**WebQuest Description:** Throughout this webquest you will research information about the author and multiple aspects of the 1930's relevant to John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*.

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Curriculum:** English / Language Arts

**Keywords:** Steinbeck, Of Mice and Men, Stone

**Published On:** 2012-09-11 07:16:34

**Last Modified:** 2015-08-29 00:15:30


---

**Introduction**

"An' live off the fatta the lan'" Lennie shouted. "An' have rabbits. Go on, George! Tell about what we're gonna have in the garden and about the rabbits in the cages and about the rain in the winter and the stove, and how thick the cream is on the milk like you can hardly cut it. Tell about that George." - John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*

In completing this webquest you will gain knowledge prior to reading John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. You are going to examine the time period and setting in which the author lived and wrote the novel. By closely examining the time period and setting, you will gain a better understanding of the social, cultural, psychological and economic factors that influenced Steinbeck in addition to Steinbeck's own life. You will also learn what it was like to be a migrant worker, like the main characters, in the Salinas Valley of California during the 1920's and 1930's. You will be able to accurately describe the Great Depression and the factors that created it.

---

**Tasks**

**Essential Questions:** What aspects of John Steinbeck's life influenced his writing of *Of Mice and Men*? What was The Great Depression and how did it affect life in the 1920s & 1930s, specifically in California? What was life like for migrant workers? One of the main characters suffers from a mental disability; what are some specific mental disabilities and how is it best to care for someone with a mental disability? Visit various sources to answer the questions for your assigned role.

---

**Process**

1. You will be divided up into groups of 4 - 5 members. Each group member will be assigned a specific role in the task.

   - **Geographer**
   - **Historian**
   - **Biographer**
   - **Psychologist**

2. Each group member will research information and respond to questions for your specific topic. Be sure to record all websites that you use; all information you obtain must be cited.

   - **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**
     - What are the geographical features of California's Salinas River?
     - What was John Steinbeck's connection to the Salinas River?
     - What job opportunities were available in California in the 1930's?
     - What was the "Dust Bowl"?
     - What was life like in America in the 1930's?

3. **What are some different kinds of mental disabilities?**

   - How do mental disabilities affect one's life and lifestyle?
   - How are people with mental disabilities cared for?
   - How important are friendships and family?
   - One of the main characters in *Of Mice and Men*, Lennie, suffers from Intellectual Developmental Disorder (formerly called mental retardation.) What are some of the characteristics of this disability?

4. **What were Steinbeck's accomplishments?**

   - What is the Steinbeck Award? How does one win this award? Who are some of the recipients of the Steinbeck Award?

---

**Conclusion**
By the end of this project each group member should have a better understanding of John Steinbeck and his reasons for writing Of Mice and Men. With your group, you need to write and present to the class a well-developed response to the following prompt: 1. Each student will share what was learned from his/her research and responses to the questions. 2. Each student will independently write a summary of what he/she learned about John Steinbeck, his inspirations for writing Of Mice and Men, the setting, and the disability of one of the main characters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category and Score</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Information is vague and unclear. Focus questions are incomplete throughout project</td>
<td>Basic information is provided. Details are mostly relevant.</td>
<td>Full topic/idea development.Logical organization. Strong details</td>
<td>Rich topic/idea development.Careful and/or subtle organization. Supportive and purposefully chosen details provided</td>
<td>%25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Errors seriously interfere with communication. Little control of sentence structure, grammar and usage, mechanics</td>
<td>Errors interfere somewhat with communication and/or too many errors relative to the length of essay or complexity of sentence structure, grammar and usage, and mechanics</td>
<td>Errors do not interfere with communication and/or Few errors relative to the length of essay or complexity of sentence structure, grammar and usage, and mechanics</td>
<td>Control of sentence structure, grammar and usage, and mechanics-Length and complexity of essay provide opportunity for student to show control of standard English convention</td>
<td>%25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of technology and the Internet</td>
<td>Little or no use of information from the Internet. Websites are not cited.</td>
<td>Some information used from the provided websites. Many errors when citing websites.</td>
<td>Project demonstrates effective use of the internet and minimal citation errors.</td>
<td>Strong use of the websites provided. No errors in citation.</td>
<td>%25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Project is dull and sloppy.</td>
<td>Project has some organization and original thought.</td>
<td>Project demonstrates effective use of the Internet, original thought and organization.</td>
<td>Project is neat, clear, organized and creative. Eye catching and informational.</td>
<td>%25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Score %100**