

### Focus Question #3

#### What is Crooks' attitude toward life?

#### Possible Answer

Crooks has a negative and hopeless attitude toward life.

[1] All his life, Crooks has been made to feel inferior to anyone who is white. This contributes to his negativity and hopelessness. However, despite the pain that a lifetime of segregation and mistreatment has caused him, Crooks takes great pleasure in teasing Lennie that George might never return from town. Although white, Lennie's mental disability allows Crooks to, at last, feel superior to a white man.

[2] Crooks' pride and aloofness mask his terrible loneliness, which is a source of his negativity and hopelessness. He is not allowed to mingle with white folks, and there are no other black folks within miles of the farm. When Lennie and Candy enter his room he feigns annoyance, but he is secretly pleased that he has some companionship, "It was difficult for Crooks to conceal his pleasure with anger." (p. 75).

[3] Crooks typically doesn't dare to dream; he is hopeless, which is why he tries to convince Lennie and Candy that their dream of 'living off the fat of the land' will never come to fruition. It doesn't stop him, however, from wanting to get in on the plan once he hears that the money is in place. For once, he dares to hold out a glimmer of hope that there is a better life somewhere out there for him.

[4] Crooks' boost of confidence from this brief contact with other humans allows him to drum up the courage to tell Curley's wife to get out of his room. She promptly calls him a "nigger," tells him to learn his place, and threatens to frame him and "have him strung up on a tree." Crooks "retire[s] into the terrible protective dignity of the Negro." "[He] had reduced himself to nothing. There was no personality, no ego—nothing to arouse either like or dislike. He said, 'Yes, ma'am,' and his voice was toneless" (p. 81). He is crestfallen.

[5] When she leaves, Crooks tells Candy to forget about his part in the plan. Negativity and hopelessness, driven by fear of the white man, had once more taken over and driven him back into helplessness.

#### Appendix #29

# Macomb ELA Genre Units: Focus Question Rubric

	3 (complete)	2 (partial)	1 (minimal)
<b><u>Traits:</u></b> <u>Content</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answers question</li> <li>Uses relevant details from text to support answer</li> <li>Stays on topic</li> </ul>	Answer is relevant with many details and examples.	Answer is relevant but has few details to support or explain the answer.	Answers question with misinterpretation. Little or no relevance to text or question. Ideas and content are not developed or connected.
<b><u>Organization</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restatement (Beginning)</li> <li>Details in support (Middle)</li> <li>Conclusion (End)</li> </ul>	Student restates the question in his/her own words. Details support point. Response is written in a logical sequence that makes connections.	Student restates the question in the answer. Events are retold in a somewhat disconnected structure.	Students answer either “yes,” “no,” or “I agree” without reference to the question. Writing lacks sequence.
<b><u>Style/Voice</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses quotes to support,</li> <li>Concludes with prediction characters feelings, opinions, etc...</li> </ul>	Word choice is precise. Uses quotes effectively. Conclusion engages the reader.	Vocabulary is basic. May use quotations, but reference is unclear. Conclusion is partially successful.	Vocabulary is limited. Quotations are not used. The conclusion is ineffective or does not exist.
<b><u>Conventions/Presentation</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing is neat.</li> <li>Uses proper conventions</li> </ul>	Presentation makes the writing inviting. Writing shows control over conventions.	Writing is readable. Errors in conventions do not distract from meaning.	Writing may not be legible. Errors in conventions distract from meaning.

## Appendix #25