**Subject area/course**: English Language Arts

**Grade level/band**: 9

**Task source**: Envision Schools (Primary Author: Ainate Yiaueki)

**Am I My Brother’s Keeper?**

**STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS**

1. **Task context**:

In class activities and whole class discussions, you have spent the month or so considering the essential question: “What is my responsibility to other people?” and "What does it mean to be compassionate to others? At the same time you have read *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck and considered compassion and responsibility as it relates to the text.

Your task is to write a literary analysis, using one of the following prompts. Write a well-developed on-demand essay with at least three body paragraphs, an introduction that includes your thesis and a conclusion paragraph. This essay will be at least 5 paragraphs total. Each body paragraph must include at least two pieces of evidence - this evidence can paraphrase, summarize the text or be a direct quotation from the text.

1. Through the lens of Lennie and George’s relationship discuss whether or not you believe Steinbeck portrays responsibility in a positive or negative light.
2. Explore whether or not dreams in *Of Mice and Men* are healthy or destructive. Explore this topic through at least three different characters’ dreams.
3. Loneliness is human’s greatest enemy. Discuss how at least three different characters accept or combat loneliness.
4. Steinbeck uses symbolism throughout the text. Pick one symbol from the text and analyze the reason why Steinbeck uses that symbol as a literary device in the text.

These prompts are based on the following essential questions:

* What is my responsibility to other people?
* What does it mean to be compassionate to others?

1. **Final product**:

Pick one prompts above and write a well developed, on-demand essay with at least three body paragraphs, an introduction that includes your thesis and a conclusion paragraph. Include evidence and textual examples with citations in your essay.

**Additional Information**

1. **Knowledge and skills you will need to demonstrate on this task:**

* Develop clear arguments based on critical thinking and sufficient textual evidence
* Craft a well-organized essay
* Include proper citations
* Demonstrate control of syntax and vocabulary

1. **Materials needed:**

* A copy of John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*

1. **Time requirements:**

This is a 45-minute in-class writing assignment.

1. **Scoring:**

Your work will be scored using the SCALE Textual Analysis Rubric (Grade 10). You should make sure you are familiar with the language that describes the expectations for proficient performance.