

Year 9 English w/c 29th June

'Of Mice & Men' Week 3: Chapter Four

Task 1: plot summary (Chapter Four)

Read Chapter Four and complete the summary by filling in the blanks.

_____ is alone in his room when _____ wanders in. Most of the other men, including George, have gone into Soledad for the _____. Envious of George and Lennie's _____, Crooks _____ Lennie with the suggestion that George may _____ come back. Lennie is frightened and angry. Crooks _____ down and speaks of his own isolation and _____.

Candy arrives, and the men discuss George, Lennie and Candy's plans for the _____. At first Crooks is _____, but at last he asks if he can come and _____ for them in _____ for his bed and board. Then Curley's wife comes in. Her husband has gone into town, leaving her _____ with nobody to _____ to. Crooks and _____ ask her to leave. She _____ all three men and _____ Crooks before departing.

The _____ men come back from town. Crooks, _____ and demoralized, tells Candy to forget about his request to _____ them on the farm.

never	threatens	friendship	Crooks	loneliness	alone
join	work	taunts	insults	farm	nastily
buck	rabbits	other	Candy	repeatedly	backs
defeated	sceptical	exchange	evening	talk	Lennie

Task 2: vocabulary & glossary

The words and definitions below have been jumbled up. Find these words in the chapter and read them in context then try to match the words with their correct meanings. Use a dictionary to check your answers (online dictionaries are available). Add to your own glossary of words and definitions that you began for Chapters One to Three. Include these words and any other words you have found tricky in this chapter.

liniment

Lasting forever

aloof

A lotion for rubbing on the body to relieve pain

contemptuous

Anxiety or fear

appraise

Given to deep thought or strong emotion

permanent

Scornful

apprehension

To assess the quality or value of a person or thing

intense

Distant and reserved

Task 3: character study - Crooks

The fourth part of the novel takes place in the harness room where Crooks lives. Re-read the first two pages of the fourth section and find a quotation that shows that Crooks...

...is intelligent: _____

...is a skilled worker: _____

...has a low status: _____

...is segregated from the other men: _____



Crooks

Fill in this character study for Crooks by choosing the best option from each row and then selecting at least 5 quotations from the chapter which tell us about Crooks.

Appearance: Large, soft eyes / Deep-set eyes / Small, sharp eyes

Thin-lipped / Wide-mouthed / Thick-lipped

Crooked spine / Wears calipers / Uses crutches

Job: Driving the mule teams / Working in the stables / Doing odd jobs

Personality: Violent / Friendly / Proud

Generous / Academic / Bitter

Key quotations:

Task 4: characterisation - Crooks

1. Why does Crooks have a room to himself? Try to think of more than one reason.
2. Why is Crooks annoyed when Lennie comes into his room? Why does he eventually let him in? Again, you should be able to come up with more than one reason.
3. Why does Crooks torment Lennie by suggesting that George will abandon him?
4. Why does Candy feel embarrassed about coming into Crooks' room?
5. Why does Crooks change his mind about joining George, Lennie and Candy on the farm?

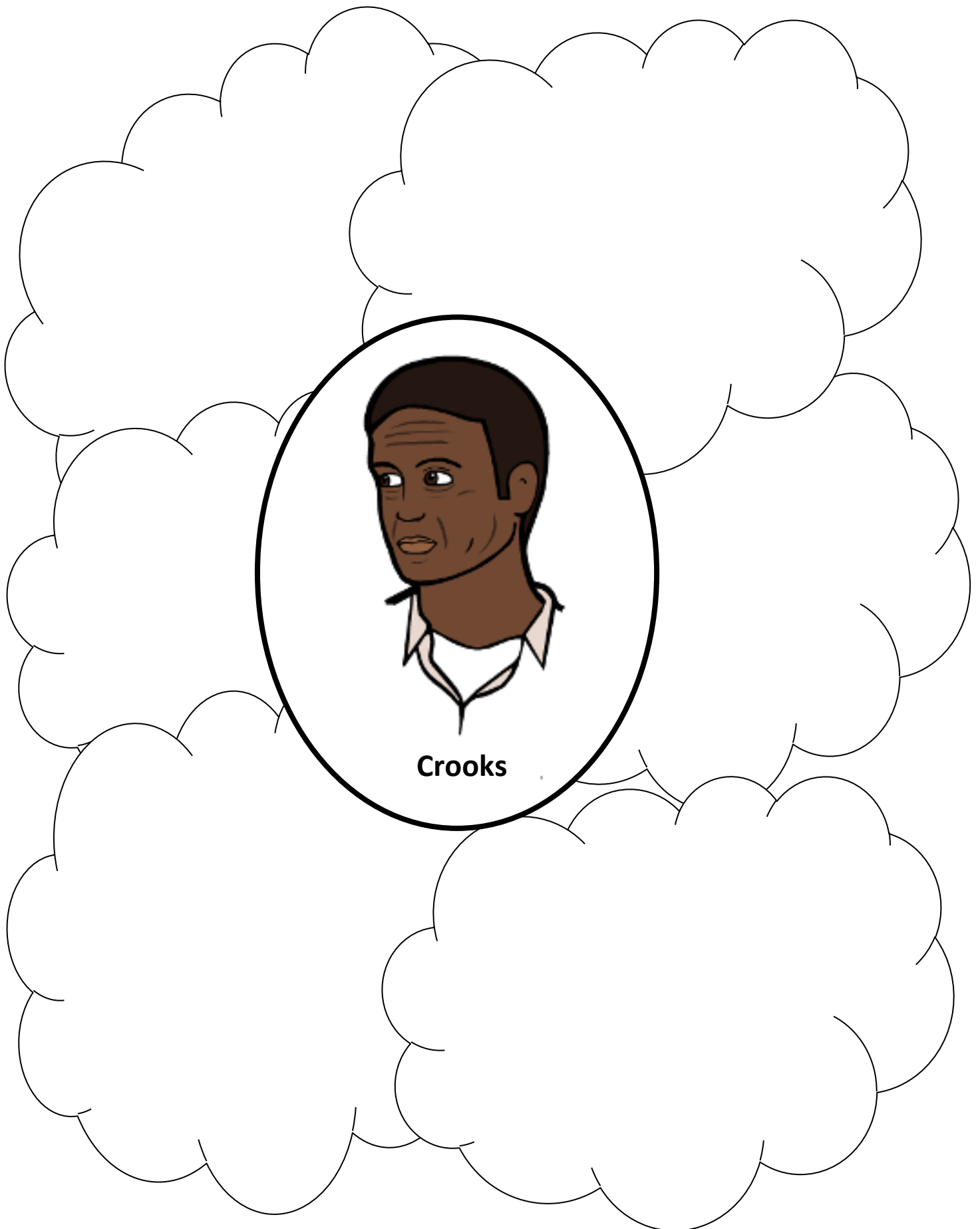
Racism:

Crooks is marginalized because he is black. In the USA at that period, black people were treated as second-class citizens. **Segregation laws** (known as **Jim Crow laws** from a derogatory term for a black person) dominated every area of life and frequently affected Native Americans and people of Asian origin as well as African Americans.

Essentially segregation meant that black people were confined to separate and usually inferior areas and facilities. They lived in different neighbourhoods, attended separate schools, and were barred from entering certain professions. Some states refused to allow black people to enter theatres and restaurants. Even public transport was segregated into 'white' seats and 'black' seats.

Segregation laws differed from state to state and altered over time. In California in the 1930s some of them had been repealed but many white people still regarded black people as inferior.

Mind-map everything you know about Crooks. Try to select short quotations to support each point.



Task 5: questions about Curley's wife

1. Where is Curley?
2. Why does Curley's wife come in?
3. Why don't the men want her to stay?
4. Why does she insult them?
5. What does she threaten to do to Crooks?
6. Do you feel any sympathy for her? Give reasons for your views.

Female stereotypes:

Think about the other women who are mentioned in the novel:

- Lennie's Aunt Clara
- The girl in Weed who, like Curley's wife, wears red, and who apparently shares her love of attention (she "rabbits in an' tells the law she been raped")
- Old Susy who keeps the brothel in Soledad
- Susy's rival Clara, who shares her name with Lennie's aunt

In the society depicted in the novel, women are perceived as falling into two categories or stereotypes: sex symbol or mother figure.

Curley's wife hangs around the bunk house and the stable because she is lonely and looking for companionship but the men will not accept her as a friend because neither they nor she are capable of perceiving her as anything other than a sex object.

Now think of all the derogatory terms the men use about Curley's wife: tart, bitch, poison, rattrap, looloo, tramp. What do you think these terms say about the men who use them?

Task 6: themes – loneliness & dreams

Loneliness and dreams are closely linked in this section. All the men have dreams, but it is only when they stand together that it looks as if they may have a chance of achieving them. In this section of the novel four of the loneliest and most downtrodden characters talk together about their dreams of a better life. Identify which character said each of the quotes below by connecting them to their picture.



“Think I don’t like to talk to somebody ever’ once in a while?”

“Standin’ here talkin’ to a bunch of bindle stiffs... an’ likin’ it because they ain’t nobody else.”

“Think I like to stick in that house all a time?”

“Had two brothers. They was always near me, always there.”

“It’s just the talking. It’s just bein’ with another guy.”

“I tell ya a guy gets too lonely an’ he gets sick.”

“There wasn’t another colored family for miles around. And now there ain’t a colored man on this ranch...”

“Sat’iday night! Ever’body out doin’ sum’pin’. Ever’body! An’ what am I doin’?”

“A guy goes nuts if he ain’t got nobody.”



Task 7: marginalisation

For each of the following characters, write two or three sentences explaining why they are marginalised and what effect this has on their lives.

Crooks: _____

Lennie: _____

Candy: _____

Curley's wife: _____

Extension Task: additional questions & activities

1. How does the structure of the chapter reinforce a sense of futility?
2. Which character do you think has most power in this chapter? Which has least? Give reasons for your answers.
3. Choose one character. Writing from his or her point of view, describe your dreams, how you might go about achieving them, and what you think might stand in your way.
4. "Crooks' face lighted with pleasure in his torture." *Of Mice and Men* is full of instances of cruelty, but rather than being confined to the powerful, it is often the underdogs who behave most viciously to one another. Why do you think this is? Can you find some more examples?