

## Year 9 English w/c 13<sup>th</sup> July

### 'Of Mice & Men' Week 7: Chapter Six

#### Task 1: plot summary (Chapter Six)

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

The final chapter of the novel opens with a description of the river bank where Lennie comes to \_\_\_\_\_ and wait for \_\_\_\_\_.

Lennie drinks from the \_\_\_\_\_, then sits down with his knees drawn up to his chest. As he sits there he has two \_\_\_\_\_ – first of his \_\_\_\_\_, who \_\_\_\_\_ him for being a \_\_\_\_\_ to George, then of an enormous \_\_\_\_\_, who tells him that this time George is going to \_\_\_\_\_ him.

Then George arrives. He \_\_\_\_\_ Lennie and tells him one last time about the \_\_\_\_\_ they dream of owning \_\_\_\_\_. Then he \_\_\_\_\_ the other men approaching. He slips Carlson's \_\_\_\_\_ out of his pocket and \_\_\_\_\_ Lennie in the back of the head.

The other men run into the clearing. \_\_\_\_\_ gloats over Lennie's dead body, and \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ and insensitive. Only \_\_\_\_\_ understands what Lennie's \_\_\_\_\_ has cost George.

Clara      Carlson      visions      hide      burden      together      death  
comforts      Aunt      Curley      rabbit      rifle      sees  
kill      crass      pistol      shoots      scolds      Slim      leave  
farm      river      hears      George

## 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 Five. Include these words and any other words you have found tricky in this chapter.

gingham

Wild with fear

haunches

Hostile and aggressive

emphasis

To answer back sharply, angrily or cheekily

frantic

Flat and dull

monotonous

White checked cotton cloth

belligerent

The thighs and buttocks

retort

Stress placed on a word to show importance

### **Task 3: structure**

The last chapter of the novel echoes the first. The setting is identical and many phrases, incidents and images are repeated. Find as many similarities as you can and enter them in the table below.

<b>Chapter One</b>	<b>Chapter Six</b>

#### **What effect do these structural similarities have?**

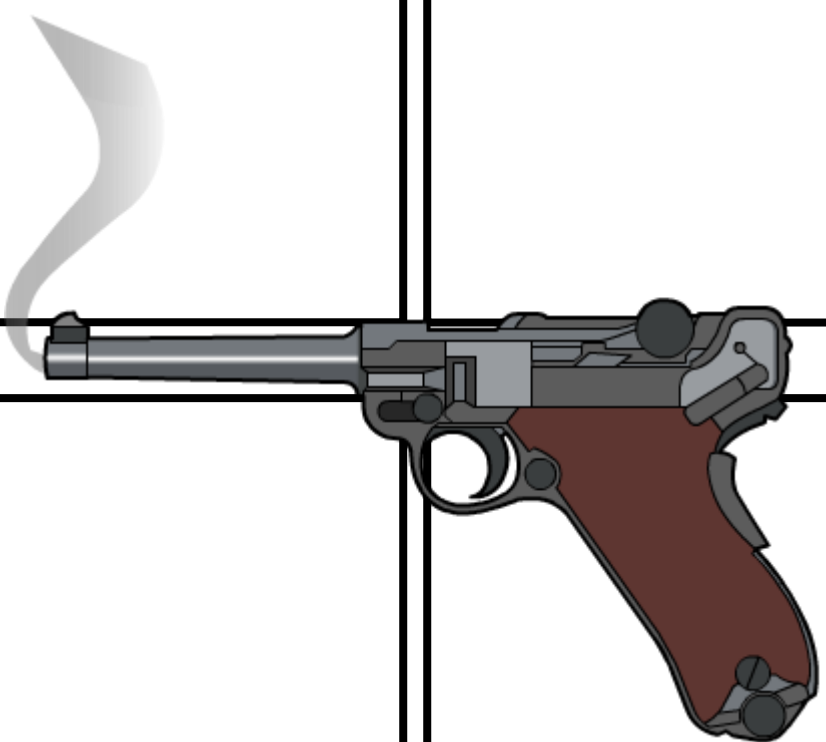
The incident with the water snake changes the associations of the setting. The idyllic opening scene has given way to a vision of a predatory natural order characterized by the indiscriminate, unpredictable visitation of death. Lennie's furtive movements as he creeps down to the river to drink transform him from the happily domesticated horse, bear, or dog of Section One to a hunted animal. There is tragedy in the repetition of the farm story. Lennie revels in it, unaware of his impending death, while the reader and George both now know that the dream will never come true.

The cumulative effect of all these repetitions is to give the novel a cyclical structure which reinforces the atmosphere of inevitability. George and Lennie have come full circle and are back where they started – except that this time, Lennie is going to die. On a more general level, this cyclicity also reflects the lifestyle of the principal characters – moving from ranch to ranch, from month to month, from year to year, never getting any further forward, then finally dying.

Think: at which other points in the novel is a cyclical structure employed? What is the effect?

#### **Task 4: dramatic tension**

The novella builds to its climax as George prepares to kill Lennie. Find four quotations that heighten the dramatic tension in this chapter and enter them in the boxes below. For each, explain the how it makes the chapter tense and dramatic for the reader.

## Task 5: literary context

The title *Of Mice and Men* comes from Robert Burns' poem 'To A Mouse, On Turning Her up in Her Nest with the Plough' (1786):

*The best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men  
Gang aft agley,  
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain  
For promis'd joy.*

How are these lines relevant to the novel?

Now consider these lines from the poem:

*Still, thou art blessed, compar'd wi' me!  
The present only toucheth thee:  
But Och! I backward cast my e'e,  
On prospects drear!  
An' forward, tho' I canna see,  
I guess an' fear!*

(Robert Burns, 'To a Mouse', 1786)

In your opinion, which characters from the novel qualify as 'mice' and which as 'men'?  
Why?

Taking these lines into account, for whom do you feel most sorry at the end of the novel –  
George or Lennie? Why?

## **Task 6: got the plot?**

How much can you remember about the plot? Number the following events to show which order they occur in.

Curley attacks Lennie.	
Lennie kills Curley's wife.	
George and Lennie arrive at the ranch.	
Crooks considers joining them on the farm.	
Lennie hides in the brush.	
They meet Curley, who takes a dislike to Lennie.	
Candy's old dog is shot.	
The men set out to hunt for Lennie.	
George shoots Lennie dead.	
Candy offers to put up \$350 for the farm.	

## **Task 7: quiz**

1. What is the name of Slim's dog?

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2. What is the name of Curley's wife?

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3. What is the name of the river?

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4. What is the name of the nearest town?

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5. What does Lennie like with beans?

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6. What does Lennie like best?

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7. Where did Lennie get into trouble?

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8. What is Lennie often compared to?

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9. In which chapter of the novel is Candy's dog shot?

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10. In which chapter of the novel do we hear most about Crooks?

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11. In which chapter of the novel does Lennie hide in the brush?

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12. In which chapter of the novel does Curley's wife first meet George?

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13. Who says, "Now what the hell ya suppose is eatin' them two guys?"

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14. Who says, "I coulda made somethin' of myself"?

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15. Who says, "You got no right to come in here"?

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16. Who says, "Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world"?

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## Extension Task: additional questions

1. Reread the passage where Lennie experiences visions of his aunt and a giant rabbit. To what extent do you think Lennie is aware of his difference from other people?
2. Which other incident in the book Lennie's death? What point do these incidents make, considered together?
3. Why does George shoot Lennie? Try to think of more than one reason.
4. What will be the consequences for George? Consider the major themes of the novel in your answer.
5. How do you think George changes over the course of the novel?
6. What is the significance of Slim's attitude to George at the end of the novel?