

Honors Literature and Short Stories
Week 10

This week you will have a choice of novels by John Steinbeck
Of Mice and Men or Tortilla Flat

This week you will begin reading one of John Steinbeck's famous novels, Of Mice and Men or Tortilla Flat. So far we have learned to recognize and analyze theme, symbolism, character, setting, mood, and plot, and to recognize allegory and irony. When analyzing these elements in a short story, it is often easier because everything happens quickly. However, in a novel, the development of character, revealing of setting, and development of plot takes place over a much longer period of time. It is important to learn to read a novel and make notes. If the novel is your own copy, an excellent method of note taking is to write in the margins of the book. If it is not your own copy, or you don't wish to write in the book, try using sticky notes to make notes and stick on the pages.

First, read about John Steinbeck:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Steinbeck

In order to better understand the setting, as you begin reading, also visit the following websites and note information about the conditions:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/afctshtml/tsme.html>

http://migration.ucdavis.edu/rmn/more.php?id=584_0_2_0

<http://www.farmworkers.org/strugcal.html>

Assignments

1. Read Chapters 1 and 2 of Of Mice and Men OR approximately 70 pages of Tortilla Flat. As you read, be sure to take notes – either with margin notes, sticky notes, or on a separate sheet of paper. Note page numbers with specific points. Note observations and examples of the theme of friendship, the setting and its importance, and any symbolism.
2. **Weekly Shorts: 5 points**
3. **Journal: 10 points** Respond briefly to at least two of the following observations. In addition, be sure to respond with your personal reactions to the story so far.

Of Mice and Men

- The clearing into which Lennie and George wander evokes Eden in its serenity and beauty. Why do you suppose Steinbeck opens his novel in this way? How does this symbolize the story?

- ❑ How do Steinbeck's repeated comparisons between Lennie and animals (bears, horses, terriers) reinforce the impending sense of doom?
- ❑ The ranch represents a society that does not consider the welfare of its weaker members, as well as one in which those who hold power wield it irresponsibly. What are some examples that prove this?
- ❑ How does the novel represent women? What view does it present?

Tortilla Flat

- ❑ Do you think that Steinbeck intends for the paisanos to be viewed as model citizens or heroes? Why or why not?
- ❑ Do you think that Pilon and the rest of the conspirators would really have helped the Pirate, or would they have taken advantage of him and spent his money greedily?
- ❑ Why do you think Danny is the only one affected by the change in his life?
- ❑ How does the novel represent the role of women? What view does it present?