**Opening Paragraph:** *establishes context for the essay*

John Steinbeck’s famous novel *Of Mice and Men* was published in 1937, set just outside his home town of Soledad, California. The main characters, George Milton and Lennie Small, are migrant workers, moving from one job to the next. As they begin “bucking barley” at a new location, a ranch in California, a story of trust begins to emerge. Many in the novel highlight this theme of trust, but it is George who does best, since it is his only means of staying alive; he has to trust other people in order to land jobs and make money—these relationships enable him to move ahead in life. George is able to trust Slim because Slim listens respectfully without judging; this could lead to a successful friendship.

**Body Paragraph Topic Sentence:** *This will explain what aspect of the theme you intend to prove*.One key to gain trust is simply by listening to what other people have to say.

***Context*** *for first example: what’s going on in the story just prior to your first quote* In chapter three, George and Slim have a conversation in the bunkhouse, and George begins to tell a story about what Lennie did in Weed, where he scared a girl and they had to run away. George stops talking, thinking he’s said too much.

**Quote**: *this is your evidence—quote it, give a page number.*

“ ‘What’d he do in Weed?’ Slim asked calmly.

‘You wouldn’t tell? . . . No, ‘course you wouldn’. ‘

‘What’d he do in Weed?’ Slim asked again” (Steinbeck 41).

**Analysis**: *what does your evidence SHOW? Don’t just reword it! How does it support your thesis?*

This conversation proves that trust is a key to relationships. When Slim asks George to tell more about this story, it forces George to tell a secret, basically, since it’s something that could get him and Lennie in trouble. By telling this to Slim, he lets his guard down, and Slim knows that they are now making a relationship based off of what’s real, and not just a ‘cover story. By being honest, this is a first step into making what could be a lasting friendship.

Repeat 3x—give each example its own paragraph!

**Conclusion: what do we learn about humanity through this? How do the events of the story show us something about *ourselves*?**

There are many things that make *Of Mice and Men* a timeless story, and the idea of trust is one of them. We see by the end what happens when there *is* no trust—George cannot trust Curley to do what’s humane and decent, which is to let the law sort out the consequences of Lennie’s actions, so he must trust his own instincts instead, even though it costs him his best friend. When trust fails us, our relationships suffer (like between Curley and his wife). When trust is strong, our opportunities expand, like when Candy and Crooks trust George with their money in exchange for buying into his dream of owning his own farm. Steinbeck seems to suggest that this is the glue that bonds us all together.