



Of Mice and Men Sensory Language

Throughout the novella *Of Mice and Men*, John Steinbeck uses language that creates sensory imagery for his readers. Sensory language includes words that connect to the human senses: sight, taste, touch, smell, and sound. This language permits the author to allow his readers to see, taste, feel, smell, or hear what the characters do.

In columns 1 and 2: Read the sensory term used in *Of Mice and Men* and note where the term is found in the text. Find the term in your book and read the context around it.

In column 3: Record the meaning of the term as used in context.

In column 4: Record what sense or senses the term creates for you as a reader.

Sensory Term	Page	Definition from Context	What Sense(s)?
recumbent	p. 3	lying down or being in a horizontal position	Sight; I can picture the tree branches extending in a horizontal position over the water.
mottled	p. 3		
lumbered	p. 9		
dust-laden	p. 18		
gingerly	p. 25		

brittle	p. 31		
rouged	p. 31		
complacently	p. 34		
dousing	p. 35		
derision	p. 38		
stride	p. 44		
raptly	p. 57		
cowering	p. 62		
wryly	p. 63		

averted	p. 79		
crestfallen	p. 80		
jeering	p. 82		
writhed	p. 88		
sniveled	p. 93		
monotonous	p. 101		

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 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).

L.9-10.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown or multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 9-10 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

L.9-10.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Answer Key

Sample Student Response

Sensory Term	Page	Definition from Context	What Sense(s)?
recumbent	p. 3	lying down or being in a horizontal position	Sight; I can picture the tree branches extending in a horizontal position over the water.
mottled	p. 3	having spots or patches of color	Sight; I get the visual image of the spotted bark of a tree.
lumbered	p. 9	walking heavily or clumsily	Sight and touch; I can picture as well as feel the way Lennie walks.
dust-laden	p. 18	filled or full of dust	Sight; I can see the way the sunlight reveals a lot of dust in the air of the bunkhouse.
gingerly	p. 25	carefully	Sight and touch; I can picture and almost feel the way Curley carefully steps toward Lennie.
brittle	p. 31	cold and lacking warmth	Hearing; I can hear Curley's wife's voice's cold or emotionless quality.
rouged	p. 31	red in color from makeup	Sight; I can picture part of Curley's wife's physical appearance.
complacently	p. 34	happy with oneself or satisfied	Sight; I can picture Lennie's physical reaction from receiving a compliment from George.
dousing	p. 35	wetting thoroughly	Touch and sight; I can picture how Carlson appears when first meeting George and Lennie.
derision	p. 38	contempt or mockery	Hearing; I can hear the sound of voices cheering, mocking, or jeering at the horseshoe game outside.

stride	p. 44	to walk in even, long steps	Sight and feeling; I can see and feel how Carlson walks.
raptly	p. 57	showing great delight and interest	Sight; I can picture how George's face appears as he talks.
cowering	p. 62	crouch or curl up	Sight; I can see how Lennie physically appears after his fight with Curley.
wryly	p. 63	something done cleverly or sarcastically	Sight; I better understand the way Slim smiles and the meaning behind the smile.
averted	p. 79	turned away	Sight; I can envision Crooks wanting to avoid eye contact.
crestfallen	p. 80	showing a lowering of the spirit	Sight; I can see how sad Candy feels.
jeering	p. 82	laughing to make fun of or mock another person	Sound; I can hear the cruel tones in the characters' laughter.
writhed	p. 88	twisted or contorted	Sight and physical feeling; I can see the action of the scene and feel how Curley's wife struggled to get away from Lennie.
sniveled	p. 93	cried in an agitated or weakened way	Sound; I can hear how Candy sounds after discovering Curley's wife's body.
monotonous	p. 101	to repeat in a rhythmic way	Sound; I can hear how George is emotionally broken and dead as he speaks to Lennie.