

ANSWER KEY: SHORT ANSWER STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS - *Of Mice and Men*

Chapter 1

1. Identify and give a physical description of Lennie and George.

Lennie was a huge man, shapeless of face with large, pale eyes, with wide, sloping shoulders, and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little. Lennie is George's friend, who is not very smart but is an extremely strong man and a good worker.

George was small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, strong features. He had small, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose. George took care of Lennie as they traveled together.
2. What is George's first complaint to Lennie?

George's first complaint is that Lennie is drinking too much water. This is just the first of a series of complaints George has about Lennie. He is almost always complaining about Lennie, but that doesn't change the fact that he appreciates Lennie's companionship.
3. What trouble did George and Lennie have in Weed?

All we learn in chapter 1 is that some men came after George and Lennie for something they had done. We later learn that apparently Lennie touched a girl's dress to feel the material. When she tried to move, he got excited and confused and held on even tighter. The girl accused him of trying to rape her, and that's when the men came looking for him.
4. What is in Lennie's pocket? Why does he have it?

A dead mouse is in Lennie's pocket. He has it because he likes to pet soft things.
5. George bursts into a long speech about what he could do if he were alone. What could he do?

He could take his money and go to a cat house or out drinking whiskey all night or spend his time playing cards at a pool hall; in short, the things the lonely ranch hands do.
6. Lennie offers to go away and live in a cave. What is George's response?

He tells Lennie that Lennie wouldn't survive, that he couldn't find any food or take care of himself. Then, he admits to Lennie that he doesn't want him to go.
7. Why are George and Lennie different from the other "guys like us that work on ranches"?

They are different because each one has the other to look out for him.
8. What are George and Lennie going to do someday?

Someday George and Lennie are going to have a little piece of land with a little shack. They'll have some animals and some crops -- especially a little alfalfa patch so Lennie can pick it and feed the rabbits. They're going to live off the fat of the land, where no one can tell them to get out or boss them around.

9. What two things does George want Lennie to remember?

George wants Lennie to remember to not say anything when they talk to the boss and to return to this campsite if he gets into trouble.

10. Why did George want to camp overnight instead of going another quarter of a mile to the ranch?

At the ranch in the evening there would be too many people for Lennie to deal with at once; he might get confused. Also, it would give Lennie a chance to prove himself as a good worker before everyone would discover how slow he was mentally.

Chapter 2

1. What does George answer when the boss asks what he is trying to put over?

He says he isn't trying to put anything over, that he and Lennie travel together; they are cousins. He says that Lennie is slow mentally because he got kicked in the head by a horse, but that he is a strong, good worker who follows orders well.

2. Identify and describe Curley.

Curley was the boss' son. He was a young man with a brown face, brown eyes and a head of tightly curled hair. He wore a work glove on his left hand, and he wore high-heeled boots. Curley was a little man, but had been a boxing champion. He didn't like anybody and was always picking fights.

3. The swamper said, "Seems like Curley ain't givin' nobody a chance." Explain.

If Curley would fight a big man and win, everyone would think he was very strong and would congratulate him. If Curley would fight a big man and lose, everyone would feel sorry for him and tell the big man to pick on someone his own size. Either way, Curley would come out the favorite of the crowd.

4. What advice does George give Lennie after Curley and the swamper leave?

George tells Lennie to stay away from Curley, that he is nothing but trouble. Lennie replies that he doesn't like this place, and he wants to leave.

5. Identify Slim and Carlson.

Slim and Carlson are other ranch hands. Slim seems very reasonable and respected and tries to understand George and Lennie. Carlson is later responsible for killing Candy's dog.

6. What does Slim have that Lennie wants?

Slim's dog has just had a litter of puppies. Lennie wants one.