

### Teacher's Rationale

School: Arrowhead

Teacher: All English 9 Teachers

Title: *Of Mice and Men*

Grade or Course: John Steinbeck

Approximate date(s) a book will be used:

Semester 1

Semester 2

This book will be (check one or more):

studied by the whole class.

studied by small groups.

placed on a reading list.

placed in a classroom library.

recommended to individual students.

part of a larger study of (explain):

other (explain):

Ways in which the book is especially appropriate for student in this class:

This book is appropriate for grade 9 for three reasons. The first reason is that *Of Mice and Men* is considered an American classic. It is important for students to experience the classics to appreciate the ways our culture has changed over time. The second reason this novel is fitting for ninth grade is that it is an interesting read. The main characters share true friendship; however, they learn that relationships are not always easy. Students definitely have their own difficulties with peer relationships, so they can easily relate to the problems that the characters go through. The third reason that this book is appropriate for grade 9 is that it deals with the topic of harassment. Characters in the book are subject to cruelty and discrimination because of their differences. This novel provides an honest perspective as to how societal ignorance can lead to the mistreatment of individuals based upon their race, gender, or ability. This topic is relevant to ninth graders who are formulating their own ideals as to how society should embrace diversity.

Ways in which the book is especially pertinent to the objectives of this course or unit:

The literature read in ninth grade serves as the foundation for other English classes. Therefore, *Of Mice and Men* was chosen because it is referenced when reading other literary selections in upper level courses and allows for stimulating discussions on topics used throughout English 9. The students can begin to understand what individuals with a variety of differences have to deal with, hopefully creating a sensitive and mature perspective on the issue. The complex ideas of the novel provoke higher-level thinking, inspiring wonderful writing for this unit.

Special problems that might arise in relation to the book and some planned activities that handle this problem:

One problem that may arise in context to this book is the use of offensive language. Evaluating the author's purpose for the words would be the best way to handle this situation. The swearing is generally used to show the characters' anger or ignorance of societal norms. Although there is a great deal of swearing in the book, the reader can appreciate the fact that if the characters could choose a different form of expression they would. The characters also use racial slurs occasionally. This demonstrates the views of the time period, which will be explained during class. Another difficulty that may arise in the book is the concept of death. One character must resort to killing another because it is the best thing, given the situation they are in. This is an extreme example, but the author uses it to demonstrate the complexity of people's decisions. Class discussion will be used to help the students understand why this tragedy had to occur in context of the novel.

Some other appropriate books an individual student might read in place of this book:

*Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury  
*The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier  
*The Giver* by Lois Lowry

Summary of the book:

“*Of Mice and Men* is the story of the friendship between two itinerant California laborers, George and Lennie. George protects Lennie, a large and powerful but mentally disabled man, from the harassment and cruel teasing of those who are too ignorant to know better. George and Lennie's dream is to find a place of their own, where they can live in peace and dignity, but this dream is shattered by Lennie's innocent violence. The story ends when George must kill Lennie to save him from an ignoble death at the hands of a lynch mob led by the husband of a woman Lennie killed unintentionally.”

Summary prepared by the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee

Reviews and/or awards of the book or author:

Best Play, New York Drama Critics Circle Award, 1938  
Nobel Prize for Literature, 1962