Virtually all works of literature contain a theme, and often more than one. As a reminder, a theme is some underlying meaning, a message from the writer making some statement about people or society. Often the theme is indirectly stated, meaning we, the audience, are to read/listen/watch and understand that theme without it being told to us expressly.

Barriers in *Of Mice and Men*

Unfortunately, despite a need for companionship, people set up barriers that maintain loneliness, and they sustain those barriers by being inhumane to each other. One barrier is based on gender: The bunkhouse is a male world, where women are not to be trusted. While Curley's wife is always looking for attention, Curley's jealousy causes all the ranch hands to stay away from her. Although Curley's wife is often portrayed as cruel and troublesome (and therefore, we can see why she is left alone), the real thing that isolates her is that she is a female in an all-male environment. Race is another barrier. Crooks, for example, must occupy a room in the stable alone, and he is not welcome in the bunkhouse. For Candy, the barriers are age and handicap. He is afraid that, when he is too old to work, he will be thrown out on the ash heap, a victim of a society that does not value age and discriminates against handicaps.

*http://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/o/of-mice-and-men/critical-essays/major-themes-2*

In the above paragraph, several characters are mentioned who encounter barriers to some goal or objective they have. Using your book as a resource, explain in your own words what some of the barriers are for each of the characters listed below, **and find quotes** that show how those barriers affect the character.

George:

Candy:

Crooks:

Curley’s wife: