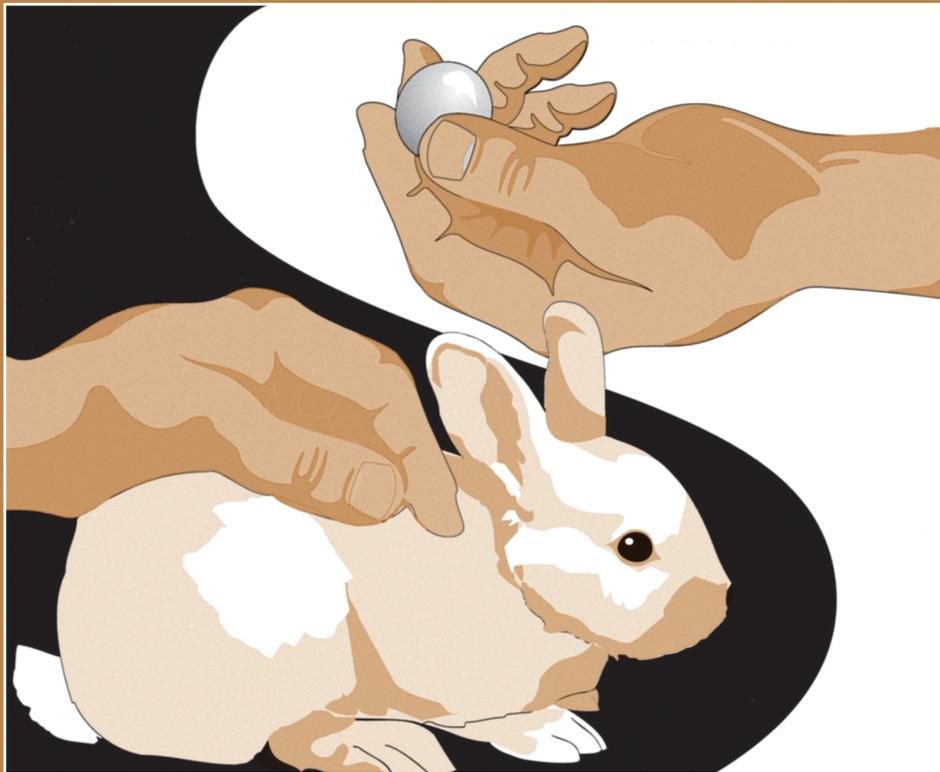


The Pearl/ Of Mice and Men

Curriculum Unit



The Pearl/Of Mice and Men

John Steinbeck

Curriculum Unit

Myrna Jean Warren



Curriculum Unit Author

Among the series of novel/drama curriculum units developed by author Myrna Jean Warren and published by The Center for Learning are *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, *Our Town*, *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*, and *Hiroshima/On the Beach*. An English and journalism teacher, she is also a contributing editor for regional and national magazines.

Editorial Team

Amy Richards, M.A.

Rose Schaffer, M.A.

Bernadette Vetter, M.A.

Cover Design

Susan Sheaffer Curtis, B.A.

List of credits found on Acknowledgments page beginning on 87.

Copyright © 1998 The Center for Learning.
Manufactured in the United States of America.

The worksheets in this book may be reproduced for academic purposes only and not for resale. Academic purposes refer to limited use within classroom and teaching settings only.

ISBN-13: 978-1-56077-534-8
ISBN-10: 1-56077-534-3

Contents

	Page	Handouts
Introduction	v	
Teacher Notes	vii	
<i>The Pearl</i>		
1 Exploring Plot	1	1, 2, 3
2 Exploring Narratives	7	4, 5, 6
3 Exploring Characterization	11	7, 8, 9
4 Exploring Dialogue	19	10, 11
5 Exploring Symbol and Song	25	12, 13, 14
Supplementary Materials		
Quiz Questions	30	
Quiz Answer Key	34	
<i>Of Mice and Men</i>		
6 An Overview	35	15, 16, 17, 18
7 Discovering Relationships	43	19, 20, 21
8 Discovering Circumstances	53	22, 23, 24
9 Discovering Dreams	61	25, 26, 27
10 Discovering Ethics	67	28, 29, 30
Supplementary Materials		
Quiz Questions	74	
Quiz Answer Key	78	
John Steinbeck		
11 A Literary Legacy	79	31
Bibliography	85	

Introduction

While John Steinbeck was researching material for a book that would be called *The Sea of Cortez* with his good friend, marine biologist Ed Ricketts, he heard a legend from the Indians in a small coastal village, which to Steinbeck was the perfect parable. Five years later he began to write his version of the legend, and two years later it appeared in *The Woman's Home Companion*. This novella was perhaps a shock to readers who expected Steinbeck's works to include severe social criticism. *The Pearl* is social commentary, rather than relentless criticism. If criticism of the exploitation of the Indians in lower California is not as harsh as expected, it is because it appears not so much as an indictment as in *The Grapes of Wrath* but an accepted condition, maintained and tolerated without hostility by both social classes. This is not to negate the rage which Kino feels about his social status and economic level, for that is crucial to the plot of *The Pearl*.

Steinbeck used his literary skill to build upon the skeletal shape of the legend and fleshed it out with characters who offered him not only purpose for his social comments but also reactions to the contrived events that would elicit both compassion and admiration from his readers. Though the story is filled with violence and pervasive evil, he brings to the work a gentleness and a concern for the family unit that is unaware or, at least, unconcerned and accepting of the exploitation that perpetuates its economic state.

Like the gentle waves that caress the beach which Kino sees each morning as he awakens, Steinbeck's soothing narrative establishes a warm and loving atmosphere, urging the reader to become acquainted with these two people who love each other and their infant son.

Disaster strikes again and again, leading the reader to the powerful climax and back to the beginning, for only the love of Kino and Juana endures. Within the slightly more than 100 pages, Steinbeck has recorded five days in the life of an Indian couple, transformed from the simple legend he had heard into a literary classic, stressing the values of family unity and the individual values of honesty, integrity, and brotherhood. In his desperation to live by these tenets, the main character, Kino, is forced to fight for his life and his soul. The possessor of two great treasures, he has one taken from him because of the other, and in disgust he rejects that one as unworthy of the sacrifice.

Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* also tells a story drawn from imagination or perhaps from a tale he heard while working among migrant workers. Two working men, not related, but as close as brothers, shared a dream. Their dream, too, is destroyed, and one of them is forced to pay the ultimate price for its loss. *Of Mice and Men*, like *The Pearl*, is a story about human beings and their predicaments. Regardless of whether or not they are accountable for the circumstances and situations in which they find themselves, they are representatives of all of humanity.

"My whole work drive has been aimed at making people understand each other," Steinbeck wrote in a letter in June 1938.

His strongest effort in *Of Mice and Men* was to generate understanding and compassion for those who are downtrodden and dispossessed. The character, Lennie, in reality would have been unable to understand

even the basic words of Steinbeck's prose, and George would have been unable to afford a copy. That George felt compelled to execute Lennie so that he would not be punished and tormented by a mob is the strongest indictment of the barriers of misunderstanding that Steinbeck observed in society. Though there is no justification for such an act, George's rationale can be understood. The plot brings to the surface the question of ethics and morality. Had Lennie been born to affluence, would he have been in danger from a mob? Had George been more knowledgeable, would he have found another solution and assessed Lennie's danger to himself in advance of the tragedy, as well as his danger to others? Steinbeck suggests that ignorance, prejudice, and poverty are as responsible for Lennie's death as the bullet from George's gun.

The value of friendship and the appeal for brotherhood are poignantly highlighted throughout the novel. Loneliness and a desperate need to dream and to achieve the dream are themes that Steinbeck skillfully weaves into a narrative with dialogue so natural that, at first glance, it seems simplistic and without style. Quite the contrary, the rhythmic flow of his narration underscores the genius of Steinbeck's literary talent.

Teacher Notes

Both stories in this unit are short and comparatively easy to read. Students should have few difficulties in following plot details. Opportunity to appreciate these works is afforded through activities relating the circumstances and situations students may encounter to those included in the stories.

Steinbeck's preface: "If this story is a parable, perhaps everyone takes his own meaning from it and reads his own life into it," becomes the basis for brainstorming activities, "what if" situations, role-playing, and symbol study. The unit also invites student writing and debates.

Both novels could be read in advance of their particular lesson segments, as rereading will take place in many of the activities and students should be encouraged to read passages aloud during discussion periods. *Of Mice and Men* invites close reading for critical analysis of the deceptively simple style employed. Students will find role-playing, small group discussions, and puzzles to be helpful activities in recognizing Steinbeck's masterful skill in achieving naturalness and simplicity of the prose.

The vivid, realistic descriptions of natural settings in both works are paced with thematic rhythms that ebb and flow, just as the tides of the ocean in *The Pearl* and the seasons of the earth in *Of Mice and Men*.

The study of both of these novels can be considered complete in itself or as an introduction to the more complex and controversial works of the author. A lesson on John Steinbeck, his life and literary philosophy, enables students to comprehend more fully the man and to understand the close relationship of his life to his work.

Student writing and dramatizing are emphasized, and attention is given to student examination of local color and national origin. Activities relating to shared problems are structured to allow perception, recognition, and student appraisal by means of small group discussions and writing introspectives.

Lessons are designed to permit activities to be condensed or extended according to the time frame allotment chosen for each novel. The unit permits use of both novels in succession or separately, according to curriculum plan. The lesson on Steinbeck may be used as best fits into chosen procedure.

Lesson 1

Exploring Plot

Objectives

- To evaluate the method Steinbeck used to transform an Indian legend into a novel
- To interpret the inclusion of characters and events that offered opportunity for commentary on social conditions and human attitudes and prejudices

Notes to the Teacher

When he first heard the legend of the Pearl of the World from Indians in a village near La Paz in Lower California, Steinbeck had the makings of his novel. From the sketchy outline, with its easily interpreted moral, Steinbeck endeavored to create a parable that would allow each reader to take his own meaning from it and read his own life into it. The author recorded in letters to others that he had some difficulty but that he believed he had created a parable, a black-and-white story with no in-betweens.

How does one turn a legend into a novel? This lesson has as its focus the exploration of Steinbeck's method, which was to add characters and events that would be compatible with the original material, enhancing and emphasizing the ending. At the same time, always the social commentator, he used a sequence to point up the exploitative social system under which the Indians lived. That part of *The Pearl* was factual and still in place at the time the novel was written.

Procedure

1. Explain to students that they will be examining Steinbeck's plotting of *The Pearl*. Comment that this is a twice-told tale, meaning that it is one the author did not originate but an adaptation of a story he was told.
2. Distribute **Handout 1** for students to read. Discuss opinions about Steinbeck's version. Do they believe that adding other characters was necessary? Let students explore a novel that would have included only the unnamed Indian and his selfish motives for wanting to reap a reward for

finding the pearl. Call students' attention to Steinbeck's comments about the original legend and the boy: he is too heroic, too wise. Do students get that impression? Had Steinbeck already imagined his hero, Kino? Was he unconsciously voicing doubts about whether readers would believe him? What in the original parable can students find to indicate the unnamed character is either heroic or wise?

3. Call attention to the account Steinbeck wrote to his editor. Do students have any opinion as to why work on *The Pearl* went slowly? Why could he not assess what the final result of his manuscript would be? Why was *The Pearl* first published in a women's magazine?
4. Distribute **Handout 2**. Students should read the directions and complete part A.

Suggested Responses:

1. *An unnamed Indian, single, and without any described family, he is changed by Steinbeck into a young father who, with his wife and child, lives in a small village next to his brother, his sister-in-law, and their children. The main character is given a name, Kino, and his other family members are also named.*
2.
 - a. *Juana is the wife of Kino and is needed for Kino to have the son and witness his change after he gets the pearl. She provides the complete family unit.*
 - b. *Coyotito is the infant son who provides the reason for Kino's need to sell the pearl.*
 - c. *Juan Tomas is Kino's brother who offers him shelter when he is attacked and his house is burned. He can also be a sounding board when Kino questions the things that have happened to him.*
 - d. *The doctor is shown as crass and opportunistic. This selfish character enables Steinbeck to comment on the exploitation of the native by unsympathetic white men.*

- e. *The priest is also unsympathetic and believes that one should not attempt to rise above one's station in life. This character allows Steinbeck's social commentary and enhances the irony of the plot, for Kino and Juana would have given money to the church and been married there had Kino been able to sell the pearl.*
 - f. *Apolonia is the wife of Juan Tomas, Kino's brother. She is of little plot significance, other than to establish Juan as a family man.*
 - g. *The pearl buyers are a collective group who represent the centuries of exploitation of natives and allow Steinbeck an opportunity to show how they deceived and duped those upon whom their livelihood depended. Even had they wanted, they could not have treated the Indians fairly, for the system demanded that the lowest possible price for the pearls be paid: if they paid more, they got no commission for such a sale.*
5. When students have completed part A, allow time for discussion of their responses. Are there any characters that should have been portrayed differently? How might this have affected the outcome? Should other characters have been added?
 6. For part B, divide students into two groups so that they can quickly list the events that occurred in the original legend, and outline additional events Steinbeck created. As each of the two groups decides upon an event and its importance, have students list it on the chalkboard. When all events have been stated, analyze those that are most effective in plot movement. What events could have been omitted? Should other events have been included? Students should indicate how a new event would have made the plot more effective.
 7. Distribute **Handout 3**. Let students fantasize for a few minutes, writing down what they would do if fortune came to them. Share responses. Ask a student to read the passage from *The Pearl*, chapter 4, which tells of the speculations of Kino's neighbors who imagine what they would do if such good fortune came to them. How similar are the responses of the student? Is it realistic to imagine how we would act in such a situation? Add a moral dilemma to the "what if" situation. Suggest that they can indeed possess a great fortune, but they must give up one happiness that currently exists in their lives. Have students discuss what this might be if they were willing to make the trade. This may be a writing assignment rather than a short discussion to conclude the moral dilemma.

The Origin of *The Pearl*

Directions: Read the following information.

An Indian boy, by accident, found a pearl of great size, an unbelievable pearl. He knew its value was so great that he need never work again. He knew he had the means to do as much drinking and womanizing as he wished. He also saw salvation in the pearl, for he believed he could purchase Masses enough to pray himself and his relatives out of Purgatory and into Heaven. He went at once with the pearl to La Paz with the certainty that his future into eternity was assured. When he was offered only a tiny sum by one of the pearl brokers, he was angry. He tried another, who offered him an even smaller sum. Wherever he went, he could not get his imagined worth out of the pearl. Discouraged, he hid the pearl and slept on the beach that evening. He was set upon by thieves who beat him into unconsciousness and searched him for the pearl. The next night, after another day of trying to sell the pearl, he went to the house of a friend. Again he hid the pearl, and that evening both he and his friend were attacked and the house nearly destroyed by the searchers. He left La Paz, went inland, thinking to sell the pearl in another city, but on the way he was attacked, beaten, and tortured. Still he had the pearl. By this time he knew what he would do. Hurt and bleeding, he made his way back to La Paz and the beach where he had first been attacked. He hurled the pearl as far as he could into the ocean. Once again he faced poverty and the jeopardy of his soul, for now he would have no money to buy food or Masses for his salvation. At the same time, he laughed jubilantly, for now, again, he was a free and wiser man.

The author had heard the story while on a journey down the Gulf of California in 1940, but it was four years later before he decided to write a script for its filming by a Mexican movie maker and as a short novel as well.

On December 8, 1944, he wrote to his editor: "I'm still struggling away at *The Pearl* and it isn't going well." He had begun the work in his unheated woodshed, writing by a kerosene lantern, in late November, and a couple of weeks later moved to an office over a bank.

The Pearl was completed by February 1945 and appeared in *The Woman's Home Companion* in December 1945. It was issued in book form in 1947 to coincide with the release of the motion picture.

Winning a Lottery!

Directions: It is not likely that many of us will dive into the sea and come up with “The Pearl of the World,” yet daydreams often include the fortune that drops from the sky. In many states, weekly lotteries have made many “instant millionaires,” people who buy tickets for a small sum and find themselves suddenly wealthy beyond all dreams, as suddenly as Kino spotted that large oyster in the distance.

What would you do if you, like Kino, became the possessor of an instant fortune? How do you think you would react? Write your response here.

Lesson 2

Exploring Narratives

Objectives

- To determine the importance of narrative description in the parable *The Pearl*
- To establish how narrative provides accurate and effective description of places and events
- To learn to write narrative form for effective emphasis

Notes to the Teacher

Narrative is a broad and comprehensive term for a style of writing. There is a narrow dichotomy between narration and description, with the two usually closely merged and only differentiated, if at all, by the degree of emphasis. This lesson is designed to explore the narrative in *The Pearl*; however, it will more realistically examine what we might call “descriptive narration” as well as “narrative description.”

Students will grasp the obvious similarities and may interchange the words *description* and *narrative* used to develop plot as opposed to its furtherance by dialogue.

Procedure

1. Establish the direction of the lesson by having students read aloud the first seven pages of *The Pearl* (chapter 1, ending with the sentence “Kino hovered; he was helpless, he was in the way.”)
2. Ask a student to go to the chalkboard to record all the pieces of information the class has learned from this part of the story.
3. Ask students to find dialogue spoken by characters within these seven pages. There is none, yet much information is gained

without any character’s having spoken. Emphasize that well-written narrative can be compelling. The narrative form can put words into the mouths of characters. However, remind students that narrative can become monotonous without some dialogue. Some works of literature emphasize much narrative and little dialogue while others emphasize dialogue, leaving the reader challenged to provide character development from inference. In *The Pearl*, both narrative passages and dialogue are placed strategically, as befits a parable. Discuss the two forms with students to be sure they can recognize the difference.

4. Distribute **Handout 4**. Allow time for students to work alone or with partners to complete maps.
5. Share the maps made of the village and its surroundings and the blueprints of the interior of Kino’s hut with the class. How different are these reproductions? Ask students if they had difficulty following the descriptions in the narrative passages of *The Pearl*.
6. Distribute **Handout 5**. Use it as a homework assignment. Require each student to select an individual so that no students will be changing the same dialogue passage into narrative. You may wish to prepare a list of novels for selection or assign novels individually.

Optional Activity

Complete **Handout 6** by rewriting a passage to include more dialogue. Share your rewrite with your classmates, and ask for their comments.

Mapping from Narrative

Part A.

Directions: Read all the passages describing Kino's brush house. List the passages on a sheet of paper so that you can refer to them. Draw a blueprint or floor plan of the hut from the perspective of viewing it from the entrance.

Part B.

Directions: Read all the passages that describe the village and surrounding area in which Kino lives, the location of the mountains, beach, and the city of La Paz. List the passages that give information. Using this information, make a map of the area so you can trace the sequence of events in *The Pearl*: where Kino lives, where he leaves his canoe on the beach, where he walks to get to La Paz, and where he hides in the home of Juan Tomas before beginning his journey into the mountains.

Transposing Dialogue into Narrative

Directions: Select a passage that is predominantly dialogue. Transpose it into a narrative that retains the meaning, mood, and attitude of the characters. You may use some dialogue, but use it sparingly, as the object of this activity is to demonstrate skill at developing interesting narrative.

Novel selected:

Location of Passage:

Did Steinbeck Make the Right Decision?

Directions: As John Steinbeck wrote *The Pearl*, he was faced with making a decision for each scene. Should it be predominantly narrative or dialogue? Which would best move the plot and intensify the climax? In your opinion, did he select the right form? Which passage was somewhat confusing? Would more dialogue have clarified it?

Write a dialogue that would improve the scene you have selected. Remember if you have to discard some of the narrative, be sure dialogue will justify that.

Passage is located on pages _____ and begins:

My version:

Lesson 3

Exploring Characterization

Objectives

- To examine the characters in *The Pearl*
- To investigate Steinbeck's method of character creation
- To assess the motivation of certain characters
- To integrate characters created by students into *The Pearl*

Notes to the Teacher

Most of the characters in *The Pearl* appear only vaguely discernible without detail revealing their appearance or thoughts. What we know about Kino is learned chiefly from his reactions to events. He is above all a human being who knows his place and has never ventured from it until the attack of the scorpion. It is significant that the character with the pivotal plot role is Coyotito, Kino's infant son. No full character sketch or analysis of an infant, so young as to be formless in personality, can be drawn. How different the story might have been had Juana been stung.

Yet upon close inspection, some characters in *The Pearl* can be found to have personality development. The challenge of this lesson for students is to use deduction and inference in establishing characterization.

Beyond the deceptively simple story of an Indian couple whose child is in jeopardy and who find a great treasure, *The Pearl* symbolically touches upon several social issues. The importance to the parable of particular characters determines the degree of their involvement as symbols. On close analysis, some will be found to be lightly sketched and others finely detailed in lifelike dimensions.

Procedure

1. Conduct a short discussion of character building. Ask which characters in *The Pearl* they know best from Steinbeck's descriptions. Are some details omitted? (Some students may note that no ages are stated, no indication of how long Kino

and Juana have been together, and there is not much detail about their families.) Suggest that vital statistics are not always necessary to create lifelike characters, and that sometimes a litany of statistics merely burdens the reader with material nonessential to the plot and to the writer's purpose.

2. Distribute **Handout 7**. Students will research information to complete part A and draw inferences to complete part B. Answers will vary according to amount of research and depth of inference.

Suggested Responses:

Part A.

Kino—*A young Indian pearl diver who remembers but does not sing the ancient songs of his tribe; he is living with Juana and their son Coyotito; Kino has black hair and a thin mustache; he is strong and silent.*

Juan Tomas—*Older brother of Kino, lives next door with his wife Apolonia and their four children; Kino looks to him for advice and support; he sees the reality of Kino's situation and cautions him about the future.*

Juana—*Wife of Kino, mother of his son Coyotito; traditional subservient Indian woman, quiet and fragile; Kino sees her as strong, obedient, respectful, cheerful, and patient. She believes both in the traditions of the tribe and the religion of the Church and mixes tribal songs with Hail Marys in times of crisis. Though Kino and Juana are not legally married, their strong commitment to each other is accepted by the villagers as marriage. Juana not only acts in response to her husband's commands but also takes initiative when necessary.*

The doctor—*Fat, lazy, shows no concern for anyone who cannot pay; longs for another time and place; finds neither joy nor satisfaction in practicing his chosen art of healing; has become crass,*

greedy, opportunistic; makes the baby ill and pretends to save him in order to bind Kino in debt so that he can profit when Kino sells the pearl.

The priest—An aging man with grey and wrinkled skin, sharp eye; hopeful that Kino will remember the needs of the Church when he sells the pearl; resigned to do nothing more than act as caretaker at the church, offering its pronouncements with no attempt to bring comfort and care to his parishioners; he visits Kino and Juana, not when the baby is stung, but after the pearl has been discovered.

The pearl buyers—Nameless so as to be considered only as a group; smooth, soft-spoken, friendly businessmen; working for others, they are committed to paying the least for the best.

Part B.

- 1. Juana is a mother whose child is her whole world. Her love is so great that she will let nothing stand in the way of her baby's survival.*
- 2. Kino admires knowledge. One of his dreams is that his son will attend school. Because he would never lie, he believes what the doctor says about the return of infection. His respect for knowledge and authority outweighs the instinct that tells him the baby is already recovered; he allows the doctor to treat Coyotito. Kino believes that a man highly schooled in healing would also have high personal integrity. It is Kino's own personal integrity, not uneducated naivete, that prompts this inference.*
- 3. Juana, though she has had the religious training of the Church, still believes in the superstitions of the Indian tribe. She believes that the pearl is evil and that their misfortunes can be blamed on the pearl. Juana does not reason that the scorpion bite occurred before the pearl was found and that the baby became violently ill only after the doctor gave him medicine. She reacts with emotion rather than logic. To her, ridding them of the pearl will also rid them of the evil.*
- 4. The doctor has long ago given up the values of the Hippocratic oath. Longing for his earlier days in Paris, the city's cosmopolitan atmosphere, he has no concern for others. He views both his patients and those too poor to pay with an equal contempt that he dare not reveal to either group. Readers can infer that he is unscrupulous, greedy, lustful, and self-concerned.*
- 5. The priest annually tells the story of the Indians long ago who tried to take their pearls to the capital to receive a fair price. He relates how none were ever heard from, and so those remaining returned to selling through the local pearl buyers who exploited and cheated. From the priest's version of the story, the villagers are taught that disaster will befall them if they attempt to rise above their appointed station in life. Instead of concern for his people, the priest devotes care to the pearl buyers in hope that they will provide needed funds for his church. That they do not always oblige is apparent when Kino finds the pearl, for the priest comes to remind him that the church is in need of repair.*
- 6. Perhaps the pearl buyers work on commission for a major company in the city, receiving a higher rate. They each have a role to play in the bargaining situation and probably use the same routine with the natives each time pearls of significant value are discovered.*

3. Discuss with students the technique of character analysis that Steinbeck provides by carefully selecting his adjectives. Ask students to pick one or two adjectives for each character.

Suggested Responses:

Kino—strong, brave, fierce

Juana—fragile, obedient, cheerful, loving

Juan Tomas—the elder (developed through dialogue)

The doctor—fat, lazy

The priest—grey, aging, but with a sharp eye

The pearl buyers—benign, clean hands; polished nails; steady, cruel, unwinking eyes

4. Distribute **Handout 8**. Divide students into two groups. One group will add a new character with good qualities. The other group will introduce a character with evil qualities. Allow latitude for the character to effect change within *The Pearl*; the outcome, that of Kino casting the pearl back into the sea, must not be altered. Present the character development to the class, placing it into the relevant part of the story. Let both groups attempt to integrate both characters into the story. Determine whether the two new characters' roles in the plot justify a change in the ending. Does the story lose or gain effectiveness with the addition of characters? Is the impact of the parable altered if the ending is changed?
5. Distribute **Handout 9**. Ask students to use Steinbeck's narrative style to write a descriptive narrative about someone who has influenced his/her life profoundly. Suggest that they use personality details, opinions, beliefs, and mannerisms in this assignment.

Information and Inference

Part A. Research Information

Directions: Just as we sometimes must make judgments without complete information, sometimes we must draw inferences about characters in fiction. Implied attitudes or evaluation requires skill in detection. Use the novel to gather information about how the following characters look and act.

Character	Information
Kino	
Juan Tomas	
Juana	
The doctor	
The priest	
The pearl buyers	

Part B. Drawing Inferences

Directions: Answer the following questions, using your ability to infer from what you have noted in part A.

1. Juana does not consult Kino about getting the doctor when the baby is stung. Yet Juana is a dutiful, submissive woman to Kino in all things: why not in this situation?
2. Kino has found the "Pearl of the World," and the baby has recovered. When the doctor comes, why does Kino not send him away? He tells him the baby is cured; why does he relent and believe the doctor's story that the poison will return?
3. Before they begin their journey, Kino and Juana rest for the night. When she thinks he sleeps, Juana steals away to the ocean with the pearl, hoping to throw it into the water before it can bring more evil. What do you infer about Juana from this action?
4. How would you describe the kind of person the doctor is from the information Steinbeck gives?
5. What inference can you draw about the main concerns of the priest and his relationship to the Indians of the village?
6. Why do you think the pearl buyers appear as a group, with only one physically described? What inference can you draw from their close association as a group?

A New Character Appears in *The Pearl*

Directions: You are going to add another character to the story of *The Pearl*. Your new character may move within any segment of the story that you select. You may adjust the story to accept the new addition, but the original ending of the parable must not be changed.

Name of your character _____

Character will be a positive or negative (circle your assignment) influence in the story.

How your character is involved in the plot:

The Most Unforgettable Character in My Life

Directions: Your life might be very different were it not for some of the people who have influenced you. Select a person who has had profound influence upon your life. Try to imitate Steinbeck's style as you write a descriptive narrative of that person.

Lesson 4

Exploring Dialogue

Objectives

- To examine the relationship of dialogue to plot progression
- To analyze Steinbeck's unity of dialogue and narrative to establish rhythm and symmetry in his prose

Notes to the Teacher

In *The Pearl* the author uses little dialogue to aid plot progression. Narratives of locale and events occupy much of the novel. What dialogue is employed conveys attitudes and points of view about the events.

This is a common pattern in a parable, since a moral or ethical message is its resultant close. Characters act and react rather than converse at length. To combine dialogue and descriptive narrative into a balance compatible with the meaning of the parable requires great skill.

Steinbeck establishes the closeness of his two main characters, Kino and Juana, by a deliberate restraint of dialogue. Their daily unvaried existence leaves little news to share in words. Speech becomes unnecessary within the daily regimen. Their spiritual union is suggested by inference in narrative and simple passages in which Kino describes Juana and his feelings toward her. She, too, is silent throughout most of the novel, though her fears and hopes are enunciated in eloquent narrative.

Restrained dialogue emphasizes Juana's refusal to be caught up in the frenzy for material things that the riches of the pearl will bring, and Kino's turmoil as he grapples with the new forces causing his life to change so swiftly and dramatically.

This lesson focuses on Steinbeck's art in employing dialogue sparingly to complement the narrative. When dialogue is used, it enhances the impact upon the reader and intensifies the author's purpose.

Procedure

1. Discuss briefly Steinbeck's use of dialogue in *The Pearl*. Ask students their opinion of why so little dialogue appears. Ask them to select passages where they believe dialogue might have made the passages more effective. As they read *The Pearl*, were they aware that the dialogue contained no profanity? Do the more recent genres in literature and film saturate dialogue with meaningless words and phrases? In a short story, parable, or novella, irrelevant words, characters, and events which slow the rhythm of the narrative are usually discarded. Does student writing ever contain crutch words used to fill space? Is repetition frequent in student writing? Ask students if they can find passages in *The Pearl* where space is wasted on useless words. Stress the importance of well-chosen words in student writing.
2. To show how excess dialogue might have slowed the pace of *The Pearl*, distribute **Handout 10** to those students selected to present the script. Other students will listen.
3. Ask the class for reactions to the script. Did the dialogue seem compatible with or familiar to that used in *The Pearl*? Did those interviewed speak out of character?
4. Distribute **Handout 11**, and assign students to work in small groups. Make sure selections are varied. Share the results with the entire class.
5. Discuss the rhythm of Steinbeck's story, *The Pearl*. Would more dialogue have made it more effective? Is there too much narrative? Should more characters have been employed to provide greater opportunity for dialogue? Would this have interrupted the readability of some passages?

Kino Meets the Media

Directions: As you perform this script, evaluate the dialogue. Is this the way that the villagers, particularly Kino and Juana, would reply to the questions that the media might ask?

Narrator: Ladies and gentlemen of the viewing audience, we have come to this tiny fishing village on the lower coast of California to talk with the participants of a tragic situation that has drawn worldwide attention. At the center of this drama are Kino and his wife Juana, who were the possessors of a priceless pearl, and who, for some unknown reason, threw the magnificent jewel back into the ocean. Grief-stricken at the loss of their only child, and now waiting a legal decision that will determine if they will stand trial for murder, the young Indian couple have agreed to tell their story to the media. With them are Kino's brother, Juan Tomas; the village priest, Father Sebastian; and the local physician, Dr. Emile Gross.

First

Reporter: Kino, I understand you first found the pearl last week after your baby became ill.

Juan Tomas: My brother's baby was bitten by a scorpion in the early morning. Juana said go for the doctor. Even as she sucked away the poison from the wound, she said go for the doctor.

Villagers: (in unison) She say: go for the doctor, but we know he will not come. And we shake our heads and tell her so. The doctor will not come.

Juana: I know in my heart they are right, but my baby is hurt. So I tell Kino, we will go to the doctor. And we did. We had no money to pay. Kino had only a few seed pearls. But we would have worked to pay the doctor. The man at the door says the doctor is not there. He cannot help, and this makes Kino very angry. He pounds his fist against the doctor's door, but it is no use, and so we leave.

Second

Reporter: What did you do then?

Kino: We do as we do each morning. We go to the beach, get into the canoe, and go out to the oyster bed. Like the others in the village, we dive for pearls. This day Juana holds the baby and puts a seaweed poultice on his shoulder. I put the rope around my waist, with the rock at the other end, and go into the water. I go deeper, deeper than I have ever been, and farther from the boat, to the length of the rope. I stay down a long time, and in my heart I begin to hear the song of the maybe pearl. I pick quickly, and my basket is almost full when I see a glimmer a few feet away. It is a large, a very large oyster. I am almost afraid to look, but I go and I look, and I think I must take this oyster from the sea, and so I do.

First

Reporter: Do all the oysters have pearls, or are most empty?

Kino: Many, most, we throw back, for there is nothing. When I climbed in the boat, the first oyster had nothing. I wanted to open each one in the basket, but Juana, the look in her eyes. She saw the large shell, and I could not take my eyes from it. Finally, she said "Open it," and I did. I could not believe my eyes.

Juana: It was as big as an egg of a seagull. It shone and glistened so, gleaming in the sun, and with a softness, like the skin of a baby. And then I looked at Coyotito and screamed Kino's name, for him to look also. The shoulder was only pink, not the red fire of the poison, and was normal size, not filled with the pain, and Coyotito smiled back at us, and we could almost see his reflection in the great pearl. It was truly a miracle.

Villagers: There was great jubilation when Kino found the great pearl. We knew it was a wondrous thing.

Juan Tomas: We all gathered in the house of Kino to hear what he would do with the great fortune he would get from this, the pearl of the world. Kino spoke of many things, of marriage in the church, of new clothes for Juana, of schooling for the boy, and of a rifle for himself. So many things he spoke of, that I, his own brother, did not know what was in his heart.

Second

Reporter: Dr. Gross, we understand the baby was a patient of yours. Yet Kino says you would not treat the baby.

Dr. Gross: You must understand. These are primitive people. One cannot interrupt a busy, established practice for the imagined ills of a native child.

First

Reporter: I'd hardly call the sting of a scorpion an imagined ill.

Dr. Gross: Yes, well, of course, but you see, I was not in when the couple came to my door, and the servant who gave me the information did not establish the urgency. Of course, I did go to the hut when I learned the nature of the child's condition.

First

Reporter: Don't you mean, when you heard that Kino had come into possession of an enormous treasure?

Dr. Gross: That had nothing to do with my decision to visit the child.

First

Reporter: Yet the villagers tell us that you never, never have gone to any of their homes before.

Dr. Gross: They are mistaken.

Second

Reporter: Father Sebastian, did you try to help these people to get an honest price for their pearl?

Fr.

Sebastian: I, unfortunately, have no persuasive powers with the pearl buyers. I do my best to care for my flock, but our parish is poor. I have only the strength of faith to offer.

First

Reporter: Father Sebastian, couldn't you have gone with them and offered at least moral support? Wouldn't that be your place?

Fr.

Sebastian: It would not. You are mistaken.

Second

Reporter: Juan Tomas, did you try to help your brother?

Juan Tomas: A man cannot interfere with another man's private business, even if he is a brother. I tried to advise Kino, but he wanted to walk in ways that are strange to our people. He even talked of going to the capital and selling the pearl. We are a simple people. We know nothing of the great city, of dealing with those who dwell in a city of stone. I could not help Kino.

Third

Reporter: Kino, why didn't one of the pearl buyers buy this fabulous pearl?

Kino: I went to the office of the pearl buyer, and he looked at the Pearl of the World. He said it was too large, not of good quality, too big to bring a good price. I told him he was lying, that the pearl was worth more than he was offering me, but he said it was not so. He called in others, and they said it was not good, that it would bring no big price, and one even said he would not pay anything for it. I thought of this, and I thought of how someone had tried to get the pearl from me in the night, and I wondered who would do such a thing for a pearl worth nothing. My anger made me say no to the offer, and I shouted that I would take the pearl to the capital and sell it there for a fair price.

Juana: I had bad feelings about this journey and about the pearl. We had only bad times after Kino found the pearl. I believe we never should have taken it from the sea. It belonged there, like the birds you cannot coax from the trees, like the snow that does not move from the top of the mountain, like the flowers that bloom and are fragrant but wither and die if you pick them from the bush. Some things cannot be moved to another time and place. I could not tell Kino this, but I tried to put the pearl back into the sea. Only he caught me and took the pearl from me.

Kino: To my shame, I struck my wife. I was like an animal, full of my own wishes, thinking only of what I would do with the money from the pearl, and so I hit her and screamed that I would kill her if she tried to return the pearl.

First

Reporter: And it was after this that you returned and found your canoe destroyed and your house in flames?

Second

Reporter: Since you could not travel by sea, you determined to go overland, taking your son with you?

Kino: This is true, and it was during the journey that others tried to get the pearl. I knew they would kill us for the pearl, and so we hid in a cave. I left Juana and my son and went to the clearing where they were camped. I could not wait for them to discover us the next morning.

Third

Reporter: Juana, how did the baby die?

Juana: It was not yet light. Kino knew they would find us, and so he went to hunt them down. I begged him not to go, but he says it is the only way, and leaves. I stand at the entrance of the cave, watching him, and I stand there even when I can no longer see him. It is a clear night and sound travels easily. I hear his steps for a long time after I cannot see him. In the distance then I can see the light of the trackers' camp, and from time to time I hear the murmur of their voices. Still I stand there. The baby is asleep in my arms. Suddenly, he stirs and cries a bit. But he has not really wakened, and I think he will go back to sleep. I rock him a bit as I stand there.

Second

Reporter: We know this is difficult, Juana. Please take your time. What happened then?

Juana: I think of it now almost as a dream. I think the baby must have cried once more, and then suddenly I was on the floor of the cave, but Coyotito was still in my arms. There was blood everywhere, and I knew it was not mine, for I was not hurt. But my baby, my poor baby, he was so terribly hurt. There was no life in him anymore, and I did not know what had happened. I had heard nothing. I lay there sobbing for what seemed like a long time. And then Kino came, and we cried together over our son, our tiny one who now lay silent in death. We cried and cried. And then Kino said it is time for this to be ended.

First
Reporter: You came back to the village then?

Second
Reporter: And you still had the pearl then?

Kino: We had the pearl, but we had nothing. As we walked back the long way to our home that would not be there, to the village where our son would not grow up, to the beach where our canoe lay in wreck and ruin, I thought of these things. Now there was only Juana and me, beginning again, and I did not know if she would stay with me after the evil I had done. I knew Juana was right. My greed for the pearl had brought us only grief.

First
Reporter: And so you threw the pearl back into the sea?

Kino: It was the only thing to do.

Second
Reporter: I'm sorry, but I don't understand. The pearl could have brought you money to leave this place, to pay for your legal defense if the authorities prosecute you for the killings of your attackers. Why would you give up so much?

Juana: So much? What did we really have? A pearl covered with the blood of our son. He was our treasure and our future.

Kino: The price of the pearl was supposed to bring us education for our son and a new way of life for us. Why should we want a new way of life without him? Where will we go that we will not say the price of the pearl was the life of our son? A man cannot make that exchange and have peace of mind. We grieve because we miss our son, but we do not sorrow over the loss of the pearl. It is best gone from our lives.

Second
Reporter: So what will you do now?

Kino: Life will go on. Juana and I will stay together, and one day perhaps there will be other children. And each day we will hope no one ever again finds the pearl. I say no more now.

Narrator: There you have it, ladies and gentlemen, the story of this Indian couple who lost two treasures this past week, but for them, only one was of real value.

Transposing Narrative into Dialogue

Directions: Working with your group members, select a narrative passage from *The Pearl*. Rewrite it in dialogue. You may relate the event before or after the fact, using only brief narrative reversing Steinbeck's style. Name the scene that your group has selected to rewrite, and record its location in the book (page or chapter).

Title:

Location:

Lesson 5

Exploring Symbol and Song

Objectives

- To examine Steinbeck's use of animal imagery to add drama to his story
- To understand the use of symbolism within the parable and to identify symbolic passages
- To identify the significance of song in the plot and to become aware of the importance of music to humanity

Notes to the Teacher

Other lessons have shown how Steinbeck added events and characters to the original legend in order to write *The Pearl*. By making lifelike characters move within believable events, he expanded the basic message of the parable, and as he said in the preface, "If this story is a parable, perhaps everyone takes his own meaning from it and reads his own life into it. . . ."

In adding depth to the story, Steinbeck included the tradition of song as an important part of Indian personal life. Music is important to the tribe, and though the village is very near the white man's stone city, the tradition persists. Though they do not gather together to sing the old songs, music remains a powerful memory.

A symbol in itself of the innate need of human beings for self-expression, music has always been a source of comfort and inspiration. Humans' first sounds may have been high-pitched keenings and wailings, vocal sounds of happiness, fear, warnings, even rage and frustration. Music, like art, is a universal language.

Like all parables, *The Pearl* includes symbols. This lesson is structured to allow students to discover and interpret symbols. Animal imagery is also an important part of Steinbeck's descriptive technique, particularly as he shows the dramatic change of Kino from the gentle being to a raging, infuriated beast when confronting those who would rob him of his treasure. Even Juana is not spared, powerless to stop the transformation and believing it can only be countered by ridding themselves of the pearl.

Procedure

1. Discuss the importance of music in our lives. Ask students to note passages in *The Pearl* in which the many songs of the tribe of Kino and Juana are mentioned. Suggest that though lyrics and melodies are not detailed, the songs are named: Song of the Family, Song of Evil, Song of the Undersea, of the Pearl That Might Be, and Song of the Enemy.
2. Distribute **Handout 12** for students to complete. Share songs with the class.
3. Discuss symbolism in *The Pearl*. Explain that symbols are prevalent in our daily lives. Ask for some examples (a dove—peace; a red rose—love; skull and cross bones—danger or death).
4. Distribute **Handout 13** for students to complete. Assign them to work as partners. Share responses in class, and allow students to assess the many interpretations of symbols.

Suggested Responses:

1. *Like most of the Indians in the novel, Kino does not have the benefit of education, which would make him more aware of the complex world in which he lives. The near-dark symbolizes Kino's life in the near-darkness of the uneducated. The crowing of the roosters signals dawn, a symbol that Kino is soon to awake to a wider world.*
2. *Kino sees Juana as an extension of himself. She sleeps only when he does.*
3. *Some students may see the duality of Kino's situation. At first, he sees the pearl as a godsend, a miracle of wealth that will free him. He does not see the forces that contrive to rob him; he seeks help from a doctor and finds himself questioning whether the doctor is using his knowledge properly. In each situation of his life, he first sees it one way and then assesses the possibility that it might not be as it seems.*

4. *Just as the small fish are eaten by the larger, and the mice are preyed upon by night hawks, Kino's life has become one of "search and destroy." Predators seek to cheat him of the worth of the pearl and want him to pay them for their deception (the doctor pretending to heal; the priest pretending concern for the family; the pearl buyers operating under a system that has cheated the Indians of the village for centuries and conspiring to get the treasure for a pittance).*
5. *This should symbolize to students the almost holiday atmosphere of the villagers. At this point, they delight in Kino's good fortune and wish to enjoy the moment when he sells his pearl and has his fortune.*
6. *Most students should understand that the bitter truth has come into the minds of Kino and Juana. Cold reality has loomed before them; they are no longer innocent of their true plight. They realize the danger that exists as long as they hold the pearl. The world around them no longer has a warm and inviting atmosphere. Students should see the couple gathering their strength for the journey, much as they gather their clothing "tighter about them." The fierce wind pelting them with bits of sticks, sand, and little rocks becomes a symbol of the torments (losing their house and canoe, cheated of the price of the pearl) that they have endured and a prelude to those that follow.*

Suggest to students that Steinbeck's symbolic use of animal imagery is very effective for some examples of animals and their symbolic associations (lion and courage; elephant and memory; fox and cunning).

5. Distribute **Handout 14**. Allow students to work as partners to research the imagery in *The Pearl*, citing chapter locations and their interpretations. Share responses with the class.

All Life Is a Song

Directions: Read the passages in *The Pearl*, chapter 2, which describe the importance of song to Kino's people. Then read the following example of a song that might have been sung. Can you improve it? Rewrite the "Song to the Moon."

Song to the Moon

Cast your gentle light on the face of my beloved,
As I cast my net into the sea, searching for the food of our life,
Search for love shining in the beauty of her face.
Cast your light so that I see the stars in her eyes,
and the love in her heart
And like your coming to each evening sky
Let our love shine eternal.

Write your own song, using one of the titles Steinbeck mentions or one you create, such as a song Juana might sing in eulogy to her dead child, or a song of happiness she might sing when she first believes the pearl will bring them wealth and a better life.

Searching for Symbols

Part A.

Directions: With your partner, search for the symbolism in the following passages. Record your ideas to share with the class.

1. Kino awakened in the near dark . . . the roosters had been crowing for some time.
2. Juana's eyes were open too. Kino could never remember seeing them closed when he awakened.
3. Although the morning was young, the hazy mirage was up. The uncertain air that magnified some things and blotted out others hung over the whole Gulf so that all sights were unreal and vision could not be trusted; so that the sea and land had the sharp clarities and the vagueness of a dream.
4. Out in the estuary a tight woven school of small fishes glittered and broke water to escape a school of great fishes that drove in to eat them. And in the houses people could hear the swish of the small ones and the bouncing splash of the great ones as the slaughter went on. . . . And the night mice crept about on the ground and the little night hawks hunted them silently.
5. And the morning of this day the canoes lay lined up on the beach; the fishermen did not go out to dive for pearls, for there would be too much happening, too many things to see when Kino went to sell the great pearl.
6. The wind blew fierce and strong, and it pelted them with bits of sticks, sand, and little rocks. Juana and Kino gathered their clothing tighter about them and covered their noses and went out into the world. The sky was brushed clean by the wind and the stars were cold in a black sky.

Part B.

Directions: Choose three passages from *The Pearl*, and point out the symbolic meaning of each.

Animal Imagery

Directions: Animal imagery is a vital part of Steinbeck's retelling of the parable of *The Pearl*. Look in the novel, find five examples of this type of imagery, and note their locations. A sample response is provided to help you.

Sample: . . . snarling, Kino had it . . . his teeth were bared.

Imagery: Kino is like a dog or wolf, showing his teeth and growling at the scorpion enemy.

1. Example:

Chapter location:

Imagery:

2. Example:

Chapter location:

Imagery:

3. Example:

Chapter location:

Imagery:

4. Example:

Chapter location:

Imagery:

5. Example:

Chapter location:

Imagery:

Quiz 1

Part A.

Directions: Place the following events of *The Pearl* in chronological order from 1 to 10.

- _____ a. Kino and Juana find the great pearl.
- _____ b. Coyotito becomes very ill after he is given a pill.
- _____ c. Coyotito is stung by the scorpion.
- _____ d. Kino goes to visit the pearl buyers.
- _____ e. Juana goes for the doctor.
- _____ f. The house of Kino is burned, and his canoe is wrecked.
- _____ g. Coyotito dies.
- _____ h. Kino and Juana travel into the mountains.
- _____ i. The doctor visits the house of Kino.
- _____ j. Kino throws the pearl into the sea.

Part B.

Directions: Steinbeck called *The Pearl* a parable and said each reader would put personal meaning to it. What meaning do you make of the parable of *The Pearl*?

Quiz 2

Part A.

Directions: Match each character with the letter of the most fitting description.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| _____ a. Juana | 1. wife of Juan Tomas |
| _____ b. Kino | 2. infant son |
| _____ c. Apolonia | 3. wife of Kino |
| _____ d. the doctor | 4. white man who hopes to profit |
| _____ e. Juan Tomas | 5. Indian pearl diver who finds the treasure |
| _____ f. Coyotito | 6. wise older brother |
| _____ g. the pearl buyers | 7. anxious to obtain the treasure |

Part B.

Directions: Select three of the most important characters, in your opinion. Write a short essay about each, stating why you feel the character was vital to the story and its moral. Explain how the story might have changed without the presence of that character.

Quiz 3

Directions: Briefly answer the following questions.

1. By whom was *The Pearl* written?
2. Who are the main characters?
3. What is the name of the infant?
4. Juan Tomas is the husband of Apolonia; whose brother is he?
5. One morning, while the Indians are diving in the oyster bed, a special find is made. What is it, and who finds it?
6. Not everyone reacts the same way about the find. How do the pearl buyers react?
7. What are some of the tragedies that occur while the treasure is in the possession of its finder?
8. What decision does the finder eventually make about the treasure, and what does he do?
9. Do you agree with that decision? Why or why not?
10. Do you agree with the author that the story is a parable? Why or why not?

Quiz 4

Part A.

Directions: Identify the speaker of each of the following quotations.

1. "This pearl has become my soul."
2. "There is a devil in this pearl."
3. "I was not in when you came this morning. But now, at the first chance, I have come to see the baby."
4. "Let us throw it back in the sea where it belongs. . . . It is evil."
5. "My son will read . . . and my son will write and will know writing . . . and these things will make us free, because he will know . . . and through him we will know."
6. "It is new ground you are walking on, you do not know the way."
7. "You have defied not only the pearl buyers, but the whole structure, the whole way of life, and I am afraid for you."
8. "This pearl is too large. Who would buy it? There is no market for such things. It is a curiosity only."
9. ". . . thou art named after a great man."
10. ". . . they never have any money. I, I alone in the world am supposed to work for nothing. . . ."

Part B.

Directions: Imagine that you have found a treasure, the kind of wealth valuable only if it is sold. (This might be a rare butterfly, a priceless gem, or a first-edition, autographed novel written by a famous author.) By itself, the treasure would have no value, other than its beauty. What would you do with it?

Quiz Answer Key

Quiz 1

Part A.

- | | |
|------|-------|
| a. 3 | f. 7 |
| b. 5 | g. 9 |
| c. 1 | h. 8 |
| d. 6 | i. 4 |
| e. 2 | j. 10 |

Quiz 2

Part A.

- | | |
|------|------|
| a. 3 | e. 6 |
| b. 5 | f. 2 |
| c. 1 | g. 7 |
| d. 4 | |

Quiz 3

1. John Steinbeck
2. Kino and Juana
3. Coyotito
4. Kino's
5. The Pearl of the World is found by Kino.
6. The pearl buyers appear to be disinterested, hoping to get the pearl at the lowest price.
7. Kino is attacked; the baby becomes ill; Kino's house and boat are destroyed; he fights with Juana; eventually, they flee to the mountains, where the baby is killed.
8. After the baby dies and Kino realizes he has also killed, the pearl seems worthless and the bearer of nothing but bad times. Kino decides to hurl it into the sea.

Quiz 4

Part A.

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. Kino | 6. Juan Tomas |
| 2. Juan Tomas | 7. Juan Tomas |
| 3. the doctor | 8. the pearl buyer |
| 4. Juana | 9. the priest |
| 5. Kino | 10. the doctor |

Lesson 6

An Overview

Objective

- To examine *Of Mice and Men*, source of title, structure, and reasons for writing to determine if the novel can be adapted as a play, as Steinbeck intended

Notes to the Teacher

Of Mice and Men, the first work to bring recognition and financial success to John Steinbeck, inherited its title and essence from the lines of a poem by Robert Burns, Scotland's folk poet. Steinbeck said that this was the work in which, at last, he achieved the form for a method of objective storytelling which was really a fictionalized play. In fact, when later adapted for the stage, 85 percent of the dialogue was retained.

Critics have said that *Of Mice and Men* is Steinbeck's last novel to be influenced by Arthurian legend. In it are parallels to the legend of King Arthur: the knightly loyalty, the pursuit of the dream or vision, the creation of a bond (that shared by George and Lennie, and the tentative, unfulfilled encounter of Candy and Crooks), the destruction of the dream and bond by the potentially adulterous relationship which Curley's wife anticipated in her attempt to seduce Lennie.

Students who are not acquainted with Arthurian legend or other works of Steinbeck can nonetheless appreciate the analogy of George as a knight of low estate who shares a dream with his companion, and who unconsciously perceives that the dream will never come true because his companion is flawed and lacks the capacity to know his own strength and to keep his innocent but powerful desires in check.

In addition to the structure of the work, students can explore ideas that Steinbeck presents: Is the dream George's, or is it Lennie's? When George complains that he could do other things (visit a "cat house, or a poolroom") if he didn't have Lennie, is he voicing his dream of independence, shed of the responsibility of caring for his slow-witted friend?

To the premise of some critics that maturity means the destruction of dreams, students will engage in an activity that suggests that maturity brings new approaches and expressions to old dreams and offers insight into creating dreams that can be realized.

Procedure

1. Students will have read *Of Mice and Men* and will be receptive to comments about its creation. Ask for comments about their reaction to the story. Do they see George as a "knight out of time" but nonetheless gallant, heroic, questing for an impossible dream, courageous and compassionate, especially where his friend is concerned? George's life, like all of life, is sometimes easy to predict and at other times difficult to solve because we do not have all the pieces.
2. Distribute **Handout 15** for students to complete. Students may work in pairs for some puzzles and singly for others. At the completion of the puzzles, discuss the answers. Suggest that our lives are similar to these puzzles, for the approach and reasoning a person brings to a situation may be quite different from that of another person in the same situation.

Suggested Responses:

1. *Sally must first realize that, in addition to going to the car, she also makes return trips, which is the solution to the problem. Sally must first take the cat to the car and then go back to the apartment to pick up Sara. When she takes Sara to the car, she should take the cat back to the apartment. Then she can leave the cat alone in the apartment and take Roger to the car. On the fourth trip she can return to the apartment, get the cat, and take it to the car.*
2. *Albert should follow Sally's lead. He must first separate the goose from the corn and from the fox. The best way is to take the goose to the island, leaving the fox and the corn on the dock. On his return, he will take the corn to the island,*

and he will bring the goose back on the return trip. He can leave the goose there again and take the fox to the island, with the corn, and then return to pick up the goose and bring it back to the island again.

3. Move the two large coins on the left to their new positions. Move the two small coins on the opposite end to their new positions. Move the two middle coins down to their positions. You are moving only adjacent coins and making only three moves.
 4. Lay out six coins as shown in model 1. In the bottom row of three coins, move the outside two up to flank the one coin in the top row; thus, the model has been reversed by moving only two coins.
3. Suggest that it will help students to see the overall construction of *Of Mice and Men* if they attempt to put it into drama form, since Steinbeck wrote the novel to experiment with the technique of converting a drama into a novel. Distribute **Handout 16** for students to complete. Working in small groups will be the more efficient approach for this activity. (Steinbeck used a three-act, each with two scenes, format.) Ask students if they believe a two-act, each with three scenes, format would have a greater impact in a stage version, or do they agree with Steinbeck's format.

Suggested Responses:

Act 1

Scene 1

Characters—George, Lennie

Plot—establishing their relationship; telling the dream

Setting—Willow Grove by Salinas River

Scene 2

Characters—George, Lennie, Curley, Slim, Curley's wife, Carlson

Plot—introducing ranch characters; establishing locale and interaction of characters

Setting—daytime, the bunkhouse

Scene 3

Characters—Slim, George, Lennie, Candy, Carlson, Whit, Crooks, Curley

Plot—Slim and George get acquainted. Carson gives Lennie a puppy. Candy's old dog is offensive to Carlson. Curley and Lennie fight. The woman visits the bunkhouse.

Setting—evening, the bunkhouse

Act 2

Scene 1

Characters—Crooks, Lennie, Candy

Plot—discussion of the dream

Setting—Crook's room, off the barn

Scene 2

Characters—Lennie, George, the woman

Plot—Lennie has killed the puppy, encounters the woman, and they talk. He kills her, is frightened, and runs away. The hands discover the body. George realizes what he must do.

Setting—inside the barn

Scene 3

Characters—George, Lennie

Plot—George finds Lennie, hears the men approaching, and kills his friend.

Setting—Willow Grove

4. Distribute **Handout 17** for students to complete. Instruct them to work individually on part A. For part B, divide the class into working partners. This activity will allow students to discover their errors as they search for supporting evidence in the book. Discuss responses.
5. Explain that the next lessons will be in-depth studies of relationships, circumstances, dreams, and ethics that make up the story. To sharpen students' deductive skills, distribute **Handout 18**. Discuss the puzzle solutions. Were students surprised to learn that all the information needed to solve both puzzles was present but not in an obvious, ordered form?

Suggest that a novelist often presents information in bits and pieces and challenges readers to draw inferences about characters or events. Readers become active participants in experiencing the story.

Suggested Responses:

1. The answer is 54 books. Person 1 takes $\frac{1}{3}$, or 18, leaving 36; person 2 takes $\frac{1}{3}$ of the 36 remaining, or 12, leaving 24; person 3 takes $\frac{1}{3}$ of the remaining 24, or 8, leaving 16 outside the apartment door. Person 2 needs 6 to make her share of 18, and the remaining 10 go to person 3, who, with the 8 she already took, now will have 18 also.
2. We find out from each clue something that helps us eliminate our choices. Example: Clue 1 tells us that Chloe is not an accountant. Clue 2 says that Daniela is not a time management expert. Clues 3 and 4 go together, for we learn that Daniela has been to Arizona, hiking the Grand Canyon, but the public relations specialist has not. We know that Chloe is not an accountant, but we know too that two professions have been

eliminated for Daniela. Clue 5 tells us Chloe cannot be a time management expert, and so she has been eliminated from two professions. Clue 6 tells us the accountant helps Daniela with her income tax, so Daniela cannot be an accountant. The only thing left for her to be is the statistics expert. We also know now that Chloe is not the time management expert, nor the statistics expert, since that is what we just learned that Daniela is, and clue 1 told us she worked with the accountant, so she must be the public relations specialist. Since the accountant helps Klein with his income tax, Klein must be the time management expert, and the last category, accountant, must belong to the last name, Harold.

Suggest that information about people often derives from bits and pieces as well as from situations, and we must often stop to sort out data before we can make accurate and fair judgments about others and about situations in our lives that require making choices.

Sometimes We Know More Than We Think We Know

Directions: Solve the following puzzles. Their details give you all the information you need to know, but the information is not readily apparent.

1. Sally has to get her two infant children, Sara and Roger, as well as the family cat, out to the car. Sally has one more problem. She recently broke her arm, and so she can carry only one child at a time or the cat. Sally has yet another problem. Neither child can be left alone with the cat. Sara pulls the cat's tail, causing general havoc, and the cat sheds hair on Roger's brown pants. How can Sally get all three to the car in as few trips as possible?
2. Albert needs to ferry Geraldine the goose, Fred the fox, and one bag of corn to his island, but he has room in his small boat for only one at a time. Albert knows he can't leave Geraldine alone with the corn, and he certainly can't leave Fred with Geraldine, so he must figure out how to get all three safely to the other side. How can he do it?
3. Change the six coins pictured in figure A to the new arrangement shown in figure B. This must be done in only three moves. You may move only two adjacent coins at a time.



Figure A

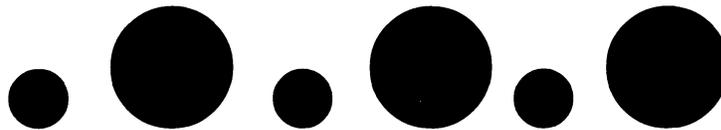
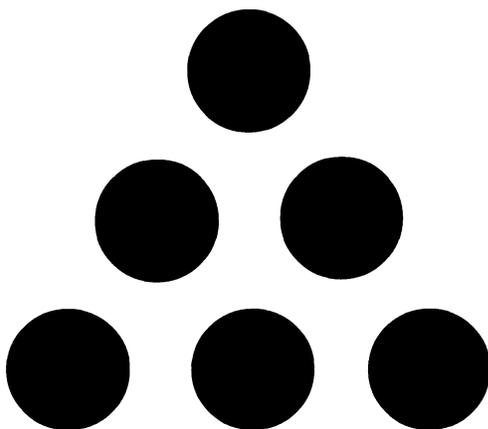
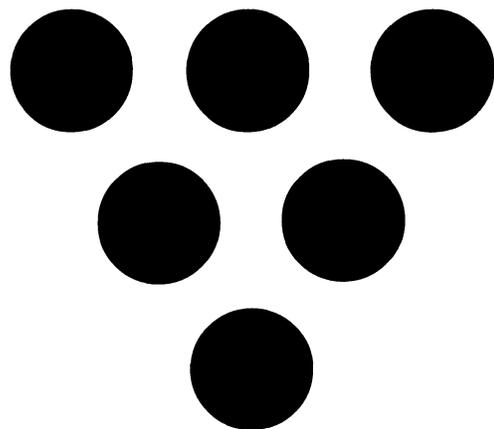


Figure B

4. Use some coins to reproduce model 1. Move only two coins to make model 2. Look carefully at the two models, and find a common element between them to help you find the solution.



Model 1



Model 2

Making the Novel a Play

Directions: John Steinbeck wrote *Of Mice and Men* as a novella that could easily be transformed into a play. The actual format of the play is three acts, each with two scenes, but you will be arranging the story into two acts with three scenes in each act. Use information from the book to complete the chart.

Scene	Characters	Plot	Setting	Novel Pages
Act 1 Scene 1				
Scene 2				
Scene 3				
Act 2 Scene 1				
Scene 2				
Scene 3				

A Cast of Eight: Characters and Character

Part A.

Directions: Match the characters in *Of Mice and Men* with the character traits you believe them to possess. Then write responses to questions 9–15.

The Characters

- _____ 1. George Milton
- _____ 2. Lennie Small
- _____ 3. Slim
- _____ 4. Candy
- _____ 5. Crooks
- _____ 6. Carlson
- _____ 7. Curley
- _____ 8. Curley's wife

Their Most Obvious Characteristics

- a. reserved, cautious
- b. brutish, cocky, arrogant
- c. aged, lonely
- d. responsible, moral
- e. pragmatic, realistic
- f. hulking, loyal, affectionate
- g. flirtatious, self-centered, coy
- h. sympathetic, perceptive

9. How many characters would you describe as lonely? Name them.
10. Which character do you like best? With whom would you probably become friendly?
11. Which character seems the angriest about the circumstances of his life?
12. Which character seems most accepting?
13. About which character do you believe John Steinbeck revealed the most?
14. Which character remains the most remote, the one about which we know the least?
15. Do we know as much as we need to know about each character to develop the plot, or are there questions that need answers? What are they?

Part B.

Directions: Justify the choices you made in part A with evidence from the novel. Find dialogue or narrative that helped you infer the traits you assigned each character. You may want to list page numbers and the beginning lines of relevant passages for use in class discussion.

Two More, Just for Fun

Directions: Here are two more puzzles that challenge you to work out situations. You and your partner will probably use different approaches to solve the problems.

1. Jill has been collecting books for many years. Now she is moving to a smaller apartment and has to get rid of some. She has told three of her friends who live in the same apartment building that she plans to give them her excess books. She puts several boxes of books outside her door for them to pick up, since she will be gone for the evening. Joan arrives and takes one-third of the books. Janice comes by later, and not knowing that Joan has been there, takes one-third of the remaining books. Finally, along comes Jane, and since she doesn't know the others have been there, she takes one-third of the remaining books.

Jill arrives home later and finds sixteen books remaining outside her door. Clever person that she is, Jill ponders the situation and then figures out what has happened. Wanting to make sure each of her friends gets the same number of books, she gives Janice and Jane the rest of her books. How many books does each receive to have her fair one-third share?

Jill knows how many books she put outside her door. You do not, or do you?

2. Four people—Chloe, Harold, Daniela, and Klein—open a new business. Their specialties as consultants are time management, accounting, public relations, and statistics, although not necessarily in that order. Here are some clues to help you determine what specialty belongs to which person.
 - a. Chloe and the accountant previously worked together.
 - b. Daniela and the time management expert graduated from the same college.
 - c. Before joining the firm, Daniela spent her fiftieth birthday hiking in the Grand Canyon.
 - d. The public relations specialist has never been to Arizona.
 - e. The time management expert's son is married to Chloe.
 - f. The accountant helps Klein and Daniela with their income taxes.

Lesson 7

Discovering Relationships

Objectives

- To examine the relationship of George and Lennie, and other characters in *Of Mice and Men*
- To determine how the relationship of the two men is perceived by others, and how outside reaction both strengthens and at times weakens it
- To discover what personal attitudes students bring to their relationships

Notes to the Teacher

All of the other characters in *Of Mice and Men* seem curious about the relationship that Lennie and George share. The boss tells George, "I never seen one guy take so much trouble for another." And Slim remarks, "Funny how you and him string along together. . . . I hardly never seen two guys travel together. You know how the hands are, they just come in and get their bunk and work a month, and then they quit and go out alone. . . . Never seem to give a damn about nobody."

The world of the migrant worker, especially the roving ranch hand, was a world of loneliness. The work was hard and demanding, and in their brief free time they could enjoy only momentary, casual pleasures that often left them only emptier and lonelier. George and Lennie are different. As Lennie jubilantly boasts, "But not us! An' why? Because . . . because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you, an' that's why."

Even George cannot always voice the reason he and Lennie are as close as brothers. He reveals to Slim that once he baited and tormented the slow-witted Lennie, because it made him (George) seem smarter. George continues to explain to Slim how a near-drowning incident reversed his attitude towards Lennie. Almost apologetically, he explains, "You get used to goin' around with a guy an' you can't get rid of him."

Neither of the men would have spoken of the love they felt. This would have been not only unmanly but also out of character. Lennie could not understand such an abstract concept,

and George believes a man can love only a woman and can express love only for family, certainly not for another man to whom he is not even a brother.

This lack of understanding is extended to George's knowledge of Lennie's mental condition, which is a complete enigma to George. He marvels at the things that Lennie remembers and those that seem not even to enter, let alone be retained, in his mind. The price of that ignorance is ultimately the loss of Lennie's life and the abrupt severance of the relationship. Had George perhaps been more perceptive of how to reinforce certain things in Lennie's mind, the ending might have been different.

The focus of this lesson is not only to examine interpersonal relationships but also to point out the importance of communication and how the lack of it affects establishment and endurance affinities.

Procedure

1. Focus this lesson on the nature of friendship. George and Lennie are best friends. Do students agree? What is their definition of *best friend*? If one is a best friend, can the two tell each other everything? Does the definition fit George and Lennie? Is there much that George cannot tell Lennie? Do best friends keep some things from each other and still retain closeness? Let students discuss these questions to confirm that there can be many kinds of "best friend" relationships.
2. Suggest that communication plays a very important role in how we feel about each other and in strengthening relationships. Why is communication, even with those to whom we are closest, sometimes difficult? Though we speak the same language, we may not understand the words of the speaker, as exemplified by George and Lennie. George knows the meaning he assigns to his words, but he has no idea what meaning they hold for Lennie. Ask students to think about profane language. Crude, vulgar language often indicates a

rage and frustration felt by the speaker who lacks ability to use other forms of verbal expression. Would a person like Lennie understand this? What other words might he speak, having heard them, but with no understanding? Distribute **Handout 19**. Assign students to work in pairs. No one should know that each student in the partnership is getting a new language. Stress that to make this experiment in communication work, they must not use English at any time. They must not share either of the sheets they have received. They must follow the instructions explicitly.

At first, this game will be amusing, but frustration will occur when students realize that they have no verbs in their new language. For determined students, necessity will become the mother of invention. For others, failure after failure will resign them to defeat. When the activity has exhausted its purpose, allow students to discuss their successes and failures.

- Discuss with students how we form relationships. Why do we like certain people, and why are we liked by some people and not by others? Are George and Lennie opposites? Are there some similarities in the two friends, in their dream of having a place of their own? Are there other things that unite them? Distribute **Handout 20**. Students may work in pairs or singly on part A.

Suggested Responses, Part A:

George

Physical Description—*small, wiry; has learned to be strong physically to defend himself; difference in physical size and similar physical strength*

Personality—*intelligent, practical, plans ahead; tries to see many sides of all situations; good-hearted, but unable to express inner feelings; quick-tempered*

Social Interaction—*cautious, does not reveal his personal hopes and problems to just anyone; stays reserved, aloof; would like to be more than an itinerant; has a sense of responsibility for Lennie, would like*

them to have a home; becomes friendly when he feels he can trust a person; has a high sense of morality

Lennie

Physical Description—*very large, overpowering, different from George; able to endure physical stress and pain when necessary, similar to George*

Personality—*slow-witted, usually good-natured, easily frightened when he doesn't understand things or situations, has limited understanding of right and wrong, but easily manipulated*

Social Interaction—*open, very vulnerable to taunts of those who don't understand him; depends on George to handle basic routines and demands of everyday life; does not understand social mores or rules; likes to pet and cuddle soft things, doesn't realize his strength will eventually overwhelm them; very intense in his desires, becomes almost hypnotized when George tells the dream*

Have students work individually to complete part B. Ask them if they agree that the relationship of Lennie and George is one of brotherhood. If they disagree, ask them to support their position with evidence from dialogue or narrative.

Suggested Responses, Part B:

- s h e p h e r d
40-1-4-42-1-4-19-2
- b r a v e; c o u r a g e o u s
6-19-10-17-4 3-11-36-19-10-5-4-11-36-40
- c o m p a s s i o n a t e
3-10-16-42-10-40-40-7-11-15-10-14-4
- c a u t i o u s
3-10-36-14-7-11-36-40
- a f f e c t i o n a t e
10-8-8-4-3-14-7-11-15-10-14-4
- r e t a r d e d
19-4-14-10-19-1-4-2
- a n i m a l i s t i c
10-15-7-16-10-9-7-40-14-7-3

8. i n n o c e n t
7-15-15-11-3-4-15-14
9. A R e l a t i o n s h i p
10 19-4-9-10-14-7-11-15-40-1-7-42
- o f B r o t h e r h o o d
11-8 6-19-11-14-1-4-19-1-11-11-2

Alphabet Number Key

a	10	n	15
b	6	o	11
c	3	p	42
d	2	q	44
e	4	r	19
f	8	s	40
g	5	t	14
h	1	u	36
i	7	v	17
j	13	w	20
k	18	x	28
l	9	y	37
m	16	z	12

4. Distribute **Handout 21**. Ask students to consider the theme of loneliness in *Of Mice and Men*. Work in small groups to locate passages that reflect loneliness.
5. To conclude, ask students to discuss why loneliness is a universal dilemma for human beings. Discuss the difference between loneliness and being alone.

Do We All Speak the Same Language?

Directions: In this activity, the question is whether or not we are all speaking the same language. We agree that we all speak English, but does that mean we always understand what is being said? A person may say something that is perfectly logical and understandable from his point of view, but the listener may not understand. This activity will give you some insight into this kind of communication barrier. You and your partner will each be given two sheets of paper. Read the top sheet silently; do not share either sheet with your partner. Wait for further instructions.

Instructions for Language Partner A:

1. Read this sheet carefully. Do not share it with your partner. No questions may be asked of the teacher.
2. Do not use any language other than the simulated language.
3. On your first attempt to communicate, use only the words for the objects on the sheet, with no conscious nonverbal communication or action.
4. If your partner does not understand what you want, then you may refer to a nonverbal form of communication. Symbols and signs can be given nonverbally, but you may not point directly to or touch any of the objects belonging to your partner.
5. You may not perform the actual action, but you may indicate something that will enable your partner to comprehend.
6. The word on the dictionary sheet for the object must be spoken each time an indication about that object is made.
7. Your teacher will signal when you should stop and your partner should begin attempting to communicate with you. You and your partner will continue to alternate communication attempts for as long as your teacher directs. When you or your partner completes a task, signal your teacher by a wave of your hand. Your teacher will then signal you to begin another task.
8. Here are the tasks you will want to have your partner perform.

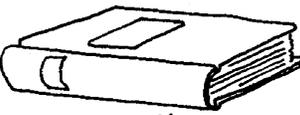
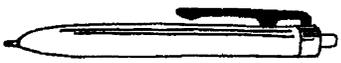
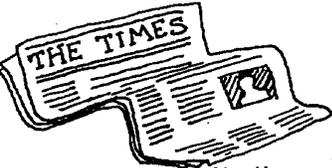
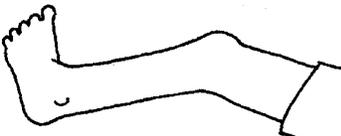
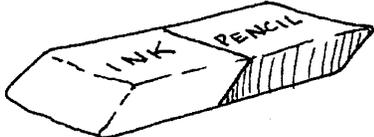
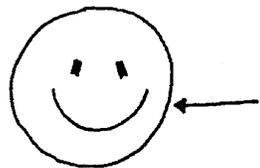
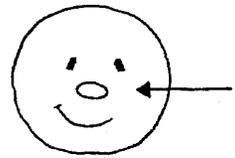
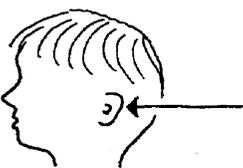
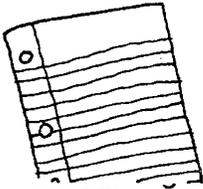
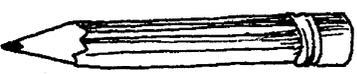
Name of Task	Circle Results	
a. Smile	Failure	Success
b. Cover nose with hand	Failure	Success
c. Give you a pen or pencil	Failure	Success
d. Take off a shoe	Failure	Success
e. Fold hands	Failure	Success
f. Put elbow on desk	Failure	Success

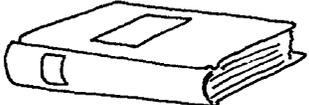
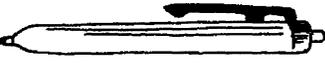
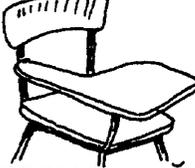
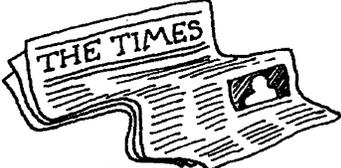
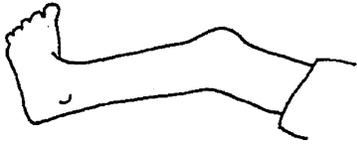
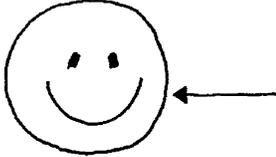
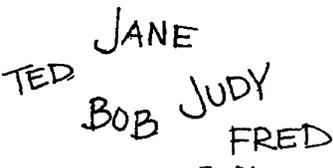
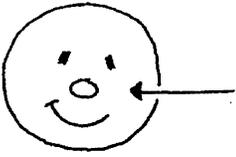
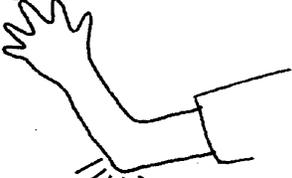
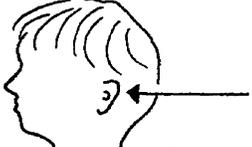
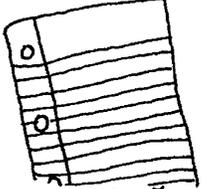
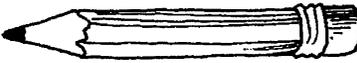
Directions: In this activity, the question is whether or not we are all speaking the same language. We agree that we all speak English, but does that mean we always understand what is being said? A person may say something that is perfectly logical and understandable from his point of view, but the listener may not understand. This activity will give you some insight into this kind of communication barrier. You and your partner will each be given two sheets of paper. Read the top sheet silently; do not share either sheet with your partner. Wait for further instructions.

Instructions for Language Partner B:

1. Read this sheet carefully. Do not share it with your partner. No questions may be asked of the teacher.
2. Do not use any language other than the simulated language.
3. On your first attempt to communicate, use only the words for the objects on the sheet, with no conscious nonverbal communication or action.
4. If your partner does not understand what you want, then you may refer to a nonverbal form of communication. Symbols and signs can be given nonverbally, but you may not point directly to or touch any of the objects belonging to your partner.
5. You may not perform the actual action, but you may indicate something that will enable your partner to comprehend.
6. The word on the dictionary sheet for the object must be spoken each time an indication about that object is made.
7. Your teacher will signal when you should stop and your partner should begin attempting to communicate with you. You and your partner will continue to alternate communication attempts for as long as your teacher directs. When you or your partner completes a task, signal your teacher by a wave of your hand. Your teacher will then signal you to begin another task.
8. Here are the tasks you will want to have your partner perform.

Name of Task	Circle Results	
a. Say his or her name	Failure	Success
b. Frown	Failure	Success
c. Give you a pen or pencil	Failure	Success
d. Put pen or pencil behind ear	Failure	Success
e. Put elbow on desk	Failure	Success
f. Put pen or pencil on top of notebook	Failure	Success

<p>Language Guide for Partner A</p>	 KAL (KĀL)	 PRO KAL (PRŌ-KĀL)
 CRET (KRĒT)	 PLAT (PLAT)	 EPIDAT (ĒP-Ī-DĀT)
 MUTT(Z) (MŪT) PL(MŪTZ)	 GAFF(Z) (GĀF) PL(GĀFZ)	 DOTT(Z) (DŌT) PL(DŌTZ)
 MIZMO (MĪS-MŌ)	 KREBBISH (KRĒB-ĪSH)	 CEEPEE (SĒE-PĒE)
 DECEEPEE (DĒE-SĒE-PĒE)	 PUMPLE (PŪM-PŪL)	<p>TED JANE BOB JUDY FRED</p> VERBO (VĒRB-Ō) PL(VĒRB-ŌZ)
 CAPO (KĀ-PŌ)	<p>ME</p> QUO (KWŌ)	 TOGUL (TŌ-GŪL)
 KRU (CREW)	 FLOT (FLŌT)	 CRETER (KRĒ-TĒR)

<p>Language Guide for Partner B</p>	 BRETT (BRĚT)	 DERBER (DĚR-BĚR)
 DORBUT (DORE-BUT)	 HORVAT (WHĚR-VAT)	 ROT (ROT)
 KNISH(EZ) (NISH) PL(NISH-EZ)	 RAMP(EZ) PL(RAMP-EZ)	 CORD(EZ) PL(CĚRD-EZ)
 RALLO (RĀH-LĚ)	 KOTIN (CĚT-TIN)	 TIMPLE (TĚM-PĚL)
 BIMPLE (BĚM-PĚL)	 KLOTZ (KĀ-LĚTZ)	 BOREZ (BĚ-RĚZ)
 DOLP (DĚLP)	 RAZ (RĀZZ)	 NĚR (NĚR)
 GOB (GĚB)	 LĚME (LĚME)	 LĚPOD (LĚ-POD)

Lennie and George

Part A.

Directions: John Steinbeck created two memorable characters: Leonard Small and George Milton. Both their physical characteristics and their personalities draw them together and set them apart from the other characters in the novel. Complete the chart below. You will use the information to complete a puzzle.

Physical Description How do they differ? How are they similar?	Personality How do they differ? How are they similar?	Social Interaction How do they relate to other people?
George		
Lennie		

Part B.

Directions: Read the following statements and supply the missing words. Notice that some of the letters have been provided. When you have completed this part of the puzzle, transfer the numbered letters to the statement at the bottom, matching each numbered space.

- George, whose name means husbandman or h_____, cares for Lennie.
40-1-4-42-1-4-19-2
- Though small in stature, George is strong, and like knights of old, he is
b_____ and c_____.
6-19-10-17-4 3-11-36-19-10-5-4-11-36-40
- George is usually patient and c_____ p_____ with Lennie.
3-11-16-42-10-40-40-7-11-15-10-14-4
- George constantly reminds Lennie not to talk around strangers. He is
t_____ s_____ because he knows most other people cannot understand Lennie.
3-10-36-14-7-11-36-40
- Lennie tries to be a_____ with the soft, furry animals he
10-8-8-4-3-14-7-11-15-10-14-4
loves to pet, but he is always too strong and usually hurts or kills them.
- Lennie is the kind of person that today we recognize as mentally _____ d_____.
19-4-14-10-19-2-4-2
- Lennie's personality could be described as _____ m_____ l_____, for he responds
10-15-7-16-10-9-7-40-14-7-3
to voice commands like a pet dog and labors long with great strength like an ox or elephant.
Finally, Steinbeck called him *Leonard*, which means "strong as a lion."
- Because he cannot really understand right from wrong, we say that Lennie is
e_____, or not responsible for his actions, for they are not committed
7-15-15-11-3-4-15-14
with evil intent but rather from overpowering, unreasoning tenderness.
- What is the title of this part of the handout?

10 19-4-9-10-14-7-11-15-40-1-7-42 11-8 6-19-11-14-1-4-19-1-11-11-2

Expressing Loneliness

Directions: In varying degrees, many of the characters in *Of Mice and Men* reveal their loneliness. In your group, divide the characters for your research. Complete the chart by finding in the novel narrative or dialogue revealing the loneliness of each of the characters listed below.

Name of Character	Supporting Evidence
George	
Lennie	
Slim	
Curley's wife	
Crooks	
Candy	

Lesson 8

Discovering Circumstances

Objectives

- To examine the circumstances John Steinbeck creates for his characters
- To show how the responses to circumstances can affect plans and goals
- To determine whether characters in *Of Mice and Men* react to circumstances because they do not see their positions clearly

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson deals with circumstances, those conditions or facts surrounding an event over which a person has little, if any, control. For George and Lennie, their stations in life since birth have changed little when we encounter them, except that once both had homes and now both are “bindle-stiffs,” as itinerant ranch hands were called in the 1930s, the setting of the story. They are in Depression straits, and little other than a miracle windfall of cash could change their plight. They do dream of a place of their own, and for a time, it appears that circumstances are working in their favor. Circumstances for tragedy are also swirling around George and Lennie, for they have come to a ranch where one of the residents is an unhappy, lonely female. If she had been happily married, shy, aloof, ugly and disfigured, or bedraggled, with gritty, dirty hair and fingernails, if she had not been soft, lovely, seductive, if she had not existed . . . circumstances might have changed for George and Lennie.

Students may like to what-if about events in the story. Activities will help them to understand that all of the circumstances in our lives are not beyond our control. With reason and logic and assessment of all alternatives, we can make some changes. Hemingway is said to have remarked that life breaks everyone, and some grow stronger at the breaking point. Steinbeck, who did not always agree with his contemporary, would probably have concurred in this instance.

Procedure

1. Explain that this lesson focuses on discovering how unforeseen circumstances can cause us to change our plans and to reassess the direction of our lives. Sometimes the circumstance can be the entry into our lives of another person or persons, whom we may see only superficially rather than with a depth of understanding. Distribute **Handout 22**. Let students work alone according to the directions on the handout, and then have them pair up for the second part. Some students may also enjoy doing the optional activity.
2. Approaches to circumstances vary. Who we are, what we believe about ourselves and others, and how we have already successfully solved problems often determine how we cope with new circumstances. Distribute **Handout 23** for students to complete. In this activity, students will place characters in *Of Mice and Men* into a new circumstance. Advise students that these characters cannot be given new personality characteristics. Ask them to make their choices individually. Distribute part B of **Handout 23** for small group work with all new characters in a similar circumstance. Can they achieve group consensus? Allow students to comment on the problems they had in getting the group to agree.
3. Distribute **Handout 24**. Assign the writing activity as homework. Share responses with the class.
4. Conclude the lesson by asking students to give examples of circumstances that can strengthen us and make us wiser in preparation for the next challenge, for that is usually what unforeseen circumstances are. The old saying, “When life sends you lemons, make lemonade,” cannot always be achieved, however, so the alert individual tries to avoid unpleasant circumstances whenever possible. Some examples include

saving money for a time when it is needed, eating properly to stay healthy, and driving defensively. Ask students to think of other things people do regularly to try to prevent dealing with unpleasant circumstances.

Optional Activity

Try some more matching in a tic-tac-toe game with a partner. You will need two kinds of markers (paper squares in two colors). Cut the statements in **Handout 22**, page 1, into strips. Turn them over so that they cannot be read. Draw one of the strips, read that statement, and make a reasonable picture match. Put a marker on it. Your partner will take a turn and do the same. Continue to use the tic-tac-toe strategy. In making choices, you cannot go against facts.

Who's Who

Directions: Put the number of the statement under the face that seems to fit the description best. When you have finished, work with your partner. Compare your choices with your partner's. Score one point for each picture-statement pairing on which the two of you agreed.

1. Cindy moves gracefully. Her long, silky hair glistens in the sunshine.
2. Sarah is always watchful. She knows that the children in her care need constant protection.
3. Randy is a true star, able to act any role—lovable or hateful, funny or serious.
4. Cam's trademark in writing and teaching is deep and careful thought.
5. Lee has the strength and quick reflexes needed to drive a ten-ton truck.
6. George is fast and powerful, but know-how is the main quality that makes him an all-pro football player.
7. Lynn, now famous as a surgeon, says that courage is the quality doctors need most.
8. Carl's good humor makes him a favorite with the customers at his drugstore.
9. Billie may not look like a champion marathon runner, but the records prove it.



Fig. 3.1 Adapted from *Learning—The Magazine for Creative Teaching* (Palo Alto, California: Education Today Company, 1979).

Part B.

Directions: This activity presents a similar circumstance, but in a new location and with new characters.

Sometimes circumstances can be readily resolved if only one person is making decisions. What happens when a committee tackles the problem? First make your choice as if you were the captain. Then, in your small group, achieve a group consensus choice. Keep your own choices clearly in mind when you encounter the group decision-making process.

The Situation

An ocean liner, en route from Singapore to San Francisco, is destroyed by an explosion. Thirteen people have managed to reach a lifeboat, but it is only a transitory haven, for it has been seriously damaged and is leaking badly. It is obvious that in only a matter of hours it will break apart. Aboard the lifeboat is an inflatable rubber raft, but it will hold only five persons. It represents the only chance for escape.

The captain, the only member of the crew to reach the lifeboat, has elected to go down with the ship. He suggests that the other twelve people draw lots to see which five will be sent aboard the rubber raft. In the interests of dispassionate emotions, the twelve unanimously decide that the captain will choose the five who will be allowed on the rubber raft.

If you were the captain, which five would you select? A list of the passengers in the lifeboat, with their credentials, follows. Explain as fully as you can why you would choose some and not others.

Dr. Michael Oberhauser, 62, is an M.D. with long and selfless service in medicine, specializing in the treatment of cancer, and purportedly is on the verge of developing a cure.

Reverend Isaac Johnson, 33, is a black militant minister, a spiritual and political leader of American blacks. Although he rejects the use of violence to achieve social parity, he enjoys a strong following among radicals as among moderate blacks. He was due in San Francisco to answer court charges of illegally using federal funds to sponsor business ventures in the ghetto.

Regina Fosdick, 32, is a successor to Betty Friedan as spokesperson for the women's liberation movement. Admired by women, she is as attractive as Gloria Steinem and as bright as Kate Millet. Her philosophical novel, *The Season of Sex*, has been highly praised by critics.

Preston Cabot, 43, is a successful banker from New Rochelle. As a member of the Rotary Club, the Elks, and the Lions, as well as serving as chairman of the Jaycees, he is dedicated to community service. He is also a member of the New York Republican Party and the founder of a treatment center for alcoholics.

Claire Cabot, 24, is pregnant and the third wife of Preston. A member of the New Rochelle Country Club and organizer of the Bridge Club for Harried Housewives, she is somewhat frustrated in her role as a housewife and has been fighting the temptation of afternoon martini get-togethers at the club.

Hans Kreitzer, 72, was born Fyodor Ivanovich Zukov in the Ukraine but moved to Germany as a young boy. After outstanding achievements at various schools and universities, he entered the field of nuclear physics. Hans left Germany in 1933 and went to England and later the United States, where he is considered to be a leading scientist in the area of atomic energy.

Michael Ward Armstrong III, 20, is the leader of Young Americans for Freedom, a college vigilante committee dedicated to cleansing campuses of liberals. He is the protégé of an ex-Senator from New York and has been accepted by the Harvard Law School.

Lorenzo Falco, 26, is a former star pupil of Connie “the Gun” Cafferellie, reputed Godfather of the syndicate. He knows the rackets inside and out. He is to testify before a Senate subcommittee investigating organized crime. What he knows, if made public, should put a crimp in drug traffic.

Sam Carroway, 38, is unknown to his fellow passengers. He has been recruited by the CIA for foreign surveillance activities and is now going back home with vital information concerning Russia’s plans in the Far East. For national security reasons, his real identity has been revealed only to the captain. Otherwise, he would have remained an ordinary tourist on board ship.

Luis Ariento, 22, is a Cuban refugee, unofficially regarded as the most promising baseball player in the American League. Like the late Roberto Clemente, he thrills millions with his skill and athleticism at bat, on the basepaths, and in center field. He is completing a tour of the United States and the Philippines, urging students to avoid drugs.

Mimsy Star, 24, formerly Zocia Chmielinski from Chicago, is a sometime hooker and a rehabilitated heroin addict who is currently the sex goddess of stage and screen. A recent article in *Time* offered the following description: “Her natural blend of earthy substantiality and childlike innocence makes her the first real successor to Marilyn Monroe as that unique kind of starlet that holds both male and female audiences in the palm of her hand . . . in these times of economic depression and social oppression, Miss Star has furnished millions with an escape from worldly cares. . . .”

Harold Goodman, 21, graduated from Yale at the age of twenty with a B.A. and M.A. in political science. He is currently the leader and social director of the Youth International Party. His M.A. thesis was entitled, “The New Anarchy or Else.” It has been acclaimed as a political landmark by the New York Review of Books and designated as “must reading” by the *National Review*.

Lesson 9

Discovering Dreams

Objectives

- To determine the importance of George and Lennie's dream to the plot
- To examine dreams as goals in life

Notes to the Teacher

George and Lennie's dream to have a place of their own is a prominent theme in *Of Mice and Men*. Without the recurring litany pronounced by George to quiet the sometimes uncontrollable Lennie, the impact of the story would be diminished.

It has been said that dreams may be humanity's only defense against an impersonal, uncaring world. For George and Lennie, the dream of a place where they will "live off the fatta the land" is the catalyst of their relationship.

The relationship of these men seems almost suspect in a lifestyle where loneliness is usual, yet the dream these two men share is a relatively common human experience. As Crooks tells Lennie, "I seen hunderds of men come by on the road and on the ranches, with their bundles on their backs and that same damn thing in their heads. Hunderds of them. They come, an' they quit an' go on; an' every damn one of 'ems got a little piece of land in his head. An' never a God damn one of 'em ever gets it."

Like those "hunderds" Crooks has seen, the dream of Lennie and George will likewise remain an illusion, forever destroyed by a tragic circumstance. The focus of this lesson is to explore the dreaming of George and Lennie and our own dreaming. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said for all of us, "I have a dream."

Procedure

1. Ask students about their dreams, not the fantasies of sleep but the hopes and goals for the future which we, like Lennie and George, might have. Why are such dreams so important? Would the quality of our lives be diminished if we did nothing but

dream about what life might be like? Would it be drearier if we did not speculate, imagine, or dream?

2. Assign two readers to act the part of Lennie and George and read the dream of having a place of their own to the class. Ask students to speculate about George and Lennie's dream. Distribute **Handout 25** for students to record their speculations. Share responses with the class.
3. A critic's review of *Of Mice and Men* suggested that George's relationship with Lennie is more necessary to George than to his simple-minded companion. Lennie is the restraint, the barrier that keeps George from actually making the dream come true. When circumstances force George to destroy Lennie and the dream, he has finally matured and is facing reality instead of the dream that he knows will never be realized. Present this viewpoint to the students. Discuss whether dreaming is for the young only. Can they think of dreams that mature people imagined and brought into being? Distribute **Handout 26**. After students have read the narrative, ask them to complete the questions and to share responses with the class.

Suggested Responses:

1. *self-reliance, poise*
 2. *It was appropriated by her son.*
 3. *through the reality of changing priorities in her busy and challenging role as a mother*
 4. *that she is light-hearted, flexible, and naturally blessed with a good sense of humor*
4. Focus the lesson on the importance of dreams as workable goals. Distribute **Handout 27** for students to write about their dreams (goals). Determine in advance whether you wish this to be an assignment to be evaluated or a free-writing personal introspective.

What Dream Did Not Exist?

Directions: Is the dream of George and Lennie vital to the basic plot of the novel-play? You have just heard it read. Go back to **Handout 16**, and look at the sequence of events in drama. Then answer the following questions.

1. Consider act 1, scene 1. What do you think George and Lennie would be talking about if the dream did not exist?
2. Without the dream, several incidents or conversations might not occur. List some of them, and include the page numbers.
3. Even without the dream, the tragedy in the barn probably would have occurred, and after the woman's death, Lennie would still be hunted by Curley and the others. Would the ending of the story have changed substantially? What do you think George would have done when he encountered Lennie by the stream? He could not have told Lennie the dream of getting a place of their own, since it would not exist in a what-if situation. What would he do and say? Would his action differ from the existing ending? How?

A Look at a Dream That Never Came True

Directions: Read the following humorous look at a dream that never came true, and answer the questions.

Nancy Drew Dream

My dreams of having a car of my own go back to the never-never land of Nancy Drew and her mystery stories. Nancy was a self-appointed teenage detective who buzzed around some mythical American county in a neat little "roadster." She changed her own tires and put on her own tire chains and, I suppose, could easily have done a valve job if the case had warranted. And it didn't seem to me that she ever got her hands dirty, rumbled a pleat of her gabardine skirt, or displaced a hair of her pretty blonde head.

At the time I was being tantalized by that fantasy, we drove around in an old black panel truck which we affectionately called "the hearse." It was used principally for hauling produce to market but doubled as the family car. Small wonder I was captivated by Nancy Drew.

When I outgrew her, I moved on to Andy Hardy. Andy, teenage idol of the silver screen, was the "rich kid" son of a lovable old judge living in small-town America back in the forties. We all envied Andy his convertible as he tooted around to soda fountains and football games and beach parties. None of us will ever forget that marvelous moment when he first pushed the button and the top went up. Wow!

That convertible, preferably red, was our consuming passion. After the war we would each have one.

When I got my "red convertible" thirty years later, it was a five-year-old blue Volkswagen.

The first year I had it my oldest son put ten thousand miles on it shuttling between a college campus, a weekend job, and a girl friend. The only time it was referred to as mine was in pronouncements like, "Your car needs new tires," "Your car is burning oil," or "I just had an accident with your car." When it was totaled the second time, I threw in the sponge. I hadn't the heart to go over to the garage and gaze upon my shattered dream.

There is now another car registered in my name. Like the first it bears little resemblance to Nancy Drew's wonder car. It is Stop Sign yellow and referred to by the kids as the rolling cheese carton.

It has been more or less appropriated by No. 2 son, and is used principally for transporting motorcycle parts and F.F.A. projects. I have the feeling that everywhere but in my presence it is referred to as "Ted's car." It is ridden in chiefly by big boys. The seats are pushed way back, the headrests way up. The rearview mirror is adjusted to spot a "Bear" I would never see. The radio is tuned to acid rock, and the under-seat area resembles a refuse can at Burger Chef. Occasionally I find a pillow on the console between the bucket seats.

Nancy Drew must now be pushing sixty. I understand she's still solving mysteries and apprehending crooks. Considering the broadened scope of everyone's activity today, I suppose she flies the world in her own Lear Jet or bombs around the nation in an Aston Martin. I'm sure it's no trick for her. In the first place she never married, but more important, she never had any kids.¹

¹Patricia Penton Leimbach, *All My Meadows* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 49, 50.

1. What else did the author envy about Nancy Drew in addition to her car?
2. What happened when the author finally got her dream car?
3. How does the author suggest she outgrew the dream?
4. What does the author's style of writing imply about her?
5. This is a wistful, humorous look at a childish dream. As we grow older, should our dreams change?
6. Would you call the "Nancy Drew Dream" an impossible dream? How would you compare it to the dream of George and Lennie for a place of their own?

Daytime Dreaming

Directions: The dream that is the theme of *Of Mice and Men* is a daytime dream, a goal that George and Lennie want to achieve. We can dream and aspire to greater and better things in our own lives, for others, or even for the whole world. The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. enunciated such an aspiration in the opening words of his famous oration, "I have a dream." Do you have a dream? Is there a goal or a circumstance that you envision for yourself, or for someone else, or for the world? Write your dream.

Lesson 10

Discovering Ethics

Objectives

- To determine the moral principles (ethical standards) by which the characters in *Of Mice and Men* live and are motivated
- To reason if ethics should change with changing circumstances

Notes to the Teacher

Ethics are those moral principles and standards by which we choose to live, as well as those imposed or dictated by the society in which we live.

The privilege of a writer in a work of fiction is to explore such standards, testing and challenging for weaknesses and strengths. In *Of Mice and Men*, George Milton is the most moral of all the characters. When the ranch hands see Curley's wife as enticing and desirable, he pronounces, "What a tramp." When the ranch hands talk of visiting the "nice, clean cathouse" in town, George states he might visit for a drink, but he isn't paying for any physical pleasure. When the ranchers smirk about Curley wearing a glove lined with vaseline to keep his hand "soft for his wife," George remarks, "That a dirty thing to say." George has also developed a sense of compassion for the weak-minded Lennie, rare for a man of sketchy education and with no moral encouragement from anyone else.

Yet, George is the character who knowingly takes the life of another human being. His victim will be that person for whom he cares most. George, and many readers, will see this act as the only alternative to Curley's murder of Lennie. It is this murder, with its potential for torment and torture to Lennie before his actual death, that George moves to prevent. Lennie, who is unaware of the vengeful hatred his unintentional killing of the woman has provoked, will meet his death still unknowing, calm, and happy as he sits by the stream listening to George tell the wonderful story of a place of their own.

Is the taking of a human life, then, an ethical act in certain circumstances? If the

taking of a human life is not always an immoral act, then what other principles can be adjusted according to a human predicament or sudden circumstance?

In this lesson, students will become aware that a dichotomy exists where the application of moral principles is concerned.

Procedure

1. Clarify that the focus of this lesson is the discussion of ethics, the moral standards by which we live, and how we determine what those standards shall be.
2. Ask students to comment on those principles they believe they would adhere to, no matter what the circumstances. Should right and wrong be the same standard for everyone? Remind students that religious dogmas, as well as societal and governmental laws, establish ethical standards by which people live and that sometimes these standards conflict.
3. Distribute **Handout 28**. Divide the class into three groups. Group 1 will be the attorneys for the defense; group 2, the government's prosecution staff; group 3, the jury. The case is Soledad County vs. an accused murderer. Imagine that George has been arrested and is on trial for Lennie's murder. Allow time for students to prepare their cases. The jury will be required to take notes during the presentation and should be given time to deliberate before announcing their verdict.
4. This activity will offer students an opportunity to discover other standards of ethics and how people determine them. Distribute **Handout 29**, and have students complete it individually. Conduct a large group discussion to explore the judgments they believe the participants would have made. Can the group reach a consensus? Which individual truly hated banana splits? Did the judgments reflect clearly the circumstances of the individuals? Would they make moral judgments in the same manner?

Answers are on the bottom of page 68.

5. We learn the moral standards prevalent in our society from those we live with, those who have the responsibility of educating us, and those who lead our government and organizations. Distribute **Handout 30**. Ask students to read the story, or let several students read the narrative to the class. Assign the questions to be answered either in writing or orally through a class discussion. Ask students to discuss whether they believe that Miss Aborn was ethical in the method she used to combat the racial prejudice that had surfaced in the previous year.
6. Discuss prejudice against race (Crooks) and age (Candy) that is inferred in *Of Mice and Men*. Ask students to find passages that illustrate the ethical norm of that time.
7. The morality of a society's duty to its disadvantaged has always been debated. What do students believe was society's responsibility to Lennie? Do they see *Of Mice and Men* as a plea for understanding and helping those who, to some degree, are mentally handicapped? Does the severity of the handicap determine the amount or kind of help that should be available?

Ask if they believe Steinbeck deliberately made the character of Lennie such a contrast in little mental skill and great physical strength to magnify the problem of those with impaired reasoning who live among us. Would Lennie's character have gained more sympathy with readers if someone else had killed the woman and he had been blamed for it? Tell students that a Hollywood producer felt Steinbeck should have used this action with George mistakenly believing Lennie was guilty. George's shooting of Lennie would engender more sympathy for Lennie from a movie audience. Ask students why Steinbeck refused the Hollywood producer's suggestion.

Optional Activity

Apply the following premise to **Handout 28**: George has not killed Lennie but has hidden him so that Curley could not find him. George has taken Lennie out of the county to authorities who would protect him. You are a lawyer at Lennie's trial for the murder of Curley's wife. Look beyond obvious defense and prosecution tactics to incidents that could indicate Lennie did or did not know right from wrong.

Suggested Responses, Handout 29:

H	Ice-cream shop owner	—	"very expensive dish"
A	Hungry child	10	—
G/D	Artist	8	"colors are great"
B/F	Nutritionist	4	"too much sugar"
C/E	Child with toothache	1	"don't want to think about banana splits"

Going to Trial

Directions: Someone is on trial for a murder. Your teacher will tell you the person who has been killed and the accused murderer. You will be assigned to be a member of the defense team for the accused, a member of the prosecution team for the district attorney's office, or a member of the panel of jurors who will decide the case. Below are instructions for each of the three groups.

1. Jurors

Your task is to listen and weigh the evidence presented by both sides. Take notes of the evidence, and use those notes during deliberations for a final verdict.

2. Defense

Your task is to persuade the jury that your client is innocent. Your group must have knowledge of the crime, motivation, and all circumstances and people involved who can help your case. Make a list of the people you will call as witnesses so that those roles can be assigned.

3. Prosecution

Your task is to prove the case against the accused. You will need witnesses to testify. Make a list of these witnesses so that the roles can be assigned.

Your teacher will act as the judge for this trial. None of you have prepared speeches, but those who are characters from the novel may want to use some dialogue from the book, where appropriate.

Who Hates Banana Splits?

Directions: Imagine a group of people looking at a banana split. The people are the owner of an ice cream shop, a nutritionist, a child with a toothache, an artist, a parent, and a hungry child. These people are being asked to rate a banana split on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, and to give comments with their ratings. Your task is to decide what comment each would make and the score each would give. Four scores and four comments are provided. Assign them to the persons you believe would have made them.

A has given it a score of 10.

B gave it a score of 4.

C gave it a score of 1.

D gave it a score of 8.

E said, "Ice cream is my favorite dessert, and this looks delicious, but right now I don't want to think about banana splits."

F said, "Too much sugar! Too many calories! It's unhealthy and fattening! The banana and the nuts are the only parts worth eating!"

G said, "The colors are great. The pinks, browns, and whites are beautiful together. The whipped cream and the marshmallow topping flow gracefully over the sides. The scoops of ice cream balance perfectly next to the slices of banana."

H said, "A very expensive dish! But who can resist heaps of real whipped cream, a marshmallow topping, pineapple, chocolate, and strawberry syrups, three ice cream flavors, fresh bananas and nuts, and a cherry on top!"

Code (A-H)	Person	Score	Comments
	Ice cream shop owner		
	Hungry child		
	Artist		
	Nutritionist		
	Child with a toothache		
	Parent		

What was important to each of these people as they made up their minds? What if circumstances had changed for some of them? Would their comments, scores, and opinions have changed? Give examples.

Establishing a Point of View

Directions: Read the story and answer the questions.

Anyone Can Be Beautiful

When I was 10 years old and in the fifth grade, Miss Mary Aborn was the most popular teacher in the entire Linden Street School in Plainsville, Connecticut. In June, at the end of my fourth-grade year, when the envelopes were passed out with next year's assignments, I could hardly open mine. I closed my eyes, afraid to look. Finally, I opened my eyes. I got her! Miss Aborn was going to be my teacher!

At that point everything should have been perfect. But something happened to spoil the day. A classmate handed me an invitation to a "class picnic." But the three black students didn't get invitations.

I didn't go. Seeing one of my black girlfriends cry was enough for me to make up my mind about that. I'm not sure anyone went.

When school started in September I happened to be talking with the black girl who had cried. "I don't think I'll ever feel as comfortable in school again," she told my girlfriend Gracie and me. Gracie and I decided we'd better do something about that. But what? "Maybe we'd better confide in Miss Aborn," Gracie suggested. And that is what we did.

One day, after our lunch break, it was time for our history lesson. "Instead of starting our regular lessons today, I think it would be interesting if we discussed the different climates around the world," Miss Aborn told us. We talked about places that become extremely hot, such as Africa, and nations like Norway that have cold weather much of the year.

"In thinking about Africa," Miss Aborn said, "if you lived there, do you think you'd get a bad sunburn? Did any of you get sunburns over the summer?"

Well, more than one of the students had to say they did get sunburned. "God planned wisely, didn't He?" teacher said. We looked at her, curious. "He gave the people in the nations where it gets extremely hot dark skins that protect them from the sun's sometimes cruel rays. In nations that have a good amount of hot weather but not to the degree that Africa does, we find people with brown skins. But look at Shirley Olsen sitting here in the front row. Her ancestors came from a cold nation, Norway. See how fair she is? Her family did not need the protection other peoples needed."

Our classmate who had cried stood beside her desk. "Miss Aborn, I'm black because my ancestors came from a very hot country?" She smiled, "Otherwise I'm the same?"

"That's correct," Miss Aborn said. The girl's smile turned to a grin.

The weeks flew by and Thanksgiving approached. These were Depression years. Our little town was more fortunate than many but of course we still had our share of problems. In my class there was one boy whose father had lost his job, and the family had very little money, even for food.

"My father says we'll have to have a charity basket if we're to have much of a Thanksgiving dinner," this classmate told us. "But he says he won't ask for charity."

The next day Miss Aborn pulled one of her surprises. "A lady living alone often has a lonely holiday," she told us. "This year I hope I can get a family to come to my house and share Thanksgiving with me. In my little home I can only have one family, of course, and though I'd like to ask all of my students and their families, I can't. So, I wonder if you would help me. I have a basket here with slips in it. One of you will draw a slip and

and the child whose name is on that slip is the one that I hope will do me the favor of coming to my home for Thanksgiving dinner.”

We all decided it was nothing short of a wonderful miracle that the name drawn was that of the boy whose father so hated to accept charity. All these years later I realize that no matter which slip had been drawn, that boy's name would have appeared!

That year went by quickly and by springtime I was worried. Gracie was worried. The world was coming to an end . . . because of the letters.

Since I passed the post office on my way home each day, Miss Aborn often gave me letters to mail. Gracie walked almost that far with me, and we worried together about those letters addressed to a gentleman in Virginia.

Was teacher in love? How could she be . . . after all, she must have been 40 . . . you don't fall in love and get married when you're that old, do you? What if she married and went to live in Virginia? What would the children of our school do? Miss Aborn had been there forever and she was needed. Loved.

Miss Aborn went around humming and smiling. We worried still more. Then I got my courage up one day and I stayed for a few minutes after school. I told Miss Aborn all about my worries. She kissed me and said she'd tell us about it the following day.

The next day Miss Aborn put a chair for herself in the front of the room and had us sit on the floor all around her. And she told us about falling in love (at any age). She explained why it was good and why it was right to wait for the one you marry. In something like maybe 15 minutes, Miss Aborn told us things that would help us make many future decisions. I know that many times her words came to my mind at just the right time. Told simply and honestly, the joy of love and marriage can become a matter of respect for yourself and the one you will someday love enough to marry.

Then she took out a photograph of the gentleman she loved, and she told us all about him. His likes and dislikes. His work. His religious convictions. We came to know him well. And to feel willing to let him marry our beloved teacher.

Fifth grade came to an end. I opened my card and saw I was passed on to grade six. My time with Miss Aborn was over. As we left her room, she kissed each girl and shook hands with each boy. We kept looking back as we left. Gracie and I even walked backward for a way in the hall. Until she left that day, we could still call her teacher.

Later that day one of my Granny Lyman's dressmaking customers was in our home for a fitting. She looked out of the window and saw Miss Aborn across the street. "Mary Aborn is such a nice person, it's too bad she's so homely," the customer said.

"Miss Aborn isn't homely," I said. "She's beautiful."

And suddenly, right at that moment, I learned the most important lesson of all from Mary Aborn, I learned how to be really beautiful.¹

¹Mary Louise Kitsen, "Anyone Can Be Beautiful." Reprinted with permission from *Guideposts* magazine. Copyright © 1985 by Guideposts Associates, Inc., Carmel, N.Y. 10512.

1. What was there about Miss Aborn that made her a good teacher?
2. Was Miss Aborn's explanation of a theory for different skin colors more effective than preaching "being nice to each other"?
3. Miss Aborn's arrangement for selecting a family to invite for a Thanksgiving dinner showed creativity and tact, but it was also what we would call a set up. Was that unethical?
4. Miss Aborn shared her love for her Virginia gentleman with her class and gave them some pointers about choosing a lifemate as well. Why do you suppose she felt that revealing her private life to her students was necessary?
5. Before you read the last part of the story, what visual image did you have of Miss Aborn? Did that change? Why or why not?
6. Establishing a point of view can be effectively accomplished through restrained narrative, allowing readers to infer or read between the lines. Can you list some examples of where this was done in this story?
7. The author entitled this essay "Anyone Can Be Beautiful." How does that title and the "homely" description complete the motif or theme? What is the main theme? Can you summarize it in a sentence?

Quiz 1

Directions: Decide if the following statements are true or false.

- _____ 1. Lennie and George are cousins.
- _____ 2. Lennie does not know his own strength.
- _____ 3. Curley's wife is modest and dutiful.
- _____ 4. George is very attracted to Curley's wife.
- _____ 5. Slim is highly regarded by the ranch workers because of his skill as a jerkline skinner.
- _____ 6. George usually controls Lennie, and the big man never fights anyone unless ordered by George.
- _____ 7. George plans to buy his own ranch someday and has saved up three hundred dollars.
- _____ 8. Candy and Crooks are interested in George's plans to buy land.
- _____ 9. Lennie is always aggressive, taking out his frustrations on small animals when George is not looking.
- _____ 10. When the boss kills Curley's wife, Lennie knows he will be blamed.
- _____ 11. George breaks Curley's hand in the bunkhouse fight.
- _____ 12. Because of its age, Candy's dog can barely see and hear.
- _____ 13. When Slim's dog has puppies, he gives one to Lennie.
- _____ 14. Lennie blames Curley's wife for the death of the puppy.
- _____ 15. Candy is the black man who tends the stable.
- _____ 16. John Steinbeck took the novel's title from a line in a Robert Frost poem.
- _____ 17. Curley's wife is shot in the barn.
- _____ 18. Candy asks Carlson to shoot his dog.
- _____ 19. Curley kills Lennie to avenge the death of his wife.
- _____ 20. Only Slim understands George's final actions toward Lennie.

Quiz 2

Directions: Write brief answers to the following questions.

1. What is significant about the name Leonard Small?
2. Compare and contrast the two main characters, George Milton and Leonard Small.
3. Explain the dream that George and Lennie share. To whom does the dream really belong?
4. How does Candy suggest he can be included in their plans?
5. How does Lennie's overpowering tenderness become fatal to tiny things, particularly the puppy Slim gives him?
6. What kind of man is Crooks, and what is his position at the ranch?
7. Describe Slim as a person, as a worker, and as others regard him.
8. Briefly describe the scene in the barn with Lennie and Curley's wife. Why do we consider Lennie blameless for the tragedy?
9. For the dramatic conclusion to the story, John Steinbeck chose the setting with care. Describe the place George told Lennie to go to in case of trouble.
10. Why does George feel forced to kill Lennie?

Quiz 3

Directions: Match the following quotations with the sources. Some characters may be used more than once; some may not be used at all.

Characters

- a. George
- b. Slim
- c. Candy
- d. Curley's wife
- e. Lennie
- f. Crooks
- g. Carlson
- h. Curley

Quotations

- _____ 1. "I hardly never seen two guys travel together."
- _____ 2. "They play cards in there, but I can't play because I'm black."
- _____ 3. "Any you boys seen Curley?"
- _____ 4. "I ought to of shot that dog myself, George. I shouldn't of ought to let no stranger shoot my dog."
- _____ 5. "You hadda, George. I swear you hadda."
- _____ 6. "How long's it gonna be till we get that little place an' live off the fatta the lan'—an' rabbits?"
- _____ 7. " . . . but he sure can take orders."
- _____ 8. "Now what the hell ya suppose is eating them guys?"
- _____ 9. "I could get along so easy and so nice if I didn't have you on my tail. I could live so easy. . . ."
- _____ 10. "S'pose I went in with you guys. Tha's three hunderd an' fifty bucks I'd put in. I ain't much good, but I could cook and tend the chickens and hoe the garden some. How'd that be?"

Quiz 4

Directions: Match the characters with their descriptions. Some characters may not be used.

Characters

- a. Carlson
- b. Slim
- c. Curley
- d. Lennie
- e. George
- f. Crooks
- g. Whit
- h. Candy
- i. Curley's wife
- j. the boss

Descriptions

- _____ 1. . . . a proud, aloof man, his body was bent over to his left by his crooked spine and his eyes lay deep in his head . . . his lean face was lined with deep black wrinkles and he had thin, pain-tightened lips.
- _____ 2. . . . a thin young man with a brown face, brown eyes and head of tightly curled hair; he wore a work glove on his left hand, and wore high-heeled boots.
- _____ 3. . . . a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with wide, sloping shoulders; and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little the way a bear drags his paws. His arms did not swing at his sides, but hung loosely.
- _____ 4. . . . he moved with a majesty only achieved by royalty and master craftsmen. . . . There was a gravity in his manner and a quiet so profound that all talk stopped when he spoke. . . . His hatchet-face was ageless. He might have been thirty-five or fifty.
- _____ 5. . . . small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, strong features. Every part of him was defined; small, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose.
- _____ 6. . . . old, tall, stoop-shouldered, missing his right hand. . . .

Quiz Answer Key

Quiz 1

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. False | 6. True | 11. False | 16. False |
| 2. True | 7. False | 12. True | 17. False |
| 3. False | 8. True | 13. True | 18. False |
| 4. False | 9. False | 14. False | 19. False |
| 5. True | 10. False | 15. False | 20. True |

Quiz 2

Responses will vary but should include the following information.

1. *Leonard* means “strong as a lion”; *Small* is an ironic last name, since Lennie is so large.
2. They are opposites in size but cling together in their common loneliness; both have gentle natures but can be provoked; George is aggressive when necessary; Lennie is aggressive without realizing it.
3. They dream of a place of their own, where they can live off the fat of the land. The dream seems more Lennie’s, but only because George can’t see a way to make it come true.
4. He has the money that can be used to secure the place and promises to help keep up the house if they let him go with them.
5. He mauls the tiny creatures, not knowing his own strength.
6. Crooks is the only black man; he has no real friends, keeps his place in the stable, and recognizes (perhaps more than anybody else) the loneliness they all suffer.
7. Slim is highly respected for his work skill and his intelligence. Though he is friendly, he forms no close friendships and does not talk casually so that everything he says is regarded as truth.
8. Curley’s wife knows he doesn’t like big men and tries to use Lennie to make Curley jealous. She doesn’t realize Lennie doesn’t understand her casual flirting. Lennie, always frightened when someone or something pulls away from him, does not mean to hurt her, and in fact, doesn’t even know he’s broken her neck. His lack of intent makes him morally blameless.
9. The conclusion is in the grove of willows, by the stream, a place of peace and tranquility, a natural setting untouched by anything man-made or material.
10. George kills Lennie because he does not want him to suffer the torment that Curley would exact during a lynching. George knows, as one man, he cannot stop this from happening, and he cannot bear to see Lennie hurt in that way.

Quiz 3

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. e |
| 2. f | 7. a |
| 3. d | 8. g |
| 4. c | 9. a |
| 5. b | 10. c |

Quiz 4

1. f
2. c
3. d
4. b
5. e
6. h

Lesson 11

A Literary Legacy

Objectives

- To acquaint students with Steinbeck's place in literature as a social critic
- To research which social issues Steinbeck stressed in his works
- To measure the impact of social criticism in literature

Notes to the Teacher

John Steinbeck was not the first writer to use his work as a commentary of social ills of his time. Writers have a long history of speaking out against those things which they believe diminish human progress or the human spirit.

From time to time, an uncommon work appears, one which so touches the hearts of all who read it that it is forever associated, as is its writer, with the social ill it describes so eloquently.

Steinbeck is probably best remembered as the creator of *The Grapes of Wrath*. He never earned a college degree, was dismissed as a reporter from the old New York *American*, worked as a hod carrier and, like the Joads in *The Grapes of Wrath*, picked fruit in California. It was a long road from the poverty of his younger years to the Nobel prize for literature in 1962.

Though he tended frequently to sermonize and tough allegory often broke the surface of his naturalistic realism, he usually fulfilled his intent as an author which, in his own words, was to present "the little known . . . delightful people—people of laughter and kindness, of honest lust and direct eyes, of courtesy beyond politeness."

East of Eden, a work which vies with *The Grapes of Wrath* as his most challenging, is the story of humankind, using as its moral theme the Cain-Abel framework. About it he said, "My wish is that when my reader has finished with this book, he will have sense of belonging in it.

"I want the participation of the reader. I want him to be so involved that it will be HIS story."

Unlike the dreams of so many of his memorable characters, Steinbeck's dream comes true each time one reads his words.

When he died in 1968, Steinbeck left behind a body of work that celebrated his special awareness of a person's relationship to his world, a body of novels, short stories, plays, and film scripts that were less a spawn of the future than a moral record from his special compartment in the nation's past.

This lesson provides activities that will help to place Steinbeck in perspective as an energetic, often sentimental expressionist of the human odyssey, striking a balance between journeys of the individual and those of the group.

Procedure

1. Explain that students will be learning about Steinbeck and his impact as a social critic. Distribute **Handout 31**. Use it as a homework assignment. Encourage students to use the library and to interview the librarian, other teachers, family, and people in the community about books that they know have had social impact. Students themselves may have read some to add to the list. Visit a bookstore; talk to the owner. Is social criticism in literature becoming less intense? What new or recent books have attacked social ills?

If students work together, suggest that they research different areas so their results do not overlap.

2. While students are doing their research, announce that a special day, "A Look at Literary Social Critics," will be observed. Encourage those who are artistic to prepare posters or banners that are pertinent to their area of research and that can be used to decorate the room. Allow actors in the class to dress as an author (or in the period of one of the works) they have been

researching. Some may want to become one of the more famous characters as they read a famous passage condemning a social ill. Let the students be creative in presenting the knowledge gathered in their research to their classmates. Some may like to accent their information with protest songs. Students should take notes during the presentations.

Among those students researching Steinbeck, there may be one capable of

being “the author for the day.” Direct that student’s focus on Steinbeck’s assessment of his work, attitudes, and some of the more amusing things about the author, such as the time his dog ate the first draft of *Of Mice and Men*. As a resource aid, provide a bibliography. (Refer to the bibliography at the end of this unit.)

3. Schedule “A Look at Literary Social Critics” day. Presentations will probably extend beyond one class period.

Nag, Nag, Complain, Complain

Directions: This form is a guideline for compiling research information. The final result will be an outline of those authors who concerned themselves with social issues or ills and the books they wrote about them. There may be so many that it will seem that all writers have done for centuries is to nag and complain about the human condition. For those writers who were social critics, their goal was to focus, through literature, on societal ills that affect the aged, the dispossessed, and the weak, with the hope that awareness would elicit correction and bring more joy into life.

When you complete your research assignment, keep this form to take notes as other students make their presentations.

Period in Civilization

Author/Works

Concerns/Social Issue or Ill

Early civilizations,
particularly Greece and Rome

Up to and including
the Renaissance

Period in Civilization	Author/Works	Concerns/Social Issue or Ill
Seventeenth century The colonies		
England		
Europe		
Eighteenth century The colonies		
England		
Europe		

Period in Civilization	Author/Works	Concerns/Social Issue or Ill
Nineteenth century		
United States		
England		
Europe		
Other countries		
Twentieth century		
United States		
England		
Other countries		

John Steinbeck—His Life, Adventures, Works

Personal data

1925–1935

Significant experiences

Works completed

Social concerns

1936–1950

Significant experiences

Works completed

Social concerns

1951–1968

Significant experiences

Works completed

Social concerns

Tragedy in his life

Humorous experiences

Close friendships

What critics said about his work

Favorable

Unfavorable

Awards and honors

Failures

Successes

Bibliography

Books

- Astro, Richard. *John Steinbeck and Edward R. Ricketts: The Shaping of a Novelist*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973.
- Astro, Richard and Tetsumaro Hayashi, eds. *Steinbeck: The Man and His Work*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1971.
- Benson, Jackson L. *The True Adventures of John Steinbeck, Writer*. New York: Viking Press, 1984.
- Davis, Robert Murray, ed. *Steinbeck: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1972.
- Fensch, Thomas. *Steinbeck and Covici: The Story of a Friendship*. Middlebury, Vt.: Paul S. Erickson, 1979.
- Ferrell, Keith. *John Steinbeck, The Voice of the Land*. New York: M. Evans and Co., 1986.
- Fontenrose, Joseph Eddy. *John Steinbeck: An Introduction and Interpretation*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1963.
- French, Warren. *John Steinbeck*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1961. (Revised ed., G.K. Halland Co., 1975.)
- Hayashi, Tetsumaro. *A New Steinbeck Bibliography: 1929-1971*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1973.
- Kiernan, Thomas. *The Intricate Music: A Biography of John Steinbeck*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1979.
- Levant, Howard. *The Novels of John Steinbeck, A Critical Study*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974.
- Lisca, Peter. *John Steinbeck, Nature and Myth*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1978.
- . *The Wide World of John Steinbeck*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University, 1958.
- Steinbeck, Elaine and Robert Wallsten, eds. *Steinbeck: A Life in Letters*. New York: Viking Press, 1969.
- Steinbeck, John. *Journal of a Novel: The East of Eden Letters*. New York: The Viking Press, 1969.
- Tedlock, E.W. and C. V. Wickev, eds. *Steinbeck and His Critics: A Record of Twenty-Five Years*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969.
- Watt, Frank W. *John Steinbeck*. New York: Grove Press, 1962.

Periodicals

Aaron, Daniel, "Radical Humanism of John Steinbeck," *Saturday Review of Literature*, September 28, 1968.

Madison, Chas. A., "Covici: Steinbeck's Editor, Collaborator and Conscience," *Saturday Review of Literature*, June 25, 1966.

Schall, Carol, "Travels with Steinbeck," *Notre Dame University Magazine*, Spring 1988, 19-22.

Shaw, Peter, "Steinbeck: The Shape of a Career," *Saturday Review of Literature*, February 8, 1969.

———. "Steinbeck at Stanford," *The Stanford Magazine*, Fall 1976, 14-21.

Steinbeck, John, "Review: Journal of a Novel, the East of Eden Letters," *Saturday Review of Literature*, December 20, 1969.

Obituaries

America, "John Steinbeck, Social Novelist," January 11, 1969, 32.

Newsweek, December 30, 1968.

Time, December 27, 1968.

Acknowledgments

For permission to reprint all works in this volume by each of the following authors, grateful acknowledgment is made to the holders of copyright, publishers, or representatives named below.

Quiz 3, *The Pearl*

Excerpt from *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck, 1983. Published by Bantam Books, New York, New York.

Lesson 8, Handout 22

Adaptation from "Who's Who" from *Learning: The Magazine for Creative Teaching*, 1979. Copyright © 1979 by Education Today Company, Palo Alto, California.

Lesson 9, Handout 26

Excerpt from *All My Meadows* by Patricia Penton Leimbach. Copyright © 1977 by Patricia Penton Leimbach. Published by Prentice Hall, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

Lesson 10, Handout 30

"Anyone Can Be Beautiful" by Mary Louise Kitsen. Reprinted with permission from *Guideposts Magazine*. Copyright © 1985 by Guideposts Associates, Inc., Carmel, New York 10512.

Quiz 3 and Quiz 4, *Of Mice and Men*

Excerpts from *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, 1974. Published by Bantam Books, New York, New York.

The Publisher

All instructional materials identified by the TAP® (Teachers/Authors/Publishers) trademark are developed by a national network of teachers whose collective educational experience distinguishes the publishing objective of The Center for Learning, an educational corporation founded in 1970.

Concentrating on values-related disciplines, the Center publishes humanities and religion curriculum units for use in public and private schools and other educational settings. Approximately 500 language arts, social studies, novel/drama, life issues, and faith publications are available.

While acutely aware of the challenges and uncertain solutions to growing educational problems, the Center is committed to quality curriculum development and to the expansion of learning opportunities for all students. Publications are regularly evaluated and updated to meet the changing and diverse needs of teachers and students. Teachers may offer suggestions for development of new publications or revisions of existing titles by contacting

The Center for Learning

10200 Jefferson Blvd.

P.O. Box 802

Culver City, CA 90232-0802

(800) 421-4246 • Fax (800) 944-5432

E-mail: access@centerforlearning.org

Web: www.centerforlearning.org