

Ideas to Consider Going into an Essay

1. **Thesis?! DO NOT CHANGE THE WORDING WITHOUT MY APPROVAL.**

John Steinbeck...uses various characters to portray hope as something that can overcome any obstacles that one may encounter in life. He portrays hope as a last lifeline, used to pull anyone through the toughest of situations.

VS

George and Lennie overcome every obstacle because they possess hope.
(one of these is NOT a strong thesis statement)

2. **Proof and discussion?! Compare these two paragraphs:**

Lennie uses the dream to keep himself in check when near other people. He is dependent on this mental paradise to keep physically straight in society. He uses the "farm" as a way to remind himself to behave and listen to George. Without it, Lennie would get into trouble more often, causing George and himself to constantly be on the move. His paradise also helps him overcome emotional burdens he faces. Whenever he feels that he has done something wrong, he wonders if George will still allow him to tend the rabbits. When people try to discourage him, he always hangs onto George's promise of the land and ignores what the others say.

VS

Besides Curley's wife, George and Lennie are also incapable of obtaining their dream to earn their own ranch. They wish to avoid the cycle of poverty and hard work that seemed to follow laborers at the time. Life is tough for the farmers and they all want easier futures where they could achieve the American Dream. The allure of the dream farm is so strong that even Candy offers his profits towards the cause. Nevertheless, they are unable to achieve their goals. The trio believes what they want to see, not what is actually occurring right before of their eyes. Because Lennie is so eager and keen about the dream, George lets go of all of his doubts and starts to think that maybe it is possible. Nobody has ever accomplished prosperity and George and Lennie are no different. Too many factors stand in the way of them from ever attaining their wishes. Lennie's much larger stature threatens Curley and causes many fights to occur between them. Curley's wife spends too much time with Lennie. Both of these variables could have easily caused Lennie and George fired; thus losing their source of income and hope of achieving their dreams. In addition, Lennie accidentally kills Curley's wife and therefore he too must die for his actions. Lennie and George are each other's foundations; they support one another so that they may accomplish their dream. Without Lennie to support George, the structure falls, and the dream collapses. Candy is still too caught up in the own fantasy that he unable to comprehend the impact of Lennie's death on George. He still wishes to continue forth with the plan but soon after realizes that such an option was contrary to reason. Crooks tells Lennie "...hundreds of men come by... every damn one of 'em's got a little piece of land in his head... never a

God damn one of 'em ever gets it. Just like heaven... Nobody never gets to heaven, and nobody gets no land" (72). Essentially, Lennie and George are unable to realize the absurdity of their dream and that it could never possibly happen.

3. **Stay in the present tense. ALWAYS.**
4. **Do not include hypothetical situations about the text or make assumptions about what could happen to a character if you altered the plot line. THAT IS NOT WHAT THE AUTHOR INTENDED. Stick to what the author has so carefully and successfully laid out before you.**
5. **Spell the names of the characters, author, title and your teacher correctly.**
6. **Be honest with your partners. There were many cases where a student wrote "great examples!" by a paragraph that did not contain any proof whatsoever.**