Extract Section:

Lennie asks George to tell about the Dream Farm.

‘Lennie spoke … one of them to Lennie.’

1. Steinbeck indicates that this conversation has happened many times before. Find three quotations from the extracts that show this. What is the significance of this? Find a quote that shows Lennie’s childlike persona – repeating the same thing over gives him a sense of comfort, security? Lack of stability? , find a quote that shows what function the ‘Dream’, gives George hope that future is going to be better – they want a home, roots etc.

2. George’s mood changes through the extract. Show how Steinbeck presents this, and suggest why it is so. (Clue: Steinbeck’s use of adverbs may help you see this).

He shows what type of emotions? Look for adverbs (ends in –ly). Angry? Goading him? Pretending/toying? Frustration/disappointment? Encouraging? Protective? Irritated? Soothing?

3. What do Lennie’s contributions and interruptions tell us about his character? Child-like, impulsive, immature/innocent, clumsy, lethargic/dramatic, curious, awestruck, enthusiastic, excitable? Eager?

4. George often uses the specific colloquial (slang) language of the itinerant worker. Copy down these examples from the extract and explain in your own words what they mean:

‘work up a stake’ – earn a living/savings, ‘blow their stake’- waste it on alcohol/women

‘get the jack’ - ‘poundin’ their tail’ -

5. How does the extract tie in with what you know about ‘The American Dream’? Do you think George and Lennie’s plans are realistic or romantic? How does Steinbeck give us a clue about this?

American Dream was all about what (note DREAM – far fetched, not going to come true, idealistic, not real). What was the American Dream (research this yourself).

Title – Robert Burns ‘To a Mouse’ Steinbeck’s own view about the American View. Whether you are a man or a mouse – they do not come true ‘gang aft aglay’ do not come true.

Steinbeck’s view is pessimistic/negative – but it is something that ALL the characters hold on to. George and Lennie NEED their Dream – why? Think about their life and the life of those itinerant workers?

Extension

Some critics have accused Steinbeck of portraying the relationship between George and Lennie in an overly sentimental way. Find some examples in the extract that these critics might have been thinking of, and try to explain their viewpoint. What do you think about this issue?