



**PROVISO**  
MATHEMATICS AND  
SCIENCE ACADEMY

"A CATALYST FOR GREATNESS"



**IH American Literature**  
**Required Summer Reading Assignment 2022**  
**Due Date: September 1<sup>st</sup> (First full day of class)**

**Welcome to IH American Literature!** This course covers an assortment of literary works in drama, poetry, and fiction by American authors from the 16<sup>th</sup> 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, this summer, you will read, annotate, and write an essay on the book *Of Mice and Men*, a short novella by John Steinbeck.

You can check out the book at PMSA before the end of the school year. You can also check it out from a local library or purchase the book from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Half-Price Books, or other book vendor.

Please read all guidelines, directions, and rubrics carefully before reading the book and beginning this 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 annotations included in this document.
- 3) While reading *Of Mice and Men*, annotate using post-it notes, index cards, strips of paper, or digital notes. Follow the directions for annotations included in this document. Your annotations will be submitted and reviewed by your teacher as part of the graded assignment. If you purchase the book, you may choose to annotate directly in the book; however, **please do NOT write in the book if you checked out/borrowed a copy.**
- 4) After reading the book in its entirety, select ONE essay prompt to write your essay using Microsoft Word. As evidence for your thesis, include direct quotes selected from various areas throughout the book, not all from one section/chapter. Include page numbers in MLA format: (Steinbeck 23).

Select your own quotes and passages, not the ones readily available online through cheater websites. Do not copy quotes or other analysis from those sites. **Plagiarized essays will receive a failing grade.**

The document should be typed and use MLA format. If you are unfamiliar with MLA format, please review the MLA guidelines on the Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab). Be sure to have one-inch margins, use 12 pt. 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 fictional work. For example: "Gatsby discovers that the American dream is not so easily attained." vs. "Gatsby discovered that..."

- 5) On the first day of class in the fall, you will submit your essay electronically. You will also bring your annotations with you to receive your first grade in the course (50 points total: 20 points for the annotations, 30 points for the essay). Be prepared to participate in a graded discussion to demonstrate your understanding of the book.

## ANNOTATION DIRECTIONS

*You must have at least one annotation per page. You will select one (or more) of the following choices for each page as you read. You should avoid having the same type of annotation repeat for back-to-back pages. In other words, there should be a “healthy mix.” Annotations should **not** be complete sentences, but your thinking while you read should be comprehensible to the teacher or another reader.*

- 1. Look for main character traits and changes:** Identify character traits or ways in which the character is developing or changing. In the margins, WRITE the trait described.
- 2. Think about connections between this text and other texts you have read, information from other classes, and personal experiences.** Make these connections. WRITE key words or phrases that signal these connections.
- 3. Think about any open-ended questions that you may have while reading.** Identify words or phrases that inspired these questions. WRITE brief versions of your questions that could be answered by others. Questions should not be easily “Googled.”
- 4. Think about the most important ideas on the page.** WRITE what those ideas are and why they are important.
- 5. Look for symbols in the text.** Identify what symbols are used. WRITE briefly the significance of those symbols or why these symbols are being used.
- 6. Identify examples of literary devices.** WRITE down examples of each one that you find. Include a key word that indicates the purpose/effect in context of the literary device.

### Literary Devices:

- Allusion: reference to history, literature, art, or religious texts (including mythology)
- Characterization: reveals a character’s personality (appearance, actions, thoughts, & reactions of others)
- Flashback: an interruption of the action to present a scene that took place before the work began
- Foreshadowing: giving hints or clues that suggest or prepare you for events that occur later in the work
- Hyperbole: a highly exaggerated statement used specifically for dramatic effect
- Irony: a contrast between what is expected and what actually happens
- Imagery: language that appeals to the five senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch)
- Metaphor: comparison, does not use “like” or “as” but compares directly
- Simile: Comparing two things using “Like” or “As”
- Symbol: A person, place, object, or action that stands for something beyond itself
- Theme: A recurring message or idea that makes the reader come to a new realization

## ANNOTATION SCORING RUBRIC (20 points)

### EXCELLENT

**20** Annotations meet the criteria for a score of 18, in addition, are especially insightful or introspective. These annotations go beyond the one annotation per page minimum.

**19** Annotations represent at least one 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

**18** Annotations are thorough and complete. All pages are annotated and include each type of annotation choice, but some types may be more dominant. Most annotations demonstrate student’s thinking, but occasional annotations may need elaboration or key words/phrases to indicate analysis-level skills vs. summary.

**17** Annotations are somewhat thorough and complete. All pages are annotated and include each type of annotation choice, but some types may be more dominant. Most annotations demonstrate student's thinking, but occasional annotations may need elaboration or key words/phrases to indicate analysis-level skills vs. summary.

### **ADEQUATE**

**16** Annotations 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.

**15** Annotations 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.

**14** Annotations 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.

### **INADEQUATE**

**13** Annotations demonstrate little effort and do not meet the minimum requirements of the assignment.

**12** Annotations demonstrate very little effort and do not meet the minimum requirements of the assignment.

**11** Annotations demonstrate inadequate effort and do not meet the minimum requirements of the assignment.

**10** No annotations submitted. Per School Board Policy, student earns 50% to avoid any zeros in the gradebook.

## **ESSAY CHOICES**

Choose ONE of the Essay Choices below.

- 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)

*Your essay will be graded according to the descriptions below.*

### EXCELLENT

**30** Essay meets the criteria for essays that are scored a 28 and, in addition, is especially full or apt in its analysis or demonstrates impressive control of language.

**28** Essay is well-organized, demonstrates a command of the elements of composition, and displays evidence of stylistic maturity. Essay explains with some precision the answer to the prompt selected and the author's purpose. Essay convincingly analyzes 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.

**24** Essay analyzes specific author choices used to create meaning in *Of Mice and Men* in response to the prompt, but does 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.

### ADEQUATE

**22** Essay demonstrates adequate success in analyzing theme or comprehension. It may offer little discussion of the author's choices, misrepresent those techniques, or analyze them incorrectly. The essay displays an understanding of the book, but it treats it only in generalities, inadequately explaining its effects or analyzing the techniques by which those effects are achieved. It may concentrate on an inappropriate evidence selection or show a lack of the facility of language needed to analyze the details mentioned.

### INADEQUATE

**20** Essay demonstrates inadequate success in analyzing theme or comprehension. It misunderstands the prompt, offers vague generalizations, substitutes simpler tasks such as summarizing the text, or does not follow assignment directions. The student writing often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing such as consistent errors in diction, spelling, or syntax. It provides little explanation in response to the prompt and no explicit analysis of how the text demonstrates author's purpose. The essay exhibits general or oversimplified, understanding of the prompt.

**18** Essay demonstrates inadequate success in analyzing theme or comprehension. It misunderstands the prompt, offers vague generalizations, substitutes simpler tasks such as summarizing the text, and/or does not follow assignment directions. The student writing demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing such as numerous errors in diction, spelling, and syntax. It provides very little explanation in response to the prompt and no explicit analysis of how the text demonstrates author's purpose. The essay exhibits general and/or oversimplified understanding of the text.

### LITTLE SUCCESS

**16** Essay demonstrates no success in analyzing theme or comprehension. It misunderstands the prompt, offers vague generalizations, substitutes simpler tasks such as summarizing the text, and does not follow assignment directions. The student writing often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing such as consistent errors in diction, spelling, and syntax. It provides very little explanation in response to the prompt and no explicit analysis of how the text demonstrates author's purpose. The essay exhibits general or oversimplified understanding of the text.

**15** No essay submitted. Per School Board Policy, student earns 50% to avoid any zeros in the gradebook.