

English 3 Reflections in American Literature Study Guide

Using this study guide will help you prepare for your section quizzes and unit exam and ensure that you learn the most important content. Keep it near you, and take notes as you progress through the unit. When you have finished the unit, be sure to store it in a notebook or in a specific folder on your computer so that you can use it to study for the semester exam.

The Path to Enlightenment/ American Author Study

1. Read the 1915 *New York Times* article entitled “**What Are American Ideals and Weaknesses?**”

A. What are the 4 most frequently mentioned ideals in this article?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

B. What are the 4 most frequently mentioned weaknesses in this article?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

2. Read the following statements excerpted from the *New York Times* article.

A. With which of the following statement(s) do you **most agree**? Draw a star next to them.

B. With which of the following statements(s) do you **least agree**? Draw an “x” next to them.

Ideals:

_____ “To leave things better than one found them. To alleviate human distress.
To protect the weak. To give each his chance” (New York Times 1915).

- _____ “Most of the men I know are either doing, or trying to do, something that will add to the sum total of the world’s beauty. In other words, they are artists of some sort, potential or actual” (New York Times 1915).
- _____ “In business—to succeed. Success means more than mere money; it means the power to advance methods and thereby benefit others” (New York Times 1915).
- _____ “The idea of scholarship, the enlargement of knowledge, is very powerful with the university professors, and perhaps equally powerful is the less definable professional ideal—the personal qualities that belong to a scholar and a gentleman. Students, too, share in the ideals and also in the astonishingly powerful ideal of education” (New York Times 1915).
- _____ “Honesty and integrity. Intellectual achievement. Beauty in art and musica as a solace in life. Domestic happiness” (New York Times 1915).

Weaknesses:

- _____ “Extravagance in living. Most Americans prefer to spend money rather than not to spend it, and therefore very many spend money foolishly and upon things which were better not purchased” (New York Times 1915).
- _____ “Selfishness—insincerity—jealousy. Tendency to destroy rather than to construct. Too little attention given individually to the serious side of life” (New York Times 1915).
- _____ “Excessive popular influence in politics. Lack of information about European affairs” (New York Times 1915).
- _____ “One weakness is that of indulgence. Our life is crammed these days with opportunities for relaxing: the picture show, the ball game, the theatre, the novel, and the canoe grip the lives of a great many and absorb their best energies” (New York Times 1915).
- _____ “Personal preferment and pleasure at any cost” (New York Times 1915).

3. Warm-Up

- Identify a cultural, political, or socio-economic group in America to whom you have access. Group examples may include African-Americans, Latinos, women, teens, elderly, blue collar workers, middle class Americans, educated people, high-school dropouts, teen parents, or cliques within a high school. Write a **brief summary** below of the group that you chose.

Group	Brief Summary
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- Identify 5 people who belong to this group, and interview them using the same two questions Cooper asked in 1915:

1. What in your opinion are the leading ideals of the people with whom you most frequently associate? In other words, "What in your opinion are the leading ideals that ~ share?" Remember that "ideals" refer to the principles or values that one actively pursues as goals.

2. What do you consider to be the chief points of weakness in our contemporary American life?

- Using your interview notes, summarize your findings using the same format Cooper used in his 1915 article:

Ideals	Number of Times Mentioned	Weaknesses	Number of Times Mentioned
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

- Draw a conclusion based on your findings and make a statement about how conscious (aware) people are of these ideals.

Conclusion

Now complete the **Warm Up Self-Check Matching Activity** and compare your answers. Were the concepts of freedom, conformity or belonging explicitly stated or implied?

Ideals and Weaknesses throughout American History

4. As you continue reading *Of Mice and Men*, take notes on examples of the following values. Think about how these ideals relate to the social themes of freedom, conformity and rebellion, and isolation and loneliness that Steinbeck is well-known for questioning.

Values	Example in <i>Of Mice and Men</i>
consumption and conservation	
urbanization and ruralization	
individualism versus community	

Introduction to Modernism (early 1900s to mid 1940s)

5. While you are reading *Of Mice and Men* Parts V and VI, take notes in the chart below about the ways in which Steinbeck exemplifies the style, content and format of the Modern literary period then write a brief summary below.

Innovation	Characteristic
Style	
Content	
Format	

6. Summary: How is Steinbeck a representative writer of the Modern literary period?

7. As you read Parts V and VI in *Of Mice and Men*, also keep in mind the following themes: freedom; rebellion and conformity; isolation and loneliness. Write down in the chart below at least one event that illustrates each theme.

Theme	Example from <i>Of Mice and Men</i> Parts 5-6
Freedom	
Rebellion and Conformity	
Isolation and Loneliness	

Ideals and Weaknesses

Of Mice and Men Parts V and VI

8. Explain three characteristics of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* that make it a Modernist literary work. You may want to review the ideals and weaknesses of the Great Depression era as well as the information on Modernism.

A) _____

B) _____

C) _____

9. Identifying Themes in *Of Mice and Men* Tutorial

Summarize the differences between topic, main idea, and theme.

A. Topic: _____

B. Main Idea: _____

C. Theme: _____

D. What are 3 general questions you can ask to identify themes in any text?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

E. Identify the following in *Of Mice and Men*.

Term	Example in <i>Of Mice and Men</i>
Topic	
Main Idea	

F. Now that you know the main idea in the novella *Of Mice and Men* is about the loneliness of a migrant worker's life, think about the following questions to identify the specific themes about loneliness and life Steinbeck is trying to convey. Jot down your ideas as they come to you, but don't worry about complete sentences or mechanics. Just brainstorm ideas for the following questions.

- What do various characters think, say and do regarding the main idea?
- What are the main characters' key traits and how do these traits relate to the main idea?
- How do details of the setting serve as a suitable background for the main idea?
- How do the conflicts relate to the main idea?

- What do the text's climax and resolution indicate about the main idea?
- What is the author's tone or attitude toward the main idea as revealed through diction and style?

G. Stating the Themes in *Of Mice and Men*

Once you have gathered details and examples from the novella about loneliness, identify the repetitious details and formulate them into three or more statements about loneliness and *life*, not loneliness and *migrant workers*. You will need these statements later on in this section for the major writing assignment of Unit 2.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

10. What is a literary tragedy? _____

11. Why can *Of Mice and Men* be considered a tragedy?

12. What characteristics of Modernism did Steinbeck purposefully use in *Of Mice and Men*?

13. Contemporary Voice on Classic Ideals Writing Project

Use this guideline and checklist to help you complete the planning process of your writing project.

STEP 1: Choosing your content

A. Know your audience.

1. To what writing contest or publication are you submitting your paper?

B. Brainstorm themes for your paper.

2. Have you decided to write about the theme(s) of loneliness or contemporary American ideals/weaknesses?

3. From what perspective are you writing—a teen's perspective or a more general view from all people?

STEP II: Selecting Your Literary Period, Format, Context

4. The literary period I have selected in which to write my paper is: _____
(examples: Puritan, Enlightenment, Colonialist, Modernist, contemporary...)

5. The format I have selected in which to write my paper is: _____
(examples: speech, journal, government/ political document, secret personal correspondence, experimental format with digressive timeline)

6. The context I have selected to use in my paper is: _____

(ex. What historical events occurred during the literary period you have chosen?)

STEP III: Tone, Diction, Style, Literary Devices

7. The tone of my paper is going to be _____
(ex. Very formal, formal, informal, very informal)

8. Some examples of diction I plan to use in my paper are _____

(ex. Borrow words and phrases from a text written during your selected literary period.)

9. The style I plan to use in my paper is _____
(ex. Long and lengthy or short and conversational)

10. The three literary devices I plan to use in my paper are: _____

(ex. Symbolism theme, allegory, foreshadowing, flashback, imagery, tragedy)

STEP IV: Writing and Peer Review

11. I have read my completed first draft and feel I need to improve by _____

12. I have completed my self-review using the Close Reading Notes format and now realize I need to work on: _____

13. The two main suggestions my friend/family member made in their peer review was that I need to improve _____

Check off items as they are completed	Contemporary Voice on Classic Ideals Writing Project Writing Checklist
1.	I have read and understand the grading rubric.
2.	I have identified a contest or publisher to whom I can submit my paper.
3.	I have decided on my theme(s).
4.	I have decided on my perspective.
5.	I have selected the literary period for my paper.
6.	I have selected the format of my paper.
7.	I have selected the context of my paper and have identified some historical events during that literary period.
8.	I have decided on the tone, style, and diction of my paper.
9.	I have decided on the diction of my paper.
10.	I have decided on the 3 literary devices I will use in my paper.
11.	I have written a complete draft of my fiction or nonfiction piece.
12.	I have completed my self-review using the Close Reading Notes format.
13.	My friend/ family member has completed a Peer Review with Close Reading Notes.
14.	I have followed the submission guidelines and submitted my paper to an outside publisher or contest.
15.	I have uploaded my planning sheets, rough drafts, and final draft to the assignments section of this course.
16.	I have uploaded my Close Reading Notes (self-review and peer review documents)
17.	I have uploaded either a confirmation letter/email from publishing site or contest or a letter from my parent stating I have correctly sent my submission.