

*Of Mice and Men*  
Close Reading Assignment  
Due:

Format: typed, double-spaced,  
standard margins, 12 pt. font.  
Length: 3 pages maximum

### **1. Interpret and close read a specific passage.**

Write a one to one-and-a-half page interpretation and close reading of the passage that begins on page 7 ("The day was going fast now . . .") and ends on p. 8 (" . . . went on whistling again").

Begin with a couple sentences that explain the passage's main theme and significance. Be as specific as possible in your opening "argument," and make it clear which theme or characters the passage develops and how the passage develops them.

Devote the rest of your paragraph to a close reading of the passage as a way to provide evidence for your initial claims.

Your interpretation of this passage *must* be no longer than one page, which means you will have to choose your points and words carefully.

### **2. Choose your own passage to interpret and close read.**

Write a one to one-and-a-half page interpretation and close reading of a passage of your choice, using the same format as you did for the first question.

Passages must be between 1/2 page and 1 page long, and you can choose any passage that we have NOT discussed in detail during class discussion. Keep in mind that all passages are not created equal: some passages are richer in meaning than others. Choose one that allows for some creative interpretation and several close reading opportunities.

As you develop your interpretation of these passages, consider the following elements of close reading:

- **Context:** how does the passage fit into the rest of the story?
- **Word choice:** choose several (4-6) examples of particularly revealing words or phrases and describe how they help shape the overall meaning of the passage
- **Imagery and figurative language:** what images are particularly powerful and how do they contribute to the passage's meaning? Does the passage contain any metaphors or similes?
- **Repetition and/or contrast** of words, images, details.
- **Character development:** how does the character development in this passage add to the passage's overall meaning?
- **Thematic development:** how is the specific meaning of a particular theme developed in the passage?