Read the passage and then answer **part (a)** and **part (b)**

ONE end of the great barn was piled high with new hay and over the pile hung the four-taloned jackson fork suspended from its pulley. The hay came down like a mountain slope to the other end of the barn, and there was a level place as yet unfilled with the new crop. At the sides the feeding racks were visible, and between the slats the heads of horses could be seen. It was Sunday afternoon. The resting horses nibbled the remaining wisps of hay, and they stamped their feet and they bit the wood of the mangers and rattled the halter chains. The afternoon sun sliced in through the cracks of the barn walls and lay in bright lines on the hay. There was the buzz of flies in the air, the lazy afternoon humming. From outside came the clang of horseshoes on the playing peg and the shouts of men, playing, encouraging, jeering. But in the barn it was quiet and humming and lazy and warm.

**Part (a)**

a) What language techniques does Steinbeck use to present the barn?

**and** then **Part (b)**

**b)** How does Steinbeck use setting in the novel to create a sense of life on the ranches at the time?

Read the passage and then answer **part (a)** and **part (b)**

ONE end of the great barn was piled high with new hay and over the pile hung the four-taloned jackson fork suspended from its pulley. The hay came down like a mountain slope to the other end of the barn, and there was a level place as yet unfilled with the new crop. At the sides the feeding racks were visible, and between the slats the heads of horses could be seen. It was Sunday afternoon. The resting horses nibbled the remaining wisps of hay, and they stamped their feet and they bit the wood of the mangers and rattled the halter chains. The afternoon sun sliced in through the cracks of the barn walls and lay in bright lines on the hay. There was the buzz of flies in the air, the lazy afternoon humming. From outside came the clang of horseshoes on the playing peg and the shouts of men, playing, encouraging, jeering. But in the barn it was quiet and humming and lazy and warm.

**Part (a)**

a) What language techniques does Steinbeck use to present the barn?

**and** then **Part (b)**

**b)** How does Steinbeck use setting in the novel to create a sense of life on the ranches at the time?

a) What language techniques does Steinbeck use to present the barn?

Steinbeck creates a sense of calm in the barn with his use of assonance in "piled high" and soft consonant sounds in phrases like "new hay". The inclusion of the "four taloned jackson fork" however introduces a reminder that this is a working space full of danger. The use of the word "taloned" reminds the reader of a bird of prey hovering in search of a kill. The fork is "suspended" over a pile of hay ready for use but still for the moment, suspended in time which seems almost to have stood still. This is further suggested by the place "as yet unfilled with the new crop".  
  
The use of the simile "like a mountain slope" reminds the reader of the natural world outside the ranch and the Gabilan mountains which Steinbeck refers to at the start and end of the novel. Like the wilderness where we first meet George and Lennie and where Lennie meets his end, the barn is a place of sanctuary and death in the novel as it is here that Curley's wife is killed. This is the calm before the storm.  
  
The idea that something is wrong is hinted at by the behaviour of the horses who seem restless. Steinbeck uses the phrases "stamped their feet...bit the wood...rattled their halter chains". However the overall feeling is of stillness which Steinbeck calls "the lazy afternoon humming".   
  
Finally, Steinbeck uses the contrast between inside the barn and outside when he writes: "From outside came the clang of horseshoes... But in the barn it was quiet". The use of the contrast prepares the reader for idea that events can unfold in the barn out of sight. In the final line of the extract "quiet and humming and lazy and warm" Steinbeck employs the technique of polysyndeton to create a relaxed rhythm which lulls the reader into a sense of security.

b) How does Steinbeck use setting in the novel to create a sense of life on the ranches at the time?   
  
Steinbeck presents life on the ranches through several key places. Firstly, we meet George and Lennie in the brush some distance from the highway. It is presented as a place where "tramps ... come wearily down from the highway". The inclusion of this detail reminds us that many people had to travel far and wide to find work, and that this has become a way of life in the depression of the 1930's. The use of the word 'wearily' reminds the audience that life is tough and exhausting especially when coupled with the phrase "Evening of a hot day",  and that a place of cool solitude like the brush is a welcome haven.  
  
The bunkhouse is described as being a purely functional space with few comforts. It has "whitewashed" walls and the floor is "unpainted. It is clear that little is spent on the men's accommodations although it is kept clean by the swamper, Candy.  Each man has an "apple box" nailed to the wall for a shelf and a few belongings. What is immediately clear is that there is no privacy on the ranch and the men sleep, eat and work together which makes it no wonder that tensions arose between them which led to events like the shooting of Candy's dog: in the confines of the bunkhouse, everyone would have to live with the smell of him.   
  
Crook's room is described in great detail also, and reveals that segregation of blacks and whites is in full force as he is "not welcome" in the bunkhouse. Crooks' possessions include a "mauled copy of the California Civil Code", "dirty books", a dictionary and a pair of spectacles. Crooks as a literate negro should have the right to vote (illiterate Negroes could not) and perhaps this is why he is so insistent on having his rights "even when he don't like 'em". As a black man, Crooks had few rights but his accommodation and facilities had to be "equal but separate". He has his own room which represents the privacy which the other men lack, but he does not have the camaraderie and companionship which the white men enjoy. He is profoundly lonely - he tells Lennie that there is just one black family in Soledad.  
  
The barn and stables are referred to several times and remind the modern reader that Steinbeck is writing about a time before the mechanisation of agriculture. The horses and mules are the engines of the ranch and the man who can control them (Slim, the jerkline skinner) is a valuable employee whose skill is respected by others: Steinbeck calls him the "Prince of the ranch".  The machinery is not described in detail but it is clear that accidents like Candy's are not uncommon. This coupled with Crooks having been kicked in the back by a horse adds to the impression that the ranches were dangerous places to work.