



Of Mice and Men What Steps from the Shadows?

John Steinbeck uses foreshadowing throughout *Of Mice and Men* to hint at the unavoidable tragic fate of several characters as well as to draw notice to the theme that working-class people are often harshly limited by their circumstances. Use this worksheet to develop a better understanding of the literary technique of foreshadowing while becoming a detective of the novella *Of Mice and Men*.

Foreshadowing happens when the writer gives a hint of something that will occur later in the story; the hint may be obvious or implied, but either way, it will help the reader anticipate future events.

You can better understand the meaning of *foreshadowing* by breaking down the word. *Fore* means "forward, ahead, or in front." *Shadow* means "the darkened image, shape, or silhouette of a solid object" and often symbolizes something ominous.

Authors create foreshadowing through:

- character dialogue

- action or an event

- the title of a work or a chapter

- symbolism

- setting (weather, location, scenery)

- music or sound (in film, theater, or even a piece a character is listening to, playing, or singing)

Read the following examples from well-known books, stories, or films in which foreshadowing is used.

Example #1: *Charlotte's Web*

When the spider, Charlotte, is helping Wilbur to survive, she explains to him that all living things must die. Charlotte's words foreshadow her death at the end of the book.

Example #2: *Bambi*

When Bambi's mother warns him of the dangers of Man in the forest early in the story, she foreshadows her untimely death caused by human hunters.

Example #3: *Toy Story 2* and *Toy Story 3*

In *Toy Story 2*, Stinky Pete warns the toys that someday they will be left behind to rot in a landfill. This foreshadowing extends into *Toy Story 3* in a dramatic scene in which the toys end up in a landfill and face being thrown into an incinerator.

Example #4: Most scary movies

In most scary movies, there is a scene in which a character says, "I'll be right back." This line almost always foreshadows that the character will *not* return due to unfortunate circumstances.

Now that you know a little bit more about foreshadowing, you are going to become a foreshadowing detective for sections of the novella *Of Mice and Men*. Find and re-read the passages listed below. Then become a detective by completing the following tasks:

In each passage/set of passages, find three to five clues (examples of foreshadowing).

Identify what event the clues are foreshadowing *or* make a prediction about what the clues might be foreshadowing.

Passage 1 (**pages 25–28**)—*Refer to these pages in the text and read the entire section within which the lines are found.*

"At that moment a young man came into the bunk house . . . George studied the cards absorbedly. 'That's a dirty thing to tell around,' he said."

Clue 1:

Clue 2:

Clue 3:

Clue 4:

Clue 5:

What event(s) does this passage foreshadow, or what might this passage might be foreshadowing?

Set of passages 2—*Refer to these pages in the text and read the entire section within which the lines are found.*

(**page 7**) "Lennie held his closed hand away from George's direction. 'It's on'y a mouse, George.' . . . 'Uh-uh. Jus' a dead mouse, George. I didn' kill it. Honest!' . . . 'Well, you ain't petting no mice while you walk with me.'"

(**page 32**) "'Listen to me, you crazy bastard,' he said fiercely. . . . Lennie cried out suddenly—'I don' like this place, George. This ain't no good place. I wanna get outta here.'"

(**pages 41–42**) "'Course he ain't mean. But he gets in trouble alla time because he's so God damn dumb. Like what happened in Weed—' He stopped . . . Lennie came in through the door.'"

(**pages 82–83**) "Only Lennie was in the barn, and Lennie sat in the hay beside a packing case . . . 'Maybe George won't care,' he said."

Clue 1:

Clue 2:

Clue 3:

Clue 4:

Clue 5:

What event(s) does this set of passages foreshadow, or what might these passages be foreshadowing?

Set of passages 3—*Refer to these pages in the text and read the entire section within which the lines are found.*

(pages 16–17) "'Course you did. Well, look. Lennie—if you jus' happen to get in trouble' . . . 'O.K. Bring your brindle over here by the fire. It's gonna be nice sleepin' here.'"

(pages 35–36) "'Glad ta meet ya,' Carlson said again. 'He ain't very small.' He chuckled softly at his joke. . . . Lennie rolled off his bunk and stood up, and the two of them started for the door."

(pages 42–43) "Lennie came in through the door. He wore his blue denim coat over his shoulders like a cape, and he walked hunched away over. . . . 'Well—let 'im. He ain't doin' no harm out there.'"

(pages 46–49) "During the conversation Carlson had refused to be drawn in. He continued to look down at the old dog. . . . For a moment he continued to stare at the ceiling. Then he rolled slowly over and faced the wall and lay silent."

(page 59–60) "Candy sat on the edge of his bunk. He scratched the stump of his wrist nervously. . . . The door opened. Slim came in, followed by Curley and Carlson and Whit."

Clue 1:

Clue 2:

Clue 3:

Clue 4:

Clue 5:

What event(s) does this set of passages foreshadow, or what might these passages be foreshadowing?

Now respond to the following questions:

Why do you think Steinbeck uses foreshadowing in *Of Mice and Men*?

How does the foreshadowing affect the reader?

How does the foreshadowing affect the story?

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.9-10.4 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. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

W.9-10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.