

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Eng. Foundations III—Silver

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
*Of Mice and Men*: Intro

### About the Language of the Novel

- John Steinbeck has written much of the novel in the form of **dialogue**, or conversation, between the characters.
- In order to give the characters real voices, Steinbeck wrote what the characters say in the way they would speak, using the language typical of the people in that place and at that time. The way in which the characters speak is called **dialect**.
- To accomplish this, he spelled many words in the way they are pronounced and not the way they are actually spelled.

#### Examples

- ❖ Some words ending in “-ing” are pronounced “-in.”

goin’ (going)                      talkin’ (talking)

- ❖ Sometimes words are pronounced without their final sound. An apostrophe is used to signal that the last letter is missing.

jus’ (just)                      spen’ (spend)  
an’ (and)                      nex’ (next)

- ❖ Other changes in spelling also reflect pronunciation:

gonna (going to)              kinda (kind of)  
gotta (got to)                  musta (must have)  
oughta (ought to)              ya (you)  
ain’t (am not, is not)          whatta (what do)

- ❖ The sound of the letter “h” in the words “he,” “him,” “her,” and “his” is often missing.

’im (him)                      ’er (her)

- Steinbeck also has his characters use **derogatory** (belittling and insulting) language that we would never use in real life. He does this to reflect the stunted views common in the time period in which the story takes place.

# Where the Story Takes Place

