Lennie

Introduction: give a general response to the question set and outline what you will be covering in your essay.

Lennie's dream is simple – to be with George and to "live on the fatta the lan". His needs are simple and centre on his desire to tend the rabbits. This forms part of the strong association between Lennie and animals. *This recurring motif distances Lennie from the world of people: it makes him both immune from the cynicism of the world and utterly dependent on George.*	"I get to tend the rabbits" "snorting into the water like a horse" "big paw" "like a terrier" "Strong as a bull," "bleated with terror" "If you don' want me I can go off in the hills an' find a cave"
Despite his difficulties in retaining ideas and coping with even simple conversation Lennie has good instincts (again this reinforces the animal imagery).	"This ain't no good place. I wanna get outa here."
His imitation of George represents not just idolisation however: George's behaviour provides a template that Lennie tries to emulate in order to "fit in".	"Lennie, who had been watching, imitated George exactly." "Lennie followed his words admiringly, and moved his lips a little to keep up."
Lennie's dependency on George becomes apparent when Crooks attempts to force him to contemplate life without George.	"S'pose George don't come back no more." "'Ain't nobody goin' to talk no hurt to George,' he grumbled."
George's early relationship with Lennie was exploitative. George seems to retain a sense of guilt in his relationship to Lennie – often stemming from frustration at looking after Lennie.	"Made me seem God damn smart alongside of him. Why he'd do any damn thing I tol' him." "I ain't mad. I never been mad, an' I ain't now. That's a thing I want ya to know."
Steinbeck gives us a clear progression that emphasises Lennie's dangerous physical strength. He goes from crushing mice, to Curley's hand, to his puppy, to killing Curley's Wife. The fact that all of these are accidental only emphasises his lack of control and the danger he represents. *His encounter with the woman in Weed also serves to provide a precursor to the events in the barn: the scene where Lennie kills CW becomes plausible because of this anecdote.*	"Well, he better watch out for Lennie. Lennie ain't no fighter, but Lennie's strong and quick and Lennie don't know no rules." "God awmighty, I never seen such a strong guy." "So he reaches out to feel this red dress an' the girl lets out a squawk, and that gets Lennie all mixed up, and he holds on 'cause that's the only thing he can think to do." ""Maybe like that time in Weed you was tellin' about."
Lennie's fate provides a shocking but inevitable conclusion to the novel. *Lennie allows Steinbeck to explore the harshness of life: his childlike nature makes him sympathetic and largely blameless, yet there is no avoiding his death.* *When George kills Lennie he kills their dream, their shared future, and it is implied that without Lennie to temper the loneliness of existence George will become bitter and mean.*	"He's jus' like a kid, ain't he?" "Guy don't need no sense to be a nice fella." "I seen the guys that go around on the ranches alone. That ain't no good. They don't have no fun. After a long time they get mean. They get wantin' to fight all the time."

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