ANALYTICAL ESSAY: Of Mice and Men and Romeo and Juliet

The essay must be at least 500 typed words in order to be accepted for grading.

Using MLA style headings and citations, write a 500-word analytical essay that explores one of the following two topics. The essay must be double-spaced, using 12-point Times font. You must refer to Romeo and Juliet *and* Of Mice and Men in the essay.

1. *Of Mice and Men* is highly "dramatic" - that is, similar to a drama or play - in its structure and action. Describe the ways in which the novel is like a play, using *Romeo and Juliet* for comparison. Structure your claim (thesis) so that you are making an arguable statement about why Steinbeck chose to put his work together in this way.

   Here are some ideas about *Of Mice and Men* you can include in your own essay. Do not quote this passage verbatim. Rather, use these as examples to support your claim (thesis). You do not need to cite this source.:

   Each chapter of the novel takes place in a single location, aside from a short walk at the beginning of Chapter One. Thus the novel is structured, much like a play, into "scenes." The locations of these scenes are treated much like the space of a stage - characters enter and exit frequently, give speeches and move the plot forward. The narrator, meanwhile, is minimally intrusive. This "dramatic" form of writing allows the novel to progress rapidly and portentously, building symbolic density and narrative tension without becoming too heavy-handed.

2. *Of Mice and Men* is often studied as an example of "foreshadowing" in literature. How do both Shakespeare with *Romeo and Juliet* and Steinbeck foreshadow the pivotal events in their works? What does this effect do for the tone of both pieces of literature? Structure your claim (thesis) so that you are making an arguable statement about how foreshadowing in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Of Mice and Men* affects the tone of these two works.

   Here are some ideas about *Of Mice and Men* you can include in your own essay. Do not quote this passage verbatim. Rather, use these as examples to support your claim (thesis). You do not need to cite this source.:

   Nearly every word and image in the novel is carefully chosen to guide the reader to the accidental killing of Curley's wife and the mercy killing of Lennie. The gun used to shoot Candy's decrepit dog is later used by George to shoot Lennie; the many small animals that Lennie crushes out of love foreshadow his panicked killings of his puppy and, moments later, Curley's wife; and the event that drove George and Lennie out of Weed (Lennie's false accusation of rape) parallels the scene in the barn between him and Curley's wife. This dense layering of related plot elements gives the plot an element of inevitability - as though fate has preordained the tragic events of the book.