Discussion Questions

1. If someone wants to die, is it his/her choice? Should the government have a say in the matter?

2. What would you do if one of your family members was suffering and told you that they didn’t want to live any longer?

3. How could one assess whether a person with a mental illness qualified for mercy killing? In addition, how old do you think a person needs to be to receive assistance in dying?

4. Why do you think euthanasia is illegal in most states? How different would society be if euthanasia were legal?

5. “William Lyle Dresser killed his wife, but he is not a murderer…” (Damon, par. 17). Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

6. “It’s a homicide and murdering another human cannot be rationalized under any circumstances” (M, par. 12). Do you agree with this statement? Explain your reasoning.

7. Euthanasia is legal for animals. Do you think it should stay that way or should animals die naturally like humans?

8. Why do you personally think George killed Lennie? Do you think George considered the benefits of getting rid of his friend?

9. Why didn’t George escape with Lennie and run away like last time in Weed?

10. What do you think was going through George’s head when he was about to kill Lennie? What kind of hesitancy did he show? What do his actions demonstrate about his character?

11. What do you think Carlson’s intentions were behind putting Candy’s dog down? How do you think this relates to the debate of legalizing euthanasia?

12. Both George and William Dresser are under a large amount of stress. Could this stress have hindered their judgments in taking the lives of their loved ones?

13. Since Lennie didn’t choose to die, is his death considered murder? Did George have the responsibility to tell Lennie that he was going to end his life? If Lennie had understood the situation, do you think he would have wanted to die?
1. If euthanasia were legalized, what restrictions should be applied? What are some ways to control the use of euthanasia so it is not misused?

2. As an attorney, how would you prove that William Dresser is not a murderer, but was acting out of mercy?

3. If you had a deadly sickness where medication was not an option to ease the suffering, would you consider euthanasia? Would you rather die in pain or die in peace?

4. How is mercy killing dying with honor? How is it different from giving up?

5. Though it is morally wrong to kill, isn’t it also morally wrong to make someone suffer through a life that is not only painful, but traumatic?

6. If there is treatment available, should a suffering patient be allowed to choose euthanasia instead?

7. What psychological and emotional effects does mercy killing have on the person taking the life of his/her loved one?

8. Was George’s decision to end Lennie’s life at all influenced by Candy’s predictions about what would occur if Lennie was found by Curley?

9. Was George justified in deciding Lennie’s fate? If he cared about him, how could he pull the trigger?

10. Why do you think George thought that killing Lennie was the best way to handle the situation? Was this a humane decision? What alternatives did George have?

11. Do you think the two incidents involving mercy killing in the novel are justified? Is there a difference between the dog’s death and Lennie’s death or were the circumstances surrounding both deaths the same?

12. Is Curley’s wife to blame for Lennie’s death?

13. Why did George feel obligated to kill Lennie?