Chapter 1

Look at the way both Lennie and George are first described.

**Both:** Dressed in denim coat, trousers; black shapeless hats

**George:** Small, quick, dark face, restless eyes and sharp, every part of him was defined, small, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose

**Lennie:** a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with wide sloping shoulders; he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws. Arms hung loosely

**Snow-bunny**

- How is this initial description fitting when we find out more about each man?
  - George is small and “quick” witted
  - Lennie is large and “slow-moving” and slow in catching on or figuring.

Friendship v. Obligation
- Is the relationship between George and Lennie one of friendship, or does George only feel obligated to take care of Lennie? What evidence can you find to support either conclusion?
- George believes that Lennie cannot survive without him.
- George’s life is more difficult because he has to take care of Lennie.
  - “I wisht I could put you in a cage with about a million mice an’ let you have fun.”
  - Friendship
  - George says, “I was jus foolin’, Lennie. ‘Cause I want you to stay with me...”
- He promises to get him a puppy if he stays with him.
- Friendship is reciprocal. What does George bring to this relationship? What do you think Lennie brings to this relationship?

  Why does Lennie have the dead mouse?
- A dead mouse in his pocket
- Lennie has the dead mouse in his pocket because he likes the way their fur feels. He says he likes to pet them.
- The mouse is dead because, while petting it, the mouse bites him. Lennie reacts to the bite by pinching the mouse’s head and accidently kills it. Lennie doesn’t know his own strength.
- George makes Lennie throw the mouse in the river.
- He tells Lennie that the mouse isn’t fresh.
- Carrying a mouse in his pocket sets Lennie apart from others.
- How many people do you know who carry mice in their pocket?
- George wants others to think that Lennie is “normal.”
- What happened at the last place where Lennie and George worked?
  o Lennie tried to feel the girl’s dress.
  o His attention frightened her; she moved away.
  o He held on to her like he holds onto his mice.
  o She yells.
    - “We got to hide in a irrigation ditch all day with guys lookin’ for us, and we got to sneak out in the dark.”
- What happened between the girl yelling and the men hiding out in the ditch?
  Dreams
  “Living off the fatta the lan’”
- A little house
- A couple acres
- Some critters: cow and some pigs
- A big vegetable garden
- A rabbit hutch and some chickens
- They won’t have to work in the winter;
  o “We’ll build a fire in the stove and set around it an’ listen to the rain comin’ down on the roof.”
Why is this dream so important to them?
- The dreams set them apart from the other lonely, pointless workers
- The goal helps them tolerate the horrible conditions and the monotonous work of their life.

Chapter 2
- How is the bunk house described? What does the description tell the reader about the men who live there?
  o The bunk house
  o The bunk house is empty, void of all people when Steinbeck describes it. Why would he do that?
  o Long, rectangular building
  o Whitewashed walls, unpainted floor
  o Small, square windows; door with a wooden latch.
  o Eight bunks with burlap ticking; over each, a apple box nailed to the wall for personal belongings.
- What does the description tell the reader about the men who live there?
  o Desperate, willing to work without any privacy
- What do we find out about Curley, his wife, and his father through George's discussions with others?
  o The Boss
The boss was expectin’ you last night. He was sore as hell when you wasn’t here to go out this morning.”

He’s a pretty nice fella. He gets pretty mad sometimes…

Brought out a gallon of whiskey at Christmas time.

He wore high-heeled boots and spurs to prove he was not a laboring man.

Stingy; marked in his time book that the two men didn’t start until noon that day.

Curly

Wore a glove on his left hand

Calculating and pugnacious

“What the hell’s he got on his shoulder?” Curley acts as if he has a chip on his shoulder; he’s mad at everyone for something another has done to him.

Pretty handy, good at fighting. Scrappy

He became even cockier after he married

“This guy Curly sounds like a s.o.b. to me. I don’t like mean little guys.” George.

Curly’s Wife

A tart

Uses her body to get attention from the workers
Hair done up nice, nails painted red and her face was made-up.

**Chapter 3**

- How Lennie and George ended up together:
  - Him and me was born in Auburn. I knowed his Aunt Clara. She took him when he was a baby and raised him up. When his aunt Clara died, Lennie just come along with me out workin’. Got kinda jused to each other after a little while.”
  - Traveling without Lennie wouldn’t be good or fun; George would become mean like the other loners.
  - A turning point in their relationship
    - George tells Lennie to jump in the river.
    - Lennie jumps in the river and nearly drowns; he can’t swim
    - George pulls him out of the water.
    - “An’ he was so damn nice to me for pulling him out. Clean forgot I told him to jump in.”
      - George
      - “Guy don’t need no sense to be a nice feller. Seems to me sometimes it jus’ works the other way around. Take a real smart guy and he ain’t hardly ever a nice fella.”

- Lennie fills in the blanks in the story of Weed.
  - The only way George could get Lennie to let go of the girl in the red dress was by hitting
Lennie over the head with a picket from the fence.

- The scared girl told the law he raped her.
- The men in Weed collected a lynch mob.
- They hid in the ditch until dark.

- What are Carlson's reasons for shooting Candy's dog?
  - He stinks
  - He has no teeth
  - He has rheumatism
  - He is not help
  - He’s no good for himself
  - He suffers
  - He don’t have no fun
  - It isn’t kind to keep him alive

- What does the fight between Lennie and Curley show about their characters?

- Why doesn't George help Lennie in the fight?
  - In what ways is Candy like his dog?
    - He is old
    - He can’t work as hard as he used to

- Who is William Tenner?
  - Former hand who worked there
  - He wrote a letter that was eventually published in a western magazine.

- How did the men feel about William Tenner and his letter?
- Candy wants in on the dream. What will he bring to the dream if George lets him?
  - Three-hundred-fifty bucks.
  - He’ll cook, feed the chickens and hoe the garden
  - He’ll will his share to them
- What does the fight between Lennie and Curley show about their characters?
  - Curley is arrogant and unreasonable
  - He is a bully
  - Lennie doesn’t like hurting people
  - Lennie relies on George to make decisions for him.
  - Lennie doesn’t know his own strength

**Chapter 4**

- Crook's room and the things in
- African-American stable buck
- Lived in a little shed that leaned off the wall of the barn
- Bunk was a long box (Wagon without wheels?) filled with straw
- Broken tack hung on the wall
- A bench for leather working
- Apple box over his bunk
- Medicines for himself and the horses; saddle soap and tar…
- Crooks bunk and character
- Several pairs of shoes, a single-barreled shotgun
- Spectacles
- Swept and neat
- Manure pile out his window
  - “Nobody got a right to be here but me…I got a right to have a light.”
  - “Don’t come in a place where you’re not wanted.”

- Crooks Character
  - He was “a cripple”
  - More permanent than others. Why?
  - His body was bent over to the left by his crooked spine
  - Eyes lay deep in his head; glitter with intensity
  - Deep wrinkles on his face
  - Knows his rights and that which is held against him

**Crooks Isolation and Loneliness**

- “S’pose you couldn’t go into the bunkhouse and play rummy ‘cause you was black…S’pose you had to sit out here an’ read books. Sure you could play horseshoes till it got dark, but then you got to read books. Books ain’t no good. A guy needs somebody—to be near him.”

- Crooks have a more realistic opinion of folks?
- Does he have a reason to be less trusting?
- Why would Crooks react so negatively to Lennie?
o Lennie has trespassed over one of the few rights Crooks has

- Why does Crooks torture and taunt Lennie about George?
- Is he jealous?
  o Does he trust George and other men like him?
- Why is Crooks called "Crooks"?
  o Crooks has a broken (crooked) back
- How does this reflect his personality?
  o Makes him cranky
  o Separates him even further from the other men
  o Gives him a reason not to work as hard as others.
- Where is George?
- Do you agree with Crooks when he claims that George is spending the money he promised to put towards their dream?
- Place the following characters in a social hierarchy with the most affluent, powerful and/or rich at the top of the list:
  o Crooks
  o Lennie
  o Candy
  o Curley’s wife
- The one most discriminated against should be at the bottom.
- What makes the character on the top of the list of a higher social class?

**Chapter 5**

- What has happened to Lennie’s puppy?
  - It is DEAD!

- How have Curley's wife's dreams for her life changed or been lost?
  - She could go with the show:
  - A new boyfriend wanted to take her with him
  - her *ol’ lady* wouldn’t let her;
  - she was only 15
  - she could be in the ‘pitchers’, had nice clothes, sat in big hotels, spoke on the radio

- Wife’s dream
  - wanted to be in the “pitchers”:
  - never got a letter from him telling her to come
  - thought her mother was hiding the letters

- Why does Curley's wife tell Lennie about "the letter"?
  - The letter helps explain why she is there
  - She’s trying to make Lennie believe that she is above the life she is living.
  - Is she trying to make him feel better about killing the puppy by accident?

- Is she asking to be a part of his dream?

- What do you think the letter symbolizes?
  - Broken Dreams?
  - Oppression?
o A young woman’s helplessness in the direction her future takes?
- How does Lennie's killing of the puppy parallel his killing of Curley's wife?
  o For both the puppy and Curely’s wife…
  o Lennie finds pleasure in the touch of something soft
  o …both the puppy and the wife object to his attention
  o …Lennie becomes frustrated and tries to protect himself from their dismissal and the trouble they can cause him
- How does Candy react to the death of Curley's wife?  
  o He blames her for being a tart and making a mess of his/their dream

What options do George and Candy discuss after the discovery of the body?
  o What to do with Lennie
  o Maybe they’ll lock him up and be nice to him.
  o Can’t let him get away; he’ll starve to death
  o If they lock him up Curley will kill him.
  o Carrying on with the dream
  o How George will never be able to save up his $50.
- If Lennie was your friend, what would you do?
Chapter 6

- What is the significance of the rabbit appearing at the end of the book?
  o Acts as Lennie’s conscious.
  o Predicts what George might say once he gets there.
  o Shows how Lennie views and/or understand George and the way he feels about/deals with Lennie
- Symbolize the safe place?
  o Represent a sense of freedom from hard work to both George and Lennie.
- Rabbits in Chapter 6
  - represent responsibility. Lennie has to be responsible to tend the rabbits
  - symbolize the comfort that Lennie wishes to find in a home.
  - Hope, dream, responsibility, freedom
- Why did George kill Lennie?
- Was George justified in killing Lennie?
- Explain what happens to the dream at the end of the novel
- End of the dream:
- No little farm with a house and rabbit hutch
- What becomes of George, now that he doesn’t have Lennie in his life?
- Why can’t George search for the dream he had with Lennie?
- Does Lennie get his dream?
- Is reaching heaven the ultimate dream?
- Is Lennie in a better place than George?
- In what way does Slim show understanding for George's decision?
  - “Never you mind… A guy got to sometimes.”
  - “Come on George. Me an’ you’ll go in an’ get a drink.”
  - You hadda George. I swear you hadda. Come on with me.”

- Why does Carlson ask the last question?
- How’d you do it?
- Did he have my gun?
- An’ you got it away from him an you took it an’ you killed him?
- Is he giving George an explanation for how and why he did it?