**Of Mice and Men Background Pathfinder**

**Introduction:**  
Over the next two and a half days you will be researching background information for understanding the setting in which *Of Mice and Men* takes place. The first two sections of your handout cover geographical areas, while section 3 covers language and ranch items talked about in the book. Section four is asking for brief descriptions of historical events and people from the 1930s. Section five covers brief summaries of four John Steinbeck novels and section six covers two areas of Mental Retardation. Lastly, in section seven you will be looking at photographs from the 1930s and selecting three pictures that document the experience of migrant workers.

**Section 1 and 2:**  
Google searches on these six geographical areas will lead you to web sites covering these areas. Look for city web sites, chamber of commerce sites, and local museums online to find the answers to these geographical areas. Many town web sites have a history of the town in them.

Finding the population during the 1930s for the four towns listed means you will have to look for information in the U.S. census. Go to the 1940 census at [http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1940.htm](http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1940.htm), which will give you the population figures for 1930 and 1940. Towns over 10,000 are listed in different areas in each state. Towns under 10,000 will be listed under the county in which these towns are located within the state (hint: use Google to find which county they are located in). Lastly, Weed, CA did not become an incorporated city until the 1950s, so you won’t be able to find out the population for this town during the 1930s. Mr. King doesn’t expect you to find the population of this town.

**Section 3:**  
Use [http://www.answers.com](http://www.answers.com) to locate the definitions for the words and slang in this section. Answers.com will give you definitions from online dictionaries and encyclopedias while bypassing web sites that would give you the wrong answers. Many slang terms have multiple meanings so you’ll have to figure which definition fits the novel you are reading.

**Section 4:**  
You can find the answers to any of these historical events and people in any encyclopedia. You can use the paper version of the Encyclopedia Britannica, or answers.com, or any of the encyclopedias listed under Free Reference Sources in the LMC’s web page ([http://glacierpeak.sno.wednet.edu/Page/2267](http://glacierpeak.sno.wednet.edu/Page/2267)).

**Section 5:**  
Use our Gale Virtual Reference Center under Premium Databases ([http://glacierpeak.sno.wednet.edu/Page/2267](http://glacierpeak.sno.wednet.edu/Page/2267)) to look up John Steinbeck. You’ll find short summaries of his novels in the articles listed under his name in this database.

**Section 6:**  

**Section 7:**  
Mr. King has already given you a web address to look up photographs from the 1930’s at the Library of Congress’ American Memory Project. You’ll find over 160,000 photographs to choose from at [http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsowhome.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsowhome.html) (LOC American Memory Project).
If this covers too many options I would look at the Dorothea Lange collection at the Oakland Museum of California, http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/ft3f59n5wt. She was hired by the federal government in the 1930s along with many other famous photographers of the times to photograph life in the United States. Many of her photographs covered migrant workers in California (you’ll find some of her work in the LOC American Memory Project as well).