Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

As we read John Steinbeck’s novella *Of Mice and Men*, we will track the central ideas & themes portrayed. We will be doing this with a short written analysis.

Paper:

* Length: 3 or 4 pieces of paper when printed. (Proper MLA format.)
* Strong thesis statement with 5+ paragraphs.
* A minimum of 3 quotations. (Use more if necessary but don’t over-quote, 6+).

Topics:

This paper will focus on a central theme in Steinbeck’s novella to analyze in detail. As we read, track these themes and gather evidence to help prove the thesis statement you will develop after we read.

1. **Power VS Powerlessness**

* Focus on the conflict of those in power against those who are powerless. Analyze several characters in the novella in terms of the power they possess and/or lack. Consider what kind of power they have, and from where it is derived. Be sure to discuss how the power is used as well.

1. **Symbolism: Mice, Puppies, & Rabbits**

* Analyze Steinbeck’s Analyze Steinbeck’s use of the individual or collective symbol of mice, puppies, and rabbits to convey his central message. The thesis should include a statement that explains what these animals represent & Steinbeck’s central message through them.

1. **Friendship / Relationships / \_**E**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

* Was George’s decision in the last section of the novella an act of friendship, or not? Analyze the relationship between the main characters. Is George protective, or controlling of Lennie? He may be both. Is Lennie a good friend? Why or why not? (A connection for this theme [\_E\_\_\_\_\_] will be discussed when we finish the text.)

1. **Loneliness**

* Are all the men on the ranch are lonely? This includes Lenny and George, the two men who travel together, Curley’s wife, a woman who is married, and Crooks who says he prefers to be alone. Write a paper discussing the impact of loneliness on these, and all, characters, as well as an analysis of society as a whole.

1. **“The American Dream” & Individuals VS Communities**

* Many characters are working to unite with one another, they share a collective dream and are working to achieve that dream; however, there are forces at work in their society that divide them and keep them from achieving their dream. Here, be sure to (a) characterize the common dream and (b) explain at least two forces that work against the dream.

1. **Handicaps / Survival of the Fittest**
   * Social (Sexism / Racism), Physical, Mental.

* Explore the handicaps of each character a bit more deeply and discuss how their handicap(s) is(are) holding them back. Include what each character does to try to overcome or cope with his or her handicap, if it works, and how they are treated.

1. **Other Themes**

* There are many other areas to focus on as we read. If you see something of interest developing, make note of it. If you go online to look at information about *Of Mice and Men*, beware of spoilers! There are too many to count.