Of Mice and Men - Worksheet 1 - Author & Context

About the author

Study the information on the first page of the book and fill in the missing data:

The author of the book, John _______________ was born in 19__ in ___________.
__________, USA. Even though he studied ______________ and ______________ at the
university, he never finished it. Between 1925 and 1930 he was working as a
_____________ and _____________. The three novels that focused on the Californian labouring class were
_____________________ (1936), _____________________ (1937) and _____________________ (1939).
In _____ he won the _____________ Prize. He died in _____________.

Context

Study the four extracts and write key words for each of them:

Text 1: ________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Text 2: ________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Text 3: ________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Text 4: ________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Match the information in the two columns:

| 1 The idea of the American Dream is | (a) the streets are paved with gold. |
| 2 America has always been perceived as a place where | (b) that it is something unrealistic and intangible. |
| 3 During the 1920s and 1930s, | (c) through a combination of hard work, courage and determination, prosperity can be achieved. |
| 4 Some say the American Dream is impossible because | (d) the Depression was a cause of major hardship. |
| 5 The word 'dream' suggests | (e) many trade union figures who were championing the rights of workers. |
| 6 The American Dream does not take into account | (f) where John Steinbeck was born, and a place of major immigration. |
| 7 Steinbeck was heavily influenced by | (g) that family and wealth have a potential bearing on success. |
| 8 The novel is set in the Salinas valley | (h) not everyone can gain prosperity through only hard work and determination. |
1) Put these events in the right order:

a. Curley comes in. Lennie is smiling at the thought of being able to tend the rabbits. Curley thinks Lennie is laughing at him, and starts hitting him. Lennie doesn’t defend himself until George tells him to. Then he breaks Curley’s hand.

b. George and Lennie arrive at the ranch. They meet Candy, the Boss, Curley and Slim. Curly tries to pick a fight with Lennie because he doesn’t like big guys. They see Curley’s wife. George tells Lennie to keep away from her because she looks like trouble. He tells Lennie to go back and hide in the brush if he does anything wrong.

c. George and Lennie are chased out of Weed because Lennie touched a girl’s dress.

d. George finds Lennie hiding in the brush. He calms him down, and talks about the Dream to him. While Lennie is listening and facing the other way, George shoots him in the back of the head. Curley and the others turn up. Slim tells him it was what he had to do.

e. She lets Lennie stroke her hair. When he won’t stop, she panics and starts screaming. Lennie realises he’ll get into trouble and shakes her, breaking her neck. He runs off.

f. While George is in town with the other ranch workers, Lennie goes into Crooks’ (the negro stable buck) room. Crooks senses that he has power over Lennie and tries to persuade him that George isn’t coming back. When it looks like Lennie is getting angry, Crooks backs off.

g. Curley realises it was Lennie who killed his wife, and organises a lynch mob to kill him. George and Slim talk about what George could do – they realise they can’t send Lennie to prison.

h. George and Lennie rest on the way to the ranch in Soledad. George tells Lennie off for petting a dead mouse. We find out that Lennie is a bit ‘slow’. We find out that George and Lennie have a Dream of owning their own place.

i. Lennie and George talk about their Dream. Candy overhears them and offers to help pay for it. They agree to tell no-one.

j. They meet Slim. Slim gives Lennie one of his pups. Carlson persuades Candy to let him shoot Candy’s old dog. Whit tells George what the ranch workers do when they get paid.

k. While the others play horse-shoes, Lennie is in the barn with his dead pup – he has accidentally killed it. Curley’s wife comes in and sees it. She talks to Lennie about her ambition to work in the pictures, and about how lonely she is.

l. Candy discovers Curley’s wife’s body. He calls for George. They realise that they will not be able to buy their ranch now. Candy tells the others, while George goes back to the bunkhouse.

m. Candy comes in and Crooks finds out about the dream. He offers to work on the ranch. Curley’s wife comes in and teases the men, threatening Crooks. George returns, and Crooks tells Candy that he doesn’t want to work on the farm after all.

2) How big a time span does the narration describe?

3) What is the structure of the novella? What is the setting of the individual chapters?

4) What type of narration is the text written in?

5) Comment on the language used in the text.

6) Steinbeck meant this novella to be dramatised. How is this reflected in the text?