

U of D Jesuit
English Department
Freshman Summer Reading Study Guides

Welcome, Freshmen students, from the U of D Jesuit English department!

All UDJ high school students are required each summer to read two novels. This year, Freshmen are reading *Of Mice and Men* and *All My Rage*. You have received the following questions to serve as a guide when reading Steinbeck's and Tahir's novels. These guides are not meant to serve as summer homework nor are you required to take notes or write full responses to the questions provided. The questions are meant to help the reader(s) consider elements of the novel such as the themes, characters or conflicts. It is okay if one isn't sure if they understand each and every question. The freshman English teachers simply ask that each reader think about possible responses to the following guiding questions.

Enjoy the summer,

Freshman English Teachers

Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck

Of Mice and Men, like most of Steinbeck's work, drew heavily from his own life experiences. Set in his hometown of Salinas Valley, California and reflecting the labor and class struggles of the 1930s, the story has been called a "parable of what it means to be human" because it reflects Steinbeck's empathy for the common people. He understood their strengths, their connection to - and craving for - land and, above all else, their loneliness, and the need to connect to one another in friendship.

1. The main characters Lenny and George are companions.
 - How do they relate to each other?
 - Why do they stay together?
 - What words best describe each character?
 - What happens to their relationship?
 - What does their relationship say about companionship and isolation?
2. Lenny has George talk about "the dream." What is that dream?
 - Why is this dream important?
3. Each of the supporting characters have well defined traits – consider how to describe each of the following characters:
 - Candy
 - Slim
 - Curly
 - Curly's wife
 - Carlson
 - Crooks
4. There are two summer reading novels. Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and Tahir's *All My Rage*. Consider how they're similar and different. Which characters from each book are similar in how they act and react to others and their surroundings?

***All My Rage* by Sabaa Tahir**

Part I

- There are several instances early in the text that depict Sal and Noor as lonely or invisible. What lines in the text support that discomfort? (See p. 20.)

Part II

- By Chapter 10, we learn of the multitude of stresses Sal is facing—from managing the motel to grieving his mother. What challenges does he face?
- Why do you think Noor has to hide her college interview process from Chachu?
- What decision does Sal make at the end of Part II in order to save the motel?

Part III

- What is the backstory to the name “Cloud’s Rest Inn Motel”?

Part IV

- On page 191, Noor is pushed to her limit by a fellow classmate. The chapter realizes the ongoing tension in a massive blow up that leaves Noor in trouble. What happens, and why do you think Noor snapped?
- In a parallel story, Sal’s actions lead to real danger for another young person as well. Describe the situation with Ashlee and why you think both protagonists were compelled to act the way they did.

Part V

- What does Noor mean when she says, at the end of chapter 42, “People see what they want to”?

Part VI

- The end of the text is exceedingly heavy in Sal’s changes and growth while in jail and Noor’s understanding of herself, as she goes off to college and returns. What were some changes you saw in them by the end? What were some changes you saw in them by the end? What do the two ultimately understand?

Overall Reflection

- “All my rage seethes inside me, and there’s no place for it to go” (Page 194). The feeling of rage is explored throughout the novel. What did rage mean to Noor? What did rage mean to Sal? In what ways did they express rage similarly? In what ways did they express rage differently?