Study Guide

Argyle Sox Productions presents

Of Mice and Men

based on the novel by John Steinbeck
## CAST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Actor</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Stanley Wood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lennie</td>
<td>John Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy</td>
<td>Matt Montour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slim</td>
<td>Beau Sweatman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curley’s Wife</td>
<td>Veronica Zorn-Chandler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crooks</td>
<td>Albert Flett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curley</td>
<td>Kyle Hudlin-Whelan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carlson</td>
<td>Darrion Anonychuk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whit</td>
<td>Tyler Menzies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Boss</td>
<td>David Taylor-Young</td>
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</tbody>
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## Credits

### Director
- Kyle Hudlin-Whelan

### Director of Photography
- Matthew Edwards

### 2ND Unit Directors
- Erik Berg
- Jonah Wilde

### Assistant Director
- Katrina Olson

### 2ND Assistant Director
- Leslie Brant

### Camera Operators
- Matthew Edwards
- Katrina Olson

### Editors
- Darrion Anonychuk
- Matthew Edwards
- Jocelyn Lindbloom
- Andrea Olien

### Treatment & Scriptwriters
- Sam Bousseau
- Chris Eastman
- Samantha Tkachyk
- Jonah Wilde
- Stanley Wood

### Boom Operators
- Darrion Anonychuk
- Theresa Archer
- Matthew Edwards
- Leslie Brant
- Tyler Aho

### Sound Mixers
- Theresa Archer
- Darrion Anonychuk

### Costumes
- Brianna Collis
- Tyler Menzies

### Music
- Matthew Edwards
- Calvin Lasko
- Josh Pisa

### Make-up
- Kelly O’Donnell

### Props
- Katrina Olson

### Art Department
- Katrina Olson

### Set Construction
- Tyler Aho
- Darrion Anonychuk
- Theresa Archer
- Angelica Archer-Kelsch
- Leslie Brant

### Craft Services
- Leslie Brant
- Chris Almario
- Jessica Bourgouin
Background Notes to the Production

Argyle’s Video Production Program received the rights to produce *Of Mice and Men* from the Estate of Eleanor Steinbeck. Argyle pitched them their proposal for their modern adaptation and then, at the estate’s request, created a detailed 22-page treatment before final approval. They then spent three months writing the script before producing their final draft.

Sixteen students made up the main cast and crew for *Of Mice and Men*. They earned credits in the Video Production courses they were enrolled in for the work they did on this project. However, approximately 40 students (about 1/3 of Argyle’s student population) worked in some capacity on the project, and earned credit in other courses.

Six professional filmmakers agreed to participate in an Aboriginal Mentorship Program for Argyle Alternative High School’s production of John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*. This was created through a generous grant from the Aboriginal Arts Office of the Canada Council for the Arts, and in association with the Winnipeg Aboriginal Film Festival.

![Image](image.png)

Summary

*(Of Mice and Men)* has won numerous awards, including America Indian Film Institute’s Best Actor & Best Supporting Actor, in San Francisco in 2010. It has also screened in film festivals in Germany, Minneapolis, and the National Autry Center in Los Angeles, to name but a few. The following notes are from the 2009 Freeze Frame International Film Festival program guide.

“In this adaptation of John Steinbeck’s classic novel, the main action of the story takes place today, in a rooming house in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, rather than on a farm in California. Lennie and George are not migrant farm workers; rather, they are displaced Aboriginal teenagers who have left the desolation of their remote Northern community to drift across southern Manitoba, looking for work. As their destiny unfolds tragically, they keep dreaming, not of their own farm, but of their own place up North in the bush, where they could live off the land by trapping, hunting and fishing. With this amazing ‘in-house’ student production, the team at Argyle Alternative High School delivers a powerful and creative adaptation, served by strong acting and well-mastered filmmaking. Members of the cast and crew will present the film and respond to questions at the screening.”
George and Lennie share the classic “American Dream” of owning one’s own place. Is this a dream that today’s young generation has? Do youth dream of having their own place in the country?

In light of the fact that George and Lennie are barely surviving, their dream appears to be unrealistic. Is their dream completely out of reach?

We are told to “dream big!” Is there a danger in dreaming too big?
Curley’s Wife is never referred to by her name. What are some possible reasons why Steinbeck deliberately did this?

George and Lennie see themselves as being different from others because of their friendship. Why are friendships so important? What qualities do you look for in a friend?

John Steinbeck is not condoning the mercy killing of people such as Lennie. The gun that goes off at the end of the story is to shock us. To wake us up so that we will pay attention to those in our society who are marginalized. Do we need to take better care of people like Lennie in our society? How did the ending impact you; how did it make you feel?
Use a Venn diagram as a graphic organizer for information on an essay or composition that compares and contrasts Argyle’s *Of Mice and Men* adaptation with John Steinbeck’s novel. A third circle could also be added to include another film version, such as Gary Sinise’s.
Questions of Interest

1. John Steinbeck deliberately wrote *Of Mice and Men* so that it could easily be converted into:

   a.) a full length novel
   b.) a play
   c.) a film.

2. The migrant farm workers written about by John Steinbeck in *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath* were referred to as “Okies”, denoting a resident of Oklahoma. Many of these workers portrayed by Steinbeck were of American Indian Ancestry.

   True or False

3. A recent study defined “homeless,” in its narrowest and most limiting terms, as “those using emergency shelters and those sleeping in the street.” Using this definition, and a broader one, which includes those rooming with family or friends, how many homeless people are there estimated to be in Canada?

   a.) 3,500 – 8,000
   b.) 30,000 – 80,000
   c.) 200,000 – 400,000

4. According to the latest census, Winnipeg has the highest rate of child poverty among mid-sized Canadian cities.

   True of False?

5. What percentage of First Nations Children in Manitoba, who are less than six years of age and living off the reserves, live in poverty?

   a.) 28%
   b.) 44%
   c.) 62%
Answers

1. **b.) A play.** Each of the six chapters is confined to one scene, and starts with a description of the scene. Characters enter, speak, and then exit, as in a stage-play. Also, there are only four locations - the riverbank, the bunkhouse, the barn and Crooks’ room, which makes it possible in terms of scenic construction and set changes. Further evidence is that *Of Mice and Men* opened at the Music Box Theatre on Broadway, New York, in November 1937; the same year the novel was published!

2. **True.** Rural Caucasians and American Indian farmers of Oklahoma started to migrate to the West Coast as early as the 1850s. The “Okie” migration of the 1930s brought over a million newly displaced residents to California’s Central Valley. Many of these workers were of American Indian Ancestry, the largest tribal group being Cherokees.

   **Note of Interest:** John Steinbeck describes George as being “dark of face” (pg. 2, *Of Mice and Men*, Penguin Books). Clearly he is not referring to the character as having a tan, but is referring to his race. Perhaps Steinbeck conceived George to be of American Indian ancestry!

3. **b.)** The 2014 *State of Homelessness in Canada* reported that on any given night, at least 30,000 Canadian people are in homeless or domestic violence shelters, sleeping outside or temporarily housed in places like prisons or hospitals. As many as 50,000 more could be considered the “hidden homeless,” temporarily staying with friends or family, because they have nowhere else to go.

   “In January 2013, on a single night, 610,042 people were homeless in the United States. Nearly two-thirds of people experiencing homelessness (65 percent or 394,698) were living in emergency shelters or transitional housing programs. More than one-third of all homeless people (35 percent or 215,344) were living in unsheltered locations such as under bridges, in cars, or in abandoned buildings.” (*The 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress*)

4. **True.** Approximately 21% of children in Winnipeg (i.e. 1 in 5) live in families who are below the poverty line. That’s more than Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa or Regina. Montreal has the highest of the three large cities with 25.9 % of children living in poverty (i.e. 1 in 4 )

5. **c.)** A report released in June of 2013 by The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, revealed that in Manitoba 62 % of First Nation children are living below the poverty line. That number compares to just 15 per cent of non-indigenous Manitoban children, and 50 per cent of First Nation children nationally.