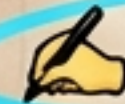


Section 3: The Turning Point

Of Mice and Men — Junior
Cycle Revision Guide



Key Events

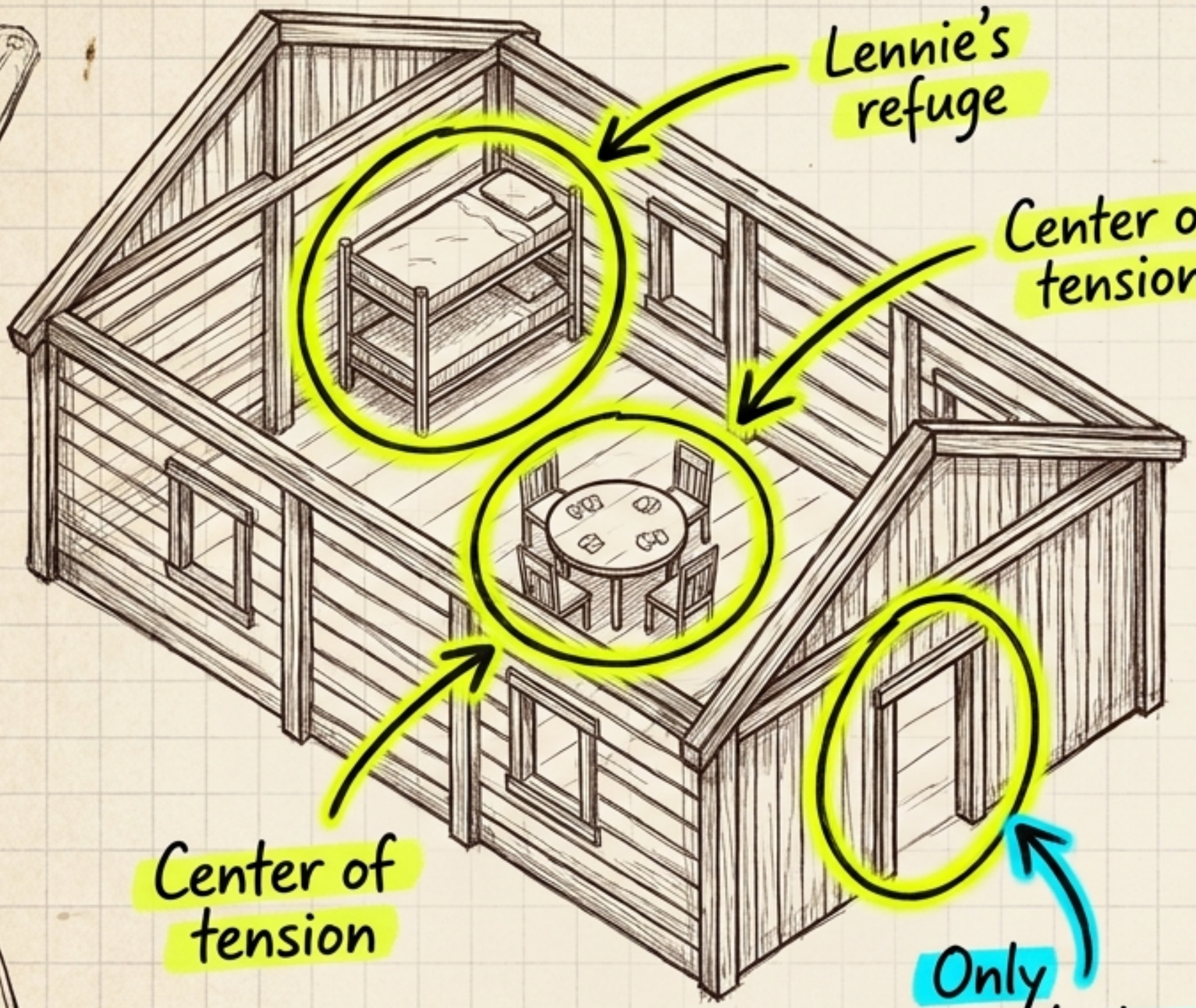


Literary Devices



Exam Tips





Lennie's refuge

Center of tension

Center of tension

Only escape/entry

The Bunkhouse at Night

Section 3 takes place entirely inside the bunkhouse on a Friday night. It's a crowded, tense space where the men's secrets, dreams, and hidden violences are forced to collide.

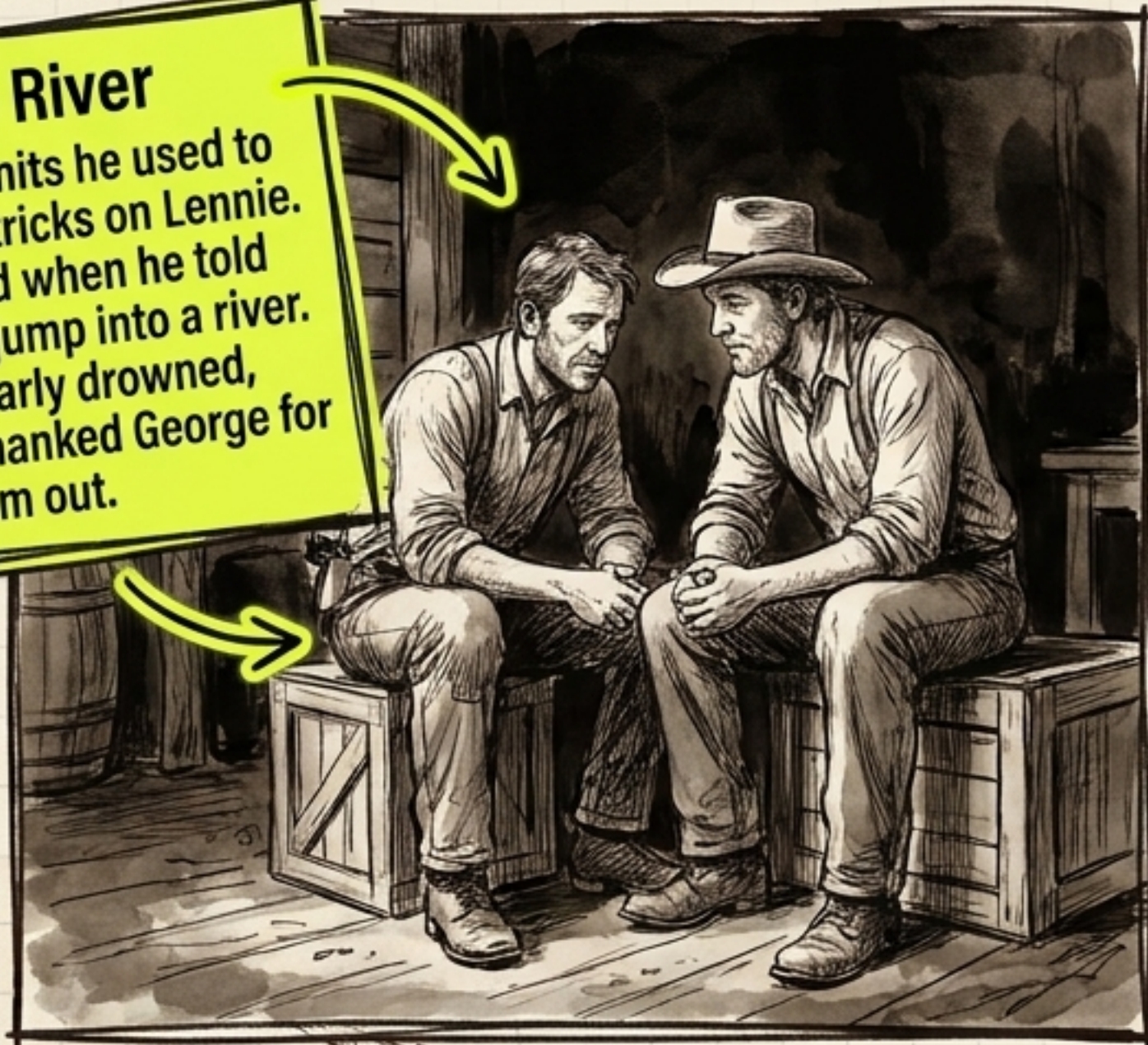
Why does the setting matter?
The bunkhouse functions like a cage. Because the men are trapped together with zero privacy, minor annoyances easily escalate into major conflicts.

Story Beat 1: The Truth About Weed

George trusts Slim. He opens up, explaining that Lennie isn't mean, just "dumb as hell," and confesses the real reasons they travel together.

The River

George admits he used to play cruel tricks on Lennie. He stopped when he told Lennie to jump into a river. Lennie nearly drowned, but still thanked George for pulling him out.



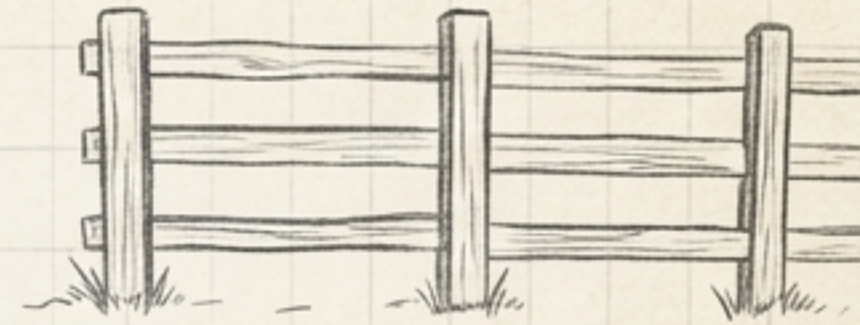
The Red Dress

Lennie touched a girl's red fabric out of curiosity, panicked when she pulled away, and held on. She accused him of rape, forcing them to flee for their lives.

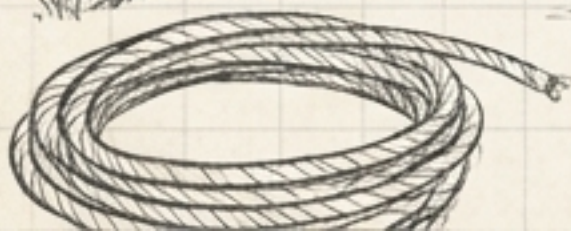
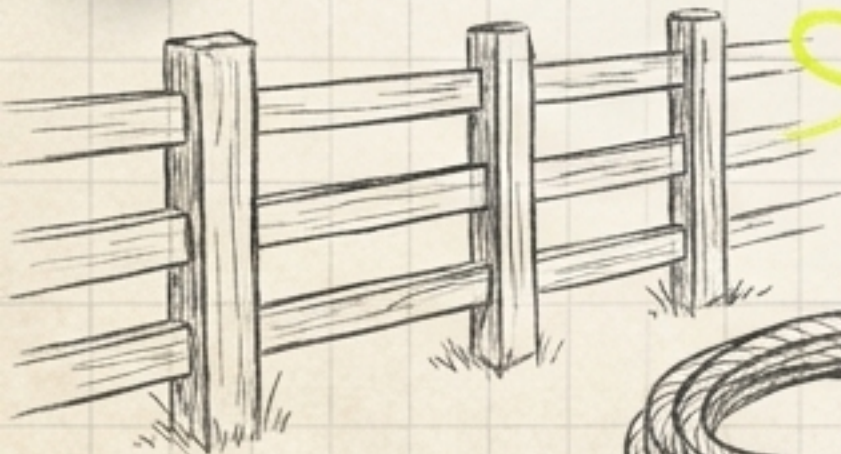


Exam Focus: The Theme of Friendship

Slim is amazed by George and Lennie's bond. Let's compare their world to the **typical 1930s** ranch worker to see why.



	George & Lennie	Other Men
The Vibe	Look out for each other and travel together.	Solitary and untrusting. As Slim says, no one "seems to give a damn about nobody."
Empathy	Forgive mistakes (like the river incident).	Harsh, unforgiving, and quick to judge.



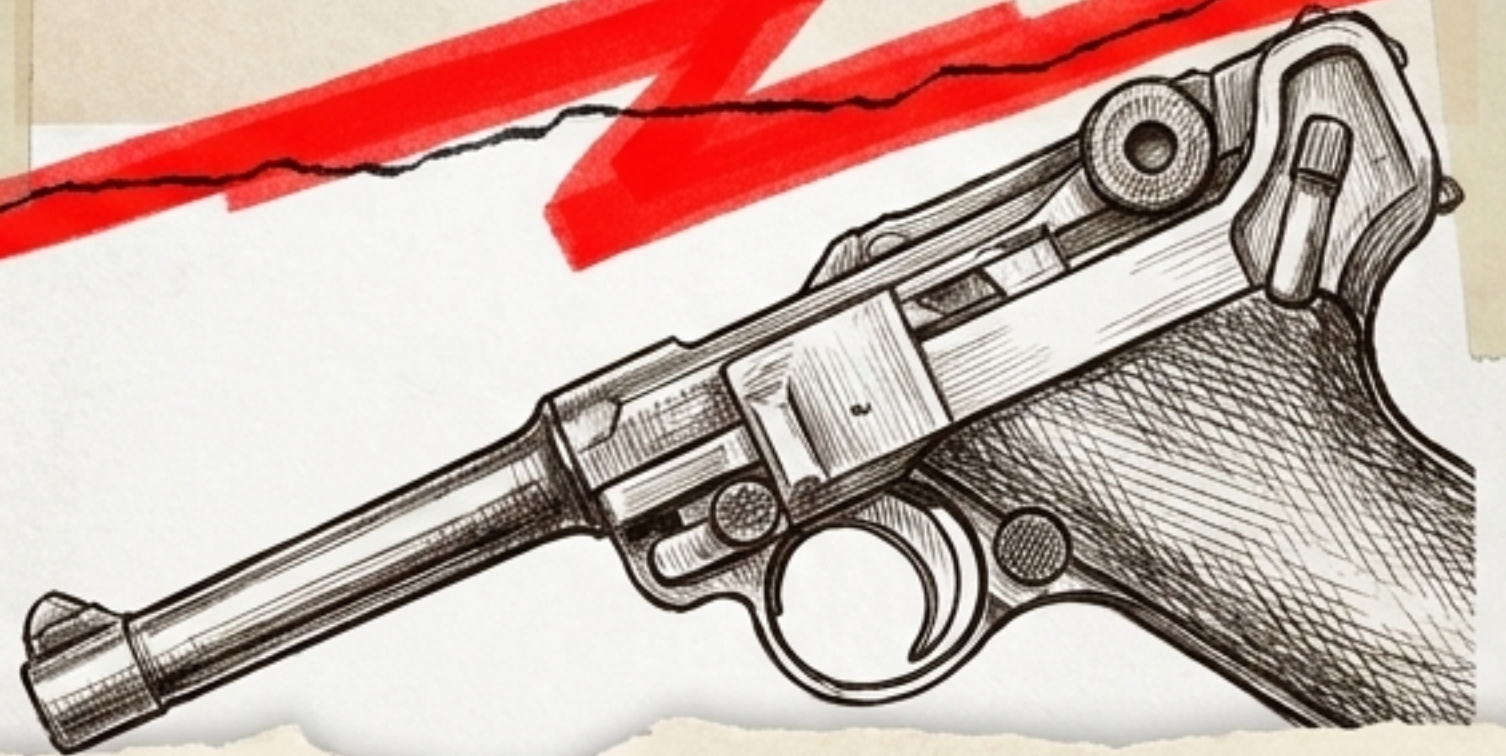
Exam Tip: Use Slim's reaction in your essays to prove that genuine friendship during the Great Depression was incredibly rare!



Story Beat 2: Carlson's Cruel Decision

Carlson complains bitterly about Candy's old, half-blind dog. Claiming the dog is "no good to himself," Carlson pressures the old man into a heartbreaking decision.

- ✓ Candy has raised the dog since it was a pup and desperately wants to protect it.
- ✓ Carlson relentlessly offers to do the killing to end the "stink."
- ✓ Defeated, Candy gives in, lies down on his bunk, and faces the wall.



"I ought to of my shot that dog myself... I shouldn't ought to of let no stranger shoot my dog."

Exam Focus: How Steinbeck Builds TENSION

Tension is that uncomfortable 'edge of your seat' feeling. Steinbeck is a master at making the reader wait and sweat alongside the characters.



1. The Waiting

Carlson takes the dog outside into the dark. The men inside are trapped in a **heavy silence**.

2. The Distraction

The men try to play cards, but they are **just listening**. The silence becomes deafening.

3. The Climax

BANG. The shot rings out. Candy turns his face to the wall in mourning.

Exam Tip: Note how the men show **zero sympathy for Candy**. This lack of emotion highlights the **cruel, survival-of-the-fittest reality** of ranch life.

Story Beat 3: The Dream Becomes Real

George and Lennie whisper about their dream farm. Candy overhears and desperately wants in. Suddenly, the math works.



Candy's Life Savings



Compensation for losing his arm



Enough to buy the farm!

The Result: For the first time, George realizes this isn't just a fantasy to keep Lennie happy. They agree to keep it a secret. The men are absolutely giddy with excitement—a rare moment of pure joy.

Story Beat 4: Curley's Attack

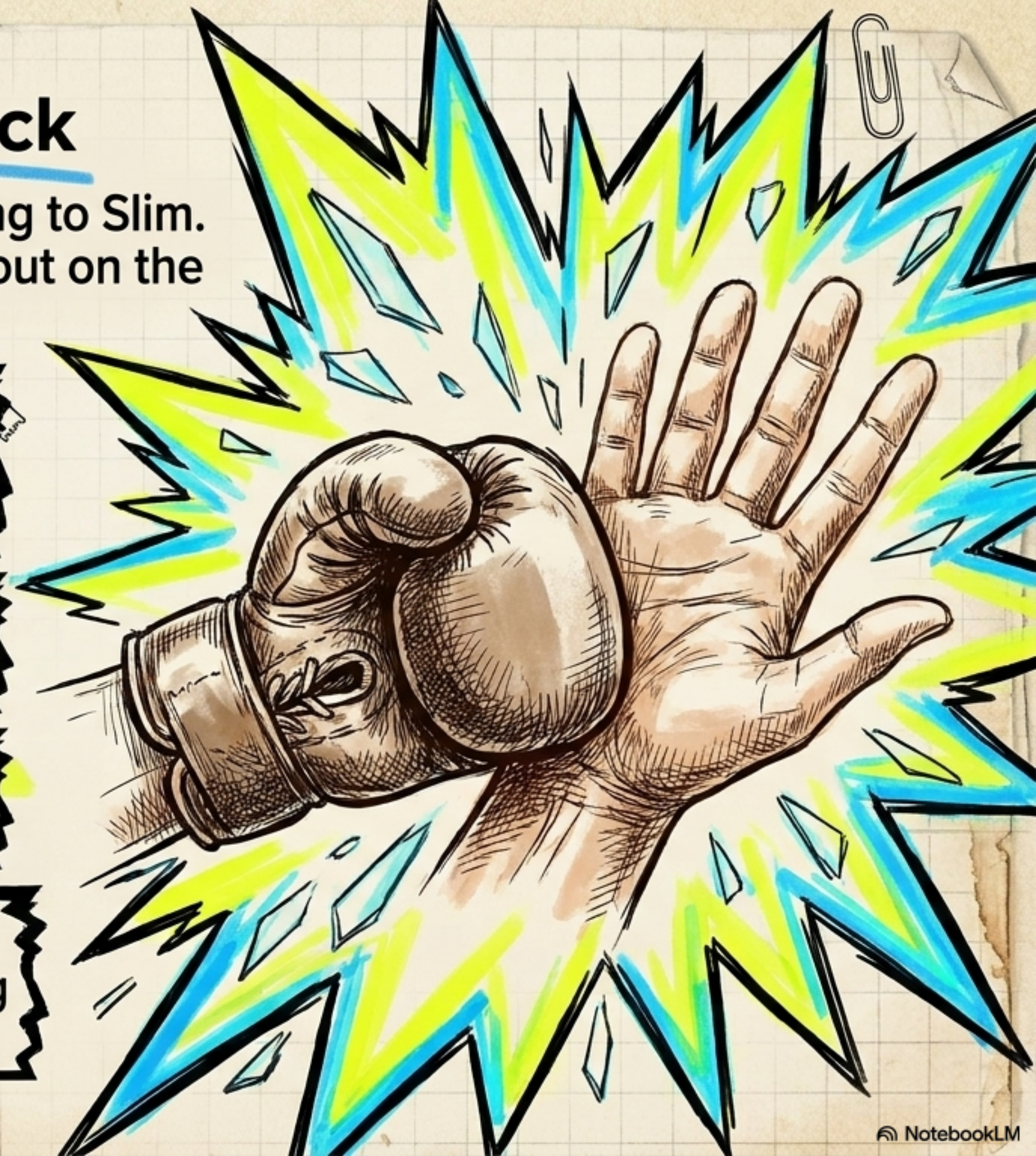
Curley storms in, humiliated after apologizing to Slim. Laughed at by the men, he takes his anger out on the easiest target: Lennie.

Lennie is in a trance, smiling about his dream rabbits. Curley wrongly assumes Lennie is mocking him.

Curley viciously punches Lennie in the face and stomach.

Lennie refuses to fight back until George finally screams, "Get 'im, Lennie!"

Lennie grabs Curley's hand, effortlessly smashing it to pieces. Slim steps in, warning Curley not to get George and Lennie fired.



Exam Focus: Character Foil (Curley vs. Lennie)

A foil is a character whose traits highly contrast with another to highlight their differences.

Curley (Aggression)



- Picks fights to feel powerful and mask his insecurities.
- Attacks a man simply for smiling.

Lennie (Innocence)



- Takes brutal punches without reacting, showing he has no natural instinct for cruelty.
- Panics after the fight because he thinks he's done a 'bad thing.'
- His only concern: 'Can I still tend the rabbits, George?'

Revision Cheat Sheet: Section 3 Themes



1. The American Dream

George, Lennie, and Candy's farm represents the desperate hope for independence and safety in a brutal world.



2. Cruelty & Harshness

The shooting of Candy's dog proves that in this society, if you are old, weak, or 'no good to yourself,' you are simply thrown away.



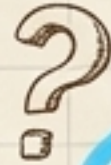
3. Friendship & Loyalty

George protecting Lennie (and Slim stepping up to protect them both from Curley's revenge) proves that loyalty can survive even in the darkest places.

Test Your Knowledge

Try answering these Junior Cycle style questions out loud:

Q1: How does Steinbeck build tension before the dog is shot?



Hint: Mention the playing cards, the intense silence, and the waiting.

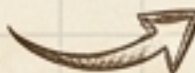


Q2: Why does Candy regret letting Carlson shoot his dog?

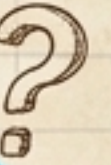


Hint: Focus on his quote about 'letting a stranger' do it. It's about personal responsibility and loyalty to a friend.

Q3: How does Lennie's reaction to Curley's punches prove his innocent nature?



Hint: He doesn't defend himself naturally; he relies entirely on George's permission to fight back.



Exam Gold:
The Creative Response

Junior Cycle exams often ask you to step into a character's shoes.

The Prompt:

Imagine you are Candy.
Write the diary entry you would write on **this Friday night.**



- Express your deep grief over Carlson taking your dog.
- Explain your regret about not shooting the dog yourself.
- Describe your sudden spark of hope about joining George and Lennie's farm.
- Mention your fear of becoming too old to work on the ranch.