

Year 9 – Of Mice and Men – English Knowledge Organiser

Expectations and content

What is this unit about and why do we teach it?

- This novel is about the hardships of living through The Great Depression whilst delivering an untimely message about the importance of friendship. Students are able to see how an unjust society affects the characters through aspects of gender, race and age. The novel also allows students to understand the concept of moral dilemmas and how people are forced to make difficult choices.

Key Vocabulary taught:

- The Great Depression
- The American Dream
- Loneliness
- Migrant worker
- Microcosm
- Concept
- Context
- Moral Dilemma

Key terminology taught:

- Exposition
- Imagery
- Connotation
- Juxtaposition
- Semantic field
- Denouement
- Climax
- Theme
- Foreshadowing

If your child needs support

Vocabulary help:

- Use a dictionary to find definitions of the key vocabulary.
- Write sentences about the novel using the key vocabulary
- Create a crossword where the answers are the key vocabulary

Terminology help:

- Find examples of the key terminology in your current reading book.
- Look at the terminology mega map and create your own examples.
- Create flashcards to help you remember the definitions of the key terminology

General help:

- Create a fact file on the context of 1930's America. You can start by watching the beginning of the Historical Context videos on Of Mice and Men www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/john-steinbecks-of-mice-and-men-historical-context-pt-1-4/8168.html
- Of Mice and Men is a popular film and you could watch it for further understanding of the plot and characters.
- Find images of real people living during The Great Depression and create a collage/scrapbook

If your child needs extension

Questions to discuss with your child:

- How do people in society still face barriers and prejudice?
- Will success always come to people who work hard and deserve it?
- Is it ever okay to break the law to do something you think is morally right?

Challenging activities to complete:

- Research the role of women and/or racial inequality in the 1930's.
- Create a backstory for the character Slim and how he came to live on the ranch
- Read Robert Burns' poem 'To a Mouse' and explore how the poem is significant to the novel's title (man/nature, suffering)

Suggested further reading:

- ***To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee**
The unforgettable novel of a childhood in a sleepy Southern town and the crisis of conscience that rocked it. The story examines the roots of human behaviour - to innocence and experience, kindness and cruelty and love and hatred.
- ***The Pearl* by John Steinbeck**
The story, first published in 1947, follows a pearl diver, Kino, and explores man's nature as well as greed, defiance of societal norms, and evil.