

A novella is a narrative prose fiction whose length is shorter than most novels, but longer than most short stories.

Key Vocabulary:

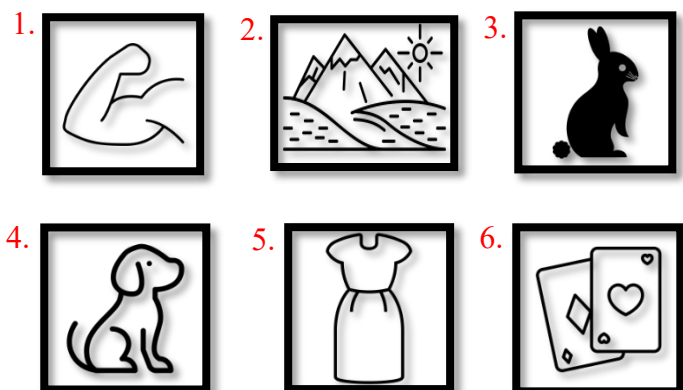
Migrant	A person who moves from one place to another in order to find work or better living conditions.
Hierarchy	A system in which members of an organisation or society are ranked according to relative status or authority.
American Dream	The ideal by which equality of opportunity is available to any American, allowing the highest aspirations and goals to be achieved.
Segregation	The action or state of setting someone or something apart from others.
Isolation	The process or fact of isolating or being isolated. (Being alone / apart from others.
The Great Depression	1929-1939 A long and severe recession in an economy or market.
Cyclical	Occurring in cycles; recurrent.

Characters:

George	Quick-witted farmworker – Lennie's best friend; takes care of him but sometimes resents it.
Lennie	Big strong worker, doesn't know his own strength.
Candy	Old ranch worker who lost his hand in an accident. He has a very old dog.
Curley	Big-headed son of the ranch boss – bullies Lennie with his Napoleon complex.
Curley's wife	Heavily made up, not very nice wife of Curley. Flirts with the farm hands. Lonely.
Slim	Super cool 'prince of the ranch' – has a natural authority on the ranch and amongst the men.
Crooks	Stable handed with a crooked back – the only man who can read. Separated from the others.

Key Quotes:

Lennie	'Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don't belong no place.'
Lennie	'Lennie broke in. "But not us! An' why? Because... because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you, and that's why." He laughed delightedly. "Go on now, George!'
George	'O.K. Someday—we're gonna get the jack together and we're gonna have a little house and a couple of acres an' a cow and some pigs and—'
Lennie	'An' live off the fatta the lan'," Lennie shouted. "An' have rabbits.'
Crooks	'Ever'body wants a little piece of lan'. I read plenty of books out here. Nobody never gets to heaven, and nobody gets no land.'
George	'Hell no. He just scared her. I'd be scared too, if he grabbed me. But he never hurt her. He jus' wanted to touch that red dress, like he wants to pet them pups all the time.'
Slim	'He ain't mean," said Slim. "I can tell a mean guy from a mile off.'



CONTEXT:

- John Steinbeck was an American author, who lived between 1902 and 1968. His works frequently explore the themes of **fate and injustice**, as experienced by **everyman characters**.
- The American Dream is a national ethos of the United States, which declares that freedoms, prosperity, success, and social mobility, can all be achieved through hard work. It implies that **anyone can achieve their dreams if they are willing to put in enough effort**.
- Racism – Life was tough for black people living in America in the 1930s. Racism was still rampant, and there were not yet laws ruling against racial discrimination. White and black people were segregated at the time, and black people were considered 2nd class citizens. The **Jim Crow laws** of post-1876 strongly reinforced racism.
- In October 1929, millions of dollars were wiped out in an event that became known as the Wall Street Crash. This triggered the Great Depression across the country throughout most of the 1930s. In this time, between 12 and 15 million (one third of the population at the time) became unemployed, and many people lost their life savings. With no social support system, **many families were left to face poverty**.
- Gender Inequality–Women had filled in for men when they had participated in the First World War. However, after the Great Depression, when many jobs were lost, **women's jobs were often the first to go**. Curley's Wife provides an example of the difficulties for women at the time – she is forced into a marriage with a man she does not love to stave off poverty.
- Golden California – In the 1930s America received a number of severe dust storms, which greatly damaged the ecology and agriculture across much of the country. The only state that remained relatively unaffected was California on the west coast, which soon became known as 'Golden California.' As men would often travel to do this alone, **it was as an extremely solitary existence**.