

Discussion Questions - "Of Mice and Men"

1. Discuss what happens when Lennie is alone in the barn in chapter five. How did he kill the pup? What does this tell you about how Lennie responds to what is right and wrong? What does he think when he kills the pup? What does he do? What does his killing the pup tell you about what is likely to happen when Curley's wife comes in? Why does this change? How does he kill her? Why? What does he think and do after he kills her? When we see Lennie at the pool in the next chapter, why does Steinbeck have him imagine Aunt Clara and the rabbit? What does this tell us about Lennie? Does he really believe what he has done is wrong? Is George right when he says, "He never done this to be mean"? Why does Lennie do it?
2. Write about the suspense you found in the novel. How does Steinbeck create that suspense? What is the climax of the book (the place at which the action turns)? What is the resolution? Why does George kill Lennie? Is Slim right when he says, "You hadda, George."?
3. Many critics consider this one of the greatest short works of fiction of all time. Why do you think they say this? Write about or discuss some of the important themes Steinbeck addresses in this short book: The importance of relationships, responsibility to others, the nature of home, respect for old age, the difference between right and wrong, and the evil of oppression and abuse. Discuss how he uses the story and characters to address the theme. What can we learn about the theme from Steinbeck's book?