

Of Mice and Men

Year 9 Term 1

Week 1: The Great Depression and 1930s America

- The American Dream was the idea that everybody could have freedom and the opportunity for prosperity and success.
- The **Wall Street Crash of 1929**, also known as the **Great Crash**, was a major stock market crash that occurred in 1929.
- The **Great Depression** was a severe economic recession that started in 1929.
- In 1930s, dust storms (**The Dust Bowl**) and droughts destroyed farms in the south of America, causing homelessness and unemployment to rise.
- In 1933, in the depths of the Depression, 24.75 percent of the labour force was unemployed.
- John Steinbeck wrote *Of Mice and Men* and it was published in 1937.

Vocabulary to boost your writing:

- Mottled: Marked with spots or smears of colour.
- Recumbent: Lying down.
- Morosely – acting morosely means to do something in a gloomy or bad mood.
- Debris – scattered pieces of rubbish or loose natural material and broken pieces of rock.
- Lumbered: Moved in a slow, heavy, awkward way.

Week 3: Friendship and Isolation

- Candy and his dog share symbolic similarities; they have grown old together and they have now become ineffective because of their increasing age.
- The death of Candy's dog represents the ruthless attitude held about the weak in 1930's America. If you were no use to the labour force, you were easily disposable.
- The friendship between George and Lennie is unusual because George is entirely responsible for Lennie. This was uncommon for itinerant (travelling) workers during the 1930s.
- Steinbeck makes no attempt to cover up the prejudice that was not uncommon at the time. Through 'Of Mice and Men' Steinbeck reveals the harsh realities of the lives and treatment of the less fortunate.

Vocabulary to boost your writing:

- Subdued: bringing someone or something under control by force .
- Flawed: having a fault or an imperfection.
- Derision: mocking or making a joke about something or someone.
- Ostracise: being excluded from a group or society.
- Itinerant: a person who travels from one place to another.

Week 2: Life on the Ranch

- During 1930s, 1.3 million workers migrated to California to try and find work after the Dust Bowl had destroyed crops in the Mid-West of America. Many left behind their families for long periods of time.
- Because of this, there was desperation for work, and employees could expect demanding work, whilst paying very low wages because they knew that there were people waiting for work.
- Living conditions for ranch workers were often cramped , uncomfortable and lonely, with workers often coping with lice, poor sanitation, and a spread of disease.
- Lennie and George's relationship surprises the characters in the novella, as most men travelled alone and looked out for themselves: "Ain't many guys travel around together." and "Maybe ever'body in the whole damn world is scared of each other."

Vocabulary to boost your writing:

- Brusquely : To do something in an abrupt, blunt way.
- Elaborate: detailed and complicated.
- Imperious: arrogant and controlling.
- Dejected: Sad or depressed.
- Claustrophobic : small and closed, and makes you feel uncomfortable when you are in it .

Week 4: The Role of Women

- Women were expected to be seen and not heard. Women were expected to be subservient and obey their husband or their father. They were seen as inferior and believed to be the weaker sex .
- Women were responsible for cooking, cleaning, looking after children and ensuring that the household was well looked after.
- Women received the vote in 1920 after they had established their competency and proved their worth.
- Women were often the first to be made redundant during The Great Depression.
- The role of a woman in society has changed and progressed in recent decades. Women now have leadership roles in businesses, schools, science and in many more fields of work.

Vocabulary to boost your writing:

- Derogatory: showing disrespect or having a critical attitude about someone.
- Prejudice: having a pre-determined opinion about someone without knowing them.
- Reprehensible: doing something wrong or dishonourable.
- Bemused: lost in thought.
- Poised: being confident and composed.

Remember: Keep reading the information from previous weeks; this will help you in future weeks, as well as allowing you to remember a whole range of new vocabulary

Week 5: Race and Racism in 1930s America

Important information:

- Slavery was abolished in 1865, however, black people still faced a lot of discrimination.
- The Jim Crow Laws : These were Southern state laws in America that separated black and white people between 1876 – 1965.
- In 1930s America, 50% of the black population was unemployed.
- For those that did retain their jobs, many salaries were reduced by half, while white people still got full payment.
- An exclamative sentence ends with an exclamation mark.

Vocabulary to boost your writing:

- Disenfranchised: To deprive someone of their rights and privileges.
- Indignation: Anger or annoyance at what is perceived as unfair treatment.
- Discrimination: The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people.
- Maltreatment: Cruel or violent treatment of a person or animal.
- Suppress: To prevent the development, action, or expression of something.

Week 6: Marginalised Characters

Important information:

- Those with mental disabilities were often separated from their families from a young age and taken to care homes, hospitals or special schools.
- They were often made to feel like second class citizens and were sometimes made to undergo harmful procedures to try and ‘cure’ them of their disability.
- The elderly were not economically productive and therefore were often treated unsympathetically.
- On farms, if animals were not productive, they were often killed because the farmers could not afford to feed them.

Vocabulary to boost your writing:

- Marginalised: To treat a person or group as insignificant.
- Stereotyped: A fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.
- Activism: Using vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change.
- Misaligned: Having an incorrect position or alignment, for example: 'Society’s views on black people in the 1930s were misaligned.'
- Oppress: To keep someone in hardship, especially by the unjust exercise of authority.

Week 7: Key quotations and structural features

- Denouement : The final part of a play, film, or narrative in which the strands of the plot are drawn together and matters are explained or resolved.
- Pathetic fallacy : Giving human emotions and actions to animals, plants, and other parts of nature such as the weather or environment. It often used at the start or end of a text to emphasise of foreshadow a feeling or event.
- Foreshadowing : When an image or event is used as a warning or indication of (a future event).
- Dialogue : a conversation between two or more people. This can often increase the tension or empathy created in a text as readers are made to feel as though they are there listening to the conversations and events unfold.
- Flashback: A scene in a film, novel, etc. set in a time earlier than the main story. This can often be used to create greater understanding or empathy as readers are made aware of previous events.

Vocabulary to boost your writing:

- Embrace (Verb): To hold closely in one's arms, as a sign of affection **or** take on board a suggestion or idea.
- Belligerently (Adverb): When an individual, group, country, or other entity acts in a hostile (aggressive) manner, such as engaging in combat.
- Monotonous (Adjective): Something dull, tedious, and repetitive—lacking in variety and interest.
- Triumph (Noun): A great victory or achievement.
- Dutifully (Adverb) : When someone acts in an obedient or conscientious manner.

Bonus Box: Ambitious Vocabulary!

Synonyms for ‘This shows’	Synonyms for increases	Synonyms for ‘focuses on’
Connotes	Amplifies	Emphasises
Suggests	Develops	Accentuates
Reveals	Heightens	Underlines
Implies	Builds	Highlights

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