

Name _____

Exploring the Setting of 'Of Mice and Men'

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. The setting of the Great Depression era in "Of Mice and Men" contributes significantly to the novella's themes and tone. It shapes the characters' struggles and aspirations by highlighting the economic challenges of the time, emphasizing their itinerant lifestyle, and creating a backdrop of instability. The setting underscores the themes of loneliness, discrimination, dreams, and the search for hope, giving the story its emotional depth and impact.
2. The itinerant worker lifestyle in the novella's setting impacts the characters' sense of stability and belonging by making them constantly move from one place to another in search of employment. This lifestyle creates a lack of permanence, making it difficult for them to establish long-term connections and trust in others.
3. The ranch setting in "Of Mice and Men" serves as a microcosm of the challenges faced by the working class during the Great Depression. It highlights issues such as discrimination (as seen in Crooks' isolation), loneliness (exemplified by Curley's wife), and the pursuit of dreams (embodied in George and Lennie's dream of land ownership). The ranch's harsh realities mirror those of the wider world during that era.
4. George and Lennie's dream of owning land is symbolic of their aspirations and represents the broader theme of hope in the story. This dream is a beacon of light in their challenging lives, motivating their actions and giving them a sense of purpose. It symbolizes the human desire for stability and a better future, even in the face of adversity.

