

English Knowledge Organiser Y8 Autumn 1 Of Mice and Men

Key term	Definition
Novella	A short story, typically longer than a full-length novel.
Context	The background information that helps you understand a text.
Society	A group of people living together in a community or country, sharing laws, traditions and cultures.
Discrimination	Someone is treated unfairly based on certain characteristics.
Prejudice	Having a biased opinion about someone based on their identity
Sexism	Treating people unfairly based on their gender.
Racism	Treating people unfairly based on their race or ethnic background.
Ageism	Treating people unfairly based on their age.
Segregation	Keeping a certain group away from others.

Context

- The **American Dream** is the belief that hard work leads to opportunities for a better life.
- In October 1929, The **Wall Street Crash** meant people lost their savings and became unemployed. Some started looking for work on ranches.
- The **Great Depression** (1929 to 1939) was a period of economic difficulties.
- **Discrimination** was common, especially in the South. This is reflected in the treatment of characters.

Main characters

- **George** – One of the protagonists. He is small, smart and short-tempered, but looks after Lennie.
- **Lennie** – One of the protagonists. He is big and strong but doesn't know his own strength which gets him into trouble.
- **Curley's Wife** – She is described by the men as a "tramp" and "tart" because she talks to them, but just wants company.
- **Crooks** – The stable buck with a crooked back. He is segregated from the others and experiences loneliness.
- **Candy** – An old odd-job worker who lost his hand in an accident. He shares George and Lennie's dreams.
- **Curley** – The boss's son. He is controlling and violent.

Plot

1. George and Lennie

George and Lennie are friends. They are going to work on a ranch but dream of owning their own farm.



3. Curley and the fight

George and Lennie meet Curley, who is confrontational. After accusing Slim of crossing the line with his wife, he attacks Lennie. When Lennie defends himself, he crushes Curley's hand.



5. Lennie gets in trouble

Lennie accidentally pets his puppy to death. When Curley's Wife comforts him, he accidentally kills her too. He runs off and hides.



2. The ranch

George and Lennie arrive at the ranch and settle into the bunkhouse. They meet some of the other workers. They make friends with some, like Slim and Candy. Slim gives Lennie a puppy and Candy wants to join in George and Lennie's future plans.

4. Curley's Wife

One night, most of the workers go into town. Lennie goes to see Crooks, then Candy joins them. They are then threatened by Curley's Wife.

6. The end

Curley's Wife's body is found, and Curley wants revenge. George finds Lennie then shoots him to protect him.

Greater Depth:

