

# Why do we study 'Of Mice and Men' in the unit 'Outsiders'?

The novel is so interesting for us because it offers us an insight into what life must've been like for many 'Outsiders' in 1930s America.

If you were black, differently abled, old or a woman you would face more challenges and difficulties than others.

Steinbeck wanted to highlight the inequalities that these 'Outsiders' faced and to address how unfair things were.

He wants us to be shocked at how poorly people were treated because of things beyond their control.

It's an important part of history for us to learn from and not ignore.

## Why does racism feature so much in the novel?

In America, in the 1930s, black and white people were segregated (separated) and racism was a common prejudice. Slavery had only been abolished less than 60 years previously - in 1875.

The novel is set in a ranch in California and many of the white characters treat the one black character poorly because of their racist attitudes. This treatment attempts to reflect society at the time.

Some of the characters use racial slurs and derogatory (negative) language to impose their superiority over others.

No student will be asked to read the offensive racist dialogue aloud when reading the novel. These racial slurs are worse than swear words and cause huge offense. These racist words should not be repeated inside or outside of school.

It is important that we learn from this terrible time in history and understand that Steinbeck himself was not racist in using racist language but was in fact trying to create a true picture of the many different prejudices that people suffered and the language and abuse that they endured.