

1. Context – America 1930s

The Great Depression: The Great Depression followed the Wall Street Crash, a period where there was little money in the world

The Dustbowl: The Dustbowl is a period of time where there was no rainfall, causing farming land to dry up, resulting in unemployment in this industry.

Racism: in 1930s America there was a lot of racial prejudice suffered.

The American Dream: Everyone has equal opportunities no matter who they are

2. Key Vocabulary

Vulnerable: exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally.

Animalistic: Behaving like an animal in ways or attitudes.

Segregation: keeping a person/ group separate from others.

Discrimination: Not treating a person/ group with equality.

Prejudice: A dislike for a person or group with no reason.

3. Themes and ideas

Dreams: Dreams in *Of Mice and Men* are linked to the 'American Dream'. This is the idea that in America, it is possible for anyone to achieve success and improve their lives through hard work.

Loneliness: Most of the characters on the ranch are lonely. George and Lennie stand out because their friendship means that they are not isolated and this is very unusual, making some others (like the Boss) suspicious of them.

Companionship: George and Lennie have an important relationship.

4. Characterisation

George Milton: George is a physically and mentally strong character, he is Lennie's sole protector and his American dream is to own his own ranch.

Lennie Small: Lennie is a physically strong character, but very vulnerable in his thoughts and ways, he looks to George for protection.

Crooks: Crooks is the only black character on the ranch, he is segregated from the others and suffers racial prejudice.

Curley's Wife: Curley's Wife is the only female on the ranch, she is owned and commanded by her husband, and as such is never given her own name.

5. Subject Terminology

Foreshadowing: Hinting or warning of a future event, we see this through Lennie's increasingly concerning behaviour in which the act stays the same but the outcome becomes worse.

Microcosm: A microcosm is a smaller version of society represented by single entities. In the novel, we see each character representative of a different part of society, e.g. Curley's Wife is representative of all women in the microcosm of 'Of Mice and Men'.

Symbolism: Symbolism is using an object to represent an image or idea about something else.

6. Chapter Summary

Chapter 1: George and Lennie travel to Soledad in search of a new job on a ranch, they hope to earn enough money to buy their own ranch one day.

Chapter 2: George and Lennie arrive at the ranch and in the bunkhouse. They meet the other men; George warns Lennie to behave here.

Chapter 3: George, Lennie and Candy plan to own their own ranch. Curley attempts to fight Lennie and Lennie (who is much stronger) fights back.

Chapter 4: We learn about Crooks who is segregated from the others.

Chapter 5: Lennie runs away after making a huge mistake, George is left to decide how best to protect his friend.