



Of Mice and Men The Impossibility of the American Dream

The theme of the impossibility of the American Dream is found throughout the novella *Of Mice and Men* as several characters dare to dream even if their dreams are unattainable.

PART A: Join the characters in *Of Mice and Men* by daring to think about your own dreams, using the graphic organizer to respond to the following:

List at least one dream in which you are "reaching for the stars" (a dream that seems more unrealistic or challenging) and one dream "grounded on earth" (a dream that feels more realistic or possible).

In the section next to your dream, explain what you plan to do to help you reach your dreams.

Reaching for the Stars Dream



What will you do to achieve this dream?

Grounded on Earth Dream



What will you do to achieve this dream?

After completing the graphic organizer, respond to the following question:

Do you think having dreams in life is important? Why or why not?

PART B: Now that you've considered your personal dreams, think about the theme of the impossibility of the American Dream in *Of Mice and Men*.

In column 1: Write the name of the character whose dream is listed in column 2. The characters to choose from are: George, Lennie, Candy, Crooks, Curley's wife.

In column 3: Identify reasons why the dream is unsuccessful or impossible.

In column 4: Respond to the questions: Does this character's dream benefit him or her? If so, how?

In the last row: Is there another character who you think had an impossible dream? If so, record the information in the last row of the chart.

Character	Impossible Dream	Reason(s) the Dream Is Unsuccessful/Impossible	Does this character's dream benefit him or her? If so, how?
Curley	to be bigger in size and stronger than others	Curley cannot control his physical height. Curley is overcome by Lennie's strength. Curley's ugly personality makes him seem smaller and difficult to respect.	In some ways, Curley's intimidating behavior and attempts at seeming tough or "big" allow him to think he controls the other men. However, this behavior also causes him to get his hand injured and to lose respect from the others, and it impacts his unsuccessful marriage.
	to be included; to be part of a group		

	to be useful; to work the land		
	to own land; to be able to sustain himself		
	to feel safe in an unaccepting world; to have comfort or protection; to take care of rabbits		
	to become a movie star; to be known and count for something		

After you complete the chart, respond to the following questions:

Why do people dream?

Why is it important to dream in life?

RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.9-10.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.