

John Chapman
Tokay High School Lodi CA
johnmchapman@yahoo.com

Of Mice and Men Lesson Plans
“Finding Connections: Reader Emotions & Experiences”

The following lessons provide students the opportunity to connect their emotions and experiences to the text of *Of Mice and Men*. For further reading see:

- “Literature’s Emotional Lessons: Grappling with the way books make students feel—not just analytical skills—should be part of the high-school English curriculum” by Andrew Simmons, *The Atlantic*, April 5, 2016.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/04/educating-teenagers-emotions-through-literature/476790/>
- “Teach the Books, Touch the Heart” by Claire Needell Hollander, *The New York Times* April 20, 2012.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/22/opinion/sunday/taking-emotions-out-of-our-schools.html>

Contents

- Chapter 2: Friendship
- Chapter 3: Loneliness
- Chapter 4: Cruelty

Connections: Reader Emotions & Experiences
Writing Assignment: Friendship

Part I—Definition

I. Define friendship (1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum).

What does the friendship mean to you? Give specific examples.

II. Definitions

1. the emotions or conduct of friends; the state of being friends.
"lasting **friendships**"

synonyms: relationship, close relationship, attachment, mutual attachment, association, bond, tie, link, union,

2. a relationship between friends.

"she formed close **friendships** with women" "old ties of love and friendship"

synonyms: camaraderie, friendliness, comradeship, companionship, fellowship, closeness, affinity, rapport, understanding, harmony, unity; intimacy, mutual affection.

Which synonym(s) resonates with you? (one that you will likely remember.)

III. Which definition is similar to yours? Which is different? How?
(1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum).

Notes

I. Personal Experience: Friendship

Use the following prompts to develop your ideas about friendship.

Required

- What does friendship mean to you?
(1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum).

Choose one (1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum).

- What characteristics do friendships possess?
- What is the difference between a friend and a best friend?
- What kinds of things do friends share?
- Describe the relationship you have with a friend or best friend.

II. Examples from the text: George and Lennie's friendship

Required

- Describe the friendship between George and Lennie.
(1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum).

Choose one question. (1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum).

- What keeps George and Lennie together? What does that reveal about their friendship?
- What kinds of things do George and Lenny share?
- How are George and Lenny alike? Different?
- How does George benefit from the relationship? Lennie?

III. Connecting with the text

Select one of the following topics and respond in complete sentences (1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum).

1. How is your relationship with a friend or best friend similar (comparison) to the friendship between George and Lennie?
2. How is your relationship with a friend or best friend different (contrast) from the friendship between George and Lennie?
3. Compare and contrast your relationship with a friend or best friend to the friendship between George and Lennie.

Part II--Experiences & Examples

I. Personal Experience

Use the following prompts to develop your ideas about loneliness.

Required

- Describe a specific situation in which you were very lonely. (1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum).

Choose one question. 1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum.

- What was the cause of your loneliness?
- What did that loneliness feel like? Emotionally? Physically?
- How did you deal being lonely?

II. Examples from the Text

Select two of the following examples of loneliness:

- "George's voice became..." (p. 13)
- "Slim looked through George...(p.35)
- "'Oh, I dunno.'" (p.39)
- "'I ain't got...'" (p.41:1) and "'Yeah, they get...'" (p. 41:2)
- "'Sure,' said George..." (p.57)
- "Candy interrupted him..." (p. 59)
- "Candy sat on..." (p. 60)

and respond to **each** of the following items:

1. Explain and describe each example.
2. What kind of loneliness is described in the examples?
3. Why are the characters lonely?
(1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum for each item)

III. Connecting with the Text

Select one of the following questions (1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum).

1. How is your experience with loneliness similar (comparison) with one of the examples you chose in Part II?
2. How is your experience with loneliness different (contrast)?

Of Mice & Men Chapter 4
Connections: Reader Emotions & Experiences
Writing Assignment: Cruelty

Part I—Definitions

I. Define cruelty (1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum).

What does cruelty mean to you? Give specific examples.

II. Definitions

cruel

1. causing pain or suffering.

"the winters are long, hard, and **cruel** "

synonyms: harsh, severe, grim, hard tough, bitter, harrowing, heartbreaking, heart rendering, distressing, upsetting, traumatic, painful, agonizing, excruciating.

2. willfully causing pain or suffering to others, or feeling no concern about it.

"people who are **cruel** to animals"

synonyms: brutal, savage inhuman, barbaric, barbarous, brutish, blood thirsty, murderous, cutthroat, vicious, ferocious, fierce.

bully

1. to seek to harm, intimidate, or coerce (someone perceived as vulnerable).

"her 11- year-old son has been constantly **bullied** at school"

synonyms: persecute, oppress, tyrannize, torment, browbeat, intimidate, coerce, strong- arm subjugate, domineer.

III. Which definition is similar to yours? Which is different? How?

(1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum).

Quickwrite prompts

- "The bully never remembers, the outcast never forgets."
- "Bullying isn't just the mean things you do. It's all the nice things you never do."

Notes

Part II--Experiences & Examples

I. Personal Experience

Use the following prompts to develop your ideas about cruelty.

Required

- Describe a specific situation in which you treated someone cruelly or you were treated cruelly by another person.
(1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum).

Choose one question. (1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum).

- What did that cruelty feel like? Emotionally? Physically?
- What caused you to be cruel or another person to be cruel to you?
- How did you deal with that cruelty?

II. Examples from the Text

Select one of the following examples of cruelty:

- Carlson shoots Candy's dog (p. 44: 4--p. 45: last; p. 47:4--p. 48:7).
- Curley fights Lennie (p. 61: last--p. 64:4).
- Crooks' conversation with Lennie (p. 70:2—p. 74:3).
- Curley's wife conversation with Crooks (p. 80:9—p. 81:3).

and respond to **both** of the following questions:

1. How is the passage an example of cruelty? Explain.
2. What motivated that person to be cruel?
(1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum for each question)

III. Connecting with the text

Choose **one** of the above examples of cruelty and respond to **one** of the following questions:

1. How is your experience with cruelty similar (comparison) with the example in the text?
2. How is your experience with cruelty different (contrast)?
(1 paragraph / 5 sentences minimum)

Notes
