Of Mice and Men

Persuasive Essay ("Five" Paragraph Essay)

Assignment: Using clear language and logical reasoning, defend or oppose George's decision at the end of Of Mice and Men to kill his companion Lennie. Include a clear introduction, three supportive body paragraphs, and a strong conclusion. The essay should be between 900 and 1100 words, or 2.5 → 3 pages. [ACP-level: 1200+ words, with two quotations in each body paragraph.]

Overall Content
1. title—interesting and/or descriptive; provocative
2. full telling—fully and thoughtfully explained, not rushed or skimpy
3. details—clearly support the thesis/topic sentence

Paragraph Organization
INTRODUCTION [100-120 words; ACP—150+ words]
1. Attention getter (Hook)—Restate the question
2. THESIS
   a. Clearly state your position without using "I think" or "in my opinion"
3. Plan for the essay—state briefly the three points you will use in your argument

BODY PARAGRAPH 1 [250-270 words; ACP—300+ words]
1. topic sentence --the topic sentence clearly identifies the important point or points to be made
2. context—introduce the quotation with background info before presenting the quotation [70+ words]
3. quotation—a direct passage from the text that clearly supports your topic sentence [ACP—two quotations]
4. analysis—full explanation of why the quotation supports your topic sentence AND thesis [120+ words]
5. concluding sentence ("clincher")—wraps up the paragraph in a satisfying way

BODY PARAGRAPH 2 [250-270 words; ACP—300+ words]
1. topic sentence --the topic sentence clearly identifies the important point or points to be made
2. context—introduce the quotation with background info before presenting the quotation
3. quotation—a direct passage from the text that clearly supports your topic sentence [ACP—two quotations]
4. analysis—full explanation of why the quotation supports your topic sentence AND thesis
5. concluding sentence ("clincher")—wraps up the paragraph in a satisfying way

BODY PARAGRAPH 3 [250-270 words; ACP—300+ words]
1. topic sentence --the topic sentence clearly identifies the important point or points to be made
2. context—introduce the quotation with background info before presenting the quotation
3. quotation—a direct passage from the text that clearly supports your topic sentence [ACP—two quotations]
4. analysis—full explanation of why the quotation supports your topic sentence AND thesis
5. concluding sentence ("clincher")—wraps up the paragraph in a satisfying way

CONCLUSION [100-120 words; ACP—150+ words]
1. Restate your thesis in different words
2. Remind the reader of your major points
3. Strong finishing sentence that stays with the reader

Style
1. point of view—Do not use "I think" or "in my opinion"
2. vocabulary—Use at least TWO course vocab words—emboldened
3. sentence variety—a rich balance of sentence lengths—long and short sentences
4. transitions between paragraphs—the paper flows naturally from one paragraph to the next
Writing Conventions/Mechanics
1. **citing quotations**—end quotation—parentheses + page number—punctuation
   - **EXAMPLE**
     - George complains out loud, “God a’mighty, if I was alone I could live so easy” (11).

2. **spelling**—words are properly spelled

3. **capitalization**—words in need of capitalization are capitalized

4. **punctuation**—sentences are properly punctuated

5. **usage**—words are used properly, e.g., subject/verb agreement, pronoun reference

6. **sentence completeness**—sentences are complete—no run-ons or fragments

Writing Conventions/Format
1. **course guidelines are followed**
   a. typed and double spaced
   b. readable, 12-pt. font with 1 in. margins
   c. proper heading:
      - Joan Smith
      - Ninth-Grade English 221/224
      - Reinstein
      - October 5, 2004
   d. contains all writing process components
      i. Pros and Cons handout—with evidence (notes)
      ii. Finding textual evidence
      iii. Body paragraphs in-class draft
      iv. Intro and conclusion draft
      v. Final draft
Example Introduction (for George doing the right thing)

Which would you prefer—bringing your best friend to a peaceful, painless death yourself, or letting a furious stranger murder him mercilessly? George, in John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*, has the difficult decision of responding to his companion Lennie, who has just accidentally killed Curley’s wife. George knows that Curley is after Lennie and he doesn’t have much time before Curley comes. He knows that killing Lennie himself is the right thing to do. George is right for three reasons. First, he is protecting Lennie from the pain of being killed by Curley. Second, he is protecting Lennie from going to jail or an institution. Finally, he is protecting others from Lennie killing again. (115 words)

Example Conclusion (for George doing the right thing)

George is right to kill Lennie for three very important reasons: he’s protecting Lennie from a painful death from Curley, he’s protecting Lennie from going to jail or an institution, and he’s protecting others, too, from Lennie’s dangerous behavior. Sometimes you are faced with very difficult decisions, when whatever you do seems horrible. Both killing Lennie and letting him live both contain pain and sadness. But when you look at what would have happened if Lennie had stayed alive, it’s clear that George makes the right decision. (87 words)
Example Body Paragraph (for George doing the wrong thing)

One way of seeing that George is doing the wrong thing in killing Lennie is that he is doing it for selfish reasons. George kills Lennie as a crime of convenience and not a crime of conscience. We see this in the first part of the story when George and Lennie are in the brush the night before going into Soledad. Lennie asks George for ketchup with their beans and George gets furious at Lennie, because he’s frustrated that Lennie is always asking for things that they don’t have. George complains out loud, “God a’mighty, if I was alone I could live so easy. I could go get a job an’ work, an’ no trouble. No mess at all, and when the end of the month come I could take my fifty bucks and go into town and get whatever I want” (11). This is important because it shows how frustrated George is with Lennie and that he sometimes thinks about what his life might be like without Lennie. Because he seems to think that his life might be better, the reader sees that maybe George is selfish when he kills Lennie at the end of the novel. Yes, he loves Lennie, but he’s also fed up. At this moment, he doesn’t want to have to be caring for Lennie, and he wishes he could just be alone. So at the end of the novel, when he kills Lennie, it’s clear that one of his reasons is based on selfishness, and it’s not acceptable to kill a person for selfish reasons. This is one way of seeing George’s decision as the wrong one. (273 words)