Of Mice and Men
Historical Research

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck, first published in 1937, tells the story of two migrant workers near the Salinas Valley. John Steinbeck’s first novella is considered historical fiction at its finest. Steinbeck developed not only a story of human love, mistreatment, loyalty, and sacrifice, but also a story which subtly explores the challenges and dilemmas facing several groups of Americans during the Great Depression.

As a reader of historical fiction, it is your job to determine what is being accurately reflected and what may be a stretch, or an all out misrepresentation. In order to determine what is accurate and what is a misrepresentation, the reader must have some background knowledge.

To facilitate your deeper understanding of the novel you will be conducting a small amount of research on The Great Depression. You will then be compiling your research for use in a timed writing situation. Your research requirements are as follows:

- 2-3 credible sources
- Copy of all sources with annotations (that connect to topic)
- MLA Citations Page

Your research question:

Are the opinions of Americans in the 1930s accurately reflected in Of Mice and Men?

Within this topic, you may choose to focus on any one of the following:

- The treatment and lives of the mentally handicapped
- The treatment and lives of African-Americans
- The treatment and lives of women
- The treatment and lives of migrant workers
- The importance and value of education

As you are conducting your research, please remember that this essay focuses on the novel Of Mice and Men. Your research is simply background knowledge to help you uncover the hidden subtleties of the text. So, as you are working on compiling and synthesizing your research, it would be wise to also search for the textual evidence needed to support your new-found conclusions.

Your completed essay is due November 19th, 2010.

Essay Topic: Write an essay in which you analyze the accuracy of the opinions of 1930's Americans as reflected in the novel, Of Mice and Men. You may focus your essay on one topic (see above list).