

Example Thesis Claims for *Of Mice and Men*

When writing a thesis claim, you must start first with a thesis handle. Your thesis handle will consist of an arguable statement regarding your critical lens. Connected to your thesis handle will be your 3 prongs; each prong will consist of specific evidence that backs up your handle. Your handle and prongs will be combined into one sentence to create your thesis claim. Write this claim in parallel structure.

Your thesis claim will be the last sentence in the introduction paragraph of your critical essay. No exceptions. Your thesis claim serves as a road map for you and your reader.

Your thesis claim must be arguable. For instance, you cannot write about plot in your thesis claim and critical essay. This is NOT a book report. You cannot write your thesis claim about how your theme exists in the novel; that fact has already been established! You must analyze it in some way, whether it is how it played a role in the novel, or how it affected other characters.

Unacceptable or Insufficient Thesis Claims

The theme loneliness and alienation is present in *Of Mice and Men*.

(The above doesn't work; I've already told you the theme exists. You can't just repeat back its existence. You could, however, argue which characters BEST displayed this theme.)

Crooks is prejudged in *Of Mice and Men*.

(The above is simple plot recap. Remember; you are not writing a book report. NOT SUMMARY. Do not simply repeat back plot events or facts for 2-5 pages. You must **analyze!**)

Of Mice and Men excellently displays life during The Great Depression.

(The above has potential but would need to be fleshed out and related to your lens somehow; it would also need arguable parameters, a task that would likely be difficult.)

Acceptable and Feasible Thesis Claims

Self-alienation is used as a coping mechanism in *Of Mice and Men* and is seen through the characters of George, Crooks, and Candy.

Friendship and loyalty is shown through reciprocal relationships in *Of Mice and Men*, particularly through George, Lennie, and Candy.

Curley's wife is the most alienated character in the novel *Of Mice and Men* as displayed through her namelessness, physical separation, and perception of her by the men on the ranch.

Prejudging is a predominant theme of *Of Mice and Men* and can be best seen through Curley's wife, Lennie, and Crooks.

Class differences create the most tension in *Of Mice and Men*; this stark contrast can be best seen through Crooks, George, Slim, and The Boss.

The characters in *Of Mice and Men* have unrealistic dreams given their circumstances, specifically with George, Candy, and Curley's wife.

The characters make dreams that cannot be achieved in *Of Mice and Men* and is seen through George, Candy, and Curley's wife.

George needed Lennie just as much as Lennie needed George in *Of Mice and Men* which is clear through his actions, comments, and plans for the future.

Loneliness is shown in various ways in *Of Mice and Men*, specifically loneliness for land, loneliness for attention, and loneliness for companionship.

Handicap characters are hastily judged by others in *Of Mice and Men*; this is evident through Crooks, Candy, and Lennie.

Migrant workers choose to be lonely in *Of Mice and Men*, which is clearly shown through games of solitaire, alienation of others, and migrant life in general.

In *Of Mice and Men*, John Steinbeck expresses through Crooks and Curley's wife the deep sense of loneliness composed from broken dreams and loss of realism.

The character Crooks becomes a broken man in *Of Mice and Men* through extreme racism shown by The Boss, Curley, and Curley's wife.