



Fishtank Plus Feature Sample

Expanded Assessment Package

9th Grade English Language Arts
Unit 2 - Power, Alienation, & The American Dream
in *Of Mice and Men* and *The Central Park Five*

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TEACHER ASSESSMENT GUIDE

9TH GRADE ENGLISH UNIT 2

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SUMMATIVE SOCRATIC SEMINAR

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

- Which characters in the novel are discriminated against and why? To what extent do the prejudices that some characters have prevent them from socializing and interacting with others on the ranch?
- Chapter 3 reads, “Candy’s face had grown redder and redder, but before she was done speaking, he had control of himself. He was the master of the situation. “I might of knew,” he said gently. “Maybe you just better go along an’ roll your hoop. We ain’t got nothing to say to you at all. We know what we got, and we don’t care whether you know it or not.” How are Curley’s wife and other women treated in the novel? In what ways do they exercise power or lack power?
- What are the drawbacks of *Of Mice and Men*? In what ways might this text be problematic, related to gender, power, disability, and equity?

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

- **Speaking:** Speak clearly and uses discipline appropriate language
- **Argument:** Share an original and sophisticated argument based on knowledge from the texts in the unit
- **Evidence:** Present evidence that is specific, detailed, relevant, and cited from the text
- **Preparation:** Come to seminar adequately prepared with annotated texts and outlined potential responses and questions
- **Discourse:** Respond to the ideas of your classmates rather than sharing what you have prepared

SEMINAR PREPARATION

To prepare for this summative Socratic Seminar:

- Read and annotate all the texts from the unit and bring them with you to class.
- Craft responses including multiple pieces of evidence, either bulleted or in complete sentences, to each of the seminar questions above.

SOCRATIC SEMINAR GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

Question #1: Which characters in the novel are discriminated against and why? To what extent do the prejudices that some characters have prevent them from socializing and interacting with others on the ranch?

<i>Ideas</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Commentary</i>

Question #2: Chapter 3 reads, “Candy’s face had grown redder and redder, but before she was done speaking, he had control of himself. He was the master of the situation. “I might of knew,” he said gently. “Maybe you just better go along an’ roll your hoop. We ain’t got nothing to say to you at all. We know what we got, and we don’t care whether you know it or not.” How are Curley’s wife and other women treated in the novel? In what ways do they exercise power or lack power?

<i>Ideas</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Commentary</i>

Question #3: What are the drawbacks of *Of Mice and Men*? In what ways might this text be problematic, related to gender, power, disability, and equity?

<i>Ideas</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Commentary</i>

SCORING RUBRIC

	0 points	1 points	2 points	3 points	4 points
Row 1: Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student is so unclear that comments are incomprehensible • Language is inappropriate and/or offensive • Does not make eye contact with the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student is unclear, rambles, and speaks consistently low • Language is inappropriate and/or too colloquial • Does not make eye contact with the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student is sometimes unclear and speaks low at times • Uses discipline appropriate language and tone inconsistently • Makes eye contact with the group only sometimes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student speaks clearly and loudly. • Uses discipline appropriate language effectively • Occasionally uses tone and emotion • Makes eye contact with the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student speaks clearly and loudly • Uses sophisticated and discipline appropriate language effectively • Effectively uses tone and emotion • Makes effective eye contact with the group

	0 points	1 points	2 points	3 points	4 points
Row 2: Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No argument presented or, all points made may not be factual in nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguments have little basis in relevant texts • Argument may be repetitive and too similar to an argument already stated in seminar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguments have some basis in relevant texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argument is convincing and draws on accurate knowledge of the text(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argument is sophisticated, original, convincing, and draws on deep and accurate knowledge of the text(s).

	0 points	1 points	2 points	3 points	4 points
Row 3: Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence from inside and outside of the text is missing Evidence is not relevant and/or appropriate; does not support argument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence from outside the text is unspecific, inaccurate and/ or irrelevant Textual evidence used does not support the argument being made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence from outside the text is vague and/or unspecific Textual evidence used is insufficiently or incorrectly explained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence from the text is specific, relevant, and accurate Evidence from outside the text is specific, relevant, and accurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence from outside the text is detailed, specific and relevant Evidence makes direct references to specific passages from the text

	0 points	1 points	2 points	3 points	4 points
Row 4: Prep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Texts are not annotated Prepared seminar responses are incomplete or, not completed at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the text(s) is not annotated Prepared seminar responses are vague and/or unspecific and do not reference specific sections of the texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some sections of text(s) are not annotated Prepared seminar responses are vague and/or unspecific and reference only one section of the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All important sections of the text are annotated Prepared seminar responses are detailed and reference multiple sections of the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All important sections of the text are annotated Prepared seminar responses are detailed & specific

	0 points	1 points	2 points	3 points	4 points
Row 5: Discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student takes no responsibility for the seminar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student does not effectively move convo forward Comments do not connect to the ideas previously discussed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student attempts to move convo forward but may do so unevenly. Attempts to link ideas and reflect on what others have said although it may be done unsuccessfully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student moves convo forward by summarizing student ideas, questioning student ideas or clarifying ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student effectively moves convo forward by summarizing, linking, clarifying, or questioning ideas. May bring up a relevant idea or question that radically alters the direction of the discussion

SAMPLE RESPONSE AND SCORING COMMENTARY

- Lennie is distinguished from his counterpart George as a result of his mental disabilities. Readers recognize Lennie's inability to understand and control his own strengths around mice and even women. His childlike dialogue loaded with stuttering and verbatim repeated lines and phrases highlights his innocence and lack of intellectual development. Because of his disabilities, he is often abused and mistreated by others.*
 - Curley's wife is the only woman in the novel. She is never given a name; referring to her as Curley's wife suggests that Curley is in possession of her. Her ownership over her own body and character is removed, leaving her figuratively and literally powerless. She is often overpowered by all men in the novel except Crooks.*
 - Candy is an aging ranch handyman who lost his hand in an accident and worries about his future on the ranch. Crook fears that his age is making him useless and wants in on George's description of the farm he and Lennie will have. He even offers his life's savings if he can join George and Lennie in owning the land. Candy is sometimes left voiceless because of his old age. This is most shown when Carlson decides to kill his dog.*
 - Crooks is the black stable-hand who gets his name from his crooked back. Proud, bitter, and funny, he is isolated from the other men because of the color of his skin.*
 - Even though characters such as Lennie, Curley's wife, and Candy have prejudices, it doesn't prevent them from interacting with characters as much as it does Crooks who is often left to himself in the stable.*
- Steinbeck portrays women as objectified, sexualized, or caretakers. Curley's wife is the only woman character in the novel and she doesn't even have a first name. Without a name, Curley's wife has no identity. Curley defines who his wife is, how she moves, and when she moves, thereby restricting her freedom and independence. The only other women mentioned in the novel are Aunt Clara and prostitutes. Steinbeck positively describes Aunt Clara: "She wore thick bull's-eye glasses and she wore a huge gingham apron with pockets, and she was starched and clean" (96). While Aunt Clara is portrayed as respectable, she is stereotypically portrayed as a woman who prioritizes family duties and takes care of men/children..*

- ○ *Answers may vary. Students may point out any of the following:*
 - *Gender is a drawback of Of Mice and Men because of the depiction of women throughout the novel. The only woman character is killed by another man. She is sexualized through the description of her clothing and makeup: red lips, red fingernails, red shoes.*
 - *Disability: The fate of people with disabilities are bleak. Lennie is unable to recognize his own strength and is killed at the end of the novel. When Carlson decides to kill Candy's dog, he denies Candy the ability to make this decision for himself and takes away one of the few forms of companionship he has left as an aging man.*
 - *Race: Crooks is the only African American man depicted in the novel and he is left in the stable by himself. Even Curley's wife, who has less power than the other men on the ranch, dehumanizes Crooks.*
- *Students may also point out that while those are problematic concerns in the book, Steinbeck includes and develops them to make social commentary on life in America during depression-era America.*

FREE RESPONSE QUESTION

FREE RESPONSE QUESTION PROMPT

In literature, the other is an individual who is perceived by the group as not belonging, as being different in some fundamental way. As a result of a character's otherness, he or she is almost always seen and treated as a lesser or inferior being. Choose a character from *Of Mice and Men* that is othered. In a well developed essay analyze how the character's otherness shapes the character and his/her relationships.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

- **Thesis:** Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation
- **Evidence:** Includes multiple and varied evidence to support your line of reasoning
- **Commentary:** Explains how your evidence supports your line of reasoning
- **Sophistication:** Demonstrates sophistication of thought or develops a complex literary argument

SCORING RUBRIC

	0 points	1 points
Row 1: Thesis	<p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no defensible thesis. • The intended thesis only restates the prompt. • The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. • There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	<p>Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the passage</p>

	0 points	1 points	2 points	3 points	4 points
Row 2: Evidence	<p>Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided info, or offers info irrelevant to the prompt</p>	<p>Provides evidence that is mostly general</p>	<p>Provides some specific, relevant evidence</p>	<p>Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning</p>	<p>Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning</p>

	0 points	1 points	2 points	3 points	4 points
Row 3: Commentary	<p>No commentary present</p>	<p>Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student's argument.</p>	<p>Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student's argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty</p>	<p>Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>	<p>Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>

	0 points	1 points
Row 4: Sophistication	<p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contextualizes interpretation by using sweeping generalizations Only hints or suggests other possible interpretations Oversimplifies complexities of topic or selected work Uses complex syntax that does not enhance overall argument 	Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument

SAMPLE RESPONSE AND SCORING COMMENTARY

Thesis:

- **The following example earns a thesis point because it provides a defensible interpretation of the selected work:** *In Of Mice and Men, Curley's wife's otherness is reflected in her rare vulnerable moments and dehumanizing treatment of men who live on the ranch. Through the representation of her otherness, Steinbeck reveals that the American Dream is only attainable for those with power and within the margins of society.*
- **The following example does not earn a thesis point because it restates the prompt:** *In Of Mice and Men, Curley's wife's otherness shapes her character and her relationships.*
- **The following example does not earn a thesis point because it does not respond to the prompt and makes a generalized comment about the selected work:** *Curley's wife represents all women in the early 20th century.*

Evidence and Commentary:

- **The following paragraph includes evidence and commentary that each earn 4 points because the writer offers and explains adequate evidence and focuses on the importance of specific details from Of Mice and Men to build an interpretation:** *As the only woman on the ranch, Curley's wife is often isolated and as a result, is desperate for attention and friendship. When Curley's wife approaches Lennie in the barn she desperately questions him: Why can't I talk to you? I never get to talk to nobody. I get awful lonely" (86). Curley's wife talks to Lennie because she wants companionship and wants someone to listen to her regrets. The phrase "awful lonely" suggests that her sense of isolation is heightened as the only woman on the ranch. Candy's use of questioning in an attempt to find companionship is also shown when she enters Crooks shed: 'Think I don't like to talk to somebody ever' once in a while? Think I like to stick in that house alla time?' The phrase "ever' once in a while" highlights how frequently she is alone and her desperation for attention and friendship. Like other characters who are on the fringes of society, she is prevented from having her own dreams and instead ends up as the possession of her husband. She is an outsider and asserts the little power she has over the weaker men in an attempt to gain attention from them and cure her loneliness. Ultimately, through both Curley's wife and Crooks, Steinbeck conveys that the American dream is unattainable for those with less power.*

Sophistication:

- **The argument presented in the following sample thesis sets up the essay to receive the sophistication point:** *In Of Mice and Men, Curley's wife's otherness is reflected in her rare vulnerable moments and dehumanizing treatment of men who live on the ranch. Through the representation of her otherness, Steinbeck reveals that the American Dream is only attainable for those with power and within the margins of society.*

- **This thesis statement acknowledges the nuances of Curley's wife's otherness - it makes her vulnerable and it also makes her treat others inhumanely. If the student continues to explore this complexity throughout the essay, tying commentary and lines of reasoning to it, the student will earn the point of sophistication.**

Adapted from College Board's "Scoring Rubric for Question 3: Literary Argument (6 points)"

<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-english-literature-and-composition-one-page-scoring-rubrics-2019-2020.pdf?course=ap-english-literature-and-composition>

PERFORMANCE TASK

PERFORMANCE TASK

Your English class has just finished Unit 2. In this unit, you and your classmates explored the concepts of otherness, power dynamics, and the American Dream while reading and watching *Of Mice and Men*, excerpts of *The Central Park Five*, and *When They See Us*. To conclude this unit, you will engage in a performance task which will allow you to explore themes highlighted in all three texts and demonstrate your understanding of power. In a written essay or podcast, you will craft an argument that synthesizes what all three texts reveal about the relationship between power dynamics, otherness, and the American Dream.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

- Is effectively organized and has a coherent structure
- Addresses the following questions:
 - In what ways do *Of Mice and Men*, *The Central Park Five*, and *When They See Us* speak to each other?
 - What is the relationship between power dynamics, otherness, and the American Dream?
- Demonstrates a complex understanding of power dynamics, otherness, and the American Dream
- Synthesizes ideas from *Of Mice and Men*, *The Central Park Five*, and *When They See Us*
- Contains clear and effective language and style

SCORING RUBRIC

	0 points	1 points	2 points	3 points	4 points
Row 1: Task & Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The task does not show understanding unit texts and themes The content of the task is not relevant to prompt The task shows no understanding of the conventions of a scripted panel discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The task shows a superficial understanding of unit texts and themes The content is generally irrelevant to the prompt The task shows a superficial understanding of the conventions of a scripted panel discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The task shows a mostly adequate understanding of unit texts and themes The content is generally relevant to the prompt The task shows an adequate understanding of the conventions of a scripted panel discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The task shows a good understanding of unit texts and themes The content is mostly relevant to the prompt The task shows a good understanding of the conventions of a scripted panel discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The task shows an excellent understanding of unit texts and themes The content is consistently appropriate to the task chosen The task shows an excellent understanding of the conventions of the text type chosen

	0 points	1 points	2 points	3 points	4 points
Row 2: Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The task shows no organization The task has no structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The task shows little organization The task has little structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The task shows some organization The task has some structure, although it is not sustained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The task is mostly organized The structure is generally coherent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The task is effectively organized The structure is coherent and effective

	0 points	1 points	2 points	3 points	4 points
Row 3: Language & Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The students' use of elements such as vocabulary, tone, sentence structure and idiom are inappropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The task contains little clarity, with many basic errors There is little sense of register and style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The task contains some clarity, though grammar, spelling and sentence structure are often inaccurate There is some sense of register, style and appropriate vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of language and the style are generally clear and effective, though there are some inaccuracies in grammar, spelling and sentence construction The task is generally appropriate in register, style and vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of language and the style are clear and effective, with a good degree of accuracy; sentence construction and vocabulary are varied and complex The task is effective in register, style, and vocabulary

	0 points	1 points	2 points	3 points	4 points
Row 4: Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The presentation is entirely inappropriate for the audience, purpose or context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All or all but one of the presenters make little or no use of techniques to engage the audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At times, some presenters (i.e. more than one) effectively engage the audience. (Some members may demonstrate inconsistent delivery or performance techniques) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most presenters (i.e. 75% or more) effectively engage the audience through strategic and intentional use of performance techniques most of the time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All presenters effectively engage the audience through strategic and intentional use of performance techniques most of the time

SAMPLE RESPONSE AND SCORING COMMENTARY

I. Introduction

- A. **Context:** While Steinbeck's novel *Of Mice and Men* and Sarah Burn's book *The Central Park Five* tell the stories of people who are the fringes of society and the hardships they face as a result of their powerlessness, Ava Duvernay's *When They See Us* highlights the importance of not only telling stories but also centering the perspectives of those who are othered.
- B. **Thesis:** Collectively *Of Mice and Men*, *The Central Park Five*, and *When They See Us* warn us about the dangers of having too much power and suggests that individuals who have little to no power because of their race, gender, or socioeconomic status are those who are the farthest away from the American Dream. Duvernay, in particular, qualifies this argument by suggesting that othered individuals can gain back power by telling their stories.

II. Body

- A. **Claim #1:** In both *The Central Park Five* and *Of Mice and Men*, authors Sarah Burns and John Steinbeck illustrate what life is like for people on the fringes of society including the ways in which they try to exert power over others and the ways in which others exert power over them.
- B. **Claim #2:** Additionally, through examples of people who both have and have not obtained the American Dream, all three texts suggest that power, otherness and the American Dream are inextricably linked. One cannot achieve the American Dream without having or knowing how to manipulate power.
- C. **Claim #3:** In *When They See Us*, director Ava Duvernay, prioritizes the five men – Antron McCray, Raymond Santana, Kevin Richardson, Korey Wise and Yusef Salaam, their voices, their adolescent stories and their families rather than than prioritizing the prosecutor, detectives, and influential celebrities who were responsible for stripping them of their youth, power, and freedom in America.