

Of Mice and Men

Lennie and George are introduced to the readers on the second page of the novel and we very quickly learn to understand the nature of their friendship – but what might others think of them when they arrive at the ranch for the first time?

Chapter 2

Imagine you are a ranch hand and were sitting quietly in the bunk house when Lennie and George arrived late for work. You witness the conversation they have with the swamper, boss and Curley and his wife.

You immediately go out into the field and tell the others about the two new arrivals – what do you say???

You should include the following points:

- The physical appearance of Lennie and George (the way they look)
- The way George reacted to their beds in the bunk house
- The fact that George does not let Lennie speak for himself and how the boss and Curley reacted to this
- Curley's wife and what Lennie says about her
- Whether you think Lennie and George will fit in well on the ranch or whether you think they will make trouble

REMEMBER, YOUR LANGUAGE SHOULD REFLECT THAT OF A TYPICAL RANCHER – YOU WOULD SPEAK IN THE SAME COLLOQUIAL STYLE AS THE OTHER CHARACTERS, USING THE SAME DIALECT....

You might start with:

' Jus' a couple of hours ago, two new ranchers turned up for work and I'll be damned if they weren't more than twelve hours late.....'

Creating Character and Atmosphere

In Chapter 3, pages 47 – 52, John Steinbeck creates a tense atmosphere before the gunshot that kills Candy's dog is heard.

He does this by:

- Carefully describing Candy's reactions and behaviour often using adverbs
- Shortening his sentences in the particularly tense moments before the gunshot
- Repetitive references to the 'silence' of the bunkhouse

Towards the end of this chapter, the tension erupts as Curley (frustrated because as usual he can't find his wife) has a confrontation and then a violent fight with Lennie...

TASK: Write the fight scene

Using the same techniques that Steinbeck used earlier in the chapter, write the final pages of Chapter 3 describing what happens when Curley attacks Lennie

Some adverbs have been provided below to help you convey character and atmosphere in an interesting way.

Points to remember....

- Look at pages 26/27 for a reminder of how Curley looks and how he treated Lennie the first time he met him
- On pages 26/27 George also predicts what might happen if Curley tries to 'lick' Lennie
- You can also start sentences with adverbs to create a stronger effect eg. Feebly....