**OM&M Conflict Essay Plan**

Choose a novel or short story in which there is a character involved in some form of conflict.

By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the character comes to be involved in this conflict and how the conflict develops throughout the text.

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| **Introduction**  Name of text  ‘Of Mice and Men’  Name of author  John Steinbeck  Very BRIEF summary of plot   * Set in California in the 1930s * Two travelling men are trying to earn enough money to achieve their dream of owning their own land * The men face many issues in their struggle to achieve the American Dream, proving that this is often an unattainable goal   Rephrase question-mention techniques that will be discussed   * Conflict between Curley and Lennie * Conflict represents difference between rich and poor in America |
| **Main Paragraph 1**  Point  Characterisation is used to show the opposing nature of these characters  Context  At the beginning of the novel, Curley and Lennie have an uncomfortable first meeting:  Quotation  “He glanced coldly at George and then at Lennie. His arms gradually bent at the elbows and his hands closed into fists.”pg46  Explanation   * Lennie and Curley are opposing figures in terms of appearance-Lennie is very tall and large, Curley is small and stocky * Curley’s actions demonstrate an instant dislike and feeling of threat-he makes himself appear larger by bending his elbows, and uses his fists to create a threatening stance * Indicates from the beginning of the text that these are very different characters, and that there is an element of tension between them |
| **Main Paragraph 2**  Point  The characters’ conflict comes to a head in a key incident in the novel.  Context  Midway through the novel, Curley challenges Lennie. Initially, Lennie does not respond, but when encouraged by George, his strength takes over:  Quotation  “The next minute Curley was flopping like a fish on a line, and his closed fist was lost in Lennie’s big hand.” pg91  Explanation   * Despite the fact Curley has been antagonising Lennie and trying to make himself seem powerful, here he is instantly overpowered by Lennie, reduced to a ‘fish on a line’-trapped, caught * Conflict here is symbolic-Lennie, as underprivileged working man, is fighting back against Curley-a symbol of the success of the American Dream * Conflict is developed here, as Lennie’s true nature is revealed, and Curley’s pride will not withstand such a crushing blow to his perceived authority |
| **Main Paragraph 3**  Point  Steinbeck makes use of climax to heighten the conflict between Lennie and Curley.  Context  At a key moment in the novella, Lennie accidentally kills Curley’s wife. When Curley finds out, he flies into a rage:  Quotation  “’He worked himself into a fury. ‘I’m gonna get him. I’m going for my shotgun. I’ll kill the big son-of-a-bitch myself.’”pg133  pg133  Explanation   * Curley views his wife as a possession-now that Lennie has destroyed his ‘property’, this gives him opportunity to confront Lennie aggressively * Curley’s wife’s death represents the death of opportunity for Lennie-he is unable to come back from this moment * This is a key moment, as the conflict has come to a head and the reader is aware that both characters cannot survive this aggressive conflict |
| **Main Paragraph 4**  Point  Steinbeck uses symbolism to show the tragic consequences of this conflict.  Context  At the end of the novella, Lennie runs away to avoid being confronted by Curley. However, George finds him:  Quotation  “’…Lennie. Look down there acrost the river, like you can almost see the place.’  Lennie obeyed him. George looked down at the gun.” Pg147  Explanation   * It is important that George kills Lennie, rather than Curley, as George’s killing is more like a mercy killing-he is sparing Lennie a torturous death and tricking him into a sense of security * Lennie’s death represents the death of The American Dream for the working man-all his opportunities are lost * Curley’s survival demonstrates that there is a lack of equality when it comes to The American Dream-he will live on, inherit his father’s ranch, perhaps remarry-all things taken away from Lennie |
| **Conclusion**  Explain why aspect is important in novel   * Conflict is important as it represents the large inequality between the rich and the poor in America * Still relevant today-gap still exists and American Dream remains a fantasy for many   Explain how techniques have been used to show this  Steinbeck’s skilful use of characterisation, key incident, climax and symbolism emphasises his criticism of the American Dream. |