

WJEC

GCSE English Literature

Activity and Exam Practice

Of Mice and Men

2010 specification

(sample pages)

Chapter 3

The dog must die

In this chapter, some of the men in the bunkhouse complain to Candy, the old swamper, that his dog is old and smelly. In the passages leading up to Carlson shooting the dog, the silence in the room is so powerful that it becomes like an extra character in the novel as these extracts show (p. 49):

'The silence came into the room. And the silence lasted.'

'The silence fell on the room again. It came out of the night and invaded the room.'

The atmosphere in the room is very strong and few words are spoken by the characters.

Activity 3.1

Re-read pages 45–50, covering events leading up to Candy's dog being shot. There is a strong sense that Candy feels powerless and is very reluctant to lose his dog. Write a speech for him in which he honestly says how he feels and tries to persuade others that his dog should live.

You might like to include:

- How unfair it is to kill a dog just because it is old and smelly.
- How Candy identifies with the dog because he is old too.
- How he has had the dog since it was a pup and how much the dog means to him.
- That they cannot really know whether the dog is suffering: he might be feeling fine.
- That shooting a dog is a painful (though quick) way for him to die.
- That replacing him with one of Slim's pups just isn't the same.

Remember ...

you are writing to persuade others. This is similar to writing an argument but you will play more on the reader's emotions. You can be one-sided and you don't need to make a counter-argument.

Persuasive texts are often structured like this:

- 1 A general description of the situation.
- 2 An explanation of why your point of view is the right way to look at things.
- 3 Background details, the history of the situation.
- 4 Practical details about what others can do to help.
- 5 A final emotional plea for support.

The fight

In Chapter 3 a fight occurs between Curley and Lennie. Curley is looking for his wife in the barn and he implies that something has been happening between his wife and Slim. When Slim tells Curley to 'lay off', Curley tries to pick a fight with Carlson. However Carlson stands his ground and then Curley notices Lennie, who is still smiling at the thought that he and George will soon buy their own little farm.

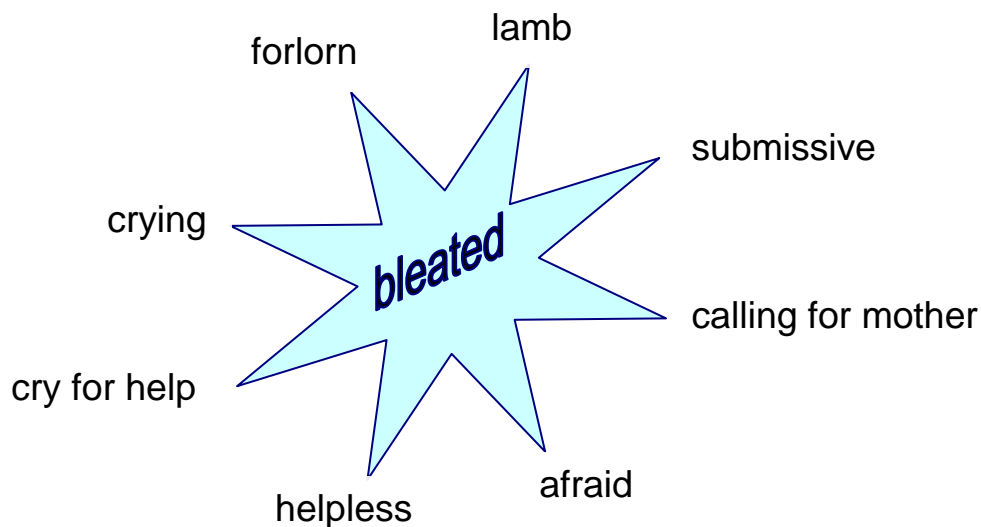
Curley starts punching the bewildered Lennie. Then, after George tells Lennie to 'Get him', Lennie grabs Curley's hand in mid-air and crushes it. When George finally makes Lennie release Curley's hand, George worries that they'll get 'canned' (sacked). Slim takes charge of the situation, telling Curley that if he gets George and Lennie canned they'll embarrass him by telling everyone what happened.

Activity 3.2

Throughout the fight there are many animal references referring to either Lennie or Curley:

- A. 'Curley stepped over to Lennie like a **terrier**'.
- B. 'Lennie covered his face with his huge **paws** and **bleated** with terror'.
- C. Slim about Curley – 'The dirty little **rat**'.
- D. 'Curley was flopping like a **fish** on a line'.
- E. 'Slim turned to the **whimpering Lennie**'.

For each of the **bold** words associated with animals, create a diagram or map like the one below listing all the things that you associate with that word or animal.



For each of the short extracts above (A–E), write down how the animal reference links to what we already know about that character.

Compare the 'animal' descriptions of Curley at the start of the fight and at the end of the fight, how do they show a change has happened to Curley's character?

Activity 3.3

Read through the fight near the end of Chapter 3 again. Imagine you are either George, Slim, Curley or Carlson. Using the hot-seating technique, you will be questioned by other members of your class about your side of the story during the fight. Think of 3–5 questions that you might want to ask the other characters. For example, here are some questions that you could ask:

