

Fishbowl Discussion
POINTS: 100

Of Mice and Men

Steps:

1. Everyone in the class needs to write notes on the questions. The notes do not have to be in paragraph form or even particularly neat. The idea is that you will be prepared to respond to each question in depth. (You may want to mark down page numbers, etc.)
2. During class, at least one group of FIVE people will be selected to be in the “fishbowl”—that is, sitting in the middle of the class. This group will discuss several of these questions.
3. While the students in the fishbowl are discussing, the rest of the class needs to be recording—your own comments about what is being said.
4. After four or five minutes, one or two students will be allowed to leave the discussion group and bring in another student or two.

Guidelines:

- ALL students should be prepared to participate in the fishbowl!
- Students watching are NOT allowed to comment during the discussion. (There will be time at the end of the discussion for students to comment.)

Questions:

Discussion Rubric:

Discussion Participant must be prepared. Remember, that if it is an answer to a question that warrants it, you must give direct textual evidence, if it is comment you can give direct or indirect evidence (you must always draw back to the book).

*5- answer/comment is very thoughtful, complete; deep and analytical, impresses me and peers, sparks new ideas and conversation, text clearly supports answer and is the best text chosen for that answer (*this is the type of answer that everyone has to pause to think about because it is so insightful)*

4- answer/comment is somewhat thoughtful, average level thinking, complete; text clearly supports answer

3- answer/comment is sort of weak (literal, not analytical), may be incomplete in some way or you may be just regurgitating what the teacher already told you; text may be somewhat weak (but did attempt)... you could have found better text to support

2- answer/comment is completely incorrect (makes me wonder if you read the novel), and/or incomplete (but did attempt); it mostly just repeats what someone else already said; text may not connect to their answer at all (but did attempt)

1- no attempt was made

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Discussion = 50 points

Notes prepared = 20 points

Observer Notes = 30 points

I will have to grade holistically, but this is the approximate range = 50 points for discussion

5's =100-95

4=94-80

3=79-70

2=69-60

1=did not participate =0

DISCUSSION NOTES: OF MICE AND MEN

1. One reoccurring **theme** in *Of Mice and Men* is that of the isolation of the individual. In a cold, cruel world, friendship and companionship is the only comfort, especially for those who cannot survive on their own. Crooks, Slim, Lennie, and Curley's wife all verbalize this in the story. Quote **one** of the characters directly and tell how that contributes to this theme.
2. *Of Mice and Men* contains much symbolism. Think of one main symbol in the book, give textual evidence, and tell how it contributes to theme. Think of the following: card game George plays, the heron eating the snake, the dream of the farm, the dog, the names of the characters, horse rattling chains, the mouse and rabbits, Candy's dog, the farm,
3. How does the idea of lost hope or hopelessness, futility (uselessness), pervade this story? Give examples of characters that have no hope, or have lost it, and show why this idea is so universal in this book. Explain why the dream of the little farm is a vision of utopia (a perfect world), and why it is impossible for them to reach. Do the characters know they won't get it?
4. Did George have a choice in killing Lennie and was he really a good friend to him? Why or why not? Use quotes to prove. It is good to include your opinion, but remember this assignment is to analyze the book.
5. Discuss the men's reactions to Curley's wife. Why doesn't she have a name? Does a reader's impressions of her differ when she finally speaks of her past to Lennie? When she threatens Crooks, she seems at her worst; why does she say what she says to him?
6. Does Lennie need George more or does George need Lennie more?
7. Even though the ending of the book surprises some, Steinbeck hints at the novel's conclusion. Give examples of foreshadowing and how it contributes to the novel.
8. Why are others attracted to George and Lennie's dream?
9. *Of Mice and Men* has an allegorical quality, with each character possessing a specific trait that represents something in society. Identify these traits in **one** of the main characters, and explain their relevance to the book, and the book's comment on society. Research "allegory" if do not remember its meaning.
10. The setting directly contributes to the behavior of the men (during the depression, little money, etc.). Do you think a story similar this could take place in modern times? If so, where?

Name _____

Fishbowl Discussion

Have outer-circle students keep track of the types of comments the fishbowl members make

? if they ask a question

C if they make a connection

I if they make an inference

T if they use specific text to answer a question or make a comment

P if they make a prediction. (These notes can give students feedback on the variety of the comments they make.)

Take notes here on important points people make – things you like, ideas you disagree with, or thought provoking questions you have.

Round 1

Round 2

Round 3

Round 4

Round 5