Teaching notes

Imagine the ending of the novel is different, and Lennie is charged with the murder of Curley’s wife. The class take on the roles of the legal team, witnesses, judge and jury. Each student is assigned (or selects) a role card and must follow the instructions on that card in order to prepare for their role.

The roles:

Lennie

The student playing the role of Lennie must research the character in great detail, ensuring they find some key quotes. They must prepare a statement, in preparation for questioning, detailing exactly what happened in the novel.

The witnesses

There are eight witnesses altogether - four for the defence and four for the prosecution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defence</th>
<th>Prosecution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Curley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slim</td>
<td>Al Wilts (Sheriff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy</td>
<td>Curley’s wife’s mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crooks</td>
<td>The girl from Weed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The witnesses must look back over the novel to determine how their character would act and speak, selecting key quotes that they may use in their statement. They need to have their story straight in preparation for their interrogation by the lawyers.

The lawyers

There are approximately eight lawyers - four for the defence and four for the prosecution (this may change depending on the size of the class). The lawyers need to, initially, work with their colleagues to establish their case for either the defence or the prosecution. They should then each partner up with one of their witnesses to create a series of possible questions and responses for the trial.

The judge/jury

The judge’s role is to coordinate the trial, so you will probably want to choose a confident student in this role. The judge will help the jury reach a verdict at the end of the trial. Depending on your class size, your jury could either be made up of 6-12 students. The judge and jurors should plan for the trial by making notes on each of the witnesses and their connection to the accused. They will then need to make detailed notes throughout the trial.
You are Lennie

You must defend yourself for killing Curley’s wife.

Things to remember:

- **Lennie is very simple and has limited responses to questions. After Curley’s wife’s death, he kept claiming that he did not mean to do it.**

Key quotations:


You are George

You are a witness for Lennie’s defence and must convince the jury that Lennie did not mean to kill Curley’s wife.

Things to remember:

- **George always looks out for Lennie, even if that means putting himself at risk.**

Key quotations:


You are Slim

You are a witness for Lennie’s defence and must convince the jury that Lennie did not mean to kill Curley’s wife.

Things to remember:

- *Slim has struck up a friendship with George and Lennie and knows about Lennie’s problems.*
- *
- *

Key quotations:
- *
- *
- *

You are Curley

You are a witness for the prosecution and must convince the jury that Lennie is guilty of murdering your wife.

Things to remember:

- *Curley has never liked Lennie or George, and even had a fight with Lennie where he crushed all the bones in his hand.*
- *
- *

Key quotations:
- *
- *
- *
You are a girl from Weed

You are a witness for the prosecution and must convince the jury that Lennie is capable of violent behaviour.

Things to remember:

- At the start of the novel, Lennie and George run away from Weed because Lennie was accused of sexually assaulting a girl there.

Key quotations:

-

You are Al Wilts (Deputy Sheriff)

You are a witness for the prosecution and must give your evidence of examining Curley’s wife’s body.

Things to remember:

- Al Wilts is brought to the scene of the crime by Whit, so would have had prior knowledge of what had happened before arriving at the scene.

Key quotations:

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You are the mother of Curley’s wife  

You are a witness for the prosecution and must convince the jury that Lennie is guilty of murdering your daughter.

**Things to remember:**

- *Curley’s wife left home because her mother was very protective of her and did not support her dream to become an actress- that’s why she married Curley.*

**Key quotations:**

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- 
- 

You are Candy  

You are a witness for Lennie’s defence and must convince the jury that Lennie did not mean to kill Curley’s wife.

**Things to remember:**

- *Candy had recently agreed to send his own money to secure the ranch with George and Lennie.*

**Key quotations:**

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- 
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You are a witness for Lennie’s defence and must convince the jury that Lennie did not mean to kill Curley’s wife.

Things to remember:

- *Crooks is an extremely lonely person and has always been judged by the colour of his skin - Lennie is the only person who saw past that.*

Key quotations:

You are the judge

It is your job to coordinate the whole trial and keep order in the courtroom. You must thoroughly research all of the witnesses in the trial to ensure you understand their connection to the defendant.

You are a lawyer for the prosecution

It is your job, along with your colleagues, to compile as much evidence as you can to prove Lennie’s guilt. You need to prove that he intended to kill Curley’s wife and should be treated like any other adult who has committed murder.

You also need to write questions to ask your own witnesses, as well as the defence’s witnesses, which will strengthen your case.

You are a lawyer for the defence

It is your job, along with your colleagues, to compile as much evidence as you can to support Lennie’s trial and prove his innocence. You need to prove that he did not mean to kill Curley’s wife and is not capable of knowing right from wrong.

You also need to write questions to ask your own witnesses, as well as the prosecution’s witnesses, which will strengthen your case.
You are a member of the jury

It is your job, along with your colleagues, to listen to all the evidence presented to you throughout the court case and come to a decision about whether or not Lennie is guilty.

In order to prepare for this, you need to compile a ‘witness information bank’ for each witness in the trial to ensure you are aware of their connections to the defendant.