

Omnipotent = all powerful
Impotent = no power
Omniscient = all knowing
Omnipresent = immortal
Euthanasia =

Of Mice and Men

Characterization Chart

Essay Prompt:

“(A writer) is charged with exposing our many grievous faults and failures, with dredging up to the light our dark and dangerous dreams for the purpose of improvement.”
 —John Steinbeck, *Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech 1962*

How does John Steinbeck use characters in his novel, *Of Mice and Men* to present his view of prejudice and bias? How are the characters denied even dreams to keep them strong? Considering the bleak way the novel ends, what do you think Steinbeck is saying about a society that allows injustice, hatred and oppression? Explain how the novel reflects Steinbeck’s quote, above.

Characters	Descriptions: Use actions, words or facts to illustrate your points
George Who is he? What kind of person is he? What is his conflict in the story? How does he try to solve his conflict? What is his goal? Why is this goal important?	<p>George is a white guy who takes care of Lennie, who is mentally disabled. They have nowhere to stay during the Depression, and no family to help them. They travel around together looking for work so they can have shelter and eat.</p> <p>George has trouble taking care of Lennie by himself. He is very stressed and gets mean with Lennie because Lennie doesn’t always understand how strong he is, or how to keep out danger. He yells at Lennie when he gets frustrated, and he uses bad words.</p> <p>He is also a kind man, and cares for Lennie like a brother. He told Lennie’s Aunt Clara that he would take care of him after she died, even though he is not related to Lennie. Lennie is important to George because Lennie gives George a sense of honor and righteousness, in taking care of him. He loves him as you would a child, or a brother. George in fact used to beat up Lennie, but stopped because he realized how mean he was when he did this.</p> <p>George has trouble getting jobs because of discrimination against Lennie, he has trouble protecting Lennie and himself when a lynch mob come after Lennie, after Lennie touched a girl in Weed, and he has sacrificed his own life to feed, and watch out for Lennie in order to keep him safe.</p> <p>George’s goal is to buy a small farm where he and Lennie will be safe, fed, sheltered, and not worry about survival.</p> <p>In the novel, George represents a society’s failure to provide help for families of disabled people...</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Lennie</p> <p>Who is he?</p> <p>What kind of person is he?</p> <p>What is his conflict in the story?</p> <p>How does he try to solve his conflict?</p> <p>What is his goal?</p> <p>Why is this goal important?</p>	<p>Lennie is a grown, mentally disabled man. He has known George since they were children together. Lennie's Aunt Clara died, and George takes care of him.</p> <p>Lennie has the mentality of a small child. He likes to hold onto soft things to comfort himself, just like a small child holds onto things. He often picks up mice to hold, to comfort him, and sometimes kills them because Lennie doesn't realize how strong he is. When he was a child, other children made fun of him and beat him up, including George. George tells us that once he told Lennie to jump in a river, and Lennie almost drowned, but Lennie never hurt George back. He just thanked him for saving his life. Lennie touched a girl's dress, and when she screamed, got confused and wouldn't let go.</p> <p>Lennie would have trouble surviving on his own. He would die because he needs someone to take care of him. He suffers from discrimination and injustice because of his disability. He can't get jobs, people try to kill him for touching a girl's dress, and he gets beaten up by Curley for no reason.</p> <p>Lennie's goal is to live on the farm with George to be safe, to be fed, to have a place to sleep, and to take care of rabbits, so that he can feel -- just like George feels for taking care of him -- that he is worthy and responsible in the society. This would give him a sense of importance and power. And to have the love and comfort of family.</p> <p>Lennie represents discrimination against people with disabilities....</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Candy</p> <p>Who is he?</p> <p>What kind of person is he?</p> <p>What is his conflict in the story?</p> <p>How does he try to solve his conflict?</p> <p>What is his goal?</p> <p>Why is this goal important?</p>	<p>Candy is an old man on the ranch where George and Lennie work.</p> <p>He is very lonely on the ranch, and the only creature he has is his old dog. He tries to talk to George and Lennie when they first arrive, and seems to be gossiping about things. He takes care of his dog, even though the dog has no teeth, can't walk, can barely eat, and stinks. He lost one hand in a farm machine.</p> <p>Candy's has no power on this ranch to keep Carlson from killing his dog. And, he thinks that society looks the same way at him: old, useless, worth nothing. He says that when he becomes too old to work, he'll be fired, and put out on the street to die. He has no family to help him.</p> <p>His goal is to join in with Lennie and George, and be a part of their dream farm. Here, he will have food, safety, shelter, freedom from worrying about how to survive -- and not to die alone on the street, to have family love around him.</p> <p>Candy represents society's failure....</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Characters</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Descriptions: Use actions, words or facts to illustrate your points.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Crooks</p> <p>Who is he?</p> <p>What kind of person is he?</p> <p>What is his conflict in the story?</p> <p>How does he try to solve his conflict?</p> <p>What is his goal?</p> <p>Why is this goal important?</p>	<p>Crooks is a crippled African American who is the “stable buck” -- That is, he is the man who takes care of the animals on the ranch, and cures them of disease. He is self-educated. Candy tells us that he reads a lot. In his bunk, he has a lot of books, magazines, a dictionary and the California civil code from 1905 -- a law book about civil rights. He must be very intelligent to be able to understand laws without having had much of an education. There were few opportunities for African American to achieve even a high school education.</p> <p>In 1937, there was violent racism, and Crooks is beaten by the boss whenever the boss gets angry. Men on the ranch get drunk on Christmas and invite him into the bunk to beat him, taking bets on who will win. They call him the n-word, and no one talks to him. He is forced to sleep with the animals in the barn. He is not allowed at all to go in the bunk to talk to anyone. This is because of racism. He has nowhere to go during the Depression for another job, and he is the only African American in Soledad. He is also desperately lonely, almost to the point of having a mental breakdown. When Curley’s wife comes in, she threatens to have him lynched.</p> <p>He at first wants to be a part of the dream farm with George, Lennie, and Candy, but he realizes that this could never happen, after Curley’s wife threatens him, and points out that no one, no white person, would be able to stand up for him. They would all be lynched. There was no justice, and no ability to even have an empowering dream during the 1930’s for minority people. Crooks is forced to erase himself to stay safe when Curley’s wife threatens him.</p> <p>Crooks’s character in this novel represents a failure of society because....</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Curley’s wife</p> <p>Who is she?</p> <p>What kind of person is she?</p> <p>What is her conflict in the story?</p> <p>How does she try to solve her conflict?</p> <p>What is her goal?</p> <p>Why is this goal important?</p>	<p>She is married to Curley -- but has no name of her own because the men on the ranch only see her as his wife. They slut-shame her because she is young, pretty, and seems to want to talk to someone. She seems to never be in the same place as Curley, as if she is avoiding him. The men call her a tramp, a whore, a bitch, a tart, and jail-bait -- as if she is having sex with men when she’s not old enough to consent. Whit says that there is no evidence that she has slept with anyone, though.</p> <p>For women, there was also very little hope for an empowering future. Women rarely had college education, and often not even expected to finish high school. Divorce was unusual, and often women were caught in violent marriages.</p> <p>Her dream is to be in movies, but this rarely happened -- more than likely, she would in a porn film. There were few job options for females. We learn that she grows up in poverty, she is not cared for by a mother who allows her to get married to an older man she met one night at a bar. We learn also that even though she is only fifteen, she has spent a lot time in bars with men. Her lack of opportunities and the oppression she suffers cause her to become mean and violent. She turns on Crooks and threatens to have him lynched.</p> <p>When she meets Lennie in the barn, she is desperately lonely, and tells Lennie that Curley is cruel to her. Her mother signed the papers to allow her as an underaged girl, to marry Curley.</p> <p>Her character represents a failure of society because...</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Curley</p> <p>Who is he?</p> <p>What kind of person is he?</p> <p>What role does he play in the story?</p>	<p>He is the boss's son on the ranch. He is white. He has more money and power than the other men on the ranch. He treats Crooks badly and calls him the "n" word. He is a bully and likes to beat people up, especially men who are bigger than he is, to make himself look good. He is someone who is very insecure.</p> <p>He picks on Lennie and beats him up because he sees Lennie as an easy target because he is mentally disabled. He doesn't care at all about his young wife because he goes to whore houses, and it seems that he is someone always trying to prove himself.</p> <p>When his wife is accidentally killed by Lennie, he gets his gun to torture and lynch Lennie -- without any desire to get justice.</p> <p>Curley is an example of what happens to someone who isn't discriminated against in a society that allows hatred and discrimination.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Slim</p> <p>Who is he?</p> <p>What kind of person is he?</p> <p>What role does he play in the story?</p>	<p>Slim is described as god-like. He is the person people on the ranch turn to when there is drama, or a moral crisis. Candy turns to Slim when Carlson takes his dog. Slim tells Candy he can have any of the puppies that his dog had.</p> <p>George confesses to Slim that he used to beat Lennie up and hurt him, and almost caused him to drown. Slim also talks to Curley after Lennie breaks his hand, to convince Curley not to get Lennie and George fired.</p> <p>Slim is very respectful to Crooks, the only African American man on the ranch. Slim is a wise, kind man, who is able to offer comfort in a world that has no justice. In the end, Slim tries to comfort George, when George kills Lennie to try to save him from being tortured.</p>

- 1) Exposition: Learn about the characters, their goals, and their strengths and weaknesses.
- 2) Rising Action: The protagonists move towards their goals and are able to fight off antagonistic forces.
- 3) Turning Point:
- 4) Falling Action:
- 5) Resolution / Catastrophe

Name _____

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<p>Curley's Wife</p> <p>Who is she?</p> <p>What kind of person is she?</p> <p>What is her conflict in the story?</p> <p>How does she try to solve his conflict?</p> <p>What is hers goal?</p> <p>Why is this goal important?</p>	
<p>Curley</p> <p>Who is he?</p> <p>What kind of person is he?</p> <p>What role does he play in the story?</p>	
<p>Slim</p> <p>Who is he?</p> <p>What kind of person is he?</p> <p>What role does he play in the story?</p>	

