

Diction and Dialogue Assessment: *Of Mice and Men*

Note: Steinbeck was criticized and applauded for his realistic style in *Of Mice and Men*.

Big idea: Texts are socially and geographically constructed and language shapes ideas.

Goals: Assess diction and dialogue in relation to a realistic tone and themes of violence and discrimination.

Curricular Competencies:

Assess information for diverse purposes and from a variety of sources.

Evaluate the relevance and how language constructs social, gender, and cultural identities.

Understand the relationship between an author's text and context.

Students should do	Students could do	Extension possibilities
A. __Determine who is speaking and to whom	__Concisely describe the characters	__Determine the character's role in the narrative
B. __Describe the scene and context	__Use suitable vocabulary when describing the scene	__Use imagery when describing the scene
C. __Explain the message of the quote	__Interpret the words in your own words (paraphrase)	__Compare the literal content and explain the inferences being made with the colloquial language
D. __Discuss how the diction affects or changes the message.	__Provide interpretation as to what the message is with the colloquial language	__Juxtapose what the message is with and without colloquialism

Instructions: Read the explanation above. Note the example provided below in question 1.

- 1) "You do bad things and I got to get you out...You crazy son-of-a-b***h." (11)
 - a. The main protagonist George is an outspoken person particularly when talking with his foil character and relative, Lennie, a meek and likeable fellow.
 - b. George berates Lennie about what he did to the girl in the previous town, and while sitting on the dry grass in a treed area complains about how he is burdened with Lennie.
 - c. Although George feels he ought to take care of Lennie, he is frustrated with Lennie's mental challenge and how it leads them into dangerous conflicts.
 - d. When George uses words like "crazy son-of-a-b***h" (11) he is emphasizing how frustrated he is with Lennie's mental inability as well as stressing the reality of Lennie creating an extremely dangerous situation.

- 2) "I want you to stay with me, Lennie. Jesus Christ, somebody'd shoot you for a coyote if you was by yourself." (13)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

- 3) "Maybe he ain't bright, but I never seen such a worker. He damn near killed his partner buckin' barley. There ain't nobody can keep up with him. God awmighty I never seen such a strong guy." (39)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

- 4) "Sure. Ya see the stable buck's a n***r."

"N***r, huh?"

English 11 - Bryant-Taneda: Diction

"Yeah. Nice fella too. Got a crooked back where a horse kicked him. The boss gives him hell when he's mad. But the stable buck don't give a damn about that. He reads a lot. Got books in his room." (20)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

5) "Yes sir. Jesus, we had fun. They let the n****r come in that night. Little skinner name of Smitty took after the n****r. Done pretty good, too. The guys wouldn't let him use his feet, so the n****r got him. If he coulda used his feet, Smitty says he woulda killed the n****r. The guys said on account of the n****r's got a crooked back, Smitty can't use his feet." He paused in relish of the memory. (20)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

6) "Don't you even take a look at that b***h. I don't care what she says and what she does. I seen 'em poison before, but I never seen no piece of jail bait worse than her" (32)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

7) "Married two weeks and got the eye? Maybe that's why Curley's pants is full of ants" (28)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

8) "You God damn tramp...You done it, di'nt you? I s'pose you'r glad." Ever'body knowed you'd mess thinks up." (95)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

9) "I know who done it...That big son-of-a-b***h done it." (96)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

10) "An s'pose they lock him up an' strap him down and put him in a cage. That ain't no good, George." (97)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.