John Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California in 1902.

His most famous books were written in the 1930s and 1940s, and are set in California.

They deal with the lives and problems of working-class people.

Many of the characters in his books are immigrants from Mexico or from other parts of the United States who went to California looking for work or a better life.
Novel Overview

OF MICE AND MEN

A Novel by
JOHN STEINBECK
AUTHOR OF 'TORTILLA FLAT'
Setting, a ranch in the Salinas Valley in rural California, 1930`s.

The novel opens a few miles south of Soledad, where the Salinas River drops close to a hillside brook.

The two main characters are walking towards a ranch where harvesting jobs are available.
Novel Overview

During this time, the Great Depression occurred and many people traveled west to find land and labor in order to survive.

The novel tells the story of two men (George & Lennie) struggling to understand themselves & their place in the world.

Their dream is to own their own land and their journey is full of obstacles.
Characters

- **George Milton**
  - A ranch worker who looks out for Lennie & dreams of owning a farm.

- **Lennie Small**
  - Powerful, but mentally disabled; trusts George.

- **Curley**
  - Ranch owner’s son, a bully.
Characters

- **Slim**
  - A kind ranch worker, respected by others

- **Crooks**
  - Black stable hand who is isolated from the others.

- **Curley’s Wife**
  - Bored & lonely, a flirt.

- **Candy**
  - Old swamper who dreams of owning a farm.
Themes

- **The nature of dreams**: human dreams & aspirations, and the forces that work against them as is the case with the 2 main characters.

- **Loneliness**: ranch workers represent this throughout the novel, as does Curley`s Wife.

- **Barriers**: based on gender and race.

- **Powerlessness**: of the underdog, in this case, Lennie, George, & Crooks represent powerlessness in different ways.
Symbolism

- Rabbits
- Mice
- Dogs
- Solitaire, (card game)
- The dream farm