

A selection of introductions to Other Cultures essays

1. Explore Steinbeck's use of dreams and how important they are to the characters in the novel:

'Steinbeck was born in Salinas in California in 1902. He had many casual jobs one being an itinerant ranch-hand. Although Steinbeck's family were wealthy, he wanted to live modestly and worked to earn a living. From what I have read about him his thoughts seem isolated from his family. He was a moralist and wanted to help others in his writing. In the novel 'Of Mice and Men' Steinbeck highlights the immense proportions of social problems which he had once experienced.'

2. What does *Of Mice and Men* tell us about women in the 1930s?

'The novel *Of Mice and Men* was set on the west coast of America in California in a small town called Soledad. The word Soledad is Spanish and it means loneliness. It was set in the 1930s in the time of the Great Depression.

3. John Steinbeck said, *Of Mice and Men* was about 'everybody's daydreams'. Show how the dreams in the novel reflect the time and place in which it is set.

'Throughout *Of Mice and Men* dreams are an important theme, right from the opening few pages when Steinbeck describes George and Lennie discussing their dream of owning their own land. Many of the characters have a dream, which can be considered a reflection of common aspirations of people at the time. The novel was published in 1937, when America was still suffering repercussions of the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and many migrant farmers had moved west in search of employment. Many people lost everything in the depression and even those who had been wealthy were reduced to working on other people's land. America was still deeply divided along racial lines and segregation still openly existed. Women were not considered men's equals and had little opportunity for work outside the home once they were married.'

'John Steinbeck wrote *Of Mice and Men* and it was published in 1937. It is about the dream of George and Lennie and others' dreams as well. Many Americans lived poorly in the 1930s due to the Depression. The novel shows how many people lived at the time.'