Chapter One

anguish
brusque
contemplate
debri
elaborate
juncture
mimic
morose
recumbent
stake

1. juncture (juhngk-cher) n. the line or point at which two bodies are joined; joint or articulation; seam; the act of joining

derivatives: junction

“... but on the valley side the water is lined with trees—willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter’s flooding: and sycamores with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool” (1).

2. debris (duh-bree, dey-bree) n. the scattered remains of something broken or destroyed; rubble or wreckage; carelessly discarded refuse; litter

derivatives: none

“... but on the valley side the water is lined with trees—willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter’s flooding: and sycamores with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool” (1).

3. recumbent (ri-kuhm-buhnt) adj. lying down, especially in a position of comfort or rest; reclining; resting; idle

derivatives: recumbency, recumbence, recumbently

“... but on the valley side the water is lined with trees—willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter’s flooding: and sycamores with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool” (1).
4. **morose** *(muh-ros)* **adj.** sullen; melancholy; gloomy  
   derivatives: morosely, moroseness  
   “George stared **morosely** at the water” (4).

5. **brusque** *(bruhsk)* **adj.** abrupt and curt in manner or speech; discourteously blunt  
   derivatives: brusquely, brusqueness  
   “‘Awright,’ he said **brusquely**” (8).

6. **contemplate** *(kohn-tuh m-pleyt)* **v.** to consider carefully and at length; meditate on or ponder  
   derivatives: contemplated, contemplating, contemplates  
   “Lennie hesitated, backed away, looked wildly at the brush line as though he **contemplated** running for his freedom” (8).

7. **elaborate** *(ih-lab-er-it)* **adj.** planned or executed with painstaking attention to numerous parts or details. Intricate and rich in detail  
   derivatives: elaborated, elaborating, elaborates  
   “He took on the **elaborate** manner of little girls when they are mimicking one another” (11).

8. **mimic** *(mim-ik)* **v.** to copy or imitate closely, especially in speech, expression, and gesture; ape; to copy or imitate so as to ridicule; mock  
   derivatives: mimicked, mimicking, mimics  
   “He took on the elaborate manner of little girls when they are **mimicking** one another” (11).
9. **anguish** (ang-gwish) *n.* agonizing physical or mental pain; torment  
   derivatives: anguished, anguishing, anguish

   “He looked across the fire at Lennie’s **anguished** face. . .” (11).

10. **stake** (steyk) *n.* an amount of money; to possess, claim, or reserve a share of (land, profit, glory, etc.)  
   derivatives: none

   “‘They come to a ranch an’ work up a **stake**. . .’” (13).
# Vocabulary Study

## Of Mice and Men

by John Steinbeck

Chapter Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abrupt</th>
<th>Ominous</th>
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<td>Apprehensive</td>
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<td>Mollify</td>
<td>Vicious</td>
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### 1. scourge (skurj) n.
A source of widespread dreadful affliction and devastation such as that caused by pestilence or war; a means of inflicting severe suffering, vengeance, or punishment.

- derivatives: scourged, scourging, scourges
- “Says ‘positively kills lice, roaches and other scourges’” (18).

### 2. scowl (skoul) v.
To wrinkle or contract the brow as an expression of anger or disapproval

- derivatives: scowled, scowling, scowls
- “George scowled at him. . .” (22).

### 3. abrupt (uh-bruhpt) adj.
Unexpectedly sudden; surprisingly curt; brusque

- derivatives: abruptly, abruptness
- “He turned abruptly and went to the door. . .” (23).

### 4. vicious (vish-uh)s adj.
Having the nature of vice; evil, immoral, or depraved; spiteful; malicious

- derivatives: viciously, viciousness
- “‘Be a damn good thing if you was,’ George said viciously’” (23).
5. mollify (mol-uh-fahy) v. to calm in temper or feeling; soothe; to lessen in intensity; temper, to reduce the rigidity of; soften

derivatives: mollified, mollifying, mollifies, mollifiable, mollification, mollifier, mollifyingly

“‘Damn right he don’t,’ said George, slightly mollified. . .” (24).

6. pugnacious (puhg-ney-shuh s) adj. combative in nature; belligerent

derivatives: pugnaciously, pugnaciousness, pugnacity

“His glance was at once calculating and pugnacious” (25).

7. ominous (om-uh-nuh s) adj. menacing; threatening; of or being an omen, especially an evil one

derivatives: ominously, ominousness

“He said ominously, ‘Well, he better watch out for Lennie . . .’” (27).

8. derogatory (dih-rog-uh-tawr-ee, -tohr-ee) adj. disparaging; belittling; tending to detract or diminish

derivatives: derogatorily, derogatoriiness

“He had drawn a derogatory statement from George” (27).

9. apprehensive (ap-ri-hen-siv) adj. anxious or fearful about the future; uneasy

derivatives: apprehensively, apprehensiveness

“She was suddenly apprehensive” (32).
10. complacent (kuh m-pley-suh nt) adj. contented to a fault; self-satisfied and unconcerned eager to please; complaisant

derivative: complacently

“Lennie . . . smiled complacently at the compliment” (34).
Chapter Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>bemuse</td>
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<td>bleat</td>
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<td>cower</td>
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<tr>
<td>derision</td>
<td>n. contemptuous or jeering laughter; ridicule; an object of ridicule; a</td>
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<td></td>
<td>laughingstock</td>
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<tr>
<td>euchre</td>
<td>n. a card game played usually with the highest 32 cards, in which each</td>
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<td>player is dealt 5 cards and the player making the trump is required to take</td>
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<td></td>
<td>at least 3 tricks to win</td>
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<tr>
<td>magazine</td>
<td>n. a compartment in some types of firearms, often a small detachable box,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in which cartridges are held to be fed into the firing chamber</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. **derision** (dih-rizh-uh-n) n. contemptuous or jeering laughter; ridicule; an object of ridicule; a laughingstock

   derivative: deride

   “Through the door came the thuds and occasional clangs of a horseshoe game, and now and then the sound of voices raised in approval or derision” (38).

2. **receptive** (ri-sep-tiv) adj. capable of or qualified for receiving; ready or willing to receive favorably

   derivatives: receptively, receptiveness, receptivity

   “He just sat back quiet and receptive” (39).

3. **euchre** (yoo-ker) n. a card game played usually with the highest 32 cards, in which each player is dealt 5 cards and the player making the trump is required to take at least 3 tricks to win

   derivatives: euchred, euchring, euchres

   “‘Anybody like to play a little euchre?’” (48)

4. **magazine** (mag-uh-zeen, mag-uh-zeen) n. a compartment in some types of firearms, often a small detachable box, in which cartridges are held to be fed into the firing chamber

   derivatives: mag·a·zin·ish, mag·a·zin·y

   “He laid them on his bed and then brought out the pistol, took out the magazine and snapped the loaded shell from the chamber. Then he fell to cleaning the barrel with the little rod” (53).
5. **sarcasmic** (sahr-kas-rik) *adj.* expressing or marked by sarcasm; having or marked by a feeling of bitterness and a biting or cutting quality

   derivative: sarcastically

   “Whit said *sarcastically*, ‘He spends half his time lookin’ for her, and the rest of the time she’s lookin’ for him’” (53).

6. **smoke** (smohk) *n.* to preserve (meat or fish) by exposure to the aromatic smoke of burning hardwood, usually after pickling in salt or brine

   derivatives: smoked, smoking, smokes

   “I could build a smoke house like the one gran’pa had, an’ when we kill a pig we can **smoke** the bacon and the hams. . .’ (57).

7. **reprehensible** (rep-ri-hen-suh-buh-l) *adj.* deserving rebuke or censure; blameworthy

   derivatives: reprehensibility, reprehensibly

   “When Candy spoke they both jumped as though they had been caught doing something **reprehensible**” (59).

8. **bemuse** (bih-myooz) *v.* to cause to be bewildered; confuse

   derivatives: bemused, bemusing, bemuses, bemusedly, bemusement

   “They all sat still, all **bemused** by the beauty of the thing. . .” (60).

9. **bleat** (bleet) *n.* the characteristic cry of a goat or sheep; a whining, feeble complaint

   derivatives: bleated, bleating, bleats

   “Lennie covered his face with huge paws and **bleated** with terror” (63).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>10. cower</strong> (kou-er)  v. to cringe in fear</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>derivatives: cowered, cowering, cowers</td>
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<tr>
<td>“He crouched <strong>cowering</strong> against the wall” (64).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Four

aloof  meager
arouse  persuasive
contemptuous  scornful
intensity  spectacles
maul  subside

1. maul (mawl) v. to handle or use roughly

derivatives: mauled, mauling, mauls

“And [Crooks] had books, too; a tattered dictionary and a mauled copy of the California civil code for 1905” (67).

2. spectacle (spek-tuh-kuhls) n. a pair of eyeglasses.

“A large pair of large gold-rimmed spectacles hung from a nail on the wall above his bed” (67).

3. aloof (uh-loof) adj. distant physically or emotionally; reserved and remote. adv. at a distance but within view; apart

derivatives: aloofly, aloofness

“. . .Crooks was a proud, aloof man” (67).

4. intensity (in-ten-si-tee) n. exceptionally great concentration, power, or force

derivative: intensities

“. . .his eyes . . . seemed to glitter with intensity” (67).
5. **meager** (mee-ger) *adj.* deficient in quantity, fullness, or extent; scanty; deficient in richness, fertility, or vigor; feeble:

- derivatives: meagerly, meagerness

  “...a small electric globe threw a **meager** yellow light” (67).

6. **persuasive** (per-swey-siv) *adj.* tending or having the power to persuade

- derivatives: persuasively, persuasiveness

  “His voice grew soft and **persuasive**” (71).

7. **scorn** (skawrn) *n.* contempt or disdain felt toward a person or object considered despicable or unworthy

- derivatives: scorned, scorning, scorns

  “Crooks was **scornful**” (74).

8. **contemptuous** (kuh n-temp-choo-uh s) *adj.* manifesting or feeling contempt; scornful

- derivatives: contemptuously, contemptuousness

  “‘Awright,’ she said **contemptuously**” (78).

9. **arouse** (uh-rouz) *v.* to stir up; excite

- derivatives: aroused, arousing, arouses

  “There was no personality, no ego—nothing to **arouse** either like or dislike” (81).

10. **subside** (suh b-sahyd) *v.* to become less agitated or active; abate

- derivatives: subsided, subsiding, subsides

  “Candy **subsided**. ‘No . . .’ he agreed. ‘nobody’d listen to us’” (81).
Chapters Five and Six

crafty          monotonous
emphasis        sulky
faint           sullen
gust            talon
hover           writhe

1. talon  (tal-uh n) n. something similar to or suggestive of an animal’s claw

   “. . . over the pile hung the four-taloned Jackson fork suspended from its pulley” (84).

2. sullen  (suhl-uh n) adj. showing a brooding ill humor or silent resentment; morose or sulky

   derivatives: sullener, sullenest, sullenly, sullenness

   “He looked sullenly up at her” (86).

3. writhe  (rahyth) v. to twist, as in pain, struggle, or embarrassment

   derivatives: writed, writhing, writhes

   “Her feet battered on the hay and she writed to be free. . .” (91).

4. hover  (huhv-er) v. to remain in an uncertain state; waver

   derivatives: hovered, hovering, hovers

   “. . . a moment settled and hovered and remained for much more than a moment” (93).

5. sulky  (suhl-kee) adj. sullenly aloof or withdrawn; gloomy; dismal

   derivatives: sulkier, sulkiest

   “‘Then—it’s all off?’ Candy asked sulkily” (95).
6. faint (feynt) adj. lacking strength or vigor; feeble; lacking conviction, boldness, or courage; timid
   derivatives: fainter, faintest
   “The sound of the men grew fainter” (98).

7. gust (guhst) n. a strong, abrupt rush of wind.
   derivatives: gusted, gusting, gusts
   “A far rush of wind and a gust drove through the tops of the trees like a wave” (99).

8. monotonous (muh-not-n-uh s) adj. sounded or spoken in an unvarying tone; lacking in variety
   derivatives: monotonously, monotonousness
   “His voice was monotonous, had no emphasis” (103).

9. emphasis (em-fuh-sis) n. special forcefulness of expression that gives importance to something singled out; stress
   derivative: emphases
   “His voice was monotonous, had no emphasis” (103).

10. crafty (kraf-tee) adj. skillful in underhand or evil schemes; cunning; deceitful; sly
    derivatives: craftier, craftiest, craftily
    “Lennie said craftily—‘Tell me like you done before’” (104).
Complete List of Vocabulary Words for *Of Mice and Men*

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**Of Mice and Men**  
Fill-in-the-Blank Activity  
Chapter One

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1. George looks back on the past with _______ feelings and a general lack of stability.
2. Because many people think Lennie is a little slow mentally and he talks differently, they like to ___________ his speech habits.
3. When George and Lennie leave the previous job hurriedly, they must _________ their future realistically.
4. At a _______ in the road, the men must make a decision about which way to go.
5. George believes that a man must have a _________ on a piece of land to be truly independent.
6. Although Lennie simply wants to be with George on his own farm, he gets a look of _________ when he fears George will leave him.
7. The men trudge through ankle high _________ when they pass through the woods.
8. George is a little _________ in his tone to Lennie about where they will find work.
9. As they plan their future, George _____________ on his idea of one day owning a farm of his own.
10. In a _____________ position, the two friends watch the stars and discuss both the problems of the past and the promise of the future.
Of Mice and Men
Fill-in-the-Blank Activity
Chapter Two

abrupt  ominous
apprehensive  pugnacious
complacent  scourge
derogatory  scowl
mollify  vicious

1. With a ___________ on his face, George waits for the foreman to make a decision.

2. Lennie has a ___________ attitude about where they will finally settle down to work.

3. Unfortunately, George has to ___________ a boss more times than not because of Lennie’s slow ways.

4. In the times of the depression, many farms faced a ___________ of insects that often decimated the crops.

5. With a/an ___________ turn, the foreman walked away, expecting both men to follow him submissively.

6. George is a little ___________ about how Lennie will work out with the new job; his size helps out, but his strength can also be a negative force.

7. With a/an ___________ look on his face, Curley seems to be looking for trouble.

8. Curley’s ___________ stature and attitude alert George that he needs to watch out for Lennie more closely than ever.

9. Lennie does not always understand why someone would be ___________ to want to attack him unprovoked; perhaps it was because his size intimidated most men.

10. Making his dislike clear with a ___________ comment, Candy shows he does not welcome the two new ranch hands.
**Of Mice and Men**

**Fill-in-the Blank Activity**

**Chapter Three**

bemuse  
bleat  
cower  
derision  
euchre  

magazine  
receptive  
reprehensible  
sarcastic  
smoke

1. Most of the men are ___________ to George and Lennie, believing the new hands will help out with all the work around the ranch.

2. George joined the other men at the game table when they opened up a new game of ___________.

3. Most of the meat went into the ___________ house for curing.

4. Curley’s wife ___________ when he started screaming at her and questioning her whereabouts.

5. Lennie is ___________ by Curley’s wife’s behavior and wants to talk to her.

6. With ___________ characteristic of a bully, Curley talks down to everyone on the ranch, believing in his own superiority.

7. Goats and sheep make a strange ___________ sound when they are taken for slaughter.

8. Candy clipped the ___________ into the revolver after he filled it with bullets.

9. Lennie is too naïve to understand the ___________ tone of voice Curley uses when he ridicules the workers.

10. Although Curley’s wife was innocent of doing anything ___________, she is always blamed by her husband because he does not trust her.
Of Mice and Men
Fill-in-the Blank Activity
Chapter Four

aloof               meager
arouse              persuasive
contemptuous        scornful
intensity           spectacles
maul                subside

1. In order to avoid __________ suspicion about their plans, George and Lennie only tell Candy, and the old ranch hand decides he want to be partners with the two men.

2. At first Crooks is __________ about the men’s desire to “live offa tha’ fat a tha land.”

3. They know they must have more than their _________ savings to make their plan a reality.

4. At first Crooks is __________ and stays away from the men; then he slowly changes his demeanor and becomes more friendly.

5. Lennie does not understand that when he __________ a small creature, he can harm it unknowingly.

6. Crooks takes care that his __________ are always close by so he could read the magazines each evening.

7. With great __________, Crooks and Candy listen to George’s plan, hoping they can somehow take part in its outcome.

8. Crooks can offer a __________ argument when he tells George how he can help out with the opportunity to own their own land.

9. Lennie is oblivious to Curley’s wife’s __________ behavior, thinking the big man is not worth her time.

10. As plans for owning a farm involve more than just George and Lennie, the men’s worries begin to __________, and they think it might just work out.
1. George’s grip on Lennie’s arm is as unrelenting as the _________ of a pitchfork holding the bale of hay.

2. Lennie _______ over the body of Curley’s wife, shaking her in disbelief when she fails to regain consciousness.

3. As Lennie struggles to keep Curley’s wife from moving away from him, he holds tighter, and she begins to _______ in terror.

4. Stroking the puppy and talking to it in a singsong, _______ tone, the big man does not realize he has once again squeezed an animal too tightly.

5. With _______ on getting Lennie as far away as possible, George rushes through the bunkhouse concerned that they will get caught.

6. Lennie, far from being _________ does not know how to be deceptive about what he has done.

7. Voices of Slim and Carlson, searching desperately for the killer of Curley’s wife, grow _________, and George believes Lennie might be safe.

8. A _______ of wind brings the sound of men’s pounding footsteps closer to the river in the woods.

9. A _______ Lennie, dejected that once again he has caused himself and George to be on the move, refuses to move ahead any faster.

10. Waiting by the river, Lennie _____________ asks if George is going to yell at him for ruining their chances at owning their own place.
Multiple Choice Exam
Of Mice and Men

1. feeling of great physical or mental pain
   a. morose
   b. anguish
   c. mollify
   d. persuasive
   e. arouse

2. in a mean way; bitterly
   a. recumbent
   b. brusque
   c. derogatory
   d. sarcastic
   e. complacent

3. able and willing to listen to and accept information, new ideas, etc.
   a. deceptive
   b. reprehensible
   c. apprehensive
   d. sulky
   e. receptive

4. became less excited; calmed down
   a. arouse
   b. subside
   c. faint
   d. crafty
   e. mimick

5. in a threatening way
   a. morose
   b. anguish
   c. abrupt
   d. complacent
   e. ominous

6. something that is deserving of criticism
   a. persuasive
   b. recumbent
   c. reprehensible
   d. brusque
   e. mimic

7. suddenly; almost rudely
   a. reprehensible
   b. abrupt
   c. pugnacious
   d. complacent
   e. crafty

8. full of contempt or scorn
   a. contemptuous
   b. sullen
   c. sulky
   d. aloof
   e. meager

9. force; expression; stress
   a. elaborate
   b. persuasive
   c. emphasis
   d. monotonous
   e. bemuse

10. treat roughly or clumsily
    a. mimick
    b. maul
    c. scowl
    d. derogatorily
    e. apprehensively

11. preoccupied; deep in thought
    a. abrupt
    b. morose
    c. receptive
    d. bemuse
    e. cower
12. eager and ready to fight
   a. recumbent
   b. elaborate
   c. aroused
   d. maul
   e. pugnacious

13. still; without movement
   a. writhe
   b. recumbent
   c. mollify
   d. complacent
   e. hover

14. cruel; in a mean way
   a. vicious
   b. anguish
   c. stake
   d. sarcastic
   e. cower

15. a finger-like claw
   a. juncture
   b. stake
   c. debris
   d. gust
   e. talon

16. the part of the gun that holds the bullets
   a. talon
   b. scourge
   c. magazine
   d. reception
   e. mollification

17. in a gloomy manner
   a. sulky
   b. anguish
   c. faint
   d. crafty
   e. sarcastic

18. quick; blunt; abrupt; almost rude
   a. subside
   b. contemptuous
   c. persuasive
   d. brusque
   e. morose

19. linger; stay suspended
   a. gust
   b. mollify
   c. apprehend
   d. arouse
   e. hover

20. distant; removed; cool
   a. aloof
   b. recumbent
   c. morose
   d. sulky
   e. sullen

21. twist
   a. hover
   b. mollify
   c. bleat
   d. writhe
   e. deride

22. in a pleased, satisfied manner
   a. intensity
   b. deride
   c. receptive
   d. sarcastic
   e. complacent

23. an amount of money
   a. euchre
   b. stake
   c. juncture
   d. debris
   e. talon
24. where two things come together
   a. elaborate
   b. spectacle
   c. juncture
   d. bemusement
   e. intensity

25. to ridicule a person
   a. apprehend
   b. derogatory
   c. mimic
   d. cower
   e. derision
Writing Assignment

*Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

John Steinbeck said that *Of Mice and Men* “is a parable about commitment, loneliness, hope, loss, drawing its power from the fact that these universal truths are grounded in the realistic contrast of friendship and shared dreams.” In the novel, George and Lenny travel together from job to job, sustained only by each other and their dream of one day owning their own farm. Consider how the relationship between George and Lenny reflects Steinbeck’s description of the novel. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze how their friendship and shared dream reveal the meaning of the work as a whole.