

**Level 1 /2 Certificate in English Literature**

**KET0\_01**

**Exemplars for Of Mice and Men**

The novel "Of Mice and Men" was written in the 1930s, by John Steinbeck and is set in California. The 1930s in America was an era called "The Great Depression" as Wall Street crashed and the country became rife with unemployment. Work is an essential part of the characters of "Of Mice and Men's" lives.

George describes migrant workers as the "honestest guys in the world". This is because migrant workers are often lacking the concept of companionship, they do not remain in one place long enough to develop friendships. They need work to survive and as much as possible they will move wherever it takes them. All they have is "little articles" as they do not carry a heavy amount. The world of work is difficult and the harshship often causes a man to be hostile, they "get mean". These men also believe that work is all there is to life, Candy says "I wish someone'd just shoot me" when he loses his job. These men are afraid of losing their work or ~~or~~ <sup>getting</sup> "canned" that they refuse to go near Candy's wife as she is a "rallup" if "ever seen one" or to stand up to Candy despite the fact he "gotta a guy's belly" and he "ain't a nice fella", it essentially controls their lives. Life without work is

ranch has also hardened C. W. as a character as there he is subjected to prejudice, if he says anything: it's "just a <sup>white</sup> nigger talkin'" and the ranch hands say he "stinks" as they are socially prejudiced towards him // in a contrasting manner it elevates Slim, not only is he respected for being a kind and authoritative figure but he is respected for being a "jerk line shane" and controlling a team, his position in west makes him a respectable individual. He "rises in a way only achieved by majesty and craftsmanship." W. also brings many people into unstable environments. As Cockey's shot and the ranch hands are "big guys" he becomes both secure about his wife's ability to be faithful and his height. He never "high heeled boots" and is constantly heard saying "anyone seen my wife?" In this environment he becomes aggressive // The person who is worst in this environment is Lennie, although he's "strong as a bull" he is still "jus' like a kid" and doesn't understand does not understand his own strength.

He falls of victim to this on numerous occasions. He just kills a mouse at the "green pool" by the Salinas river by pinching its heart because it bit him. George also tells Slim that he was accused of sexual assault in Weed for stabbing a

girls red" (similar to Curley's wife with her "mangoed lips") dress because it was soft and "he likes to pet soft things". It is obvious that Lennie is not suited to the adult world of work. If he hadn't gone to the ranch to work then he would have never have killed Curley's wife and George would not have had to kill him, yet George and Lennie both needed work.

Most of the ranch hands go into town and "blow their stake" at a "cat house" as they seek the immediate gratification from work, simple George, Lennie and a few other characters they do not have a dream they're not aspiring to. They are not striving for anything more than "driving around the country being fed by some top cook", they believe that "nobody never gets to heaven, nobody never gets no land". George is aware that his dream of "Livin' off the fatta the land" is unrealistic yet he scolds it to Lennie to comfort him and reassure that the two of them are working towards something more than being a "bit kinderfog". Although it becomes a possibility when Candy becomes involved the death of Curley's wife signal to Candy and George that they were never really gonna do it".

work kills their dreams instead of bringing it to life. The slightly insignificant character of Willy represents a man that is destined to end up in Candy's position in the end as he has very few aspirations as his work has become everything he is.

As a result of the above I would conclude that work in "Of Mice and Men" is both a necessity, a blessing and a curse. Although these men "need to get the jack together" it often puts and end to their hopes and aspirations for life. The way that Curley's wife is described as a "rattletrap" implies that these men are rats which refers to the theme. The rat race, these men are essentially running the rat race. Work is a theme that defines the characters of this novel and the way they act and react to everyone. When Curley's wife dies she looks "innocent" suggesting that living in a working environment turns people into monstrous characters.

#### Commentary and mark:

This answer on the importance of work in the novel offers assured knowledge conveyed with maturity and perception. There is effective and sophisticated reference to theme and character with fully relevant examples used for support. There is originality of interpretation in points such as that in which Lennie is described as too childlike to fit into the world of work.

Mark: 28

Candidate B: Q11 – Of Mice and Men

Curley - As the boss run thing  
2 - No worries "aggressive"  
"pugnacious"

1 G&L - Need to find  
= "fatta lar"  
- "lil win' mill"  
- American Dream

3 C. W. - Doesn't get any  
as a women  
= lonely "what have I done"



4

Crooks - gets the worst  
- hard = Black

Lead to dream "Coulda' been in the movies

Throughout "Of Mice and Men" it is shown that work is important as it is what all the characters look for. In "Of Mice and Men" work means money and money means freedom, this is true as most characters ~~sets~~ in the story as they all hold a dream.

At the beginning of the book we meet George and Lennie who both seem to be seeking a

work as they both hold a dream "livin' of the fatta the lan'". In order to accomplish this dream they must ~~get~~ <sup>earn</sup> enough money. ~~to~~ which means finding a ~~job~~ work. George and Lennie also hope to live the American dream, as living free and living of their own produce, and having a "lil' win' mill", however in order of succeeding in this George and Lennie must producing enough income.

Secondly, if you have the best job with the highest rank you generally have more power. This applies to Curley as his father is the owner of the ranch he feels that he has power over the rest of the ranch workers. This shows that ~~task~~ <sup>having better work equals better power. This leads to</sup> Curley having no fear and he becomes a "pugnacious" ~~ang~~ and "aggressive" character. This shows us that work makes up the personality of a character.

However, this leads to Curley neglecting his wife. As the only female on the ranch she is married to Curley and therefore does not have to work. However, this leaves Curley's wife lonely which leads her to question, "what have I done" as many people ignore her as she is considered trouble as she does not have a job and therefore

does not have a reason for being disciplined and therefore potentially trouble. Also, the lack of work leads to Curley's Wife dreaming, ~~and~~ "I Coulda been in the movies" which shows that she could have ~~been~~ had the American dream which is what work is supposed to be linked with.

~~The importance~~ There is much importance to work throughout ~~of~~ "Of Mice and Men" as it leads to many things. Work is important to George and Lennie as they aspire to have the American ~~dream~~ dream and in order to obtain this they need money which is achieved through work. Work is also ~~is~~ a state of authority which is represented through Curley who feels that he has more power as he has better work as his dad owns the ranch. Finally, work can lead to loneliness as those who cannot work are left unfilled. Work is important in "Of Mice and Men" as it leads to many other factors which are the American Dream, Power and Loneliness.

#### Commentary and mark:

This answer is undeveloped in terms of length but does make some effective points on the theme of work in the novel. Some relevant comments related to theme and characters demonstrate engagement with the text but there is a tendency for points to become somewhat circuitous. The candidate has attempted to use knowledge of other themes such as loneliness and the dreams to apply to this question with partial success.

Mark: 11

The importance of work is massive in 'Of Mice and Men' it effects mostly every character in the novel. We see through the characters such as George, Lennie, Crooks and Candy.

First of all the first characters we see who get into work are George and Lennie. George being the person with the brains and Lennie being the person who is strong as a bull and can do any job thrown at him. For example he can buck barley, he can drive a cultor or anything you want him to do.

Where as on the other hand George has got the brains which means he knows what he is doing when he is doing it. George sometimes has to act for Lennie. ~~don't think he~~.

Another person who works on the ranch a lot is Crook's. Crook's works away from everyone because he is black. He is treated differently for this reason also. Crook's gets mainly the jobs to do with the horses as his job title suggests he is the stable buck.

Also a character who has to work but is treated badly for a different reason to Crooks. this time it's Candy, Candy is treated differently because of his age and also he only has one arm which puts him to a massive disadvantage.

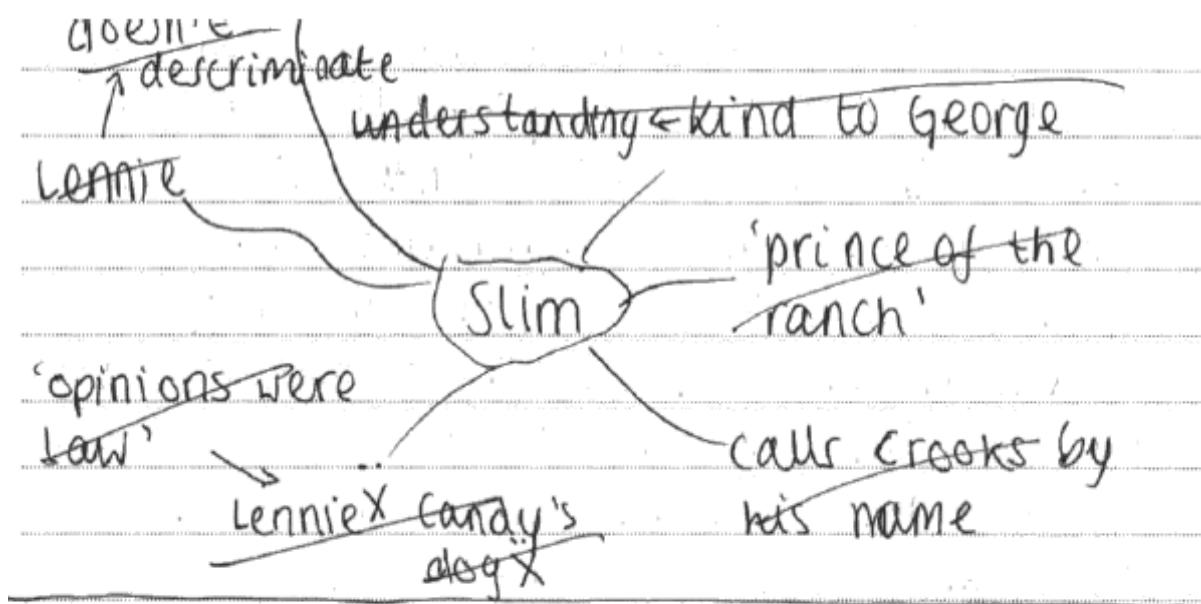
To the other ranchworkers. This means Candy has ~~easy~~ some of easier jobs on the ranch, he normally has to feed the animals for example the chickens. He has mainly all the easy labor.

In my opinion the importance of works all of the characters is the honest, even if the person is handicapped they still have to work a lot to earn their living.

#### Commentary and mark:

The answer features limited knowledge and understanding but there are several comments on the theme of work, based around characters that just tip this answer into Level 2. Textual reference is evident in comments such as when Lennie is referred to as 'strong as a bull' and there is some appreciation of Steinbeck's craft.

Mark: 7



The character of Slim in the novel 'Of Mice and Men' is portrayed as a role model, friend and loyal. Slim is a main character of the novel because of his relationships with other characters. As Steinbeck is the one who explains about Slim, as well as Candy, the reader thinks highly of him and tends to agree with most of his opinions throughout the novel.

Slim is described as 'prince of the ranch' and that <sup>he</sup> has 'godlike eyes'. This immediate description from Steinbeck allows the reader to make a connection that he has natural leadership over the ranch workers. Slim is

portrayed not to be prejudice against other characters such as Crooks and Lennie. Other ranch hands refer to Crooks as a 'nigger' or 'negro', discriminating him because of his ~~poor~~ race. Slim though, refers to Crooks by his name, showing Crooks respect. Crooks in return is grateful for this as he refers to Slim as 'sir' showing his respect towards Slim, as Slim has earned it.

In the novel Slim also does not discriminate Lennie. He refers to him as a childlike by saying 'he's jes like a kid' which is true, and the fact Slim says it proves that Lennie has low intelligence. Unlike the other characters Slim refers to Lennie by name and not calling him 'a crazy bastard' or 'dum-dum'. Slim also trusts Lennie ~~much~~ with his pups because he later in the novel explains 'he ain't mean'; and would not intentionally hurt people.

George and Slim's relationship shows how good of a friend Slim can be. He listens to George understand about Lennie. His understanding and caring nature allows the reader to share similar views with Slim, and respect him.

Slim's words and opinions 'were law', as Steinbeck tells us at the second section of the novel. This is shown when he persuades Candy that his dog should be shot as it 'stinks' has 'no damn teeth' and can 'barely walk'. When Carlson explains why <sup>his</sup> reasons sound harsh and unnecessary. Whereas, when Slim agrees, Candy can not argue against this because he and the reader knows that Slim is correct.

This authority and correct manner of

behaviour is shown again at the end of the novel when George shoots Lennie. Slim is there to comfort George as a friend and says to him; 'You hadda, George. I swear you hadda.' showing that what George did was right, because Slim, whose 'opinions were law, be on politics or love' agreed it was.

Slim and Curley's relationship shows and exaggerates the meanness of the character Curley. Curley always tries to pick fights and is 'like a lot of little guys' who constantly fight. Slim's disliking and bad relationship with

Curley's wife says 'I don't like Curley' which gives more evidence to why Slim's disliking of him is right to accept.

The character of Slim and his relationships with other characters in the novel help the reader to create a better understanding. As Slim creates a good example to follow, the reader can easily comprehend that Slim's authority and power over the other characters is done by the purpose of Steinbeck. Enabling the reader to identify what is right and wrong throughout the novel.

#### **Commentary and mark:**

This is a thorough response that sustains engagement with the text, integrating key quotations and references concerning Slim – 'godlike eyes' and 'words were law'. Engagement with both text and question are sustained effectively and there is some sensitivity in analysis such as in the references to the incident with Candy's dog. His function in the novel and his character are considered appropriately.

**Mark: 21**