

George and Lennie

This task is about reading and answering questions about a text.

Read the following extract from *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck (from *The Short Novels of John Steinbeck*, 1954). The answer the questions that follow.

There is a path through the willows and among the sycamores, a path beaten hard by boys coming down from the ranches to swim in the deep pool, and beaten hard by tramps who come wearily down from the highway in the evening to jungle-up near water. In front of the low horizontal limb of a giant sycamore there is an ash pile made by many fires; the limb is worn smooth by men who have sat on it.

Evening of a hot day started the little wind to moving among the leaves. The shade climbed up the hills towards the top. On the sand-banks the rabbits sat as quietly as little grey, sculptured stones. And then from the direction of the state highway came the sound of footsteps on crisp sycamore leaves. The rabbits hurried noiselessly for cover. A stilted heron laboured up into the air and pounded down river. For a moment the place was lifeless, and then two men emerged from the path and came into the opening by the green pool. They had walked in single file down the path, and even in the open one stayed behind the other. Both were dressed in denim trousers and in denim coats with brass buttons. Both wore black, shapeless hats and both carried tight blanket rolls slung over their shoulders. The first man small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, strong features. Every part of him was defined: small, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose. Behind him walked his opposite, a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with wide, sloping shoulders; and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws. His arms did not swing at his sides, but hung loosely and only moved because the heavy hands were pendula.

The first man stopped short in the clearing, and the follower nearly ran over him. He took off his hat and wiped the sweat-band with his forefinger and snapped the moisture off. His huge companion dropped his blankets and flung himself down and drank from the surface of the green pool; drank with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse. The small man stepped nervously beside him.

"Lennie!" he said sharply. "Lennie, for God' sakes don't drink so much." Lennie continued to snort into the pool. The small man leaned over and shook him by the shoulder. "Lennie. You gonna be sick like you was last night."

Lennie dipped his whole head under, hat and all, and then he sat up on the bank and his hat dripped down on his blue coat and ran down his back. "That's good," he said. "You drink some, George. You take a good big drink." He smiled happily.

a) Why was the track down to the pool hard?

Animals used it regularly.

It was a hot, dry place.

Cars from the state highway drove down it

It was stony.

Many people had walked along it.

b) What startled the rabbits?

The heron taking flight.

The wind blowing through the trees.

Farm boys coming down the track for a swim.

Lennie's noisy drinking.

The crunching of dry leaves.

c) Read the descriptions of George and Lennie in paragraph 2. Which of the following does the author describe as **not** being different?

their physical appearance.

the way they move.

the way they are dressed.

their size.

their facial features.

d) George wanted Lennie to stop drinking because he ...

was hot and tired and wanted a drink himself.

thought Lennie was drinking too much too quickly.

thought Lennie would muddy the water before he could drink.

was unsure of who else had drunk from the pool.

e) Lennie's way of walking is compared with

f) Why would the author liken the rabbits to 'sculptured stones'?

g) What does 'stopped short' mean as used in the first sentence of Paragraph 3?

h) What two words suggest that the stilted heron is a clumsy flier?

1.

2.