

Reading Makes You a Better Writer

Writing Sample 1:

from John Steinbeck "Of Mice and Men" (an abridged passage)

The bunkhouse was a long building. Inside it was plain. It had three doors and small windows. There were eight bunks. Some of the bunks had blankets. Some had burlap ticking. Each bunk had shelves. Each shelf had the cowboy's belongings. There was also medicine and other stuff on the shelves. Near one wall was a stove. In the middle of the room was a table to play games on.

Writing Sample 2:

from John Steinbeck "Of Mice and Men" (actual passage)

The bunkhouse was a long, rectangular building. Inside, the walls were whitewashed and the floor unpainted. In three walls there were small, square windows, and in the fourth, a solid door with a wooden latch. Against the walls were eight bunks, five of them made up of blankets and the other three showing their burlap ticking. Over each bunk there was nailed an apple box with the opening forward so that it made two shelves for the personal belongings of the occupant of the bunk. And these shelves were loaded with little articles, soap and talcum powder, razors, and those Western magazines ranch men love to read and scoff at and secretly believe. And there were medicines on the shelves, and little vials, combs; and from the nails on the box sides, a few neckties. Near one wall there was a black cast iron stove, its stovepipe going straight up through the ceiling. In the middle of the room stood a big square table littered with playing cards, and around it were grouped boxes for the players to sit on.