

ASSIGNMENT

Write an expository/argumentative essay that interprets a thematic element in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*.

Choose one of the following six essay topics (or see me about an alternative):

- Dreams and Hope
- Death and Loss
- Loneliness and Companionship
- Patterns-Repetitions-Parallels-Circles
- Imagery and Meaning
- Foreshadowing and Meaning

Your essay should consist of a compelling introduction that leads to thesis, a well organized body that supports and defends the thesis as well as explores ramifications of your topic, and a thoughtful conclusion that gives the reader a satisfying sense of closure.

Guidelines:

Two or three double-spaced pages (one inch margins, size 12 Times font) usually does an excellent job. The paper should utilize 2-5 quoted passages from the novel.

Some suggestions:

DREAMS AND HOPE: "An' live off the fatta the lan'" (p. 15)

Here are some questions to help you get started—

What do characters such as George, Lennie, Candy, Crooks, and Curley's wife share and what don't they share in terms of their dreams, in terms of their hopes? What are their dreams; what do their dreams say about them; what happens to their dreams, to their hope for the future? What does the novel say about dreams and hope?

LONELINESS AND COMPANIONSHIP: "A guy goes nuts if he ain't got nobody." (p. 71)

Here are some questions to help you get started—

Candy, Crooks, and Curley's wife are certainly lonely, and perhaps we could include other characters in the novel as well. What do these characters share and what don't they share in terms of loneliness, in terms of the human need for companionship? Why are they lonely; how does their loneliness affect them; what is the outcome of their loneliness? What does the novel say about loneliness and companionship?

DEATH AND LOSS: "I ought to of shot that dog myself, George." (p. 60)

Here are some questions to help you get started—

Carlson kills Candy's dog; Lennie kills the puppy and Curley's wife; George kills Lennie. Other characters, perhaps because of these deaths, also experience loss. How and why does each death occur—what situation surrounds each death; what are the consequences of each death; what sort of relationship exists between some of these deaths? What does the novel say about death and loss?