1. John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*, despite its short length, deals with many important themes. The relationship between George and Lennie forces the reader to consider themes such as friendship, trust, or responsibility. Furthermore, their dream of owning a little piece of property and living off “the fat of the land,” which they find is shared by many of the guys who work on ranches including Candy and Crooks, suggests “the American dream,” or dreams in general, as an important theme. Finally, loneliness, which is felt or discussed by many characters in the novel, cannot be ignored as a major theme as well.

Choose one of the themes mentioned above or another theme you have identified in *Of Mice and Men*.

In your essay, explain why the theme you have chosen should be considered the most important theme in the novel. Support your opinion with specific examples from the book, including quotations, which demonstrate the importance of the theme.

2. Social criticism is a term used to describe literature that addresses real-life issues. The issues might be political, social, religious, or economic. A writer might make comments directly, though statements about an issue, or indirectly, through portrayals of imaginary characters’ situations. Some of Steinbeck’s novels are often noted as social criticism, including *Of Mice and Men*. What real-life issue or issues does he address in *Of Mice and Men*? As a social critic, what message does he provide about the issue or issues through the novel?

Develop a thesis which answers the two questions from the prompt. Support your opinion with specific examples from the book, including quotations.

**Paper Specifications:**

Assignment: 2-4 page, typed essay on one of topics listed above. The essay should have a clear thesis at the end of the introductory paragraph which responds to the topic prompt by providing your opinion. This thesis should be followed by at least three supporting paragraphs which persuade the reader to agree with your thesis and provide specific examples and/or quotes from the novel (not the movie) as evidence.

Typing and Format Specifications: Times New Roman, 12 point, 1 inch margins, MLA formatting

**Due Date:**

**Suggested outline:**

I. Introduction
   A. Provide context for the essay: What are we reading? What is it about? What do we need to know about the topic to understand the rest of your essay and to get our attention. Assume the reader is unfamiliar with the novel.
   B. Thesis: Use prompt as lead in to thesis, which is your answer or opinion on the prompt.

II. Point 1 to support the thesis.
   A. Explain
   B. Evidence/Quotes

III. Point 2 to support the thesis.
   A. Explain
   B. Evidence/Quotes

IV. Point 3 to support the thesis.
   A. Explain
   B. Evidence/Quotes

V. Other points to support...
   A. Explain
   B. Evidence/Quotes

VI. Conclusion
   A. Review argument and thesis
   B. Parting comment about the significance of the topic.