



PROVISO
MATHEMATICS AND
SCIENCE ACADEMY

"A CATALYST FOR GREATNESS"

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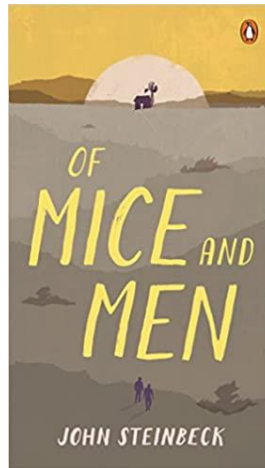
American Literature and Composition

Summer 2021 Reading Assignment

60 points in the Assessment Grading Category (45%)

Essay = 30 points, Annotated Book = 30 points

Due Date: First Day of Class, 2021-2022 School Year



Welcome to American Literature and Composition! This course covers an assortment of literary works in drama, poetry, and fiction by American authors from the 16th century to the present. In addition to examining the social and historical values of these time periods and literary works, you will learn strategies and methods for approaching each genre, paying particular attention to how authors use allusion, diction, imagery, style, symbolism, syntax, theme, and tone. Using these texts as a basis for deep reading and textual analysis, you will also understand how various beliefs and idealizations around the American Dream were formed.

In preparation for these themes and skills embedded within the course, you will read, annotate, and write an essay on *Of Mice and Men*, a short novella by John Steinbeck this summer.

Due to the annotation requirement, it is strongly recommended that you purchase your own copy of *Of Mice and Men* so that you may write directly on the pages. *Of Mice and Men* is readily available on Amazon.com and at other online booksellers. In addition to used copies that sell for a few dollars, you can obtain a brand-new copy for around \$5. Copies are also available at local bookstores.

Please read all guidelines, directions, and rubrics carefully before reading the novel and beginning the assignment.

Steps to complete (in order)—

- 1) Read the essay prompts and essay rubric included in this document. This will help focus your reading and allow you to pay special attention to evidence you can use in your essay.
- 2) Read the directions for annotation included in this document.
- 3) **While reading *Of Mice and Men*, annotate directly on *each* page.** Follow the directions for annotations included in this document. Your annotated novel will be submitted and reviewed by your teacher as part of the graded assignment.
- 4) After reading, select ONE essay prompt to address and prepare your essay for submission. You may use Google Docs or MS Word. As evidence for your thesis, you should include quotes selected from **various areas throughout the book, not all from one section.** Include page numbers in **MLA format (Steinbeck 23).**

Do not simply use quotes and passages that are readily available online through Shmoop or similar sites. We are aware of what these quotes are as well as each quote's corresponding analysis. Plagiarized essays will receive a failing grade.

The document should be typed and should adhere to MLA format. If you are unfamiliar with MLA format, please review the MLA guidelines on the Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab). We recommend that you use Microsoft Word or Google Docs to complete this assignment. Be sure to have one-inch margins, use a size 12 font, and include the author's last name and page number in parentheses for your textual evidence and page references. For example, "this is a quote you are using as supporting evidence" (Steinbeck 17). This is a paraphrase from the book (Steinbeck 43). You must also use **literary tense (this means you will write in the literary present)**. The literary present refers to using present tense verbs when writing about events that take place in a work of fiction. For example: "Gatsby **discovers** that the American dream is not so easily attained."

5. On the first day of class, you will submit your essay electronically. You will also bring your annotated book with you to receive your first grade for the course (60-point total value—30 points for the annotated book, 30 points for the essay). Be prepared to participate in a graded discussion and be assessed over your understanding of the book. These may be the additional major grades of the first quarter.

The annotation directions, annotation rubric, essay choices, and essay rubric follow.

ANNOTATION SCORING RUBRIC (30 points)

EXCELLENT

30—Annotated novels earning a score of 30 meet the criteria for annotated novels that are scored a 28 and, in addition, are especially apt, insightful, or introspective in their annotations. These novels also go beyond the one annotation per page minimum.

28—A score of 28 or above is reserved for novels that have at least one annotation per page, have a “healthy mix” of each type of annotation selections, and demonstrate thoughtful reading. They convincingly observe and analyze the specific means (literary devices and author’s craft) by which author’s purpose in *Of Mice and Men* is achieved. All annotations are easily comprehensible by the teacher and elaborated on in concise but effective short phrases.

EFFECTIVE

26—For annotated novels that are somewhat thorough or incomplete. All pages are annotated and include each type of annotation choices, but some types may be more dominant. Most annotations demonstrate the student’s thinking, but occasional annotations may need elaboration or key words/phrases to indicate analysis-level skills as opposed to summary.

ADEQUATE

24—Annotated novels earning a score of 24 have at least one annotation per page, but annotations were done unevenly, inconsistently, or insufficiently. The student’s thinking while reading is adequately represented, though it does not demonstrate depth or analysis-level observations. These annotations may also over-rely on summary or one or two annotation types.

INADEQUATE

22—Annotated novels earning a score of 22 demonstrate some effort but do not meet the minimum requirements of the assignment. The novel may not be fully annotated, or there may be a significant number of pages with markings that do not provide insight.

ESSAY CHOICES

After reading and annotating *Of Mice and Men*, select ONE essay prompt to address. You may use Google Docs or MS Word. As evidence for your thesis, you should include quotes selected from **various areas throughout the book, not all from one section**. Include page numbers in **MLA format (Steinbeck 23)**.

Do not simply use quotes and passages that are readily available online through Shmoop or similar sites. We are aware of what these quotes are as well as each quote's corresponding analysis. Plagiarized essays will receive a failing grade.

The document should be typed and should adhere to MLA format. If you are unfamiliar with MLA format, please review the MLA guidelines on the Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab). We recommend that you use Microsoft Word or Google Docs to complete this assignment. Be sure to have one-inch margins, use a size 12 font, and include the author's last name and page number in parentheses for your textual evidence and page references. For example, "this is a quote you are using as supporting evidence" (Steinbeck 17). This is a paraphrase from the book (Steinbeck 43). You must also use **literary tense (this means you will write in the literary present)**. The literary present refers to using present tense verbs when writing about events that take place in a work of fiction.

- **CHOICE A:** Analyze the dynamic of George and Lennie's relationship. What do they each receive from one another? In what ways do they rely on each other, and in what ways do they hold each other back? A microcosm is a community, place, or situation regarded as encapsulating in miniature the characteristic qualities or features of something much larger. Considering the definition of a microcosm, what broader ideas or aspects of society might each character represent? Be sure to include how their relationship illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole.
- **CHOICE B:** Examine the concept of hope throughout the novel through the protagonists and the supporting characters. What is the importance of hope in *Of Mice and Men*? What roles do hope and dreams play in people's lives? For instance, the dream of the farm with rabbits gives each of the men involved an opportunity to be useful and regain a sense of dignity and purpose. Which characters have a stake in the "dream farm?" What are the different roles of each of the people invested in the farm? What do the roles and the significance of the farm represent to each of the men? What other hopes and dreams do we see in the novel? Be sure to demonstrate how the concept of hope illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole.
- **CHOICE C:** The title of the novel echoes the following famous lines of poet Robert Burns: "The best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men/Gang aft agley, /An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain, /For promis'd joy!" In other words, the best laid plans of mice and men often go astray and leave us only grief and pain for promised joy. How does Steinbeck convey this idea? Be sure to demonstrate how the title of the novel illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole by using specific evidence from throughout the text.
- **CHOICE D:** Using one of the topics from A, B, or C, you will compare and contrast the film version of the novel (released in 1992 and directed by Gary Sinise), specifically focusing on the director's treatment of your selected topic compared to its depiction in the novel. After reading the novel and viewing the film, you will select several scenes with which you can compare the choices of the author to the choices of the director. This is not a summary or report of the general differences between the film or novel. Your scenes selected from both should include very specific details and decisions by both artists and an analysis of how these decisions illuminate the meaning of each work as a whole through A, B, or C.

ESSAY SCORING RUBRIC (30 points)

EXCELLENT

30—Essays earning a score of 30 meet the criteria for essays that are scored a 28 and, in addition, are especially full or apt in their analysis or demonstrate impressive control of language.

28—A score of 28 or above is reserved for those essays that are well-organized, demonstrate a command of the elements of composition, and display evidence of stylistic maturity. These essays explain with some precision the answer to the prompt selected and the author's purpose. They convincingly analyze the specific means (literary devices and author's craft) by which that purpose in *Of Mice and Men* is achieved. While the student writing demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing, it is not necessarily flawless.

EFFECTIVE

26—For essays that are somewhat less well-written: they may show occasional lapses in syntax, diction, or organization. These essays explain their response to the prompt and include details which support that explanation, though they may analyze with less clarity or precision the means by which the author's purpose/theme is achieved through literary devices and author's craft. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally, the student writing is clear.

ADEQUATE

24—Essays earning a score of 24 analyze specific author choices used to create meaning in *Of Mice and Men* in response to the prompt, but do so unevenly, inconsistently, or insufficiently. The writing is adequately written, though it does not demonstrate stylistic maturity or confident control over the elements of composition. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the writer's ideas. These ideas are correct in essentials but are not explored in depth.

INADEQUATE

22—Essays earning a score of 22 demonstrate effort but may respond to the prompt inadequately. They may offer little discussion of the author's choices, may misrepresent those techniques, or analyze them incorrectly. These essays display an understanding of the book, but they treat it only in generalities, inadequately explaining its effects or analyzing the techniques by which those effects are achieved. They may concentrate on an inappropriate evidence selection or show a lack of the facility of language needed to analyze the details they mention.

LITTLE SUCCESS

20—Essays earning a score of 20 or below demonstrate little success in analyzing theme or comprehension. These essays misunderstand the prompt, offer vague generalizations, substitute simpler tasks such as summarizing the text, or do not follow assignment directions. The student writing often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing such as consistent errors in diction, spelling, or syntax. These essays provide little explanation in response to the prompt and no explicit analysis of how the text demonstrates author's purpose. The essay may be a general or oversimplified, reader-response based answer to the prompt.