer them in return?
4. Loneliness. Many of the characters in *Of Mice and Men* seem lonely. Why are various characters lonely, and how does it affect them?
5. Power. Think about different characters in *Of Mice and Men*, and the power that they have. What different kinds of power do different characters have? Where does it come from? What do they do with it? How does it help them, or hurt them?
6. Foreshadowing. Consider the many examples of foreshadowing in *Of Mice and Men*. What important actions and plot points are foreshadowed? How do these important events differ from the events that foreshadow them? How does foreshadowing help us understand the important turning points in the novella?
7. Show how John Steinbeck explores the complex relationship between George and Lennie. You should write about: What keeps them together, and the difficulties they each have. How they are different from other people on the farm.
8. Hopes and dreams help people to survive, even if they can never become real. How true is this for characters in *Of Mice and Men*?
9. Many characters in Steinbeck's novel *Of Mice and Men* are plagued by loneliness and alienation and are searching for friendship and acceptance. Write a response that explains how three of the characters are plagued by loneliness and alienation and are searching for friendship and acceptance.
10. John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* echoes the following famous lines of poet Robert Burns: "The best laid plans of mice and men often go astray, and leave us only grief and pain for promised joy." Write a response that explains how Steinbeck conveys the theme that that we have identified in this poem.

11. Steinbeck's novel *Of Mice and Men* makes the world seem like a cruel place where dreams can't come true. Write a response that discusses three of the characters' experiences in a cruel world where dreams do not come true.
12. Innocent characters suffer in John Steinbeck's novel *Of Mice and Men*. Write a response that explains which innocent characters suffer in the novel.
13. Steinbeck uses the technique known as "framing" on several occasions. Discuss these and the effects that each has on the overall effectiveness of developing specific themes.
14. Discuss three symbols in the novel and how they help develop specific themes.
15. Discuss the use of static and dynamic characters in the novel. Include their importance in the book.
16. Discuss the use of animal terms to describe Lennie. Use specific examples and discuss the effects of these descriptions.
17. Setting plays an important role in *Of Mice and Men*. Discuss the various settings of the novel and their impact on the story.
18. Soon after the release of the novel, the story was produced as a stage play. Discuss how the story, its characters, and the settings made this a natural transition.
19. Curly's wife is not happy with her life. Do you feel sympathy for her, or do you scorn her for her actions. In other words, do you see her as a villain, or a victim? (Students will explain that they feel sorry for her because she is stuck and lonely or they will scorn her because she is troublesome and deceitful)
20. In the end of the story George does what he thinks is best for Lennie. Do you think he did what was right? If you say yes, explain why. Do you think that there could have been a better solution to the problem? If so, explain what you would have done differently.