Overview: John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men* tells a story of two very different friends who share the same dream. Throughout the novel, starting with the title, Steinbeck provides clues as to what will happen next. This Mini-Q asks you to discover the clues that prepare the reader for key events in *Of Mice and Men*.

The Documents:

Document A: “To a Mouse”
Document B: “I like to pet nice things”
Document C: “A little piece of land”
Document D: “Right in the back of the head”
Step One: The Hook

**Teacher Note:** The purpose of the Hook is to create some initial interest in the Mini-Q. In small groups, students will examine a cartoon and answer the questions that follow. Then you can discuss the questions with the class as a whole.

**Possible responses to Hook questions:**

1. **Who is teaching the “class” in the cartoon below?**
   
   The class is being taught by a turkey.

2. **What term is this “teacher” discussing?**
   
   The turkey is teaching the class the term “foreshadowing.”

3. **What do you see in this cartoon that can help you figure out the meaning of “foreshadowing”?**
   
   Behind the turkey, you can see his shadow, but the shadow doesn’t have a head. Maybe his head is about to get chopped off.

4. **What is your best guess of what “foreshadowing” means?**
   
   This cartoon suggests that “foreshadowing” tells you what’s about to happen. (NOTE: Some students might see the connection between the shadow in the cartoon and the word *shadow* as part of *foreshadowing*. In fact, the origin of the word *foreshadow* is the combination of the prefix *lore*, meaning “before,” and the word *shadow*. In the turkey’s case, the shadow is behind him, but sometimes a shadow is thrown forward, allowing you to see an object’s shadow before you see the thing itself—the shadow tells you what’s coming.)
Hook Exercise: Foreshadowing

**Directions:** Working with a partner or in a small group, look at the cartoon and answer the questions below.

1. Who is teaching the “class” in the cartoon below?

2. What term is this “teacher” discussing?

3. What do you see in this cartoon that can help you figure out the meaning of “foreshadowing”?

4. What is your best guess of what “foreshadowing” means?
Step Two: Establishing the Context

General Instructions

- Pre-teach the boldfaced vocabulary.
- Have students read, or read aloud to them, the Background Essay.
- Have students answer the Background Essay questions on the next page.

Specific Considerations

The main purpose of the Background Essay is to create a context for the Mini-Q exercise. **It is NOT meant to replace the reading of the novel as a whole.** Rather, its job is to review the relevant plot points of the novel, and introduce important vocabulary and concepts. Doing this well gives all students a more equal chance to succeed with the Mini-Q. We recommend that it not be rushed. Also, consider reading the Background Essay aloud. We believe it is good for many students, even good readers, to hear the words as they see them. For many it is important to hear the cadence of the language, to experience pauses and emphasis.

Vocabulary and Concepts

You may want to pre-teach the five boldfaced terms in the essay. Even for English language learners, context can help to clarify the meaning of some words, and other words are explicitly defined in the essay. Our feeling about vocabulary is that some pre-teaching is good but keep the word list short. (Note: “Ominous” is a word that appears in *Of Mice and Men* which could come in handy as students write their essays.)
Of Mice and Men: How Does Steinbeck Use Foreshadowing?

Of Mice and Men is a short book that tells a powerful story. It is a tale of two unlikely friends—small, intelligent George and enormous but childlike Lennie—travelling through California during the 1930s. George and Lennie are migrant workers. They take on temporary jobs at different ranches in an effort to make enough money to buy a place of their own. At their new job, they meet a cast of characters: Candy, the one-handed old “swamper” who cleans the bunk house; Slim, a man of God-like wisdom who is described as the “prince of the ranch”; Crooks, the African-American stable hand, living a solitary life on the ranch because of his race; Curley, the boss’s hostile and aggressive son; and Curley’s nameless wife, a woman desperate for attention.

Things start out well enough, and Candy offers to put up money and join George and Lennie in their dream of buying their own farm. Quickly, though, the book begins to move towards its disastrous conclusion—and if they’ve been paying attention, readers see it coming. Although Of Mice and Men is short, it is carefully crafted.

In this American classic, Nobel Prize-winning author John Steinbeck uses several structural elements. For one, the title, Of Mice and Men, is an allusion, meaning it was taken from another work. Steinbeck borrowed his title from the poem, “To a Mouse,” by Scottish farmer and poet, Robert Burns. Writers use allusions as a short-cut to a set of ideas. By taking his title from a well-known poem, Steinbeck is asking readers to recall what that poem contains and suggests, and then to apply those ideas to the novel. Your first step, then, will be to read an edited version of “To a Mouse” in Document A.

Steinbeck also sets up two important ideas in the book’s opening pages. In the first paragraph, animals scurry onto the scene: “a lizard…Rabbits…dogs from the ranches…and…deer….” The title has already clued the reader into the importance of animals in this book, for “mice” are right there with the “men,” and the presence of animals in the first paragraph makes this point even more strongly. In the next paragraph, Steinbeck introduces a second idea. Moments before George and Lennie literally walk into the picture, we see an image of “a path beaten hard by boys coming down from the ranches,” “an ash pile made by many fires,” and a “limb…worn smooth by men who have sat on it.” This beaten path, this ash pile, and this smooth limb are evidence that George and Lennie are not the first men to come to this place, and they will not be the last. In other words, Steinbeck is preparing us for a story that is universal.

Perhaps the most important structural element in Of Mice and Men is foreshadowing. Foreshadowing is a device used by an author to provide clues of what is to come. Just as ominous clouds alert us that a thunderstorm is on its way, small disasters and seemingly insignificant events prepare the reader for larger disasters on the horizon. As you read the documents that follow, your job is to discover the clouds and answer the question: Of Mice and Men: How does Steinbeck use foreshadowing?
Step Two: Establishing the Context (continued)

Answers to Background Essay Questions

1. *Of Mice and Men* tells the story of what two friends? What are they hoping to do?
   George and Lennie are hoping to save enough money to buy their own farm.

2. Name five other characters in the novel.
   Candy, Slim, Crooks, Curley and Curley’s wife

3. Who is the author of *Of Mice and Men*? Which prestigious prize did he win?
   John Steinbeck won the Nobel Prize in Literature.

4. Where does the title, *Of Mice and Men*, come from?
   the poem, “To a Mouse,” by Robert Burns

5. What two ideas does Steinbeck set up in the first pages of the book?
   the importance of animals and the universal nature of George and Lennie’s story

6. Define these terms:
   - migrant workers: People who travel around looking for temporary jobs
   - allusion: A reference to a work of literature or art; can provide a short-cut to a set of ideas
   - universal: Applying to all people, places, and times
   - foreshadowing: A literary device in which an author gives clues of what is to come
   - ominous: Suggesting bad things to come; related to the word *omen*
Background Essay Questions

1. *Of Mice and Men* tells the story of what two friends? What are they hoping to do?

2. Name five other characters in the novel.

3. Who is the author of *Of Mice and Men*? Which prestigious prize did he win?

4. Where does the title, *Of Mice and Men*, come from?

5. What two ideas does Steinbeck set up in the first pages of the book?

6. Define these terms:
   
   migrant workers
   
   allusion
   
   universal
   
   foreshadowing
   
   ominous
Step Three: Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing

Understanding the Question

1. What is the analytical question asked by this Mini-Q?

   Of Mice and Men: How does Steinbeck use foreshadowing?

2. Which terms in the question need to be defined?

   foreshadowing

3. Rewrite the question in your own words.

   What clues does Steinbeck provide throughout Of Mice and Men to hint at key events to come?

Pre-Bucketing

Teacher Note: As students suggest their bucket labels, draw bucket sets on the board. At this stage, students are simply looking for generic labels that provide a framework for organizing the essay.
Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing

Understanding the Question

1. What is the analytical question asked by this Mini-Q?

2. Which terms in the question need to be defined?

3. Rewrite the question in your own words.

Pre-Bucketing

Directions: Using any clues from the Mini-Q question and the Background Essay, establish general analytical categories and label the buckets.
Step Four: Document Analysis

Document A: “To a Mouse”

Content Notes:
- Robert Burns wrote “To a Mouse” in Scottish, and there are numerous English translations of the poem. The one used here was chosen both for its fidelity to the original and its accessibility to students.
- Document Analysis question #2 refers to the “speaker” of the poem. In the case of this poem, which is based on the poet’s personal experience of overturning a mouse’s nest, the speaker or narrator is very likely to be the poet himself rather than an invented persona. However, it is important not to assume that the speaker in a poem is always the poet.

Teaching Tips:
- Students should remember the definition of allusion from the Background Essay. You may want to re-read these two sentences to them: “Writers use allusions as a short-cut to a set of ideas. By taking his title from a well-known poem, Steinbeck is asking readers to recall what that poem contains and suggests, and then to apply those ideas to the novel.” This is particularly relevant to question #6 below.
- Discuss the Document Analysis questions:
  1. Besides being a poet, what was Robert Burns’s other profession?
     He was a farmer.
  2. In the first stanza, why is the mouse feeling “panic”? Why does the speaker in the poem say the mouse doesn’t need to run away?
     The mouse is feeling panic because her house just got destroyed and she is afraid she will be killed. The speaker assures the mouse that he will not harm her (“I would be loath to run and chase you”).
  3. What is the state of the mouse’s house? What will happen to the mouse now?
     The mouse’s house is “in ruin” and the scraps used to make the house have blown away. The mouse will have to endure the winter without shelter.
  4. Find the line(s) in which the title, Of Mice and Men, appears. Write the complete sentence (after the colon) here.
     “The best laid schemes of mice and men / Go often askew, / And leaves us nothing but grief and pain, / For promised joy!”
  5. In what way have the “schemes” (meaning “plans”) of the mouse gone “askew” (meaning “off track”)?
     The mouse had planned to spend her winter snug in her house, but now that her house is ruined, she will be out in the cold and could die.
  6. Since Steinbeck chose Of Mice and Men as the title for his novel, what should we expect will happen to the “men” (meaning all humans) in the novel?
     We should expect that like the mouse, the people in Of Mice and Men will have plans that “go askew,” and instead of joy, they will experience “grief and pain.”
**Document A: “To a Mouse”**

**Source:** Robert Burns, “To a Mouse” (edited), 1785.

**Note:** This poem was written when the poet, who was also a farmer, turned up a mouse's nest while plowing a field. This is Burns's apology to the mouse, and has been translated from the original Scottish. The poem in its entirety is eight stanzas long, but only four stanzas are provided here.

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Small, sleek, cowering, timorous beast,  ... That small bit heap of leaves and stubble,  
O, what a panic is in your breast! Has cost you many a weary nibble!  
You need not start away so hasty Now you are turned out, for all your trouble,  
With hurrying scamper! Without house or holding,  
I would be loath to run and chase you, To endure the winter's sleety dribble,  
With murdering plough-staff. And hoar-frost cold.  

... Your small house, too, in ruin! But Mouse, you are not alone,  
Its feeble walls the winds are scattering! In proving foresight may be vain:  
And nothing now, to build a new one! The best laid schemes of mice and men  
Of coarse grass green! Go often askew,  
And bleak December’s winds coming, And leaves us nothing but grief and pain,  
Both bitter and keen! For promised joy!...

**Document Analysis**

1. Besides being a poet, what was Robert Burns’s other profession?

2. In the first stanza, why is the mouse feeling “panic”? Why does the speaker in the poem say the mouse doesn’t need to run away?

3. What is the state of the mouse’s house? What will happen to the mouse now?

4. Find the line(s) in which the title, *Of Mice and Men*, appears. Write the complete sentence (after the colon) here.

5. In what way have the “schemes” (meaning “plans”) of the mouse gone “askew” (meaning “off track”)?

6. Since Steinbeck chose *Of Mice and Men* as the title for his novel, what should we expect will happen to the “men” (meaning all humans) in the novel?
Step Four: Document Analysis (continued)

Document B: “I like to pet nice things”

Content Notes:
• Throughout *Of Mice and Men*, the characters speak in dialect. Dialect—when an author writes dialogue according to the way real people speak as opposed to following conventions of grammar and spelling—is a device used by writers to add realism to a piece. Dialect can also be a way to learn more about a character, particularly education level, social class or status. If you haven’t already done so, this is a good opportunity to discuss this device with students.

Grammar and Writing Notes:
• Besides showing possession, the apostrophe is used to take the place of missing letters. Apostrophes abound in this excerpt as well as others from *Of Mice and Men*—all in service to dialect, discussed in the Content Notes above.

Teaching Tips:
• Discuss the Document Analysis questions:

1. What happened in Weed that made it necessary for George and Lennie to “hide” and “sneak” away? What does George say to indicate that things like this have happened before?

   Lennie felt a girl’s dress “like it was a mouse” and she got scared because she thought Lennie was trying to attack her. George says that this type of thing happens “all the time” and talks about the likelihood of Lennie getting in trouble again “like you always done before.”

2. What animals does Lennie like to pet? Why does he say he likes to pet them?

   Lennie likes to pet mice, rabbits, and puppies because they are soft and nice to touch.

3. How does the puppy die?

   Lennie handles the puppy too roughly while he is petting it.

4. Juxtaposition is a literary tool where two things are put next to each other to create emphasis or add a layer of meaning. In the last sentence of the final excerpt, what two things are juxtaposed? What is being emphasized?

   The puppy and Curley’s wife are placed next to each other. The similarity between their deaths is being emphasized—although Lennie did so unintentionally, he killed them both because he wanted to touch them so badly. As he says in the book, “I did another bad thing.”

5. How does Steinbeck use foreshadowing to suggest that Curley’s wife will die? Give at least two specific examples.

   There are several textual clues in this document that Curley’s wife will die. First, the incident in Weed suggests that Lennie gets in trouble “all the time” and that touching women is something that tempts him. Second, Lennie has killed all the mice he pets, and then kills the puppy. The moment Curley’s wife offers her hair to him to pet, she is in danger. Finally, in this document, Lennie repeats a warning that George has issued to him throughout the novel: “‘You gonna get me in trouble jus’ like George says you will.’” George knows—and so does the reader—that Curley’s wife will cause big trouble for Lennie.
Document B: “I like to pet nice things”


Story Note: George is reminding Lennie why they had to leave their last job in the town of Weed.

> “‘Jus’ wanted to feel that girl’s dress—jus’ wanted to pet it like it was a mouse—Well, how the hell did she know you jus’ wanted to feel her dress? … She yells and we got to…sneak out in the dark and get outta the country. All the time somethin’ like that—all the time’… ‘Well, look. Lennie—if you jus’ happen to get in trouble like you always done before, I want you to come right here an’ hide in the brush.” (Chapter 1)

Story Note: Lennie is alone in the barn while the other men are playing horseshoes.

> “… Lennie sat in the hay and looked at a little dead puppy that lay in front of him…. And Lennie said softly to the puppy, ‘Why do you got to get killed? You ain’t so little as mice. I didn’t bounce you hard… You wasn’t big enough,’ he said. ‘They tol’ me and tol’ me you wasn’t. I di’n’t know you’d get killed so easy.’” (Chapter 5)

Story Note: After the death of Lennie’s puppy, Curley’s wife sits with Lennie in the barn and asks about his love of rabbits.

> “Lennie…moved cautiously close to her…. ‘I like to pet nice things…’ ‘… Well, who don’t?… When I’m doin’ my hair sometimes I jus’ set an’ stroke it ‘cause it’s so soft…. Feel right aroun’ there an’ see how soft it is.’ Lennie’s big fingers fell to stroking her hair…. ‘Look out, now, you’ll muss it.’ … She jerked her head sideways, and Lennie’s fingers closed on her hair and hung on. ‘Let go,’ she cried. ‘You let go!’ Lennie was in a panic…. She screamed then, and Lennie’s other hand closed over her mouth and nose…. ‘You gonna get me in trouble jus’ like George says you will. Now don’t you do that.’ And she continued to struggle…. He shook her…[a]nd then she was still, for Lennie had broken her neck. … And then he whispered in fright, ‘I done a bad thing. I done another bad thing.’ … Lennie went back and looked at the dead girl. The puppy lay close to her.” (Chapter 5)

Document Analysis

1. What happened in Weed that made it necessary for George and Lennie to “hide” and “sneak” away? What does George say to indicate that things like this have happened before?
2. What animals does Lennie like to pet? Why does he say he likes to pet them?
3. How does the puppy die?
4. Juxtaposition is a literary tool where two things are put next to each other to create emphasis or add a layer of meaning. In the last sentence of the final excerpt, what two things are juxtaposed? What is being emphasized?
5. How does Steinbeck use foreshadowing to signal that Curley’s wife will die? Give at least two specific examples.
Step Four: Document Analysis (continued)

Document C: “A little piece of land”

Content Notes:

- The backdrop for *Of Mice and Men* is the Great Depression. As migrant workers, George and Lennie are living job to job and paycheck to paycheck. Crooks’s claim to have seen “hundreds” of men in a similar situation may well be accurate.
- The loss of George, Lennie, and Candy’s dream to get a farm of their own can be read as a loss of the American Dream. Crooks is an apt spokesperson for this loss. For an African-American man living in a racist society, the possibility of such a dream coming true is remote. In Chapter 4, Crooks briefly entertains the idea of joining George, Lennie and Candy’s dream, but by the end of the chapter—after Curley’s wife threatens to have him lynched—he says to “jus’ forget it.”

Teaching Tips:

- Discuss the Document Analysis questions:
  1. In the first excerpt, as he has “done before,” what does George describe to Lennie?
     George describes the little farm that he and Lennie are hoping to buy and the independence that goes along with it.
  2. At the end of the first excerpt, George breaks off suddenly, saying he “ain’t got time for no more.” Why does George stop his description so abruptly?
     It is likely that George stops describing the farm because he knows he will never get it and feels great frustration. The idea that he doesn’t have “time” for talk is a silly one; George and Lennie have nothing more to do but eat their beans and go to sleep.
  3. Does Crooks think Lennie and George will get their own “little piece of land”? Explain his reason.
     Crooks predicts that Lennie and George will never get their own farm. He bases this prediction on the similar lost dreams of “hundreds” of men that he claims to have witnessed.
  4. In the final excerpt, what is it that George “knowed from the very first”?
     George implies that he “knowed from the very first” that they would never get their own place.
  5. How does Steinbeck use foreshadowing to hint that George and Lennie will not get their own farm? Find two examples, one from the first excerpt and another from the second excerpt.
     In the first excerpt, George’s inability to finish describing the farm is a clue that he does not truly believe that the plan is feasible. This is confirmed by his admission that he “knowed from the very first” it wouldn’t happen. Then, in the second excerpt, the loss of the dream is foreshadowed by Crooks’s dire prediction that they won’t get the farm. His evidence that “hundreds” of men have lost the same dream is particularly significant given the ways that Steinbeck sets up George and Lennie’s story as universal in the opening pages (see BGE).
**Document C: “A little piece of land”**


**Story Note:** The night before they arrive at their new job, Lennie and George spend the night alone by the water.

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“Lennie pleaded, ‘Come on, George. Tell me. Please George. Like you done before.’
… George’s voice became deeper. He repeated his words rhythmically as though he had
said them many times before…. ‘O.K. Someday—we’re gonna…have a little house and a
couple of acres an’ a cow and some pigs and…we’ll have a big vegetable patch and a rabbit
hutch and chickens. And when it rains in the winter, we’ll just say the hell with goin’ to work,
and we’ll build up a fire in the stove and set around it an’ listen to the rain comin’ down on
the roof—Nuts!… I ain’t got time for no more….”” (Chapter 1)
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**Story Note:** Lennie is talking with Crooks, the stable hand, about their plan to get their own farm. A *bindle* is a little bundle of possessions, often carried on the end of a stick.

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“‘You’re nuts.’
‘We are too. You ast George.’
‘You’re nuts.’ Crooks was scornful. ‘I seen hunderds of men come by on the road an’ on
the ranches, with bindles on their back an’ that same damn thing in their heads. Hunderds
of them. They come, an’ they quit an’ go on; an’ every damn one of ‘em’s got a little piece
of land in his head. An’ never a God damn one of ‘em ever gets it…. You guys is just kiddin’
yourself. You’ll talk about it a hell of a lot, but you won’t get no land.’” (Chapter 4)
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**Story Note:** After Lennie kills Curley’s wife, George and Candy are discussing what they will do next.

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“Now Candy spoke his greatest fear. ‘You an’ me can get that little place, can’t we,
George? You an’ me can go there an’ live nice, can’t we, George? Can’t we?’
Before George answered, Candy dropped his head and looked down at the hay. He knew.
George said softly, ‘—I think I knowed from the very first. I think I knowed we’d never
do her.’” (Chapter 5)
```

**Document Analysis**

1. In the first excerpt, as he has “done before,” what does George describe to Lennie?

2. At the end of the first excerpt, George breaks off suddenly, saying he “ain’t got time for no more.” Why does George stop his description so abruptly?

3. Does Crooks think Lennie and George will get their own “little piece of land”? Explain his reason.

4. In the final excerpt, what is it that George “knowed from the very first”?

5. How does Steinbeck use foreshadowing to hint that George and Lennie will not get their own farm? Find two examples, one from the first excerpt and another from the second excerpt.
Step Four: Document Analysis (continued)

Document D: “Right in the back of the head”

Content Notes:
- In 1889, Russian playwright Anton Chekhov wrote in a letter that “One must not put a loaded rifle on the stage if no one is thinking of firing it.” This principle has come to be known as “Chekhov’s gun.” While Chekhov is really giving advice on keeping story structure tight and eliminating unnecessary elements, Chekhov’s gun is often cited as a prime example of foreshadowing. When audience members see a gun, they expect it to be fired.

Teaching Tips:
- Discuss the Document Analysis questions:
  1. Why does Carlson offer to shoot Candy’s dog?
     Carlson says the dog is old, smelly, and “no good to himself.” He offers to shoot the dog so that Candy won’t have to be the one who does it.
  2. How does Carlson say he will shoot the dog? What gun does he use?
     Carlson says he will shoot the dog in the back of the head so he “wouldn’t even quiver.” He uses a Luger pistol.
  3. Why does Candy tell George that he “oughtta of shot that dog myself”?
     Candy feels he should have shot the dog himself because the dog is his responsibility, and the dog would have felt a loving presence at the time of his death. He feels it was wrong to have let a “stranger” shoot his dog.
  4. Why does George shoot Lennie?
     George shoots Lennie before Curley can do it. He wants to end Lennie’s life peacefully and painlessly.
  5. How does George shoot Lennie? What gun does he use?
     George shoots Lennie in the back of the head and Lennie dies “without quivering.” George uses Carlson’s Luger pistol.
  6. How does Steinbeck use foreshadowing to suggest how Lennie will die? Be specific.
     The shooting of Candy’s dog clearly foreshadows George’s shooting of Lennie. Candy wishes he had shot his own dog just as George feels responsible for Lennie and wants to shoot him himself. The dog and Lennie are shot in exactly the same spot (“right in the back of the head”) and with the same gun, Carlson’s Luger pistol. Note also the repetition of the word “quiver.” Carlson says that Candy’s dog “wouldn’t even quiver” and Lennie also dies “without quivering.”
Document D: “Right in the back of the head”


Story Note: Carlson, one of the ranch hands, has been complaining about Candy’s old dog.

“The old man squirmed uncomfortably. ‘Well—hell! I had him...since he was a pup....’

Carlson was not to be put off. ‘Look, Candy.... If you was to take him out and shoot him right in the back of the head...why he’d never know what hit him.... I’ll shoot him for you. Then it won’t be you that does it.... Right back of the head. He wouldn’t even quiver.’

… Candy said, ‘Maybe tomorrow. Let’s wait till tomorrow.’

‘I don’t see no reason for it,’ said Carlson. He went to his bunk, pulled his bag from underneath it and took out a Luger pistol. ‘Let’s get it over with.’” *(Chapter 3)*

Document Analysis

1. Why does Carlson offer to shoot Candy’s dog?
2. How does Carlson say he will shoot the dog? What gun does he use?
3. Why does Candy tell George that he “oughtta of shot that dog myself”?
4. Why does George shoot Lennie?
5. How does George shoot Lennie? What gun does he use?
6. How does Steinbeck use foreshadowing to suggest how Lennie will die? Be specific.
Step Five: Bucketing—Getting Ready to Write

Task One: Bucketing

Teacher Note: A simpler option for struggling students would be to focus the paper entirely on Document B. The thesis could be that the death of Curley’s wife is foreshadowed throughout the novel, and buckets could be the incident in Weed, the death of the puppy, and the warnings that Curley’s wife is “trouble.”

Task Two: Thesis Development and Road Map

The Chickenfoot

In Of Mice and Men, there are four clear examples of Steinbeck’s use of foreshadowing:
Bucketing—Getting Ready to Write

Bucketing

Look over all the documents and organize them into your final buckets. Write final bucket labels under each bucket and place the letters of the documents in the buckets where they belong. Remember, your buckets are going to become your body paragraphs.

Thesis Development and Road Map

On the chickenfoot below, write your thesis and your road map. Your thesis is always an opinion and answers the Mini-Q question. The road map is created from your bucket labels and lists the topic areas you will examine in order to prove your thesis.
Step Six: From Thesis to Essay Writing

Mini-Q Essay Outline Guide

Unit Title: *Of Mice and Men*: How Does Steinbeck Use Foreshadowing?

**Paragraph #1**
Grabber: Whether you’re a man or a mouse, your “schemes” are likely to go “askew.”

Brief and relevant plot summary: In John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*, two friends, George and Lennie, travel from ranch to ranch during the 1930s, dreaming of buying their own farm. However, they never do it and the novel ends tragically.

Restating the question with key terms defined: So what clues does Steinbeck provide to prepare the reader for key events in the novel?

Thesis and Road Map: There are four clear examples of Steinbeck’s use of foreshadowing: the plans of the characters going “askew,” the death of Curley’s wife, the loss of the farm dream, and the death of Lennie.

**Paragraph #2**
Baby Thesis: The title of the novel foreshadows all the losses to come.

Evidence:
- The title is an allusion to the poem, “To A Mouse,” so we know “the best laid schemes of mice and men” will go “askew” or off track (Doc A)

Argument: From the title page, Steinbeck’s use of allusion clearly foreshadows that all the characters’ plans will end badly.

**Paragraph #3**
Baby Thesis: The death of Curley’s wife is foreshadowed throughout the novel.

Evidence:
- Incident in Weed and death of mice and puppy (Doc B)
- Warnings about Curley’s wife: “‘You gonna get me in trouble jus’ like George says you will’” (Doc B)

Argument: Lennie’s tendency to crush soft things, combined with his history in Weed and George’s warnings, strongly hints that he will kill Curley’s wife.

**Paragraph #4**
Baby Thesis: The loss of the dream of the farm is also heavily foreshadowed.

Evidence:
- George cannot finish describing the dream farm: “knowed from the very first” (Doc C)
- Crooks predicts that they will not achieve this dream: “‘…you won’t get no land’” (Doc C)

Argument: George’s inability to describe the dream farm to Lennie in the very first chapter shows that he does not believe it will happen; Crooks also foreshadows this.

**Paragraph #5**
Baby Thesis: Finally, the death of Lennie at the end is foreshadowed by the shooting of Candy’s dog.

Evidence:
- Candy’s dog and Lennie both shot in the “back of the head” with Carlson’s Luger pistol (Doc D)
- Candy’s dog and Lennie both shouldn’t be shot by “no stranger” (Doc D)

Argument: The circumstances of the shooting of Candy’s dog predict the circumstances of Lennie’s death and the reader is well prepared for this tragic event.

**Paragraph #6**
Conclusion: Foreshadowing prepares the reader for the tragic ending, but the emotional impact remains strong.
From Thesis to Essay Writing

Mini-Q Essay Outline Guide

Unit Title

**Paragraph #1**
Grabber

Brief and relevant plot summary

Restating the question with key terms defined

Thesis and Road Map

**Paragraph #2**
Baby Thesis for bucket one

Evidence: Supporting detail and quotation from document with document citation

Argument: Connecting evidence to the thesis

**Paragraph #3**
Baby Thesis for bucket two

Evidence

Argument

**Paragraph #4**
Baby Thesis for bucket three

Evidence

Argument

**Paragraph #5**
Baby Thesis for bucket four

Evidence

Argument

**Paragraph #6**
Conclusion: Restatement of main idea, along with a fresh insight or wrinkle