



December 2008

Newsletter for English Teachers

About the USA – Virtual Classroom

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Economic Integration: Opportunities and Challenges

In the past 20 years, no two parts of the world have experienced economic integration faster and more intensely than the U.S. and EU. The economic relationship between Germany, Europe's largest economy, and the United States is one of the most important in the world. The levels of connectivity that link Germany and the United States through trade and investment are so broad and deep -- and in some cases so seamless -- they are often taken for granted. The positive aspects of globalization -- the broad circulation of ideas and technology, people and financial resources, goods and services -- enable the best ideas and solutions to address problems the world over. Worldwide, the United States and Germany support the largest and second largest workforces, respectively, through their foreign affiliates: U.S. affiliates employ 9 million workers while German affiliates employ 4.6 million worldwide.

Publications:

- [The German-American Partnership: Benchmarking Success](#) (U.S. Embassy)
- Globalization and Europe: Prospering in the new Whirled Order: [Europe and Globalization](#) / [France and Globalization](#) / Germany and Globalization *Coming soon!* (SAIS Center for Transatlantic Relations, Johns Hopkins University)

Increased economic integration allows opportunities, as well as financial difficulties, to spread rapidly across borders. The G-20 nations plan to alleviate the current economic crisis and get the world economy on a more stable footing, as determined during the summit meeting in Washington in mid-November.

America.gov Articles

- [Large Economies Pursue Financial Reform](#): "We will have a global financial regulator at about the same time we have a global army." Barry Eichengreen, economist, University of California, Berkley
- [Leaders Agree to Actions on Financial System](#): "One of the dangers during a crisis such as this is that people will start implementing protectionist policies." President Bush
- [Bush Optimistic about Global Financial Situation](#): President Bush believes that the global economic crisis may be overcome well ahead of the 18-month time frame adopted by summit participants.

President Obama's Economic Team

President-elect Barack Obama and Vice President-elect Joe Biden [officially announced](#) key members of their economic team on November 24, naming Timothy Geithner as Secretary of the Treasury and Lawrence Summers as Director of the National Economic Council. Obama and Biden also named Christina Romer as Chair of the Council of Economic advisors, and named Melody Barnes and Heather Higginbottom to serve as Director and Deputy Director of the Domestic Policy Council. "Vice President-elect Biden and I have assembled an economic team with the vision and expertise to stabilize our economy, create jobs, and get America back on track. Even as we face great economic challenges, we know that great opportunity is at hand -- if we act swiftly and boldly. That's the mission our economic team will take on," said President-elect Obama.

[Office of the President-Elect](#): Agenda - [Economy](#)



[America.gov: Economics and Trade](#)

Did you know?

- U.S. companies in Germany provide jobs for 800,000 Germans -- one in every 35 German private sector employees! These jobs support up to an estimated additional 2 million jobs.
- The United States is German businesses' # 1 investment target. German investment in the American southeast alone is greater than all of European investment in China. In recent years, the U.S. has invested more than three times as much in Germany as it has in China.
- The U.S. traded four times as much with Germany as it did with India. Germany trades more with the United States than it does with China and India put together!

[germany.usembassy.gov/benchmarks](#)



From bottom left, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, President Bush. From top left, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero pose at the summit.

[America.gov: Photogallery](#)



(©America.gov: [Human Rights](#))

eJournal USA: [Celebrating 60 Years of Human Rights: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948–2008](#) - explores the document's origins, sites it within humanity's common intellectual heritage, and explains how it has bettered the lives of individuals in every corner of the globe.

Photo gallery: [Evolution of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#): For centuries, philosophers, statesmen, religious leaders and activists have been defining what now have become widely accepted concepts for human rights. (America.gov)



(©FDR Library/America.gov)

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."
Eleanor Roosevelt

[Know Your Rights 2008](#) (UN)
[Human Rights Index](#) (UN)
[60th Anniversary](#) (UN)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), was adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. The first sentence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that respect for human rights and human dignity "is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world."

Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2: Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. [...]

"The campaign reminds us that in a world still reeling from the horrors of the Second World War, the Declaration was the first global statement of what we now take for granted -- the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings." Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

"First Lady of the World" - Eleanor Roosevelt

A passionate champion for human rights, Eleanor Roosevelt, widow of U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was appointed by President Harry S. Truman in 1945 to serve as a delegate to the U.N. General Assembly. In April 1946, she is appointed chair of U.N.'s Commission on Human Rights, the committee that would draft and endorse the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

President Truman admiringly called Mrs. Roosevelt "First Lady of the World." She was, typically, more unassuming in describing her achievements: "I just did what I had to do as things came along."

([America.gov](#))

Links

- Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute's web site for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: [Eleanor Roosevelt](#)
- [Q&As – The Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - [A Lesson](#) Plan for Middle and Upper Grades
- PBS: Human [Rights – Exploring Freedom of Expression](#)

Publications

- [Human Rights in Brief](#) * [Human Rights and You](#)

Eleanor Roosevelt on Human Rights:

- [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (December 10, 1948)
- [Human Rights and Human Freedom: An American View](#) (1946)
- [The Promise of Human Rights](#) (April 1948)
- [Making Human Rights Come Alive](#) (1949)
- [Statement on Draft Covenant on Human Rights](#) (1951)
- [On the Draft Convention on Political Rights of Women](#) (1953)
- [In Your Hands](#) (March 27, 1958)
- [Adoption of the Declaration of Human Rights](#) (Dec. 9, 1948)

Protecting Human Rights - New Developments

"On-Call" Scientists Project Promotes, Protects Human Rights Web-based tool links human rights groups with scientific experts

[America.gov, Nov. 7:](#) A new project unveiled by the Science and Human Rights Program (SHRP) aims to create an international network of "on-call" scientists to whom human rights organizations can turn for free consultations on scientific questions. Founded in 1977, SHRP works with scientists to promote and protect human rights around the world, according to its mission statement. It is part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). The "on-call" scientists project began in October 2008. [...] Scientists of all disciplines — behavioral, life, physical and social scientists, as well as engineers, technicians, medical and public health professionals — can provide advice regarding scientific method, data analyses and data interpretation, according to AAAS. For more information on the AAAS Science and Human Rights Program's ["On-Call" scientists](#) program, see its Web site.

Literature: John Steinbeck

December 20th marks the 40th anniversary of John Steinbeck's death. - "No writer is more quintessentially American than John Steinbeck. Born in 1902 in Salinas, California, Steinbeck attended Stanford University before working at a series of mostly blue-collar jobs and embarking on his literary career. Profoundly committed to social progress, he used his writing to raise issues of labor exploitation and the plight of the common man, penning some of the greatest American novels of the twentieth century and winning such prestigious awards as the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. He received the Nobel Prize in 1962 [see column]. Today, [forty] years after his death, he remains one of America's greatest writers and cultural figures." ([Penguin](#))

Links

- National Steinbeck Center: [About John Steinbeck](#)
- Nobelprize.org: [John Steinbeck](#)
- Penguin.com: [John Steinbeck](#)
- [Center for Steinbeck Studies](#) at San Jose State University

Of Mice and Men

Clinging to each other in their loneliness and alienation, George and his simple-minded friend Lennie dream of a place to call their own. However, after they come to work on a ranch in the Salinas Valley in California their hopes begin to falter. The title suggests that the best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry, a reference to Robert Burns's poem "[To a Mouse](#)." [Burns, a Scottish poet](#) in the 18th century, wrote the poem in an English dialect called Scots.

Of Mice and Men is set during the Great Depression of the 1930s. John Steinbeck wrote with empathy about the struggles of migrant farm workers. During the late 1930s, California was struggling not only with the economic problems of the Great Depression, but also with severe labor strife. Labor conflicts occurred on the docks, packing sheds and fields.

As some analysts have drawn comparisons between the current financial crisis and the Great Depression, teaching Steinbeck might be an appropriate choice for your classroom.

Links

- NPS: [The Great Depression](#)
- PBS: [Timeline of the Great Depression](#)
- LoC: [America from the Great Depression to World War II](#)
- FDR Presidential Library: [The Great Depression](#)

Once Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected president in 1932 during the height of the crisis, Eleanor, whose role as a human rights champion we have highlighted on page 2, toured a country devastated by the Great Depression. She reported back to him on conditions and tirelessly promoted equal rights for women and minorities, child welfare, and housing reform.

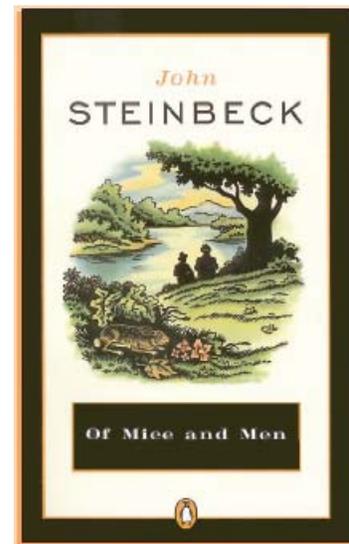
A Teacher's Guide to the Penguin Edition of Mice and Men

[This guide](#) is designed to assist teachers in moving students beyond the surface story of Steinbeck's novella. The prereading activities prepare students for what they will read in the novel. The brief discussion of the techniques of plot, character development and theme employed by Steinbeck in his deceptively simple story provides an overview of the story as well as an understanding of its simplicity and complexity.

Links [CliffsNotes](#) * [Sparknotes](#) * [Book Rags](#) * [Novelguide.com](#)

Essay Questions

- Steinbeck was going to name his story "Something That Happened." Instead, he named it Of Mice and Men. Which title do you think is more appropriate to the novel as a whole? Explain your answer.
- In tragedies, the central character comes to a realization about his life or an understanding of life in general as a result of his suffering. Is this true of Of Mice and Men? Explain.
- Explain Steinbeck's use of foreshadowing in Of Mice and Men.
- Choose a symbol used by Steinbeck and explain its significance in the novel. ([CliffsNotes](#))



(© Penguin Books)

Teaching Resources

- [Steinbeck Word Find](#) (grades 3-5th)
- [Steinbeck Crossword Puzzle](#) (grades 9-12th)
- [Steinbeck Trivia Game](#) (grades 6-12th)

Did you know?

- Although many people believe Steinbeck to be a lifelong Californian, he spent much of his life in New York and eventually shed most of his ties to the Salinas Valley.
- Steinbeck had a lifelong fascination with the King Arthur tales.
- Hollywood loved Steinbeck. Film adaptations of his work include *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Cannery Row*, *East of Eden*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Red Pony*, and *Tortilla Flat*.
- Privately Steinbeck feared that the Nobel Prize usually spelled the end of a writer's career.
- The two things Steinbeck found most necessary to life were "work and women."

[John Steinbeck was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962](#) "...for his realistic as well as imaginative writings, distinguished by a sympathetic humor and a keen social perception."

"Literature is as old as speech. It grew out of human need for it and it has not changed except to become more needed. The skalds, the bards, the writers are not separate and exclusive. From the beginning, their functions, their duties, their responsibilities have been decreed by our species...the writer is delegated to declare and to celebrate man's proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit - for gallantry in defeat, for courage, compassion and love. In the endless war against weakness and despair, these are the bright rally flags of hope and of emulation. I hold that a writer who does not passionately believe in the perfectibility of man has no dedication nor any membership in literature."

- John Steinbeck's Nobel Prize [Acceptance Speech](#)



(© AP Images)

America.gov: [Global Health](#)

WHO's World Health Statistics 2008 projects deaths from HIV/AIDS worldwide will rise from 2.2 million in 2008 to a maximum of 2.4 million in 2012 before declining to 1.2 million in 2030.

- Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS: [UNAIDS / Fast Facts About HIV](#)
- World Health Organization (WHO): [HIV/AIDS](#)
- U.S. Agency for Int. Development: [USAID HIV](#)
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: [World AIDS Day](#)
- Center for Disease Control [HIV/AIDS in the U.S.](#)
- New York Times: [AIDS/HIV](#)



Article: [HIV-Positive Muppet Educates Children in South Africa](#): The most visible figure in the fight against HIV/AIDS in South Africa is 2 meters tall, has yellow fur, and is loved by children.

Webchat Station

Global Forum: Using Technology to End Violence - Thursday, Dec. 4, 14:00

Facebook, Google, YouTube, MTV, Howcast, Columbia Law School, the U.S. Department of State and Access 360 Media are bringing the leaders of 17 pioneering organizations from 15 countries together with technology experts Dec. 3-5 in New York for the first-ever conclave to empower youth against violence and oppression through the use of the latest online tools. [ENTER](#)

Find more webchats [HERE](#)

In Focus: World AIDS Day The Search for a Cure

U.S. doctors first noticed an outbreak of a peculiar immune deficiency disorder in 1981. Three years later, researchers at the Pasteur Institute in Paris and the National Cancer Institute in Washington isolated the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Since it was first identified, HIV has claimed more than 25 million lives. Although no cure has been found, anti-retroviral treatments have improved over the years, and it is estimated that more than 33 million people around the world are now living with HIV. ([America.gov](#)) December 1st, World AIDS Day, is the day when individuals and organizations from around the world come together to bring attention to the global epidemic. This year marks the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day and while treatment and education on HIV/AIDS have come a long way, there is still much more to be done.

Did you know?

In 2003, President Bush announces PEPFAR, the [President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief](#), a five-year, \$15 billion initiative to address HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in hardest-hit countries. On July 30, 2008, President Bush signed into law the [U.S. States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act](#). The new legislation will dramatically increase the financial commitment to this fight - authorizing up to \$48 billion to combat global HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. Under this legislation, the next phase of the commitment will support treatment for at least 3 million people; prevention of 12 million new infections; and care for 12 million people, including 5 million orphans and vulnerable children.

Facts

- 2007: 2.7 mill. new HIV infections and 2 mill. HIV-related deaths
- The rate of new HIV infections has fallen in several countries, but globally these favorable trends are at least partially offset by increases in new infections in other countries.
- As treatment access has increased over the last ten years the annual number of AIDS deaths has fallen. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region most heavily affected by HIV, accounting for 67% of all people living with HIV and for 75% of AIDS deaths in 2007. Some of the most worrisome increases in new infections are now occurring in Indonesia, the Russian Federation, and various high-income countries. ([UNAIDS: 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic](#))

TRANSITION NEWS [Website](#)

[U.S. Elections Turn Elephants, Donkeys into Lame Ducks](#) - Lag between election, inauguration poses challenge to effective governance: How do you turn an elephant or a donkey into a lame duck? In U.S. government, you just defeat it in an election. ([America.gov](#))

This 1915 cartoon depicts defeated Democrats heading to the White House to seek political appointments from President Wilson.



[usa.usembassy.de](#)

About the USA is a digital collection of background resources on American society, culture, and political processes. In addition to featuring selected websites, it provides access to documents in full text format (E-Texts) on topics ranging from the history of German-American relations, government and politics to travel, holidays and sports.

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