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

**Grade level/band**: 9

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

**Am I My Brother’s Keeper?**

**TEACHER'S GUIDE**

1. **Task overview**:

In this task students are asked to think critically about the text *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck and to write a textual analysis essay. The prompts for the essay are based on the essential questions: 1) What is my responsibility to other people? and 2) What does it mean to be compassionate to others? Students will pick from five writing prompts and write an on-demand essay supported by textual evidence.

1. **Aligned standards:**
2. **Common Core State Standards**

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/1/) Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.C](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/1/c/) Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.E](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/1/e/) Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

1. **Critical abilities**

Analysis of Information:Integrate and synthesize multiple sources of information (e.g., texts, experiments, simulations) presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to address a question, make informed decisions, understand a process, phenomenon, or concept, and solve problems while evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

1. **Time/schedule requirements:**

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

1. **Materials/resources:**

Students will need a copy of John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men.*

1. **Prior knowledge:**

* Class discussion throughout the reading of the book on the following essential questions:
  + What is my responsibility to other people?
  + What does it mean to be compassionate to others?
  + Instruction in use of direct literary evidence in an essay.

1. **Connection to curriculum:**

This task is intended to be used in conjunction with the study of John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men.* Given the complexity of the prompts, the instructor should consider giving the topics to students before the on-demand task and let them spend some time finding evidence.

1. **Teacher instructions:**

* Be sure students understand the difference between a fully-developed process essay and an on-demand essay. The on-demand essay is essentially a complete draft, organized and written under time pressure.
* Give students prompts for the on-demand essay and allow 45 minutes to complete the essay.

1. **Student support:**

* The number of prompts can be reduced, depending on the level of the class.
* The students can be given the prompts in advance and asked to collect their evidence as they read. They could be allowed to take notes of the evidence when they write the on-demand prompt.
* The 1992 movie version (Gary Sinise, director) can be used as an aid in discussing issues or for post-essay discussion. The use of the video may be helpful for students with lower reading skills.
* For ELL and/or LD students, extended time and/or opportunities to revise could be offered.

1. **Extensions or variations:**

* Students can be given the prompts before the on-demand task. Students could choose the prompt and find evidence in the book before the on-demand task.
* Students could work in groups to discuss their theses and find evidence for prompts.

1. **Scoring:**

Student work can be scored using the SCALE Textual Analysis Rubric (Grade 10).