

Self-Isolation Activities

Of Mice and Men

Year 9

It is important to note that you do not need to complete all of the activities in this booklet during your period of self-isolation.

If you are at the beginning of the novel during your period of self isolation, you must complete lessons 1-4 (chapters 1&2).

If you are in the middle of the novel during your period of self-isolation you must complete lessons 5-8 (chapters 3&4)

If you are approaching the end of the novel during your period of self-isolation, you must complete lessons 9-12 (chapters 5-6).

Please communicate with your peers to find out where you are at in the novel. You must keep up-to-speed with the reading that is occurring in class as well as the activities.



This resource should be viewed in print layout view. If editing, note that all page breaks are set as 'hard' breaks. This means that adding a substantial amount of text to the page will create an 'overflow' page rather than changing the layout of the whole resource.

Lesson One: The Setting of 'Of Mice and Men'

The Dust Bowl and California Dreaming

Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico had already suffered seven years of drought. Their once arable land was parched and dust storms destroyed what crops there were. It had become a dust bowl. The banks needed to collect their debts, but many farmers lost their land – their only source of income and food – because they could not afford to repay them. Whole families were forced to move to find food and employment.

Many victims of the Dust Bowl chose to go to California (see map below) where the soil was

rich and fertile and where they believed there was room for everyone to have their own piece of land.

However, Steinbeck observed when reporting from the migratory labour camps:

There is the scurrying on the highways and the families in open cars to the ready crops, and hurrying to be the first at work ... For it has been the habit of the Grower's Association of the State to provide by importation twice as much labour as was necessary so that the wages might remain low. They move frantically, with starvation just behind them.



Migrant labour

Parallels can be drawn between the employers of 1930s America and those of present-day Britain who profit from the desperate plight of asylum seekers and immigrants trying to scrape together enough money to make a living.

The next page has an article taken from the *Guardian*, 7 February 2004, revealing details of the Chinese cockle pickers drowned in Morecambe Bay, and a list of statements. Match up the *italic* extracts in the article to support the statements in the list.

Consider the connections between the situation in the article is similar to the situation on the ranch in 'Of Mice and Men'. List comparisons in your book.

The underbelly of globalisation

The Chinese workers who died were victims of cowboy capitalism

Tony Woodley

Saturday 7 February 2004

Morecambe Bay's famously ferocious tide may be a force of nature, but *human beings bear the responsibility for yesterday's deaths of 19 Chinese workers picking cockles*. 'Drowning' will be the word on their death certificate, but it is cowboy capitalism that has caused this dreadful human tragedy.

The cockle pickers involved form part of the *growing army of workers employed in a twilight world propping up profit levels across the British economy*. The rightwing response can be predicted. They will ask why these workers were in the country, not why they were working – almost certainly for very little – in such *dangerous circumstances*, and for whom.

This is not a migration issue. It is an exploitation issue. As the local Labour MP in Morecambe said yesterday: *'The cockles are worth a great deal of money, but those poor people who lost their lives were making very little of that.'*

The sordid underbelly of free-market globalisation is on display at that sandbank in Morecambe Bay. *Working people are being uprooted from their communities across the world by the unchecked movement of capital and brought to Britain in order to provide cheap labour*.

They often put their lives at risk even getting here – remember the 58 Chinese people who died in the back of a lorry crossing the Channel in 2000? *On arrival, they face intolerable and unsafe living and working conditions right under our noses*, providing services and goods we take for granted. *Nobody gains but reckless employers*.

There are respectable providers of labour for seasonal work in agriculture, but *pay and conditions are undermined by rogue employers, 'gangmasters' in the appropriately Victorian parlance*, who find even the very limited protections afforded by British employment law too burdensome.

The poor Chinese cockle pickers are *the tip of an enormous iceberg of migrant labour working in many sectors of the economy*, in all parts of the country. In Norfolk, *gang workers were paid just £3 to cut 1,000 daffodils*. In Cambridgeshire, *workers were forced to live in partitioned containers with no water supply – and were deducted up to £80 a week rent from their meagre earnings for the privilege*. In a fish processing plant in Scotland, *gang workers were found working 12-hour shifts, seven days a week, for less than the minimum wage*.

It is a system that preys on the vulnerable. *In the Midlands, a gang worker was charged £600 by a gangmaster for documentation that was never provided*. Such employers also cheat the taxpayer, of course. During 2002–3, the Inland Revenue recouped more than £4 million in unpaid tax and National Insurance contributions from gangmasters in the Thames Valley area.

List of statements

N.B. There may be more than one *italic* extract relevant to a particular statement and some extracts maybe relevant to more than one statement.

1. Workers are dispensable as there are so many migrants needing work and they are therefore easily replaced.
2. Workers are exploited.
 - Bosses can take advantage of the fact that illegal immigrants are not officially allowed to work in Britain and pay them very low wages.
 - Bosses make more money out of migrant labour than they would out of national citizens.
 - Workers have fewer employment rights.
3. Poor working conditions. No training is provided and workers are put at risk through a lack of specialised knowledge or skills.
4. Poor living conditions.
5. Workers are away from their families and homes in an unfamiliar environment.

Lesson Two: Recapping Chapter 1: Quotations

Chapter 1

George and his huge, child-like friend Lennie arrive a few miles south of Soledad hoping for work, bucking wheat on a nearby ranch in California's Salinas Valley.

The two men are very different from each other. George is described as 'small and quick' and Lennie as 'his opposite, a huge man, shapeless of face'. He is likened to an animal on more than

one occasion: 'the way a bear drags his paws' and 'snorting into the water like a horse'.

Despite their differences George and Lennie are friends. However, their behaviour and attitude and the way that they speak to each other sometimes suggests a relationship more like that of parent and child.

Activity 1.1: George and Lennie

Copy the grid into your book: Explain how the following quotations from the first chapter support the notion that George and Lennie's relationship is more like that of a father and son than a regular friendship.

Quotation	Interpretation
<i>They had walked in single file down the path, and even in the open one stayed behind the other.</i>	It was Lennie who chose to stay behind George, suggesting that a less confident Lennie preferred the security of going second and allowing George to be first to experience something new and uncertain. This image is similar to a shy child hiding behind a parent.
<i>'Lennie, for God's sake don't drink so much.'</i>	
<i>'You never oughta drink water when it ain't running, Lennie.'</i>	
<i>Lennie, who had been watching, imitated George exactly.</i>	
<i>'Now, look – I'll give him the work tickets, but you ain't gonna say a word. You jus' stand there and don't say nothing.'</i>	
<i>'Good boy. That's swell' You say that over two, three times so you sure won't forget it.'</i>	
<i>'I could get along so easy and so nice if I didn't have you on my tail. I could live so easy and maybe have a girl.'</i>	
<i>Lennie said, 'I like beans with ketchup.'</i>	
<i>'Your Aunt Clara give you a rubber mouse and you wouldn't have nothing to do with it.'</i>	

Lesson Three: Characterisation

Chapter 2

After meeting the main characters, George and Lennie, in Chapter 1, Steinbeck now introduces most of the other major characters of the novel in Chapter 2. George and Lennie arrive in Soledad to work on the ranch. Candy, the old

swamper, shows them around the sparse, rough 'bunkhouse' where they will live. Candy shows he likes to gossip, giving George and Lennie snippets of information about others on the ranch, such as Curley, Curley's wife and the boss.

Activity 2.1: Curley's wife and Slim

Read the following extracts, in which Steinbeck introduces first Curley's wife, then Slim. Complete the 7 activities listed after these extracts.

Extract A

Both men [George and Lennie] glanced up, for the rectangle of sunshine in the doorway was cut off. A girl was standing there looking in. She had full, rouged lips and wide-spaced eyes, heavily made-up. Her finger nails were red. Her hair hung in little rolled clusters, like sausages. She wore a cotton house dress and red mules, on the insteps of which were little bouquets of red ostrich feathers. 'I'm looking for Curley,' she said. Her voice had a nasal, brittle quality.

George looked away from her and then back. 'He was in here a minute ago, but he went.'

'Oh!' She put her hands behind her back and leaned against the door-frame so that her body was thrown forward. 'You're the new fellas that just come, ain't ya?'

'Yeah.'

Lennie's eyes moved down over her body, and although she did not seem to be looking at Lennie, she bridled a little. She looked down at her finger-nails.

'Sometimes Curley's in here,' she explained.

George said brusquely, 'Well, he ain't now.'

'If he ain't, I guess I better look someplace else,' she said playfully.

Lennie watched her, fascinated. George said, 'If I see him, I'll pass word you was looking for him.' She smiled archly and twitched her body.

Extract B

A tall man stood in the doorway. He held a crushed Stetson hat under his arm while he combed his long, black, damp hair straight back. Like the others, he wore blue jeans and a short denim jacket. When he had finished combing his hair he moved into the room, and he moved with a majesty only achieved by royalty and master craftsmen. He was a jerkline skinner, the prince of the ranch, capable of driving ten, sixteen, even twenty mules with a single line to the leaders. He was capable of killing a fly on the wheeler's butt with a bull whip without touching the mule. There was a gravity in his manner and a quiet so profound that all talk stopped when he spoke. His authority was so great that his word was taken on any subject, be it politics or love. This was Slim, the jerkline skinner. His hatchet face was ageless. He might have been thirty-five or fifty. His ear heard more than was said to him, and his slow speech had overtones not of thought, but of understanding beyond thought. His hands, large and lean, were as delicate in their action as those of a temple dancer.

He smoothed out his crushed hat, creased it in the middle and put it on. He looked kindly at the two in the bunk-house. 'It's brighter'n a bitch outside,' he said gently.

- 1 In the novel, Candy has already described Curley's wife as a 'tart'. Look at Extract A. What do you notice about how Steinbeck uses colour to describe her? What does this suggest about her? What do you associate with the colour red?
- 2 In these extracts Steinbeck describes the body movements of both characters. How does he describe:
 - (a) How Curley's wife moves in reaction to George and Lennie in Extract A?
 - (b) How Slim moves in Extract B? What does this tell us about Slim?
- 3 Pay particular attention to how Steinbeck describes Slim's hands, near the end of Extract B. It suggests that Slim has a mystical, knowing quality. What other phrases suggest this?
- 4 Read both extracts again. Which words does Steinbeck use to describe the voices of Curley's wife and Slim? How do the description of how they speak fit in with what we've learned about these characters?
- 5 Steinbeck uses very different adjectives and adverbs to create an impression of these two very different characters. Complete the chart below, listing the different words Steinbeck uses to describe Curley's wife and Slim.

Curley's wife	Slim
full, rouged (lips)	master
heavily made-up (eyes)	great

- 6 Look at the lists you have created. Judging by these descriptions, what image do you think Steinbeck wants to create for each of these characters? How are we, the readers, meant to respond to them? Are we meant to like Curley's wife?
- 7 Can you think of a TV or film character who is similar to Slim or Curley's wife? List reasons stating why they are similar.

Lesson Four: George's Viewpoint

Key points

- In Chapter 2 George and Lennie meet Candy, the boss, Curley's wife, Slim, and Carlson, a ranch hand.
- Curley's wife makes an impact on Lennie, who thinks she's pretty, but George senses that she might be trouble and he warns Lennie to stay away from her.
- We learn that George and Lennie are just going to stay on the ranch until they can work up a 'stake' – enough money to put down as a deposit on the farm of their dreams.

Activity 2.2: Dear Diary – George's viewpoint

After reading Chapter 2, imagine you are George and you are writing a diary entry after arriving at the ranch. You will need to include these things in your entry:

- The bus driver misleading you and Lennie, and you having to spend the night out in the open near the river.
- Your first impressions of Candy, the boss and the bunkhouse.
- What you think of Slim.
- Your worries about Lennie and the troubles that could be brewing with Curley or Curley's wife.
- The way that Lennie always wants to hear about the dream of the farm and keeping rabbits.
- How Lennie wants one of Slim's pups and how he's fascinated by petting soft things, like mice.

To make this diary entry sound authentic, you will need to adopt George's style of language. You might like to use phrases like these, taken from the novel:

- 'I ain't got nothing'
- 'They ain't oughta' (They shouldn't have)
- 'The hell with...'
- 'I'll tell ya'
- 'You ain't gonna do no bad things'
- 'That's swell' (That's good)
- 'Awright'
- 'Blubberin' like a baby' (Crying like a baby)
- 'Gi' me' (Give it to me)
- 'You ain't puttin' nothing over' (You're not going to fool me)
- 'The fatta the lan' (The fat of the land – what nature provides)
- 'Poundin' their tail' (Working hard)
- 'Blow our jack' (Waste, or spend, our money)
- 'Whatta ya want?'
- 'Leave your big flapper shut' (Shut up)
- 'Pretty handy' (Good at fighting)
- 'Purty' (Pretty)
- 'Buck barley' (Lifting barley bales onto carts)
- 'The brush' (The bushes)
- 'She slang her pups' (She's had her pups – Slim's bitch)

Lesson Five: The Theme of Power in the Novel.

Activity 2.3: Power

- 1 Add names to the boxes below to arrange the characters in order, putting the one with the most power and authority at the top and the one with the least at the bottom.
- 2 Write at least one sentence for each character to explain the order you chose.

Most power



Least power



CURLEY



LENNIE



CANDY



SLIM



CROOKS



CURLEY'S WIFE



GEORGE



THE BOSS



CARLSON

Lesson Six: Persuasive Writing – Candy’s Speech

Chapter 3

The dog must die

In this chapter, some of the men in the bunkhouse complain to Candy, the old swamper, that his dog is old and smelly. In the passages leading up to Carlson shooting the dog, the silence in the room is so powerful that it becomes like an extra character in the novel as the following extracts show (p. 49):

‘The silence came into the room. And the silence lasted.’

‘The silence fell on the room again. It came out of the night and invaded the room.’

The atmosphere in the room is very strong and few words are spoken by the characters.

Activity 3.1: A speech for Candy

Re-read pages 45–50 of the novel, covering events leading up to Candy’s dog being shot. There is a strong sense that Candy feels powerless and is very reluctant to lose his dog. Write a speech for him in which he honestly says how he feels and tries to persuade others that his dog should live.

You might like to include:

- How unfair it is to kill a dog just because it is old and smelly.
- How Candy identifies with the dog because he is old too.
- How he has had the dog since it was a pup and how much the dog means to him.
- That they cannot really know whether the dog is suffering. He might be feeling fine.
- That shooting a dog is a painful (though quick) way for him to die.
- That replacing him with one of Slim’s pups just isn’t the same.

Remember ...

You are writing to persuade others. This is similar to writing an argument but you will play more on the reader’s emotions. You can be one-sided and you don’t need to make a counter-argument.

Persuasive texts are often structured like this:

- 1 A general description of the situation.
- 2 An explanation of why your point of view is the right way to look at things.
- 3 Background details, the history of the situation.
- 4 Practical details about what others can do to help.
- 5 A final emotional plea for support.

Lesson Seven: Animal Imagery

The fight

In Chapter 3 a fight occurs between Curley and Lennie. Curley is looking for his wife in the barn and he implies that something has been happening between his wife and Slim. When Slim tells Curley to 'lay off', Curley tries to pick a fight with Carlson. However Carlson stands his ground and then Curley notices Lennie, who is still smiling at the thought that he and George will soon buy their own little farm.

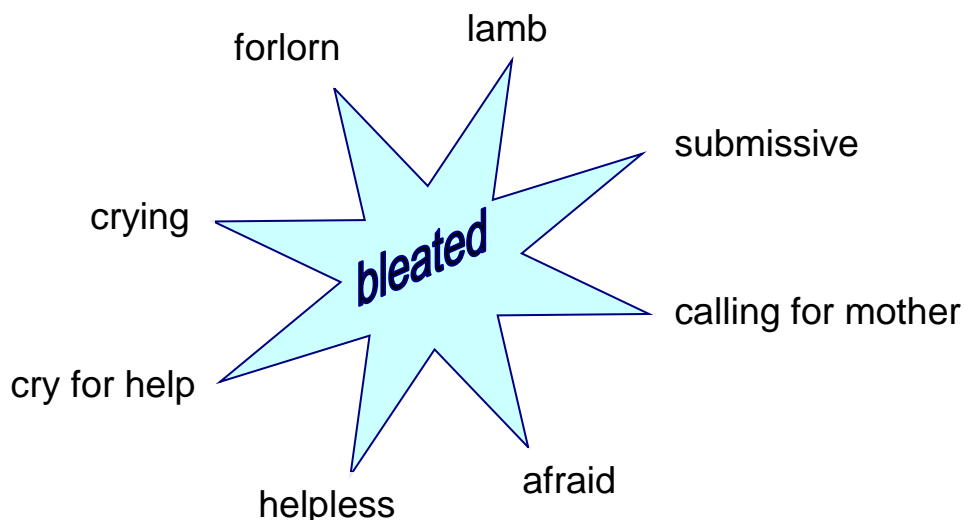
Curley starts punching the bewildered Lennie. Then, after George tells Lennie to 'Get him', Lennie grabs Curley's hand in mid-air and crushes it. When George finally makes Lennie release Curley's hand, George worries that they'll get 'canned' (sacked). Slim takes charge of the situation, telling Curley that if he gets George and Lennie canned they'll embarrass him by telling everyone what happened.

Activity 3.2: Curley and Lennie as animals

Throughout the fight there are many animal references referring to either Lennie or Curley:

- A. '**Curley** stepped over to Lennie like a **terrier**'.
- B. '**Lennie** covered his face with his huge **paws** and **bleated** with terror'.
- C. Slim about **Curley** – 'The dirty little **rat**'.
- D. '**Curley** was flopping like a **fish** on a line'.
- E. 'Slim turned to the **whimpering Lennie**'.

For each of the **bold** words associated with animals, create a diagram or map like the one below listing all the things that you associate with that word or animal.



For each of the short extracts above (A–E), write down how the animal reference links to what we already know about that character.

Compare the animal descriptions of Curley at the start of the fight and at the end of the fight. How do they show a change has happened to Curley's character?

Lesson Eight: How Steinbeck presents racism

Chapter 4

This chapter is set in the harness room, 'a little shed that leaned off the wall of the barn', home to Crooks, 'the negro stable buck'. There is a detailed description of his room and its contents.

George and the rest of the men have gone into town, leaving Lennie and Crooks behind. Lennie discovers Crooks's room and, unaware of the different social rules that applied to black and white people at that time, invites himself in.

Later on Candy joins them. Finally Curley's wife enters the room and says, 'An' what am I doin'? Standin' here talkin' to a bunch of bindle stiffs –

a nigger an' a dum-dum and a lousy ol' sheep – an' likin' it because they ain't nobody else.' Her description is offensive. A 'bindle stiff' is a rough migrant worker (whose possessions are rolled in a bundle). Her term for Crooks reflects the racism common in the USA at this time. The 'dum-dum' is Lennie; the 'sheep' is Candy.

Steinbeck uses individual characters to explore issues surrounding whole groups of people. Curley's wife and the three characters to whom she is referring represent minority groups shunned and excluded because of their race, gender, age and physical or mental ability.

Activity 4.1: What's in Crooks's room?

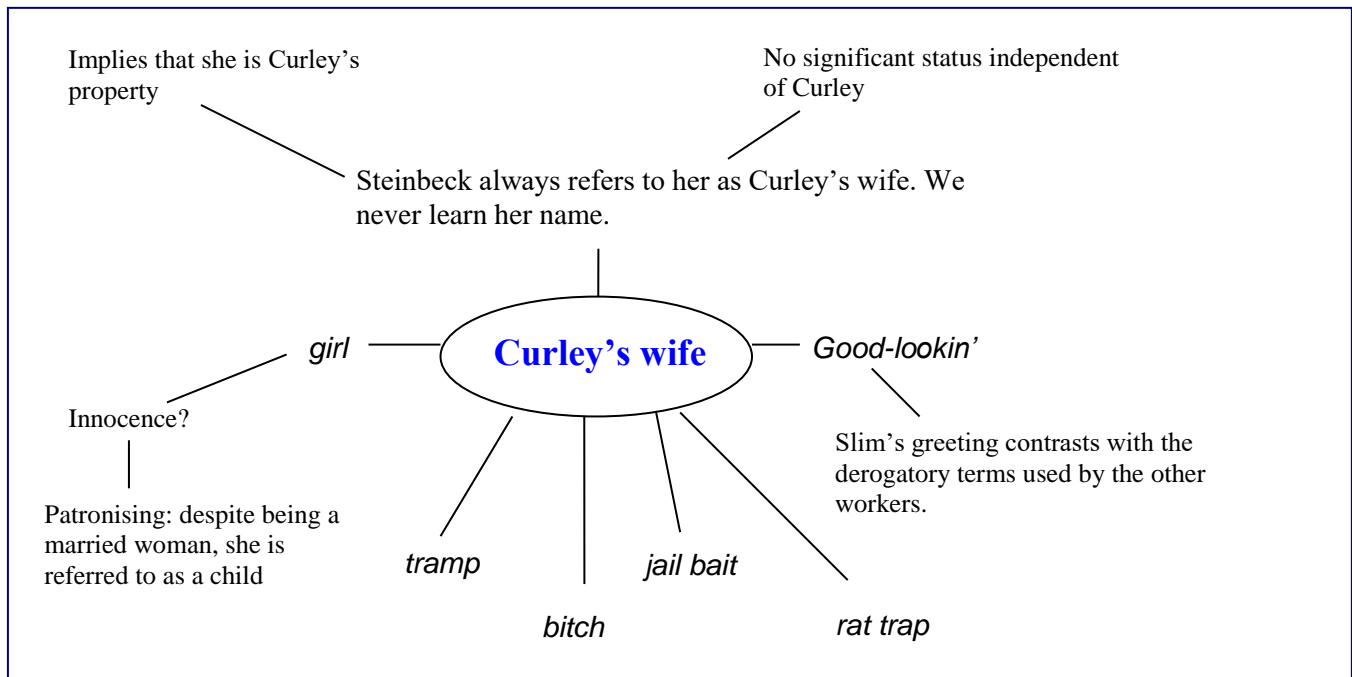
Write a contents list for Crooks's room and say what each item suggests about him. One is started for you below.

Item	Interpretation
<i>Long box filled with straw, on which his blankets were flung</i>	Because he is black, Crooks is not allowed to sleep in the bunkhouse with the white workers. He is placed in the harness room, which was not intended for human habitation.
<i>Pegs on which hung broken harness in process of being mended</i>	No separation from his work
<i>A little bench for leather-working tools</i>	Not really suitable for living quarters

Activity 4.2: Interpreting references to characters

- 1 Identify the different ways in which Steinbeck has referred to Curley's wife, Crooks, Lennie and Candy so far in the text. Consider what these names and references suggest about the character and attitudes towards the character. Look at the spider diagram on page 16 exploring some of the names given to Curley's wife in Chapter 2. Complete the diagram, giving your own comments on the names that she is called. Find other references to her from Chapter 4 and include your own comments.
- 2 Produce diagrams for Candy, Crooks and Lennie, using terms from Chapter 4.

Some of the language is troubling to read from the perspective of a reader in 2020. For some, it may have been troubling to read in the 1930s when the book was published. The attitudes towards perceived 'weak' people in society such as the elderly, women, the black population is presented in quite a brutal fashion. What do you think Steinbeck's intentions were with this?



Crooks

Crooks represents the black population of America's South in the 1930s and Steinbeck uses him to demonstrate the racism and prejudice of the time.

Activity 4.3: Racism in the Deep South

Below are the lyrics of the Billie Holiday song 'Strange Fruits' (written by Lewis Allen). She likens the fertile land and good harvests to the growing racism and violence in the South.

Southern trees bear a strange fruit
 Blood on the leaves and blood on the root
 Black bodies swingin' in the southern breeze
 Strange fruit hangin' from the poplar trees

Pastoral scene of the gallant South
 The bulging eye and the twisting mouth
 Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh
 Then the sudden smell of burning flesh

Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck
 For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck
 For the sun to rot, for the tree to drop
 Here is a strange and bitter crop.

- 1 Find phrases in the song that (a) support a peaceful and picturesque idea of the Deep South and (b) reveal its racism and brutality.
- 2 Consider all the connotations of the word *strange*.
- 3 Discuss the effectiveness of the analogy between trees laden with fruit and trees used for lynching.

Lesson Nine: Curley's Wife

Chapter 5

This chapter opens with Lennie alone in the great barn. There is a description of the barn before Lennie is described sitting in the hay with a little dead puppy lying in front of him.

The death of Curley's wife

There are mixed emotion reactions to the death of Curley's wife. Candy's initial response is one of resentment. He feels that she somehow brought it on herself and that it has destroyed any chance of the dream coming true for him and George and Lennie. Curley is more concerned with finding Lennie and getting his revenge than he is about having lost his wife.

When Slim suggests that he should stay with his wife and let the others find Lennie, Curley reveals the venomous feelings he has towards Lennie and how he is intent on finding him and shooting him himself. Slim is the only one to touch Curley's wife. He checks whether or not she is dead and how it could have happened. He touches her gently and carefully.

Activity 5.3: Post-mortem inquiry

Imagine a discussion between two characters about the incident after the death of Curley's wife. In pairs, produce a dialogue between two of the following characters; Candy, Slim, Carlson and Curley.

Consider the following points.

- What might each character think actually happened?
- Why do they think Lennie did it? Does it change their feelings towards Lennie? Are they now frightened of Lennie? Does it put previous incidents into a different light?
- What part do they suspect Curley's wife played in her own death?
- What were their attitudes towards her before and after her death?
- What do their comments reveal about themselves? For example, Candy's sentiments may reveal a degree of selfishness.
- Remember that what they say may vary depending on who they are talking to. For example, if Curley is one of the chosen characters then the other person would need to be careful about what he said about his late wife and would not want to offend Curley.

You may find it helpful to refer back to Chapter 2 as well.

Key question

- Is Curley's wife a 'slut' who deserves what she gets for playing with Lennie's feelings? Or is she an unfortunate victim of sexism and circumstance? What would you write for her obituary?

Lesson Ten: The Circular Narrative – Returning to the Start

Chapter 6

At the beginning of this chapter we revisit the pool where we first met George and Lennie at the start of the book. After killing Curley's wife, Lennie arrives at the pool, remembering that this is where he is supposed to meet George if

anything goes wrong. In his confusion and distress Lennie talks to imaginary characters (first Aunt Clara and then a giant rabbit) who are reprimanding him for what he has done.

Activity 6.1: Back to the pool

Re-read from the start of Chapter 1 to 'then two men emerged from the path and came into the opening by the green pool.' Then re-read the start of Chapter 6 to 'the little snake slid in among the reeds at the pool side'. After reading the extracts:

- 1 Why do you think Steinbeck uses a lengthy description of the pool at the beginning of Chapter 1 and then returns to another lengthy description of the same place at the start of Chapter 6?
- 2 Look at these descriptions of the pool at the start of Chapter 1: 'The water is warm', 'it [the water] has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands', 'golden foothill slopes curve up', 'willows fresh and green', 'the leaves lie deep and so crisp', 'Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening'. What kind of mood or atmosphere do you think Steinbeck is trying to create?
- 3 Look again at the description of the animals and surroundings in the first paragraph of Chapter 1. Notice the use of colour. How does this add to the image Steinbeck is trying to create?
- 4 Look at the following descriptions of the pool from the start of Chapter 6:

'A far rush of wind sounded', 'Already the sun had left the valley', 'a gust drove through the tops of the trees', 'the wind died'. What sort of mood or atmosphere is Steinbeck trying to create here? How is it different from the atmosphere created by the description of the pool at the start of Chapter 1?

- 5 Compare the following extracts:

Chapter 1 – 'A stilted heron labored up into the air and pounded down river'.... 'A water snake slipped along the pool, its head held up like a little periscope.'

Chapter 6 – 'A water snake glided smoothly up the pool, twisting its periscope head from side to side; and it swam the length of the pool and came to the legs of a motionless heron that stood in the shallows. A silent head and beak lanced down and plucked it out by the head, and the beak swallowed the little snake while its tail waved frantically.'

What do you think Steinbeck is trying to demonstrate by having the heron kill the snake at the end of the novel? How does it reflect other events in the novel?

Lesson Eleven: The Brutal Ending?

George's arrival

George arrives and finds a distressed Lennie by the pool. Lennie expects George to 'give him hell' but George tells Lennie off in a half-hearted way, knowing that there is no running away from this situation.

The end

The novel ends with the dramatic shooting of Lennie by his close friend George. This is followed by the irony of Carlson's comment to Curley: 'Now what the hell ya suppose is eatin' them two guys?'. This comment shows that, unlike Slim, Carlson and Curley have little understanding of how painful it was for George to kill Lennie, or of the complexities of their relationship.

Activity 6.3: An alternative ending

Is it a good ending? Write an alternative ending. Be sure to consider the following:

- After Lennie had killed Curley's wife, how would he have been treated if he had been caught by the men from the ranch?
- The attitudes of all the characters involved in finding Lennie after he fled from the ranch.
- What George could have done differently.
- Why George didn't just run away again with Lennie.
- What you think would have happened if Lennie had run away on his own.

Imagine you are the author, John Steinbeck. Write a paragraph justifying the ending of your book.

Activity B.2: The 'framed' novel

The idea that the novel is 'framed' is first suggested in Activity 6.1. The heron and snake are introduced in Chapter 1 and the heron eats the snake in Chapter 6. There is a sense of symmetry and much of the language is repeated. The beginning and ending are set in the same place, giving the novel a feeling of coming full circle. Plays often use this device of ending where they began, creating a frame for the action.

The death of the snake is the final death in *Of Mice and Men*, but there are a number of deaths that occur throughout the novel, building up to Lennie's death.

Identify all the deaths that occur throughout the novel. Put them in chronological order and ensure that you include animal as well as human deaths. Notice that the deaths build up and as the story progresses so the deaths are more serious.








- At what point did you think a human death had to occur?
- At what point did you think that Lennie had to die?

Lesson Twelve: Summarising the Characters

Activity B.4: Character relationships

In a novel of lonely characters the relationship between George and Lennie stands out as the closest and deepest (even though there is a married couple in the novel). Though George is often exasperated by Lennie's behaviour, their relationship has benefits for both of them: Lennie has someone to take care of him and George has another person to travel around with and someone with whom he can share the dream of a better life. This relationship prevents both George and Lennie from feeling as though nobody cares. By being together, they avoid becoming lonely and hopeless.

Look at the chart below, some boxes have already been completed for you. Fill in the rest of the boxes with your own notes about the relationships between the characters.

	 CANDY	 LENNIE	 SLIM	 CURLY
 GEORGE		They take care of each other. George looks out for Lennie in an almost fatherly way. Close friends.		
 CURLY'S WIFE				Not a close marriage. They never appear together until she's dead – then he's more concerned about finding Lennie than about her death.
 CROOKS				