

Week 1: America in the 1930s

-American Dream: the ideal by which equality of opportunity is available to any American, allowing the highest aspirations and goals to be achieved.

Roaring Twenties: a decade of economic growth and widespread prosperity.

Wall Street Crash: a major stock market crash in 1929.

Great Depression: a severe worldwide economic depression, beginning in the United States. It meant that many people lost jobs and homes, and had to travel in order to find work.



- The novella is set in California, in the 1930s.
- This was a period of huge inequality and disruption.

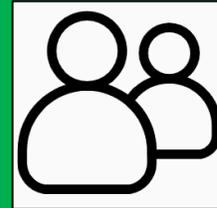
Week 2: Meet George and Lennie

John Steinbeck: the author of the novella.

Novella: a work of narrative prose fiction, longer than a short story but shorter than a novella.

Soledad: a city in California, and the Spanish word for "loneliness".

Itinerant worker: A person who moves from place to place to find a job.



- The reader meets George and Lennie, the main characters.
- They are travelling in the countryside, looking for work.

Week 3: The Bunkhouse and The Ranch

Bunk house: a building offering basic sleeping accommodation for workers.

Archetype: a very typical example of a certain person or thing.

Femme fatale: an attractive and seductive woman, especially one who will ultimately cause distress to a man who becomes involved with her.

Extended metaphor: a metaphor that unfolds and repeats in multiple places within a text.



- George and Lennie arrive at the ranch.
- They meet the other workers, and Curley's wife.



Who: Quick-witted farmworker with a heart of gold

What: Is a BFF to Lennie (real friends mercy kill each other)



Who: Big strong farmworker who likes soft things (and his pal, George)

What: Accidentally kills the soft things



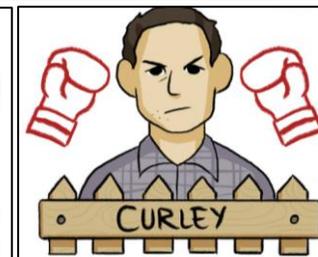
Who: Old ranch worker who lost his hand and his money

What: Loses his dog and his ambitions



Who: Heavily made-up, not very nice wife of (surprise) Curley

What: Flirtily messes with the farmhands



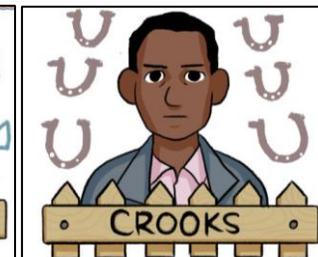
Who: Big-headed (yet tiny) son of the ranch boss

What: Bullies Lennie with his Napoleon complex



Who: Super cool prince of the ranch

What: Lays down the law (in the coolest way possible)



Who: Stable hand with a crooked back and big dreams

What: Gets his dreams shattered by racial discrimination

Week 4: Candy's Dog, Dreams and Dust-Ups

Autocracy: a leadership style in which an individual controls all decisions with little input from team members.

Democracy: a leadership style in which members of the group take part in the decision-making process.

Paternalistic: a leadership style that treats team members like an extended family.

American Dream: the ideal by which equality of opportunity is available to any American, allowing the highest aspirations and goals to be achieved.



- George and Lennie discuss their dream of owning a place.
- Curley uses his boxing skills to fight Lennie, but is hurt.

Knowledge Organiser: Year 8: Of Mice and Men

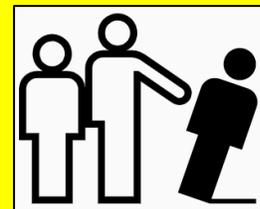
Week 5: Focus on Crooks

Jim Crow laws: laws that enforced racial segregation in the Southern United States.

Segregation: the action of setting someone or something apart from others.

Stable buck: (slang) A derogatory name for an African-American man who works in the stables.

Connotations: an idea or feeling which a word invokes, in addition to its literal meaning.



- Lennie meets Crooks, the only black worker on the ranch.
- Crooks discusses how lonely his own life can be.

Week 6 and 7: Curley's Wife and the Ending

Climax: the turning point in the text that changes the protagonist's fate.

Circular narrative: the story moves one event at a time to end back where the story originated.

Sympathetic character: a character in a story whom the writer expects the reader to identify with and care about.

Falling action: the part of a story where the hero resolves the main problem.

Dénouement: a part in a story where normality is restored and all conflicts are resolved.



- Curley's wife dreams of being an actress.
- The story comes to a tragic close.