**PART ONE:**

**Directions:** While viewing the images from the presentation, write the **number** of each photo in a box below telling whether it depicts a positive or negative view of individuals or groups.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Individual Positive + | Groups Positive + |
|  |  |
| Individual Negative - | Groups Negative - |
|  |  |

**PART TWO:**

**Directions:** Read the quotations below and determine if Steinbeck was saying something positive or negative about individuals/groups and explain why for each.

1). GEORGE"‘Whatever we ain’t got, that’s what you want. God a’mighty, if I was alone I could live so easy. I could go get a job an’ work, an’ no trouble. No mess at all, and when the end of the month come I could take my fifty bucks and go into town and get whatever I want.’ … Lennie knelt and looked over the fire at the angry George. And Lennie’s face was drawn in with terror. ‘An’ whatta I got," George went on furiously. "I got you! You can’t keep a job and you lose me ever’ job I get. Jus’ keep me shovin’ all over the country all the time." (1.89)

What George envisions as freedom (freedom from Lennie, to do whatever he wants, to hang out in whorehouses and pool halls) is exactly what some people might describe as utter isolation. It’s interesting that even as George is outlining this low-budget "playboy" lifestyle, he’s soon to run into guys who live just this way yet find it unfulfilling.

2). LENNIE "If you don’ want me I can g off in the hills an’ find a cave. I can go away any time." GEORGE "No—look! I was jus’ foolin’, Lennie. ’Cause I want you to stay with me." (1.103-104)

Once Lennie seems ready to leave George alone (whether he actually is or not), George finally comes around to admitting that he needs Lennie. It seems he has realized that isolation simply isn’t worth it.

3). BOSS "I said what stake you got in this guy? You takin’ his pay away from him?"  
GEORGE "No, ‘course I ain’t. Why you think I’m sellin’ him out?"  
BOSS "Well, I never seen one guy take so much trouble for another guy. I just like to know what your interest is." (2.45-47)

The boss immediately suspects George is taking advantage of Lennie. In this transient worker culture, with men wandering around and generally suffering under the [Depression](http://www.shmoop.com/intro/history/us/the-great-depression.html), the boss can’t imagine a situation where two guys would stick together, just because. Though it’s a bit preposterous, to the boss it’s more believable that this tiny guy would be taking advantage of this much bigger guy than that the two could really just look out for each other. The boss, like any one else familiar with ranch work during the [Depression](http://www.shmoop.com/intro/history/us/the-great-depression.html), expects isolation as the status quo.

4). When the sound of the footsteps had died away, George turned on Lennie. "So you wasn’t gonna say a word. You was gonna leave your big flapper shut and leave me do the talkin’. Damn near lost us the job."  
Lennie stared helplessly at his hands. "I forgot, George."  
"Yea, you forgot. You always forget, an’ I got to talk you out of it." He sat down heavily on the bunk. "Now he’s got his eye on us. Now we got to be careful and not make no slips. You keep your big flapper shut after this." He fell morosely silent. (2.56-59)

The relationship between George and Lennie constricts them both in different ways: in this particular situation, George needs Lennie to speak up, but Lennie is under orders from George not to speak up at all. George, because he’s so stern about having Lennie always follow his orders, is now under the watchful gaze of the boss, confining him even further. Throughout the novella, George has the habit of getting backed into a corner of his own design. This idea is especially interesting if we consider George’s final decision in the novella – is it a liberating choice, or just another episode of George being backed into a corner?

5). CANDY "A guy on a ranch don’t never listen nor he don’t ast no questions." (2.67)

It’s interesting to wonder whether this kind of loneliness serves the greater good. Each guy keeps his nose clean, everybody stays out of trouble with each other, and all involved then lead a lonely, miserable life into a lonely, isolated death.

6). "We travel together," said George coldly.  
[CURLEY] "Oh, so it’s that way."  
George was tense and motionless. "Yea, it’s that way." (2.80-82)

Curley, using scorn, makes the suggestion that George and Lennie are gay. George, fully understanding this innuendo, stands firm in his description of his close friendship and bond to Lennie.

7). Slim looked through George and beyond him. "Ain’t many guys travel around together," he mused. "I don’t know why. Maybe ever’body in the whole damn world is scared of each other." (2.179)

It’s really interesting that this comment comes from Slim. Of course, it characterizes how all those people drifting in poverty across the country and looking for work are feeling, but Slim’s the ranch’s own local megastar. He, who can do no wrong, intimidate any man, and kill a fly with a bull whip, seems to have the same feelings as everybody else about the whole world. It’s a lonely and scary place.

8). "It ain’t so funny, him an’ me goin’ aroun’ together," George said at last. "Him and me was both born in Auburn. I knowed his Aunt Clara. She took him when he was a baby and raised him up. When his Aunt Clara died, Lennie just come along with me out workin’. Got kinda used to each other after a little while." (3.12)

George describes his friendship with Lennie in no abstract terms and with no justifications. To George, he and Lennie just got used to each other, naturally, but it’s pretty remarkable that two guys are so close in a world full of guys that don’t get close to anybody. Though George doesn’t tell Slim he necessarily sees it that way, George’s speech to Lennie about why they’re different highlights the fact that he realizes what a special relationship they have.

<http://www.shmoop.com/of-mice-and-men/quotes.html>

**PART THREE:**

**Directions:** After reading the quotes above, and with your knowledge of *Of Mice and Men*, which was Steinbeck rooting for: the individual, or group? Please write in complete sentences with two EBCs.