Teaching notes

The following questions are designed to meet the assessment objectives for Of Mice and Men for GCSE English Literature Unit 1, Section B: Exploring cultures. Where we have created practice questions, they follow a similar structure and wording to the questions that have been set for examination.

Questions are provided for each section of the text, according to the passage focused on in Part (a). It is not necessary to have completed a reading of the whole text in order to answer Part (a) of each question, so you may wish to use one or more of these with students as they study a particular section. Part (b) of each question requires reference to the novel as a whole.

Where available, past paper questions have been identified for you to use as possible practice questions for that section of the text. These can be downloaded here: http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-literature-9710/past-papers-and-mark-schemes. Please note that for copyright reasons past papers are moved to the Secure Key Materials of the AQA website after three years, with copyright extracts removed.

Please also note that the passages focused on in Part (a) of the practice questions below have not been reproduced, again for copyright reasons.

Section 1

Foundation

Read the following passage and then answer Part (a) and Part (b).

Extract from p.2, ‘For a moment the place was lifeless, and then two men emerged from the path and came into the opening by the pool ...’ to p.3, ‘The small man stepped nervously beside him.’

Part (a)

In this passage, how does Steinbeck present the two men and their situation? Refer closely to the passage in your answer.

and then Part (b)

In the novel how does Steinbeck show what working life was like for some men at that time?

In Part (b) you should write about:

• what the men say and do
• details of what the male characters’ working lives are like
• the methods Steinbeck uses to present what working life was like for some men.

Higher

Read the following passage and then answer Part (a) and Part (b).

Extract from p.2, ‘Evening of a hot day ...’ to ‘His arms did not swing at his sides, but hung loosely and only moved because the heavy hands were pendula.’
Part (a)
In this passage, what methods does Steinbeck use to present George and Lennie and the scene around them? Refer closely to the passage in your answer.

and then Part (b)
In the rest of the novel how does Steinbeck use the relationship between George and Lennie to present what working life was like for some men at that time?

Section 2
For Section 2, it would be advisable to use the past papers:

Foundation
January 2011, January 2012, June 2012 and January 2013

Higher
January 2011, January 2012, June 2012 and June 2013

Section 3
For Section 3, it would be advisable to use the past papers:

Foundation
June 2011, June 2013.

Higher
June 2011

Section 4
Foundation Tier
Read the following passage and then answer Part (a) and Part (b).

Extract from p. 74, ‘Crooks leaned forward over the edge of the bunk ...’ to p.75, ‘It’s just being with another guy. That’s all.’”

Part (a)
In this passage, what methods does Steinbeck use to present Crooks? Refer closely to the passage in your answer.

and then Part (b)
How do other characters treat Crooks in the novel? What does this tell you about attitudes to black people in the society in which Crooks lives?

In Part (b) you should write about:
- what the other characters say and do to Crooks
- the methods Steinbeck uses to present attitudes towards black people.

Higher Tier

The January 2013 past paper focuses on a passage from Section 4.

**Section 5**

**Foundation**

Read the following passage and then answer Part (a) and Part (b).

*Extract from p.95, ‘Lennie’s big fingers fell to stroking her hair ...’ to p.96, ‘And then she was still, for Lennie had broken her neck.’*

**Part (a)**

In this passage, what methods does Steinbeck use to present Curley’s wife? Refer closely to the passage in your answer.

**and then Part (b)**

In the novel how does Steinbeck show what life was like for ‘outsiders’ like Curley’s wife and people in a minority group?

In Part (b) you should write about:
- details of who the ‘outsiders’ in the novel are
- what characters say and do to ‘outsiders’ and those in a minority group
- the methods Steinbeck uses to show attitudes to ‘outsiders’ and minority groups.

**Higher**

Read the following passage and then answer Part (a) and Part (b).

*Extract from p.97, ‘The sun-streaks were high on the wall by now ...’ to p.98, ’”Oh, Jesus Christ!” He looked about helplessly, and he rubbed his beard. And then he jumped up and went quickly out of the barn.’*

**Part (a)**

In this passage, what methods does Steinbeck use to create an eerily calm atmosphere? Refer closely to the passage in your answer.
Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

Exam style practice questions for AQA GCSE English Literature

and then Part (b)

How does Steinbeck use animal imagery to present both nature and mankind at the time the novel is set?

Section 6

Foundation

Read the following passage and then answer Part (a) and Part (b).

Extract from p.104, ‘The deep green pool of the Salinas River was still in the late afternoon ...’ to p.105, ‘Another little water-snake swam up the pool, turning its periscope head from side to side.’

Part (a)

In this passage, how does Steinbeck show the mood and atmosphere of the place? Refer closely to the passage in your answer.

and then Part (b)

In the novel how does Steinbeck show the hopelessness of life at the time?

In Part (b) you should write about:
- why life was hopeless for the people on the ranch
- the methods Steinbeck uses to suggest the hopelessness of life at the time.

Higher

Read the following passage and then answer Part (a) and Part (b).

Extract from p.109, ‘George shook himself again. “No,” he said. “I want you to stay with me here ...” to “Go on,” said Lennie. “How’s it gonna be. We gonna get a little place.”’

Part (a)

In this passage, what methods does Steinbeck use to create tension? Refer closely to the passage in your answer.

and then Part (b)

In the rest of the novel, how does Steinbeck present loneliness in society at the time?