Text annotation and essay – Of Mice and Men

Assessment focuses: AF2, AF3, AF4, AF5, AF6

Context

As part of a longer sequence of work on the novel, pupils re-read the fight scene between Curley and Lennie from John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* as a whole class and then individually. They annotated the text in detail, discussing key points as a whole class and then wrote up their ideas as a commentary on the extract. In groups they then discussed the ending of the novel, identifying features and aspects they thought effective before writing an essay individually.

Whole pages from *Of Mice and Men* that feature the annotated text have not been included here due to copyright restrictions.
Excerpts from the essay written by a pupil that displays his understanding on The Fight Scene in 'Of Mice And Men'.

The whole fight scene is really caused when Slim and Carlson start to humiliate Curley at the start of the passage. This starts first when Slim tells Curley that "if you can't look after your own God damn wife, what do you expect me to do about it?" This really gets on Curley's wick, as it makes a challenge to his ability to control his own wife, and as a result is getting shown up in front of the other men, inevitably he is now angry, as "Curley whirled on Carlson" which clearly shows that he is looking for someone to take his anger out on, and that he is ready to snap.

This is further proven as Slim and Carlson refuse to be bullied by Curley, even hurling threats at him. Slim is quite clearly annoyed as he tells Curley, "you lay off me," while Carlson goes so far as to say "I'll kick your God damn head off." Quite clearly the men dislike Curley, and it has come to the point where they stand up to him, even Candy adds insult to injury, as he refers to Curleys "glove fluid" case as "a very tender point for Curley, further dragging out the anger in Curley.

In contrast, Lennie is quite clearly out of his depth when it comes to the fight, and he "looked hopelessly
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Excerpts from analysis of 'Of Mice and Men' by a pupil in the form of an essay. The pupil has written about the last incidence of the story wherein George shot Lennie in the back of his head. Although Lennie does not know it, George gave him more of a serene way out.
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and someone had been the one that needed looking after but now George's position has been reversed and he is the one that needs looking after by Slim. Slim is trying to comfort George when he "sits down very close" to George and says "never mind... A guy got to do it sometimes." Slim's sympathetic character is very different to that of Curley's who seems rather annoyed that George had shot Connie rather than letting Curley do it. He shows this when he says "got him by God and then looks at George. Slim's character is also contrasting to Carlson's who is very unsympathetic and seems more interested in the gory details rather than George's feelings. These points show this passage is moving to the reader who sympathise with George and Connie and also how and why it is so effective because it ties back to the story.