The Grapes of Wrath
Reading Assignment

DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PACKET – keep everything organized in your composition book

Social Criticism – Literature that addresses real-life issues: Political, Social, Religious, or Economic. A writer comments on a perceived problem through direct comments or portrayals of imaginary characters’ situations

Route 66 is a highway that runs from Chicago, Illinois to Los Angeles, California. In the 1930s this was the main road to travel the Southwest. This is the road the Joads took after leaving Sallisaw, Oklahoma.

Narration and Structure

The narrator tells the story in third-person point of view. Generally, the narrator is omniscient, or all-knowing, seeing and reporting the thoughts of the characters as well as witnessing and reporting the action. At times, however, he reports only the action without revealing the characters' thoughts. The narration alternates between chapters centering on society, nature, universal themes, or background information and chapters centering on specific people and places. For example, Chapter 1 presents information about the the Dust Bowl and society's reaction to it. Chapter 2 centers on Tom Joad and a truck driver who gives Tom a ride home after his release from prison. Chapter 3 centers on a turtle that exhibits the kind of perseverance that sustains the Joad family during their journey west. Chapter 4 focuses on Tom and Jim Casy, a former preacher who tags along with Tom. Chapter 5 presents general information on how banks evict tenant farmers. Chapter 6 zeroes in on Tom, Casy, and Muley Graves at the abandoned Joad homestead. The narration continues to alternate chapters in this way, giving the novel a balanced structure.

Answer the following in a well developed paragraph.

1. Many Americans have thought of their country as a kind of “promised land.” Some see its promise in its good land, bountiful harvests and stable weather conditions. Some see its promise in terms of democratic processes. Still others are dazzled by opportunities provided by a system of free enterprise. What is your idea of a “promised land”?

Read Chapters 1 & 2 and complete the following

2. Describe the setting established in the first chapter. What color imagery do you note here? How does it create emotion?
3. What does the setting of the opening scene suggest about the rest of the novel? What does it suggest about family structure?
4. The Oklahoma setting includes two overwhelming elements—the sun and the dust. Quote and document at least three references to sun and dust.
5. Explain this quote: “The faces of the watching men...became hard and angry and resistant...Then the
women knew they were safe...”

6. Write a character analysis for Tom Joad. Include observations about his physical characteristics and his
mannerisms. What does his handling of the grasshopper connote about him?

7. How does this chapter set up an opposition between bosses and workers?

Draw and complete this Connections Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image or Idea</th>
<th>Example from Chapter 1</th>
<th>Example from Chapter 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>“as the sharp sun struck day after day...”, “The dust was long in the settling back again.”</td>
<td>“Now and then the flies roared...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wind</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tools/Machines</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People and Their</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Read Chapter 3 and complete the following

8. The turtle is symbolic of a struggle for survival. Indicate from the final paragraph of Chapter 3, two actions
that are similar to humans.

9. Compare the turtle to Tom Joad

Chapter 4 Summary

After getting out of the truck, Tom Joad begins walking home. He sees the turtle of the previous chapter and
picks it up. He stops in the shade of a tree to rest and meets a man who sits there, singing "Jesus is My Savior." The man, Jim Casy, had a long, bony frame and sharp features. A former minister, he recognizes Tom immediately. He was a "Burning Busher" who used to "howl out the name of Jesus to glory," but he lost the calling because he has too many sinful ideas that seem sensible. Tom tells Casy that he took the turtle for his little brother, and he replies that nobody can keep a turtle, for they eventually just go off on their own. Casy claims that he doesn't know where he's going now, and Tom tells him to lead people, even if he doesn't know
where to lead them. Casy tells Tom that part of the reason he quit preaching was that he too often succumbed to
temptation. Finally he realized that perhaps what he was doing wasn't a sin, and there isn't really sin or virtue
there are simply things people do. He realized he didn't “know Jesus,” he merely knew the stories of the Bible.
Tom tells Casy why he was in jail: he was at a dance drunk, and got in a fight with a man. The man cut Tom
with a knife, so he hit him over the head with a shovel. Tom tells him that he was treated relatively well in
McAlester. He ate regularly, got clean clothes and bathed. He even tells about how someone broke his parole to
go back. Tom tells how his father “stole” their house. There was a family living there that moved away, so his
father, uncle and grandfather cut the house in two and dragged part of it first, only to find that Wink Manley
took the other half. They get to the boundary fence of their property, and Tom tells him that they didn't need a
fence, but it gave Pa a feeling that their forty acres was forty acres. Tom and Casy get to the house: something
has happened nobody is there.

Analysis: Jim Casy is the moral voice of the novel and its religious center. He is a religious icon, a philosopher
and a prophet. His initials (J.C.) reveal that Steinbeck intends him to be a Christ figure espousing Steinbeck's
interpretation of religious doctrine. He eschews dogma and scripture, even any semblance of a strict moral code.
Instead, Casy finds the rules and regulations of Christian teachings too confining and not applicable to actual
situations. The most striking case of this is his “sins” with the women he converts. Casy originally felt
tremendously guilty over his actions, worried about his responsibilities toward the women he was trying to
convert to Jesus, yet finally came to the conclusion that "maybe it's just the way folks is." Casy's final moral
code is one without any definition. He denies the existence of virtue or vice, finding that "there's just stuff
people do. It's all part of the same thing."
Tom's description of prison demonstrates the poverty under which he and his family live. For Tom, prison ensured that he would be fed and cared for. Now that he has reentered society, he has no such guarantee. The story of how Tom's family obtained their house further demonstrates his family's dire situation to have a home, they literally have to carry one from another property. Yet Tom tells Casy this as a humorous anecdote; his poverty has become so ingrained that all that Tom can do is accept it.

Read Chapter 5 and complete the following.

10. Quote and document from the novel an example of personification about the bank.
11. Discuss how the tractors are described as monsters.
12. How is the tractor driver “part of the monster”?
13. What power do the small farmers have against the banks and the tractors?
14. Contrast the physical characteristics of the owner and the farmers. What does Steinbeck communicate about each through these details?
15. What are the components ownership?

Draw and complete this Graphic Organizer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Simile or Metaphor</th>
<th>Image or Idea Evoked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Baptized both of you in the irrigation ditch at once, Fightin’ and yelling like a couple of Cats.”</td>
<td>Simile</td>
<td>Cats hate water, and the simile evokes an image of the boys resisting and struggling against the baptism fiercely.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“… the banks were machines and masters all at the same time.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“The banks – the monster has to have profits all the time.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“But you’ll kill the land with cotton.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“The tractors came over the roads and into the fields, great crawlers moving like insects…”</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…he was part of the monster, a robot in the seat.”</td>
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Provide one direct quote from Chapter 5 to describe the bank, the tractor, and the monster.

Chapter 6 Summary

Casy and Tom approached the Joad home. The house was mashed at one corner and appeared deserted. Casy says that it looks like the arm of the Lord had struck. Tom can tell that Ma isn't there, for she would have never left the gate unhooked. They only see one resident (the cat), but Tom wonders why the cat didn't go to find another family if his family had moved, or why the neighbors hadn't taken the rest of the belongings in the house. Muley Graves approaches, a short, lean old man with the truculent look of an ornery child. Muley tells
Tom that his mother was worrying about him. His family was evicted, and had to move in with his Uncle John. They were forced to chop cotton to make enough money to go west. Casy suggests going west to pick grapes in California. Muley tells Tom and Casy that the loss of the farm broke up his family; his wife and kids went off to California, while Muley chose to stay. He has been forced to eat wild game. He muses about how angry he was when he was told he had to get off the land. First he wanted to kill people, but then his family left and Muley was left alone and wandering. He realized that he is used to the place, even if he has to wander the land like a ghost. Tom tells them that he can't go to California, for it would mean breaking parole. According to Tom, prison has not changed him significantly. He thinks that if he saw Herb Turnbull, the man he killed, coming after him with a knife again, he would still hit him with the shovel. Tom tells them that there was a man in McAlester that read a great deal about prisons and told him that they started a long time ago and now cannot be stopped, despite the fact that they do not actually rehabilitate people. Muley tells them that they have to hide, for they are trespassing on the land. They have to hide in a cave for the night.

Analysis: When Tom and Casy return to the Joad home, it appears foreign and unfriendly. The home is empty, but for Tom the situation is unnatural. There are signs that the family has left, but suspiciously everyone seems to have left as well.

Muley Graves echoes the previous chapter's idea that no matter who a man might kill, he cannot stop the banks. Eventually Muley enters a state of resignation, forced to accept his fate. The character is essentially a ghost, living on the outskirts of society and wandering the land, bereft of his wife and children. He demonstrates the dehumanizing quality of the banks' intrusion. He is a man without any impetus for living.

When Tom tells Muley and Casy that he has not been rehabilitated by his jail term, it is a warning that, despite his calm demeanor he is still a man capable of violence. This foreshadows later developments; if Tom is provoked, there is still the possibility that he could react viciously. Neither Tom nor Muley believe in the rehabilitating power of prisons. According to Muley, the only type of government force that can manipulate human behavior is the capitalist system, the idea of the “safe margin of profit.” This reinforces the idea that the corporate system is the real controlling force of society, now more powerful than any citizen or group of citizens yet without concern for them.

Even spending the night on the property places Tom, Casy and Muley in danger. They are trespassing, and must hide in a cave in order to protect themselves from patrolling deputies. Muley makes the apt comparison of them to hunted animals, forced into subterfuge and unable to even show themselves in the open.

Read Chapter 7 and complete the following.

16. Discuss how the consumer was manipulated by the car salesman. Describe a time that you think you have been manipulated either by advertising or by a sales person.
17. What does Chapter 7 imply about used-car salesmen?
18. How does the mules' replacement by used cars parallel the situation the farmers experience with their land?

Chapter 8 Summary
Tom and Casy reach Uncle John's farm. They remark that Muley's lonely and covert lifestyle has obviously driven him insane. According to Tom, his Uncle John is equally crazy, and wasn't expected to live long, yet is older than his father. Still, he is tougher and meaner than even Grampa, hardened by losing his young wife years ago. They see Pa Joad fixing the truck. When he sees Tom, he assumes that he broke out of jail. They go in the house and see Ma Joad, a heavy woman thick with child-bearing and work. Her face was controlled and kindly. She worries that Tom went mad in prison. This chapter also introduces Grampa and Granma Joad. She is as tough as he is, once shooting her husband while she was speaking in tongues. Noah Joad, Tom's older brother, is a strange man, slow and withdrawn, with little pride and few urges. He may have been brain damaged at childbirth. The family has dinner, and Casy says grace. He talks about how Jesus went off into the wilderness alone, and how he did the same. Yet what Casy concluded was that mankind was holy. Pa tells Tom about Al, his sixteen-year old brother, who is concerned with little more than girls and cars. He hasn't been at home at night for a week. His sister Rosasharn has married Connie Rivers, and is several months pregnant. They have two hundred dollars for their journey.
Analysis: The members of the Joad family are tough people, crude and hardened by life experience. Uncle John has gone nearly mad from losing his wife to illness, Pa Joad is sullen and withdrawn, and Grampa is too angry and bitter to even stay in the house. Only Ma Joad retains some level of warmth and compassion. She worries that Tom may have gone insane in prison. However, even she has changed, as Tom remarks, for until recently she never had her house pushed over or had to sell everything she owned. Even Granma and Grampa Joad are mean, tough people.

Casy's speech at dinner is yet another example of Steinbeck's glorification of the common person. For him, the population as a whole exemplifies what is holy. It is only when people diverge from the common good that they become unholy. This is further bolstered by Ma Joad's musings that there might be hope if everybody became angry enough to rise up against the moneyed interests. Steinbeck takes a largely socialist viewpoint, championing the common good over individual interests.

Read the following and answer the question that follows

Ma was heavy, but not fat; thick with child-bearing and work. She wore a loose Mother Hubbard of gray cloth in which there had once been colored flowers, but the color was washed out now, so that the small flowered pattern was only a little lighter gray than the background. The dress came down to her ankles, and her strong, broad, bare feet moved quickly and deftly over the floor. Her thin, steel-gray hair was gathered in a sparse wispy knot at the back of her head. Strong, freckled arms were bare to the elbow, and her hands were chubby and delicate, like those of a plump little girl. She looked out into the sunshine. Her full face was not soft; it was controlled, kindly. Her hazel eyes seemed to have experienced all possible tragedy and to have mounted pain and suffering like steps into a high calm and a superhuman understanding. She seemed to know, to accept, to welcome her position, the citadel of the family, the strong place that could not be taken. And since old Tom and the children could not know hurt or fear unless she acknowledged hurt and fear, she had practiced denying them in herself. And since, when a joyful thing happened, they looked to see whether joy was on her, it was her habit to build up laughter out of inadequate materials. But better than joy was calm. Imperturbability could be depended upon. And from her great and humble position in the family she had taken dignity and a clean calm beauty. From her position as healer, her hands had grown sure and cool and quiet; from her position as arbiter she had become as remote and faultless in judgment as a goddess. She seemed to know that if she swayed the family shook, and if she ever really deeply wavered or despairsed the family would fall, the family will to function would be gone.

19. How would you characterize Ma Joad? Give specific evidence from the passage to support your assertions.

20. What similarities are there between Ma Joad and Casy?

Read the biblical story of the prodigal son that follows (Luke 15:11-32, King James Version). How does Chapter Eight echo the parable?

A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, & before thee, & am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.
Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him.

And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends, but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

In the following table, compare and contrast Tom and the prodigal son.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Tom Joad</strong></th>
<th><strong>The Prodigal Son</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tom has been away from home</td>
<td>Prodigal son has been away from home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Read Chapter 9 and complete the following.

21. The following are typical statements of the dispossessed families:

   *You’re not buying only junk; you’re buying junked lives.*
   *How can we live without our lives? How will we know it’s us without our past?*

   Explain the phrases “junked lives” and “Without our lives.”

22. Explain the willow tree metaphor set up at the end of this chapter.

Chapters 10 Summary

Ma Joad tells Tom that she is concerned about going to California, worried that it won't turn out well, for the only information they have is from flyers they read. Casy asks to accompany them to California. He wants to work in the fields, where he can listen to people rather than preach to them. Tom says that preaching is a tone of voice and a style, being good to people when they don't respond to it. Pa and Uncle John return with the truck, and prepare to leave. The two children, twelve-year old Ruthie and ten-year old Winfield are there with their older sister, Rose of Sharon (Rosasharn) and her husband. They discuss how Tom can't leave the state because of his parole. They have a family conference that night and discuss a number of issues: they decide to allow Casy to go with them, since it's the only right thing for them to do. They continue with preparations, killing the pigs to have food to take with them. While Casy helps out Ma Joad with food preparation, he remarks to Tom that she looks tired, as if she is sick. Ma Joad looks through her belongings, going through old letters and clippings she had saved. She has to place them in the fire. Before they leave, Muley Graves stops to say goodbye. Noah tells him that he's going to die out in the field if he stays, but Muley accepts his fate. Grampa refuses to leave, so they decide to give him medicine that will knock him out and take him with them.
Analysis: This chapter illustrates the Joad family dynamic. The numerous relatives across three generations make any order difficult, as the family meeting demonstrates. The Joad family has Grampa as the nominal head, yet he exerts no special influence. If any member of the family leads the others, it is Ma Joad, who dominates by moral force. It is she who issues the final verdict allowing Casy to go with them to California. While Tom Joad is the main character in *The Grapes of Wrath*, it is Ma Joad who is the story's moral center, reminding everyone that they have greater concerns than just their own interests: it would be wrong if they to refuse food or shelter to anyone.

Ma Joad appears to be the principal victim of the move to California. Casy notices that she looks ill from the recent events, and only she is the only one who appears to have regrets. For the others, it is an unfortunate move, yet she must leave behind the memories that she treasures. Even Grampa, when he refuses to leave, does so out of bitter energy. Ma Joad, in contrast, has a “great weariness.”

Grampa's refusal to leave highlights how important the land is for these people. For him, it is unimaginable to leave the area where he was born and raised. Yet he has no option. If he were to remain, he would essentially cease to exist as a human, like Muley Graves.

Read Chapter 11 and Find examples for each THEME

**Modern technology separates people from the land**
1. “there is no day and night for a tractor”
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

**A deep relationship with the land is important and necessary, because people have no connection to the land cannot truly understand themselves.**
1. “in the tractor man there grows the contempt that comes only to a stranger who has little understanding an no relation”
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

Read Chapter 12 and complete the following.

23. Discuss why Route 66 is called “the mother road.”
24. List the states that Route 66 traverses. List only the states that the Joads traverse.
25. How can the last scene in this chapter be an allegory to the entire novel's journey? (You might consider coming back to this question after you finish the novel.)

Find examples for each THEME

**Human beings as predatory**
1. Businessmen taking advantage of poverty and/or ignorance
2. 
3. 
4. 

**Human beings as kind and decent**
1. Man helping a family of twelve
2. 
3. 
4.
**Chapter 13 Summary**

The Joads continue on their travels. Al remarks that they may have trouble getting over mountains in their car, which can barely support its weight. Grampa Joad wakes up and insists that he's not going with them. They stop at a gas station where the owner automatically assumes they are broke, and tells them that people often stop, begging for gas. The owner claims that fifty cars per day go west, but wonders what they expect when they reach their destination. He tells how one family traded their daughter's doll for some gas. Casy wonders what the nation is coming to, since people seem unable to make a decent living. Casy says that he used to use his energy to fight against the devil, believing that the devil was the enemy. However, now he believes that there's something worse. The Joad's dog wanders from the car and is run over in the road. They continue on their journey and begin to worry when they reach the state line. However, Tom reassures them that he is only in danger if he commits a crime. Otherwise, nobody will know that he has broken his parole by leaving the state. On their next stop for the night, the Joads meet the Wilsons, a family from Kansas that is going to California. Grampa complains of illness, and weeps. The family thinks that he may suffer a stroke. Gramma tells Casy to pray for Grampa, even if he is no longer a preacher. Suddenly Grampa starts twitching and slumps. He dies. The Joads face a choice: they can pay fifty dollars for a proper burial for him or have him buried a pauper. They decide to bury Grampa themselves and leave a note so that people don't assume he was murdered. The Wilsons help them bury Grampa. They write a verse from scripture on the note on his grave. After burying Grampa, they have Casy say a few words. The reactions to the death are varied. Rose of Sharon comforts Gramma, while Uncle John is curiously unmoved by the turn of events. Casy admits that he knew Grampa was dying, but didn't say anything because he couldn't have helped. He blames the separation from the land for Grampa's death. The Joads and the Wilsons decide to help each other on the journey by spreading out the load between their two cars so that both families will make it to California.

**Analysis:** The first stop that the Joads make reinforces the idea that they may not find work when they reach California because of a filled labor market. Yet even with the dire situation that the Joads face, they are nevertheless better off than some travelers, at the very least able to pay for gas.

Casy reiterates the idea that the nation faces a nearly unconquerable enemy. Although he does not explicitly identify this identity, its characteristics indicate that it is the capitalist system that was earlier vilified. He identifies the enemy as a system that precludes normal people from making a decent living. For Casy, this "evil" is too powerful to effectively combat, a battle more strenuous than that against the devil.

Even early in the journey the Joads suffer a tragic loss, if one less significant than an actual family member. The family dog becomes the first victim on the journey. Its early demise, dying before the Joads even reach the Oklahoma border, foreshadows further losses that the family may suffer. Steinbeck further foreshadows problems that the Joads may face when Tom mentions parole violations. He is only in danger if he commits another crime. That danger may eventually arise.

The death of the dog is followed by the death of an actual family member. Despite his tough veneer of anger and bitterness, Grampa dies from a stroke. Since he was the one family member most adamantly opposed to leaving their home, it was likely the separation that hastened his demise. Casy makes a direct correlation between Grampa's death and their journey, reinforcing the idea that these people have a significant personal relationship with they farmed.

The agreement between the Joads and the Wilsons to aid each other on the way to California is a significant plot development, for it is in collective interests that these families find their strength. This is the first building block in a collectivist scheme that Steinbeck seems to support in which working class people come together for their collective interests.

**Read the following paragraph. Then using it as a mentor passage, describe someone you know**

*Al, at the wheel, his face purposeful, his whole body listening to the car, his restless eyes jumping from the road to the instrument panel. Al was one with his engine, every nerve listening for weaknesses, for the thumps or squeals, hums and chattering that indicate a change that may cause a breakdown. He had become the soul of the car.*
Read the following passages and answer the following questions

Ma sat beside Granma, one elbow out the window, and the skin reddening under the fierce sun. Ma looked ahead too, but her eyes were flat and did not see the road or the fields, the gas stations, the little eating sheds. She did not glance at them as the Hudson went by.

26. If Ma Joad “looked ahead” but “did not see the road,” what does she see? (Hint: it isn’t necessarily something physical.)

"You folks aim to buy anything? Gasoline or stuff?" he asked.
Al was out already, unscrewing the steaming radiator cap with the tips of his fingers, jerking his hand away to escape the spurt when the cap should come loose. "Need some gas, mister."
"Got any money?"
"Sure. Think we're beggin'?"
The truculence left the fat man's face. "Well, that's all right, folks. He'p yourself to water." And he hastened to explain. "Road is full a people, come in, use water, dirty up the toilet, an' then, by God, they'll steal stuff an' don't buy nothin'. Got no money to buy with. Come beggin' a gallon gas to move on."
Tom dropped angrily to the ground and moved toward the fat man. "We're payin' our way," he said fiercely. "You got no call to give us a goin'-over. We ain't asked you for nothin'."
"I ain't," the fat man said quickly. The sweat began to soak through his short-sleeved polo shirt. "Jus' he'p yourself to water, and go use the toilet if you want." "I don't know what the country's comin' to," the fat man continued. His complaint had shifted now and he was no longer talking to or about the Joads. "Fifty-sixty cars a folks go by ever' day, folks all movin' west with kids an' househol' stuff. Where they goin'? What they gonna do?"
"Doin' the same as us," said Tom. "Goin' someplace to live. Tryin' to get along. That's all."
"Well, I don' know what the country's comin' to. I jus' don' know. Here's me tryin' to get along, too. Think any them big new cars stop here? No, sir! They go on to them yella-painted company stations in town. They don't stop no place like this. Most folks stops here ain't got nothin." "It ain't that I'm tryin' to git trade outa rich folks," the fat man went on. "I'm just tryin' to git trade. Why, the folks that stops here begs gasoline an' they trades for gasoline. I could show you in my back room the stuff they'll trade for gas an' oil: beds an' baby buggies an' pots an' pans. One family traded a doll their kid had for a gallon. An' what'm I gonna do with the stuff, open a junk shop? Why, one fella wanted to gimme his shoes for a gallon. An' if I was that kinda fella I bet I could git—" He glanced at Ma and stopped.
Jim Casy had wet his head, and the drops still coursed down his high forehead, and his muscled neck was wet, and his shirt was wet. He moved over beside Tom. "It ain't the people's fault," he said. "How'd you like to sell the bed you sleep on for a tankful a gas?"
"I know it ain't their fault. Ever' person I talked to is on the move for a damn good reason. But what's the country comin' to?" Casy tried to tell ya an' you jest ast the same thing over. I seen fellas like you before. You ain't askin' nothin'; you're jus' singin' a kinda song. "What we
comin' to?' You don' wanta know. Country's movin' aroun', goin' places. They's folks dyin' all aroun'. Maybe you'll die pretty soon, but you won't know nothin'. I seen too many fellas like you. You don't want to know nothin'. Just sing yourself to sleep with a song- 'What we comin' to?'" He looked at the gas pump, rusted and old, and at the shack behind it, built of old lumber, the nail holes of its first use still showing through the paint that had been brave, the brave yellow paint that had tried to imitate the big company stations in town. But the paint couldn't cover the old nail holes and the old cracks in the lumber, and the paint could not be renewed. The imitation was a failure and the owner had known it was a failure. And inside the open door of the shack Tom saw the oil barrels, only two of them, and the candy counter with stale candies and licorice whips turning brown with age, and cigarettes. He saw the broken chair and the fly screen with a rusted hole in it. And the littered yard that should have been graveld, and behind, the corn field drying and dying in the sun. Beside the house the little stock of used tires and retreaded tires. And he saw for the first time the fat man's cheap washed pants and his cheap polo shirt and his paper hat. He said, "I didn't mean to sound off at ya, mister. It's the heat. You ain't got nothin'. Pretty soon you'll be on the road yourself. And it ain't tractors'll put you there. It's them pretty yella stations in town. Folks is movin'," he said ashamedly. "An' you'll be movin', mister."

The fat man's hand slowed on the pump and stopped while Tom spoke. He looked worriedly at Tom. "How'd you know?" he asked helplessly. "How'd you know we was already talkin' about packin' up an' movin' west?"

Casy answered him. "It's ever'body," he said. "Here's me that used to give all my fight against the devil 'cause I figgered the devil was the enemy. But they's somepin worse'n the devil got hold a the country, an' it ain't gonna let go till it's chopped loose. Ever see one a them Gila monsters take hold, mister? Grabs hold, an' you chop him in two an' his head hangs on. Chop him at the neck an' his head hangs on. Got to take a screw-driver an' pry his head apart to git him loose. An' while he's layin' there, poison is drippin' an' drippin' into the hole he's made with his teeth." He stopped and looked sideways at Tom.

The fat man stared hopelessly straight ahead. His hand started turning the crank slowly. "I dunno what we're comin' to," he said softly.

27. Explain both sides of the situation.
28. How do the Joads feel about their situation?
29. How does Casy make the service station attendant understand the plight of the migrants?
30. Why does Tom change his tone with the service station attendant?
31. What does it show about the Joads when they befriend the Wilsons?
32. Explain Casy's statement: "Grampa didn't die tonight. He died the minute you took him off the place."

Read Chapter 14 and complete the following.

33. The novel states: "The Western States nervous under the beginning change." How are the states changing? Changes in California to the changes in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas, & Missouri.
34. Chapter 14 is one of the most powerful chapters in the novel. Discuss Steinbeck's clear definition of humanity provided here. How is his philosophy ultimately linked to the land?

Read Chapter 15 and complete the following

35. What is the function of Chapter 15? What does it imply about businessmen, waitresses, and truck drivers?
36. How do you explain the tension remaining in the diner between Mae, Al, and the truck drivers after the migrants leave?

Chapter 16 Summary
The Joads and the Wilsons continue on their travels. Rose of Sharon discusses with her mother what they will do when they reach California. She and Connie want to live in a town, where he can get a job in a store or a factory. He wants to study at home, possibly taking a radio correspondence course. There is a rattling in the Wilson's car, so Al is forced to pull over. There are problems with the motor. Sairy Wilson tells them that they should go on ahead without them, but Ma Joad refuses, telling them that they are like family now and they won't desert them. Tom says that he and Casy will stay with the truck if everyone goes on ahead. They'll fix the
car and then move on. Only Ma objects. She refuses to go, for the only thing that they have left is each other and she will not break up the family even momentarily. When everyone else objects to her, she even picks up a jack handle and threatens them. Tom and Casy try to fix the car, and Casy remarks about how he has seen so many cars moving west, but no cars going east. Casy predicts that all of the movement and collection of people in California will change the country. The two of them stay with the car while the family goes ahead. Before they leave, Al tells Tom that Ma is worried that he will do something that might break his parole. Granma has been going crazy, yelling and talking to herself. Al asks Tom about what he felt when he killed a man. Tom admits that prison has a tendency to drive a man insane. Tom and Al find a junkyard where they find a part to replace the broken con-rod in the Wilson's car. The one-eyed man working at the junkyard complains about his boss, and says that he might kill him. Tom tells off the one-eyed man for blaming all of his problems on his eye, and then criticizes Al for his constant worry that people will blame him for the car breaking down. Tom, Casy and Al rejoin the rest of the family at a campground not far away. To stay at the campground, the three would have to pay an additional charge, for they would be charged with vagrancy if they slept out in the open. Tom, Casy and Uncle John eventually decide to go on ahead and meet up with everyone else in the morning. A ragged man at the camp, when he hears that the Joads are going to pick oranges in California, laughs. The man, who is returning from California, tells how the handbills are a fraud. They ask for eight hundred people, but get several thousand people who want to work. This drives down wages. The proprietor of the campground suspects that the ragged man is trying to stir up trouble for labor.

**Analysis:** Rose of Sharon stands as a stark contrast to the rest of the characters in *The Grapes of Wrath*. She is the only adult character who retains some sense of hope for their future; she believes in the possibility of living a decent life with her husband and eventual child. The other characters expect little more from California than meager survival, while Rose of Sharon hopes to live the traditional American dream. She is the one beacon of hope within the Joad family. Even her younger brother, Al, does not have a similar optimism. He is defensive and combative, consistently worried that others will blame him for problems with the car.

Ma Joad once again reveals herself to be the center of the Joad family when she demands that they not leave Tom and Casy behind, even temporarily. She leaves the family no option but to remain together, even threatening violence against anybody who opposes her. In doing so, she reiterates the idea that the strength that these people have is in unity.

Steinbeck makes it quite clear by the end of the chapter that once the Joads reach California they may not find work. Casy mentions that he has seen numerous others travel westward, but has seen nobody travel back east, and the ragged man that the Joads meet at the campground confirms this fear. Even worse than a crowded labor market is the fact that the presumed opportunities for jobs are a fraud, inducing too many workers in order to drive down wages. The ragged men even suggests that the Joads will face a worse fate in California than they did in Oklahoma. For revealing this information, the ragged man is automatically pegged as a labor agitator, a derogative label consistently given to those who expose social injustices.

The one-eyed man serves as yet another picture of the American experience. He is garish and grotesque and his introduction is a break from the realistic depiction of the novel. The one-eyed man reveals his life story almost immediately, a device that is far from dramatically realistic but serves to give him some layering. He is one of the many workers the Joads encounter, but he is not insignificant. Steinbeck gives him some personality and history to emphasize the importance of all working people, whether or not they are the focus of this particular story. His appearance also demonstrates once again that Tom is forthright and direct. He will not shy away from standing up to a person, a quality that gives him an air of authority but may prove dangerous.

**Use this passage to answer the following questions.**

"Tom, I been watchin' the cars on the road, them we passed an' them that passed us. I been keepin' track."

"Track a what?"

"Tom, they's hunderds a families like us all a-goin' west. I watched. There ain't none of 'em goin' east-hunderds of 'em. Did you notice that?"
"Yeah, I noticed."

"Why- it's like- it's like they was runnin' away from soldiers. It's like a whole country is movin'."

"Yeah," Tom said. "They is a whole country movin'. We're movin' too."

"Well- s'pose all these here folks an' ever'body- s'pose they can't get no jobs out there?"

37. What literary device does Steinbeck use in this passage?

38. Explain what could happen to the Joads when they get to California.

**Read the following passage. In one paragraph, write your reaction to this aspect of the migrants’ plight.**

"Look", he said. "How many men they say they want on your han'bill?"

"Eight hunderd, an' that's in one little place."

"Orange color han'bill?"

"Why- yes."

"Give the name a the fella- says so and so, labor contractor?"

Pa reached in his pocket and brought out the folded handbill. "That's right. How'd you know?"

"Look," said the man. "It don't make no sense. This fella wants eight hunderd men. So he prints up five thousand of them things an' maybe twenty thousan' people sees 'em. An' maybe two-three thousan' folks gets movin' account a this here han'bill. Folks that's crazy with worry."

"But it don't make no sense!" Pa cried.

"Not till you see the fella that put out this here bill. You'll see him, or somebody that's workin' for him. You'll be a-campin' by a ditch, you an' fifty other families. An' he'll look in your tent an' see if you got anything left to eat. An' if you got nothin', he says, 'Wanna job?' An' you'll say, 'I sure do, mister. I'll sure thank you for a chance to do some work.' An' he'll say, 'I can use you.' An' you'll say, 'When do I start?' An' he'll tell you where to go, an' what time, an' then he'll go on. Maybe he needs two hunderd men, so he talks to five hunderd, an' they tell other folks, an' when you get to the place, they's a thousan' men. This here fella says, 'I'm payin' twenty cents an hour.' An' maybe half a the men walk off. But they's still five hunderd that's so goddamn hungry they'll work for nothin' but biscuits. Well, this here fella's got a contract to pick them peaches or- chop that cotton. You see now? The more fellas he can get, an' the hungrier, less he's gonna pay. An' he'll get a fella with kids if he can, 'cause- hell, I says I wasn't gonna fret ya." The circle of faces looked coldly at him. The eyes tested his words. The ragged man grew self-conscious. "I says I wasn't gonna fret ya, an' here I'm a-doin' it. You gonna go on. You ain't goin' back." The silence hung on the porch. And the light hissed, and a halo of moths swung around and around the lantern. The ragged man went on nervously, "Lemme tell ya what to do when ya meet that fella says he got work. Lemme tell ya. Ast him what he's gonna pay. Ast him to write down what he's gonna pay. Lemme tell ya. Ast him what he's gonna pay. Lemme to write down what he's gonna pay. Ast him that. I tell you men you're gonna get fooled if you don't."

**Read Chapter 17 and complete the following**

39. In this chapter you see the communal aspects of life on the road developed to a fine art. Discuss the rights, laws, and punishments of roadside camp communities.

40. What effect does the nightly camping have on the people heading for California? How does it give them strength and power?

41. What is the function of music in the roadside communities?

**Chapter 18 Summary**

When the Joads reach Arizona, a border guard stops them and nearly turns them back, but does let them continue. They eventually reach the desert of California. The terrain is barren and desolate. While washing themselves during a stop, the Joads encounter migrant workers who want to turn back. They tell them that the Californians hate the migrant workers. A good deal of the land is owned by the Land and Cattle Company that leaves the land largely untouched. Sheriffs push around migrant workers, whom they derisively call "Okies." Noah tells Tom that he is going to leave everyone, for they don't care about him. Although Tom protests, Noah leaves them. Granma remains ill, suffering from delusions. She believes that she sees Grampa. A Jehovite woman visits their tent to help Granma, and tells Ma that she will die soon. The woman wants to organize a
prayer meeting, but Ma orders them not to do so. Nevertheless, soon she can hear from a distance chanting and singing that eventually descends into crying. Granma whines with the whining, then eventually falls asleep. Rose of Sharon wonders where Connie is. Deputies come to the tent and tell Ma that they cannot stay there and that they don’t want any Okies around. Tom returns to the tent after the policeman leaves, and is glad that he wasn’t there; he admits that he would have hit the cop. He tells Ma about Noah. The Wilsons decide to remain even if they face arrest, since Sairy is too sick to leave without any rest. Sairy asks Casy to say a prayer for her. The Joads move on, and at a stop a boy remarks how hard-looking Okies are and how they are less than human. Uncle John speaks with Casy, worried that he brings bad luck to people. Connie and Rose of Sharon need privacy. Yet again the Joads are pulled over for inspection, but Ma Joad insists that they must continue because Granma needs medical attention. The next morning when they reach the orange groves, Ma tells them that Granma is dead. She died before they were pulled over for inspection.

**Analysis:** The arrival in California is anticlimactic at best. The Joads cross the border only to enter the harsh California desert. They still must journey farther to reach the orange groves. There is further evidence that California will not prove the solution to the Joad's problems. The migrant workers are loathed, and there still remains the problems of the wealthy corporate interests. The rich owners are characterized as paranoid, vindictive and cowardly. Steinbeck even makes the explicit contrast between the cowardly owners and Grampa, a fearless old man even in his final days. The rich owners have wealth, but they suffer from loneliness and fear. In this manner they are worse off than even the most impoverished.

The family loses yet another member once they reach California when Noah decides to leave. However, this loss is voluntary, as Noah, Tom's brother who has been frequently ignored, decides that he will stay at the river and support himself by fishing. This loss demonstrates the sense of hopelessness that has set in. Noah, like Muley Graves, decides to leave society instead of being crushed by it.

Although Granma seems to be at the brink of death during the beginning of this chapter, she eventually pulls through. Once again Ma takes charge, ordering the Jehovites to leave them alone. She even confronts the deputies who threaten her, effectively intimidating them. The deputies are the first example of the contempt toward "Okies" that was mentioned earlier in the chapter. This hatred is made even more explicit by the boy at the gas station, who remarks that the Okies are less than human.

The various members of the Joad family become more tense and irritable as the journey continues. Rose of Sharon and Connie begin to feel a sense of claustrophobia, bothered by the lack of privacy, while Uncle John worries irrationally that he may be the cause of the family's troubles. Uncle John, like Sairy Wilson, wishes to use Casy as a preacher, a designation he loathes but nevertheless accepts. Casy's protestations that he is not a preacher and does not believe in god seem excessive. He refuses to be called a preacher because he has doubts, and others approach him as a preacher expecting certainty.

The death of Granma Joad is significant for it demonstrates just how much Ma Joad can bear. The event forces her to confront and intimidate several police officers and hide Granma's fate from the rest of the family.

**Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.**

“What makes ‘em hate you?”

"Dunno," said the man. He cupped his hands full of water and rubbed his face, snorting and bubbling. Dusty water ran out of his hair and streaked his neck.

"I like to hear some more ‘bout this," said Pa.

"Me too," Tom added. "Why these folks out west hate ya?"

The man looked sharply at Tom. "You jus' goin’ wes’?"

"Jus’ on our way."

"You ain’t never been in California?"

"No, we ain’t."

"Well, don’ take my word. Go see for yourself."

"Yeah," Tom said, "but a fella kind a likes to know what he’s gettin’ into."
"Well, if you truly wanta know, I'm a fella that's asked questions an' give her some thought. She's a nice country. But she was stole a long time ago. You git acrost the desert an' come into the country aroun' Bakersfield. An' you never seen such purty country- all orchards, an' grapes, purtiest country you ever seen. An' you'll pass lan' flat an' fine with water thirty feet down, and that lan's layin' fallow. But you can't have none of that lan'. That's a Lan' and Cattle Company. An' if they don't want ta work her, she ain't gonna git worked. You go in there an' plant you a little corn, an' you'll go to jail!"

"Good lan', you say? An' they ain't workin' her?"

"Yes, sir. Good lan' an' they ain't! Well, sir, that'll get you a little mad, but you ain't seen nothin'. People gonna have a look in their eye. They gonna look at you an' their face says, 'I don't like you, you son-of-a-bitch.' Gonna be deputy sheriffs, an' they'll push you aroun'. You camp on the roadside, an' they'll move you on. You gonna see in people's face how they hate you. An'- I'll tell you somepin. They hate you 'cause they're scairt. They know a hungry fella gonna get food even if he got to take it. They know that fallow lan's a sin an' somebody gonna take it. What the hell! You never been called 'Okie' yet."

Tom said, "Okie? What's that?"

"Well, Okie use' ta mean you was from Oklahoma. Now it means you're a dirty son-of-a-bitch. Okie means you're scum. Don't mean nothing itself, it's the way they say it. But I can't tell you nothin'. You got to go there. I hear there's three hunderd thousan' of our people there- an' livin' like hogs, 'cause ever'thing in California is owned. They ain't nothin' left. An' them people that owns it is gonna hang on to it if they got ta kill ever'body in the worl' to do it. An' they're scairt, an' that makes 'em mad. You got to see it. You got to hear it. Purtiest goddamn country you ever seen, but they ain't nice to you, them folks. They're so scairt an' worried they ain't even nice to each other."

42. What is fallow land?
43. What is ironic about the situation?
44. What can the Joads expect in California?

**Read Chapter 19 and complete the following**

45. How has farming changed according to Chapter 19?
46. Why do the local people fear the migrants?
47. What is a Hooverville? How do you suppose a Hooverville got its name?
48. What are the "three great facts of history," and what do they imply about the outcome of the events in this novel?
49. A metaphor used early in this chapter posits the California landowners as Romans. Using your historical knowledge, what are the implications of this metaphor?

**Chapter 20 Summary**

The Joads take Granma to the Bakersfield coroner's office. They can't afford a funeral for her. They go to a camp to stay and ask about work. They ask a bearded man if he owns the camp and whether they can stay, and he replies with the same question to them. A younger man tells them that the crazy old man is called the Mayor. According to the man, the Mayor has likely been pushed by the police around so much that he's been made bull-simple (crazy). The police don't want them to settle down, for then they could draw relief, organize and vote. The younger man tells them about the handbill fraud, and Tom suggests that everybody organize so that they could guarantee higher wages. The man warns Tom about the blacklist. If he is labeled an agitator he will be prevented from getting from anybody. Tom talks to Casy, who has recently been relatively quiet. Casy says that the people unorganized are like an army without a harness. Casy says that he isn't helping out the family and should go off by himself. Tom tries to convince him to stay at least until the next day, and he relents. Connie regrets his decision to come with the Joads. When Ma is fixing dinner, groups of small children approach, asking for food. The children tell the Joads about Weedpatch, a government camp that is nearby where no cops can push people around and there is good drinking water. Al goes around looking for girls, and brags about how Tom killed a man. Al meets a man named Floyd Knowles, who tells them that there was no steady work. A woman reprimands Ma Joad for
giving her children stew. Al brings Floyd back to the family, where he says that there will be work up north around Santa Clara Valley. He tells them to leave quietly, because everyone else will follow after the work. Al wants to go with Floyd no matter what. A man arrives in a Chevrolet coupe, wearing a business suit. He tells them about work picking fruit around Tulare County. Floyd tells the man to show his license - this is one of the tricks that the contractor uses. Floyd points out some of the dirty tactics that the contractor is using, such as bringing along a cop. The cop forces Floyd into the car and says that the Board of Health might want to shut down their camp. Floyd punched the cop and ran off. As the deputy chased after him, Tom tripped him. The deputy raised his gun to shoot Floyd and fires indiscriminately, shooting a woman in the hand. Suddenly Casy kicked the deputy in the back of the neck, knocking him unconscious. Casy tells Tom to hide, for the contractor saw him trip the deputy. More officers come to the scene, and they take away Casy, who has a faint smile and a look of pride. Rose of Sharon wonders where Connie has gone. She has not seen him recently. Uncle John admits that he had five dollars. He kept it to get drunk. Uncle John gives them the five in exchange for two, which is enough for him. Al tells Rose of Sharon that he saw Connie, who was leaving. Pa claims that Connie was too big for his overalls, but Ma scolds him, telling him to act respectfully, as if Connie were dead. Because the cops are going to burn the camp tonight, they have to leave. Tom goes to find Uncle John, who has gone off to get drunk. Tom finds him by the river, singing morosely. He claims that he wants to die. Tom has to hit him to make him come. Rose of Sharon wants to wait for Connie to return. They leave the camp, heading north toward the government camp.

Analysis: The cruelty of the California police is prominently in this chapter, beginning with the introduction of the Mayor. He has been subjected to continuous torture by the police, which has driven him insane. The reason for this torture is simple: it is an attempt by the police to prevent the migrant workers from settling in California. If they were to settle down, they could vote and have political power. If they have no permanent residence, they cannot organize and threaten the ruling business elites. Yet anybody who opposes their designs is automatically labeled a labor agitator and placed on the blacklist, preventing him from working anywhere. The police can even murder migrant workers, for they have no name and no property, and thus no power.

The family loses one more member when Connie Rivers abandons his pregnant wife. He leaves out of selfishness; he believes that he would have been better off staying in Oklahoma and that he can make a better life for himself away from the Joads. What he does out of self-interest is tantamount to treason for the Joads. Connie reveals himself to be arrogant in his belief that he can aspire to a middle-class lifestyle. Ma Joad, in contrast, remains the center of authority, generous and just. She gives away some food to starving children when her family can ill afford to spare food themselves, and even defends Connie, claiming that it is useless to criticize him for leaving.

Connie's selfish behavior is reflected in Uncle John's similar actions. He has also held out from the family, keeping five dollars for himself in order to get drunk. However, when he wishes to behave selfishly, he still makes some sacrifice for the family, giving up more than half of his money. Furthermore, his behavior is spurred by a heavy sense of guilt rather than a lack of concern for the others.

There is some indication of hope for the Joad family. The government camps are safe terrain for them, where they cannot be bothered by intimidating police officers and can expect some comforts.

The sudden outbreak of violence is not an unexpected event, considering the previous accounts of the California deputies' cruelty and Tom's warning that he is still capable of committing violent acts. Yet the fight is somewhat softened: Tom does little more than trip the deputy, while Casy knocks the man unconscious. It is the deputy who causes the real havoc, inadvertently shooting an innocent woman. Still, the outcome of the event is significant for Jim Casy. He takes Tom's place as the scapegoat for the crime, sacrificing himself to save Tom. His role in the novel as a spiritual martyr is fulfilled.

Read Chapter 21 and complete the following.

50. A paradox is a seemingly contradictory statement that may nonetheless be true. What are the "paradoxes of industry" to which Steinbeck refers in the first paragraph of Chapter 21? According to the novel, what is paradoxical about industry, and why are its paradoxes dangerous?
51. There in the Middle and Southwest had lived a simple agrarian folk who had not changed with industry, who had not farmed with machines or known the power and danger of machines in private hands. They had not grown up in the paradoxes of industry. Their senses were still sharp to the ridiculousness of the industrial life.

Discuss your thoughts concerning mechanical items: are they more help or hindrance in your life? Be specific.

52. Why is it so difficult to obtain work in California? Why do wages fall?

53. What business practices do the owners adopt to ensure that they will continue to make high profits?

54. What keeps the men from uniting?

55. How have the migrants changed?

56. Why are the migrants hated?

57. In what ways does the hostility of the local people change the migrants?

58. And money that might have gone to wages went for gas, for guns, for agents and spies, for blacklists, for drilling. On the highways the people moved like ants and searched for work, for food. And the anger began to ferment.

What is the importance of this statement? What does it tell the reader about the situation in California? Explain the irony of this situation.

59. What passage from Chapter 21 hints at future large-scale violence between the migrant workers and owners?

Chapter 22 Summary

The Joads reach the government camp, where they are surprised to find that there are toilets and showers and running water. The watchman at the camp explains some of the other features of the camp: there is a central committee elected by the camp residents that keeps order and makes rules, and the camp even holds dance nights. The next morning, two camp residents (Timothy and Wilkie Wallace) give Tom breakfast and tell him about work. When they reach the fields where they are to work, Mr. Thomas, the contractor, tells them that he is reducing wages from thirty to twenty-five cents per hour. It is not his choice, but rather orders from the Farmers' Association, which is owned by the Bank of the West. Thomas also shows them a newspaper, which has a story about a band of citizens who burn a squatters' camp, infuriated by presumed communist agitation, and warns them about the dance at the government camp on Saturday night. There will be a fight in the camp so that the deputies can go in. The Farmers' Association dislikes the government camps because the people in the camps become used to being treated humanely and are thus harder to handle. Tom and the Wallaces vow to make sure that there won't be a fight. While they work, Wilkie tells Tom that the complaints about agitators are false. According to the rich owners, any person who wants thirty cents an hour instead of twenty-five is a red. Back at the camp, Ruthie and Winfield explore the camp, and are fascinated by the toilets they are frightened by the flushing sound. Ma Joad makes the rest of the family clean themselves up before the Ladies Committee comes to visit her. Jim Rawley, the camp manager, introduces himself to the Joads and tells them some of the features of the camp. Rose of Sharon goes to take a bath, and learns that a nurse visits the camp every week and can help her deliver the baby when it is time. Ma remarks that she no longer feels ashamed, as she had when they were constantly harassed by the police. Lisbeth Sandry, a religious zealot, speaks with Rose of Sharon about the alleged sin that goes on during the dances, and complains about people putting on stage plays, which she calls "sin and delusion and devil stuff." The woman even blames playacting for a mother dropping her child. Rose of Sharon becomes frightened upon hearing this, fearing that she will drop her child. Jessie Bullitt, the head of the Ladies Committee, gives Ma Joad a tour of the camp and explains some of the problems. Jessie bickers with Ella Summers, the previous committee head. The children play and bicker. Pa comforts Uncle John, who still wants to leave, thinking that he will bring the family punishment. Ma Joad confronts Lisbeth Sandry for frightening Rose and for preaching that every action is sinful. Ma becomes depressed about all of the losses Gramma and Grampa, Noah and Connie because she now has leisure time to think about such things.

Analysis: The government camp proves a shocking interruption to the consistent maladies and hardships that have plagued the Joad family throughout the novel. The people are polite and well-mannered toward the Joads. Ma Joad is even shocked to hear Jim Rawley call her "Mrs." The few problems in Weedpatch, such as the theft
of toilet paper, are handled in a fair and organized manner. The camp represents a communal society in which everyone has an equal share and an equal voice. While not a perfect place, as shown by the unwelcome proselytizing of Lisbeth Sandry, the government camp nevertheless is a comfortable community where the Joads can live respectfully.

The degree of comfort that Weedpatch affords is reflected in the return to a normal rhythm that occurs among the Joads. Ruthie and Winfield can play like small children once again. Uncle John settles into his manageable routine of depression. The impressionable Rose of Sharon begins to fret about her child; without Connie she no longer dreams of a middle-class life, but instead focuses on the immediate fate of her soon-to-be-born child. Ma Joad even realizes how great an interruption the journey to California was. For the first time, she can comprehend the losses that the family has suffered and mourn the two deaths and two desertions. Before reaching the camp, her only concern had to be her own survival; the most important luxury that Ma Joad receives at the camp is introspection.

The degree of poverty to which the Joads and other migrant workers are subjected is further reflected by the amazement that the characters show to the simple amenities in the camp. Ruthie and Winfield have never used a toilet before, while Jessie Bullitt tells Ma Joad how some camp residents have trouble with some of the camp's appliances.

Once again the banking elite causes needless hardship for the migrant workers. The Farmers' Association that the banks control dictates that wages be reduced. It becomes clear that the Farmers' Association is responsible for most of the hardship and oppression. They control the state deputies who intimidate the migrant farmers. The Farmers' Association is opposed to treating the migrant workers fairly, for if they expect to be treated well they will demand more. They even plan underhanded tactics to subvert the government camps, for when the workers are in government camps they are more difficult to control. This chapter states their plan: to sabotage the government camp they will instigate a fight that will allow the deputies to enter and disrupt Weedpatch.

60. Discuss the ways Jim Rawley and Lisbeth Sandry represent the good and evil inherent in humanity.

Read the Passages and answer the following

The younger man said, "We been eatin' good for twelve days now. Never missed a meal in twelve days—none of us. Workin' an' gettin' our pay an' eatin'." He fell to again, almost frantically, and refilled his plate. They drank the scalding coffee and threw the grounds to the earth and filled their cups again.

61. What is the tone of the passage?

We're Joads. We don't look up to nobody. Grampa's grampa, he fit in the Revolution. We was farm people till the debt. And then- them people. They done somepin to us. Ever' time they come seemed like they was a-whippin' me- all of us. An' in Needles, that police. He done somepin to me, made me feel mean. Made me feel ashamed. An' now I ain't ashamed. These folks is our folks- is our folks. An' that manager, he come an' set an' drank coffee, an' he says, 'Mrs. Joad' this, an' 'Mrs. Joad' that- an' 'How you gettin' on, Mrs. Joad?''' She stopped and sighed, "Why, I feel like people again." She stacked the last dish. She went into the tent and dug through the clothes box for her shoes and a clean dress. And she found a little paper package with her earrings in it. As she went past Rose of Sharon, she said, "If them ladies comes, you tell 'em I'll be right back." She disappeared around the side of the sanitary unit.

62. What has the Weedpatch Camp restored in the Joads?

63. Why does Ma Joad get out a clean dress and her earrings?

Read Chapter 23 and complete the following

64. How important is entertainment and leisure to you?

65. What does the Indian symbolize?

66. Under what circumstances did people move closer together?
Chapter 24 Summary

The rumors that the police were going to break up the dance reached the camp. According to Ezra Huston, the chairman of the Central Committee, this is a frequent tactic that the police use. Huston tells Willie Eaton, the head of the entertainment committee, that if he must hit a deputy, do so where they won't bleed. The camp members say that the Californians hate them because the migrants might draw relief without paying income tax, but they refute this, claiming that they pay sales tax and tobacco tax. At the dance, Willie Eaton approaches Tom and tells him where to watch for intruders. Ma comforts Rose of Sharon, who is depressed about Connie. Tom finds the intruders at the dance, but the intruders begin a fight and immediately the police enter the camp. Huston confronts the police about the intruders, asking who paid them. They only admit that they have to make money somehow. Once the problem is defused, the dance goes on without any problems.

Analysis: This chapter continues to illustrate the society within Weedpatch, showing how information goes from the elected leaders to the residents and how they maintain order. The interaction between the residents is fair and orderly; their relationships are based on mutual respect. The committee leaders do not issue orders; at most, they offer advice and counsel to the residents.

The orderly workings of Weedpatch society are reflected in the manner in which they deal with the intruders during the dance. There is no outbreak of violence, as Steinbeck had earlier foreshadowed. The committee members deal with the situation calmly, defusing the situation and refusing to allow the deputies and the intruders at the dance to instigate a violent riot.

The rationale that the intruders give for their behavior is one that Steinbeck has frequently rejected as a justification for action. They claim to have accepted the bribes given to start the riot to support themselves. This motive of self-interest has frequently been rejected by Steinbeck as untenable, whether used by a tractor driver or a small business owner. Individualist concerns are characterized as selfish and detrimental to the public good, in contrast to selfless collective behavior. The intruders are the most extreme example of this selfish attitude.

Read Chapter 25 and complete the following.

67. List the bountiful fruit and vegetables that spring produces in California.
68. How is it that people are starving when fruit is overabundant?
69. Why do the owners destroy the surplus?
70. Why did the owners of the little orchards watch and calculate?

Chapter 26 Summary

One evening, Ma Joad watches Winfield as he sleeps; he writhes as he sleeps, and he seems discolored. In the month that the Joads have been in Weedpatch, Tom has had only five days of work, and the rest of the men have had none. Ma worries because Rose of Sharon is close to delivering her baby. Ma reprimands them for becoming discouraged. She tells them that in such circumstances they don't have the right. Pa fears that they will have to leave Weedpatch. When Tom mentions work in Marysville, Ma decides that they will go there, for despite the accommodations at Weedpatch, they have no opportunity to make money. They plan to go north, where the cotton will soon be ready for harvest. Regarding Ma Joad's forceful control of the family, Pa remarks that women seem to be in control, and it may be time to get out a stick. Ma hears this, and tells him that she is doing her job as wife, but he certainly isn't doing his job as husband. Rose of Sharon complains that if Connie hadn't left they would have had a house by now. Ma pierces Rose of Sharon's ears so that she can wear small gold earrings. Al parts ways with a blonde girl that he has been seeing; she rejects his promises that they will eventually get married. He promises her that he'll return soon, but she does not believe him. Pa remarks that he only notices that he stinks now that he takes regular baths. Before they leave, Willie remarks that the deputies don't bother the residents of Weedpatch because they are united, and that their solution may be a union.

The car starts to break down as the Joads leave. Al has let the battery run down but he fixes the problem and they continue on their way. Al is irritable as they leave. He says that he's going out on his own soon to start a family. On the road, they get a flat tire. While Tom fixes the tire, a businessman stops in his car and offers them a job picking peaches forty miles north. They reach the ranch at Pixley where they are to pick oranges for five
cents a box. Even the women and children can do the job. Ruthie and Winfield worry about settling down in the area and going to school in California. They assume that everyone will call them Okies. At the nearby grocery store owned by Hooper Ranch, Ma finds that the prices are much higher than they would be at the store in town. The sales clerk lends Ma ten cents for sugar. She tells him that it is only poor people who will help out. That night, Tom goes for a walk, but a deputy tells him to walk back to the cabin at the ranch. The deputy claims that if Tom is alone, the reds will get to him. While continuing on his walk, Tom finds Casy, who has been released from jail. He is with a group of men that are on strike. Casy claims that people who strive for justice always face opposition, citing Lincoln and Washington, as well as the martyrs of the French Revolution. Casy, Tom and the rest of the strikers are confronted by the police. A short, heavy man with a white pick handle swings it at Casy, hitting him in the head. Tom fights with the man, and eventually wrenches the club from him and strikes him with it, killing him. Tom immediately fled the scene, crawling through a stream to get back to the cabin. He cannot sleep that night, and in the morning tells Ma that he has to hide. He tells her that he was spotted, and warns his family that they are breaking the strike they are getting five cents a box only because of this, and today may only get half that amount. When Tom tells Ma that he is going to leave that night, she tells him that they aren't a family anymore: Al cares about nothing more than girls, Uncle John is only dragging along, Pa has lost his place as the head of the family, and the children are becoming unruly. Rose of Sharon screams at Tom for murdering the man, she thinks that his sin will doom her baby. After a day of work, Winfield becomes extremely sick from eating peaches. Uncle John tells Tom that when the police catch him, there will be a lynching. Tom insists that he must leave, but Ma insists that they leave as a family. They hide Tom as they leave, taking the back roads to avoid police.

Analysis: The comfortable situation that the Joads find in Weedpatch must inevitably come to an end, as the Joads realize that they cannot find work in that area. The Joads must then settle for accommodations at the Hooper Ranch, where they no longer have the amenities of the government camp nor the sense of a strong community. The retreat from the strong society of the government camp is reflected in the breakdown of the Joad family. Even Ma Joad realizes that the family is breaking apart, despite her best efforts to keep everybody together. Al has little concern for anybody else, and indicates that he is ready to leave himself. Pa Joad has lost his status as head of the household; he cedes entire control to Ma, the only one strong enough to keep the family together. Pa Joad makes a significant comment about gender roles, lamenting the fact that he no longer runs the family, but Ma makes it clear that the roles have changed because he no longer fulfills his duties as husband and father. Since Ma is the only Joad who fulfills her obligations to the rest of the family, she is the caretaker and moral center she gains the right to make decisions for the rest of the family. This is the major loss that Pa suffers; he no longer has the right to make decisions for the family, and must subordinate himself to his wife.

Yet even Ma Joad is not strong enough to prevent the gradual disintegration of the Joad household. Al appears ready to abandon the Joads next; he is more concerned with finding a girl and a steady job working on cars than with helping his family support themselves. In his dreams of successful, steady employment he resembles the callous Connie. Rose of Sharon in turn descends into a paranoid religious hysteria. She fears for the safety of her child, and holds delusions that the murders her brother has committed will permanently scar the child with sin. This relates to the earlier influence of Lisbeth Sandry, the religious zealot who warned Rose of Sharon against sin. Even the two children begin to noticeably suffer: Winfield becomes sick from deprivation.

The conditions at the Hooper Ranch are worse than those at the government camp, but still more manageable than they could be. The Joads have a roof over their heads and are paid sufficient wages. However, the store owned by the ranch artificially raises prices for items, for it is the only nearby store where the workers can buy groceries, and the wages are high initially only because of a strike. Ma Joad makes the significant observation at the grocery store that it is only the poor who will help out other impoverished people; the clerk at the grocery store will help her, but the owners of the grocery store will exploit the workers through inflated prices.

The strike is the catalyst for another tragedy for the Joad family. When Tom finds the striking workers, he is reunited with Jim Casy, who has been released from jail and found a new purpose as a labor activist. His lost religious zeal has been transformed into working-class activism, charged by his experiences in jail and traveling to California. Casy is a crusader for the cause; the indecision over his role as a preacher earlier in the novel has been replaced by a fiery conviction concerning the justice of his cause. There is a strong political text to the
final scenes with Casy. Steinbeck makes it clear that these activists are facing certain doom, but they will be vindicated eventually. Casy, who sacrificed his freedom for Tom earlier in the novel, makes a final sacrifice in this chapter, the victim of a brutal murder at the hands of the police. Casy has now been a martyr for the Joad family and now for the entire class that the Joads represent.

The effect of this martyrdom is that Tom must now leave Hooper ranch to escape capture from the police. Although he wishes to go alone, Ma Joad once again binds the family together. She chooses to risk the safety of the entire family to preserve whatever unity the family has left.

Read the passages and answer the following

"Well," said Willie, "we got to figure her out some time. I been out here a year, an' wages is goin' right on down. Fella can't feed his fam'ly on his work now, an' it's gettin' worse all the time. It ain't gonna do no good to set aroun' an' starve. I don' know what to do. If a fella owns a team a horses, he don't raise no hell if he got to feed 'em when they ain't workin'. But if a fella got men workin' for him, he jus' don't give a damn. Horses is a hell of a lot more worth than men. I don' understan' it."

71. What analogy does Steinbeck make?

72. What is your reaction to this passage?

"Thought I'd get a piece of meat."
"Got all kinds," he said. "Hamburg, like to have some hamburg? Twenty cents a pound, hamburg."
"Ain't that awful high? Seems to me hamburg was fifteen las' time I got some."
"Well," he giggled softly, "yes, it's high, an' same time it ain't high. Time you go on in town for a couple poun's of hamburg, it'll cos' you 'bout a gallon of gas. So you see it ain't really high here, 'cause you got no gallon a gas."

Ma said sternly, "It didn' cos' you no gallon a gas to get it out here."
He laughed delightedly. "You're lookin' at it bass-ackwards," he said. "We ain't a-buyin' it, we're a-sellin' it. If we was buyin' it, why, that'd be different."
Ma put two fingers to her mouth and frowned with thought. "It looks a full a fat an' gristle."
"I ain't guaranteein' she won't cook down," the storekeeper said. "I ain't guaranteein' I'd eat her myself; but they's lots of stuff I wouldn' do."
Ma looked up at him fiercely for a moment. She controlled her voice. "Ain't you got some cheaper kind a meat?"

"Soup bones," he said. "Ten cents a pound."
"But them's jus' bones."
"Got any boilin' beef?"
"Oh, yeah! Sure. That's two bits a poun'."
"Maybe I can't get no meat," Ma said. "But they want meat. They said they wanted meat."
"Ever'body wants meat- needs meat. That hamburg is purty nice stuff. Use the grease that comes out a her for gravy. Purty nice. No waste. Don't throw no bone away."

73. What new reality does Ma Joad face?

74. How are the migrants now being taken advantage of?

Ma moved menacingly toward him. "I heard enough from you. I know what they cost in town."
The little man clamped his mouth tight. "Then go git 'em in town."
Ma looked at her knuckles. "What is this?" she asked softly. "You own this here store?"
"No. I jus' work here."
"Any reason you got to make fun? That help you any?" She regarded her shiny wrinkled hands. The little man was silent. "Who owns this here store?"
"Hooper Ranches, Incorporated, ma'am."
"An' they set the prices?"
"Yes, ma'am."
She looked up, smiling a little. "Ever'body comes in talks like me, is mad?"
He hesitated for a moment. "Yes, ma'am."
"An' that's why you make fun?"
"What cha mean?"
"Doin' a dirty thing like this. Shames ya, don't it? Got to act flip, huh?" Her voice was gentle. The clerk watched her, fascinated. He didn't answer. "That's how it is," Ma said finally.

75. Why does the clerk act the way he does?

Ma studied him. Her hand went blindly out and put the little bag of sugar on the pile in her arm. "Thanks to you," she said quietly. She started for the door, and when she reached it, she turned about. "I'm learnin' one thing good," she said. "Learnin' it all a time, ever' day. If you're in trouble or hurt or need- go to poor people. They're the only ones that'll help- the only ones." The screen door slammed behind her.

76. Do you agree with Ma Joad that the poor are the only ones that will help?
77. Why do you think Steinbeck implies that only the poor will help those in need?
78. What are other examples of the poor helping the poor in The Grapes of Wrath?

Read Chapter 27 and complete the following

79. How do the land owners take advantage of the migrants?
80. What is the significance of the arguments over the weight of the cotton the migrants picked?
81. There is a slight upswing in the mood of the story in this chapter. What causes this breath of hope?

Chapter 28 Summary

The Joads now stay in a boxcar that stood beside the stream, a home that proved better than anything except for the government camp. They were now picking cotton. Winfield tells Ma that Ruthie told about Tom. She got into an argument with some other kids, and told them that her brother was on the run for committing murder.

Ruthie returns to Ma, crying that the kids stole her Cracker Jack the reason that she threatened them by telling about Tom but Ma tells her that it was her own fault for showing off her candy to others. That night Ma Joad goes out into the woods and finds Tom, who has been hiding out there. She crawls close to him and wants to touch him to remember what he looked like. She wants to give him seven dollars to take the bus and get away. He tells her that he has been thinking about Casy, and remembered how Casy said that he went out into the woods searching for his soul, but only found that he had no individual soul, but rather part of a larger one. Tom has been wondering why people can't work together for their living, and vows to do what Casy had done. He leaves, but promises to return to the family when everything has blown over. As she left, Ma Joad did not cry, but rain began to fall. When she returned to the boxcar, she meets Mr. and Mrs. Wainwright, who have come to talk to the Joads about their daughter, Aggie, who has been spending time with Al. They're worried that the two families will part and then find out that Aggie is pregnant.

Pa laments leaving Oklahoma, while Ma says that women can deal with change better than a man, because women have their lives in their arms, and men have it in their heads. For women change is more acceptable because it seems inevitable. Al and Aggie return to the boxcar, and they announce that they are getting married. They go out before dawn to pick cotton before everyone else can get the rest, and Rose of Sharon vows to go with them, even though she can barely move. When they get to the place where the cotton is being picked, there are already a number of families. While picking cotton, it suddenly starts to rain, causing Rose of Sharon to fall ill. Everybody assumes that she is about to deliver, but she instead suffers from a chill. They take her back to the boxcar and start a fire to get her warm.

Analysis: The Joads settle once again into a temporary home this time a boxcar but find their routine disrupted one more time when Ruthie reveals the secret about Tom. Significantly, the cause of her flight with the other children was arrogance; by eating her candy out in the open, she offended the other children who were starving.

Tom's decision to leave the family is a bittersweet event, but entirely inevitable. By remaining with the family he endangers them and cannot contribute. When Tom does decide to leave the Joad family, he does so with a new purpose that is a combination of political and spiritual belief. He accepts Casy's belief that there is no individual soul, but instead a collective soul of which each person only has a part, and vows to continue Casy's struggle for better treatment of the workers. This is a turning point for Tom. He previously consigned himself to individualist action for himself and his family, but now wishes to work for the common good.
It is Ma Joad who bids farewell to Tom, proving once again to be the center of the Joad family. She also demonstrates a change in this chapter; she advises Tom to go alone rather than attempting to keep the family together at all cost. She has realized that family unity is insignificant without the greater society unity for which Tom will strive. Furthermore, even though Tom is the character for whom she has shown the most affection, she finds that she cannot weep over him. Rather, at the moment in which she realizes she cannot cry, the rainfall begins, a natural phenomena reflecting her emotional state.

Steinbeck suggests in this chapter that women such as Ma Joad are better equipped to handle change and pain than the men. During the course of the novel, it is the men who have railed against their fate: Noah and Connie deserted the family, while Grampa died when he was forced to leave Oklahoma. Ma Joad, in contrast, has accepted the changes she has faced. She explains that women accept change because for them, it is inevitable. They do not have the illusion that they control their own destinies, unlike men. They thus are less shaken when they are presented with hardship.

The immaturity that Al Joad has displayed throughout the novel takes a more dangerous edge in this chapter. The Wainwrights confront the Joads with the possibility that he could get their daughter pregnant, leaving her without support. When the two kids announce their engagement, despite the celebration by the families it is not joyful news, for Steinbeck contrasts the engagement with the pregnancy of Rose of Sharon, who is ready to deliver her child without her husband or any means of support.

**Read Chapter 29 and complete the following**

82. As the flood worsens, what actions do the migrants take?
83. How does the rain affect the lives of the migrants?
84. As they had done in the opening of the novel, the women watch the men for signs of breaking. Quote how anger has a direct connection as to whether or not a person “broke.”
85. Why are anger and hatred directed toward the migrants?
86. What comments about human nature might Steinbeck be making? Think about the actions of the “sodden man,” the actions of the sheriffs, and how “people in tight houses” treat migrants.
87. There is repetitive imagery in this chapter that echoes the novel's setup from Chapter 1. What is the significance of its repetition?

**Draw and complete this Personification Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Image or Idea Evoked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“… the gray clouds marched in from the ocean.”</td>
<td>The image gives one the sense of the inexorable approach of the storm and of the clouds as steady and threatening as a throng of sold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…the dry earth sucked the moisture down.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“For two days the earth drank the rain, until the earth was full.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Read Chapter 30 and complete the following.**

88. Why do the Joads remain in the boxcar instead of driving out, ahead of the floodwaters?
89. Of what importance is building the dike, even if it breaks?
90. How does Ma know they will survive?
91. State one possible cause of Rose of Sharon’s stillborn baby.
92. What impact does the stillbirth of Rose of Sharon’s baby have?
93. What does Uncle John do with the dead baby? What does this act signal about him and the other migrants?
94. Why is Rose of Sharon’s feeding the starving man an appropriate ending for this novel?
95. The theme of nourishment—its necessity and the results from lack of it—is developed in this chapter. State at least one other theme also continued in this chapter.
Digging Deeper

96. The Joads seemingly failed to find the “promised land.” Did they have unrealistic expectations? Why or why not?

97. According to statements made in this novel, of what importance is anger in overcoming fear? What must be done with anger in order to make it productive? Do you agree or disagree with that philosophy as expressed in this novel?

98. In what ways is your definition of the term family similar to the meaning Ma Joad gives to the term? In what ways is Ma Joad's meaning different? What do the implications of her meaning contribute to the author's message in the novel?

99. If you had been an owner of a large California farm in 1939, how would you have felt about people like the Joads? As the owner of that farm, how might this novel have changed your feelings?

100. Steinbeck wrote to his editor about this novel: "I've done my damndest to rip a reader's nerves to rags, I don't want him satisfied." Did he succeed in doing that to you? If so, how did he accomplish it? If not, why weren't you affected in that way?

101. Some critics maintain that this novel promotes hatred between classes of people. In what ways does it do that? In what ways does the novel's effect go beyond that?

102. Does nature function as a force for either good or evil in this book?

The Grapes of Wrath Theme of Transience – At the heart of *The Grapes of Wrath* is change, and we watch families cope as they are forced to change their lives, their homes, and their dreams. Change is bittersweet in this novel because it is imposed upon thousands of farmers and families who would otherwise prefer to remain right where they are. The Joads learn to cope with the great changes in their life by sticking together and by reaching out to other families.

103. Who changes the most in this novel?

104. How does the Joad's lifestyle change over the course of their journey to California?

105. Do any characters fight change in this novel? If so, what happens when they fight change?

106. Why doesn't Muley Graves follow his family?

The Grapes of Wrath Theme of Family – Family is a means of survival in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Without each other, the Joads would have no way of coping with the loss of their land or of getting to California. Family is the one weapon that the Joads have against the cold, bitter world around. They, along with many other migrant workers, learn that they are stronger and safer when they reach out to other families, when they create a sense of community.

107. What kind of relationship do Ma and Pa Joad have?

108. Why does Ma Joad throw a hissy fit when Tom suggests they forge ahead without him?

109. What is the definition of “family” in *The Grapes of Wrath*?

The Grapes of Wrath Theme of Lies and Deceit – Central to *The Grapes of Wrath* is a single lie: thousands of families move west to California because they believe it to be the land of plenty, a place full of jobs and opportunity. This lie is spread through a yellow pamphlet dispensed by a Californian landowner looking for workers. It gives families a sense of hope and strips them of hope. Several entities help to sustain this lie: the banks, the car salesmen, the merchants, and the landowners. The Joads are deceived into thinking that their worries will be forgotten once they get to California.

110. Are the Joads deceived by the pamphlet that tells them of job opportunity in California?

111. Who tells lies in the world of *The Grapes of Wrath*?

112. If the Joads had known what they would find in California, do you think they would still have gone?

113. How did the Joads' dream of California compare to what they found there?

The Grapes of Wrath Theme of Betrayal – In the face of loss and poverty, the Joads band together to survive and make do. Thousands of other similarly heartbroken families in *The Grapes of Wrath* also recognize the power of community. However, there are several characters who, overcome by fear, choose to serve themselves
rather than their community at large. Willy Feeley, an old family friend of the Joads, accepts a job working for the landowners and helps to drive many sharecropping families away.

114. Does Muley Graves betray his family by not following them to California?
115. Does Willy Feeley betray his community by accepting a job as a tractor driver, or is he merely supporting his family?
116. What kinds of betrayal do we see in *The Grapes of Wrath*?

**The Grapes of Wrath Theme of Gender** – The narrator of *The Grapes of Wrath* paints vivid and general portraits of life in Dust Bowl America, and clearly delineates the roles of men and women. The men consider the losses, while the women look on silently, reading their husband's expressions. Men make decisions, and women tend to the house chores. Men slaughter and hunt, while women prepare and cook. However, despite these very specific descriptions of gender roles, we see Ma Joad often assume a "man's" duties, and we see Tom Joad display more traditionally feminine sentiments. The novel complicates its own understanding of women and men in 1930s America.

117. What role do men play in *The Grapes of Wrath*?
118. What role do women play in *The Grapes of Wrath*?
119. What kinds of relationships do men and women have with one another in this novel?

**The Grapes of Wrath Theme of Criminality** – By virtue of the fact that Tom Joad is on parole and cannot leave the state of Oklahoma, the Joads are constantly aware of the law and of trying to adhere to the law. Much of the novel deals with families being treated poorly by the law, whether in their hometown or in their California towns. We begin to question the validity and the value of the law as we watch the Joad family, and many other families like them, fight tooth and nail to survive.

120. Who commits a crime in this novel, and how are they punished?
121. How is crime defined in *The Grapes of Wrath*?
122. Who is "dangerous" in this novel?

**The Grapes of Wrath Theme of Wealth** – Great poverty is juxtaposed with a great appetite for wealth in *The Grapes of Wrath*. We watch as desperate economic times make some people, like the bankers and landowners, more greedy, while other people, like the Joads and other migrant families, become more generous. Wealth is defined as both money and happiness in the context of this novel, while some seek to make lots of money at all costs, the Joads seek only peace and comfort.

123. Who is making money in the world of this novel?
124. What examples of wealth do we see in *The Grapes of Wrath*?
125. How do the landowners talk about the banks when they force tenant farmers off of their land?

**Other Themes**

**Unity and Cooperation** – Casy espouses unity and cooperation in his attempts to organize the migrant workers into a single voice that demands justice and fair wages. After Casy dies, Tom Joad decides to devote himself to carrying on Casy’s cause. Ma Joad also espouses unity and cooperation, stressing the importance of maintaining family ties and of cooperating with others to achieve common goals. After meeting the Wilsons on the road, she says, “Each’ll help each, an’ we’ll all git to California.”

**Love** – Casy, a former preacher, believes that loving fellow human beings and acting on their behalf is more important than ranting from the pulpit and warning people to live by the letter of the law. He willingly accepts blame and goes to jail for an offense that he did not commit. And he dies in the service of fellow human beings. Some scholars regard him as a Christ figure: His initials are J. C. and he lays down his life for others.

**Perseverance in the Face of Hostility** – The third chapter of the novel presents this theme when a truck deliberately runs over a turtle, knocking it to the side of the road. On its back, the turtle reaches out with its legs, grabs onto a rock, rights itself, and resumes its journey. This chapter foreshadows the response of the Joads to the troubles they face on their journey.
Prejudice – Many Californians assume that Oklahoma migrants are the lowest of the low and give them a name, Okies, charged with negative connotations. “Okie means you’re scum,” one migrant worker tells Tom.

Greed – Car salesmen take advantage of migrants desperate for transportation to California. A business charges traveling migrants for water. Landowners pay migrants very low wages in order to turn a profit.

Hope – Ma Joad never loses hope for a better future. Tom’s decision to continue Casy’s effort to organize workers and Rose of Sharon’s simple act of nursing a starving man both suggest Ma’s hope is not unfounded. Where people help each other, there is every reason to believe that good will come of it.

The Grapes of Wrath Symbolism, Imagery & Allegory
The Road – Whoever said a road is just a road has not read The Grapes of Wrath. From the minute we watch Tom Joad return home after four years in prison, roads take on great meaning. His "dark quiet eyes became amused as he stared along the road," the road that will take him home at last. Then, Route 66 is "the mother road, the road of flight," and it is the lifeline, the thing that allows thousands of families to pursue their hopes and dreams. But it is also the road that leads to their misery in California. It's interesting to note that Route 66 never really intersects with any other major highway or road – it goes in two directions only. When you are on Route 66, you can either go forward in search of opportunity, or you can go backwards and return to the poverty you came from.

The reader learns that roads are dangerous places. If you are a turtle or a dog trying to cross the road, there's a good chance that you will get run over. In the world of this novel, drivers like to create road-kill. The road can also be dangerous if your car breaks down far from the next town.

Bugs – There are lots of insects and insect-y images in this novel. When Tom Joad hitches a ride with a truck driver, a grasshopper finds its way into the truck cabin, and "Joad reached forward and crushed its hard skull-like head with his fingers, and he let it into the wind stream out the window". This moment certainly gives the phrase, "smooshed like a bug," a new meaning.

Our narrator pays special attention to the insects that populate the farmland, and we are reminded of that Biblical story in the Book of Exodus that describes the swarm of locusts that descended upon Egyptian crops after the Pharaoh refused to free the Hebrew slaves. We also are reminded of July 26, 1931, when a swarm of grasshoppers hit the Midwest region of the United States, destroying crops and devastating farms. The swarm was so thick, that the sun was temporarily blocked. Because of these stories, we fear insects and we know them to be capable of ruining a farm.

However, in The Grapes of Wrath, we also notice how easy it is for humans to kill insects, and there's a violence to the way, for instance, Tom crushes the grasshopper. We begin to see similarities between the way humans treat insects and the way landowners treat tenant farmers.

The Turtle, the Joad Dog, and Other Furry Friends – Remember that dang turtle in Chapter Three? The turtle who kept trying to cross the road, who was dead set on going in a specific direction, but who was nearly run over by cars, and who was picked up and stuffed into Tom Joad's coat? We know what you were thinking when you read this chapter: "Um, Mr. Steinbeck? We like turtles and all, but what the HEY is so important about this turtle? Why do you keep writing about him?"

Well, this stubborn and determined turtle, who almost becomes a Joad pet, reminds us of the stubborn and determined ways of the Joad family and other migrant worker families who persevere even after being kicked off of their farms, cheated by used car salesmen and merchants, and set back by sickness and loss. The turtle accepts the challenges that come his way, but he never forgets where he is going.

Another animal reference is the cat that Tom Joad sees. He recognizes it as an old family cat hanging around his abandoned family farm. Just like the migrant workers, the cat has been turned out of its home. The cat now lives in the wild and must survive on mice and other creatures – transformed from a domestic pet to a wild animal.

We also want to mention the way in which the Joad's dog dies. Sure, the Joads didn't really have a lovey-dovey relationship with this dog, and didn't even have a name for him, but he is the family dog nonetheless. This dog is run over by a speeding, westbound car, and his body is so mangled as a result that his guts lie strewn on the road. We get the feeling that his death foreshadows the gruesome circumstances that lie ahead for the Joads, and
of the tough, unrelenting life that awaits them. Times are hard, and people are so desperate and angry that they will not hesitate to run over a dog, or to ruin a family's life.

The cars on the road are also like animals, "limping along 66 like wounded things, panting and struggling". We watch humans kill animals without a second thought (remember the Joad pig fest?), and we begin to see similarities between the ways humans and their furry friends behave during desperate times.

**Yellows, Grays, and Reds** – Our narrator often describes the gold and yellow color of the Oklahoma landscape. He says, "The yellowing, dusty, afternoon light put a golden color on the land. The cornstalks looked golden", and we can't help but think of gold and money when we notice yellow things in this novel. It's as though the land is reminding its inhabitants of how it once was rich, lush, and profitable.

Similarly, our narrator talks about the "red country" and the "gray country" of Oklahoma, and we are reminded of the dismal reality of the Dust Bowl drought, and of the blood, sweat, and tears that have been poured into the land. The landowners and bankers are planting cotton in the place of corn, knowing full well that the cotton will bleed the soil dry, will take any last moisture from it. One farmer describes this effect, saying, "You know what cotton does to the land; robs it, sucks all the blood out of it". He knows that he can resuscitate his land if he is given a chance: "If they could only rotate the crops they might pump blood back into the land".

**Farming** – Farming is about life, cultivation, and growth. However, with advances in technology and science, we watch farming transition from a human-run to a machine-run art. In this novel we watch this transition, and we see how farming becomes influenced by scientific advancements. We watch farmers fight against this change, "for nitrates are not the land, nor phosphates; and the length of fiber in the cotton is not the land. Carbon is not a man, not salt nor water nor calcium. He is all these, but he is much more, much more; and the land is so much more than its analysis".

Farmers recognize that the machines that begin to take over their farms and that literally kick them out of their homes are essentially non-living things that can never understand the land. These farmers feel that, "the machine man, driving a dead tractor on the land he does not know and love, understands only chemistry; and he is contemptuous of the land and of himself. When the corrugated iron doors are shut, he goes home, & his home is not the land". We witness the art of farming trapped in a war between old & new, between human & machine.

**The Bank Monster** – When landowners kick tenant farmers off of the land, they tell them that the banks are hungry, that the bank is part of a hungry monster that cannot be sated. The tractors become the "snub-nosed monsters, raising the dust and sticking their snouts into it, straight down the country, across the country, through fences, through dooryards, in and out of gullies in straight lines". When the tenant farmers try to figure out who is in charge, who they can complain to, the tractor-monsters simply say, "Fellow was telling me the bank gets orders from the East. The orders were, 'Make the land show profit or we'll close you up’" (5.63). There is no one, specific person to blame, no single person in charge. The banks in the East are hungry for money, but we never get to see the faces of their agents, we never meet a specific landowner or banker. We only know they exist, and that they are turning families out of their homes.

**Blood** – The Grapes of Wrath is full of blood. Consider the slaughtering of the pigs, the way Tom cuts his hand fixing the touring car (and then uses his urine to make it stop bleeding), the Joad dog that gets run over, the farmland that is being bled dry by drought and by cotton, Rose of Sharon's baby's birth, and more. We also know that the "grapes of wrath" in "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" refers to injustice and spilt blood. Blood signals both life and death, so let's pay attention to moments in which it bubbles to the surface of this novel.

**The West** – The idea of going west has been a central part of the American consciousness for a long time. Remember Louis and Clark? Remember the Gold Rush? People have been heading west for years in search of fortune, opportunities, and warmer weather. California has always been a symbol of wealth and opportunity for much of American history.

However, this novel complicates that myth, showing instead the misery and desperation that fills California's verdant hills. Our narrator often describes the setting sun, offering specific description of the western sky. He says, "Only the unbalanced sky showed the approach of dawn, no horizon to the west, and a line to the east", as though suggesting that the West represents the unknown, uncharted territory.
As nice as this image is, there's something a little unsettling about a horizonless horizon. Again, we find another jarring disquieting description of the western sky, as our narrator describes, "The stars went out, few by few, toward the west". It's as though the west is eating the stars for dinner, is devouring the only glimmers of light amidst the night sky. The Grapes of Wrath puts a new, dark spin on the American ideal of moving westward and seeking fortune.

**The Sun** – The sun is an omnipresent force in the Joads' life, one that they cannot escape. Many Joads have to sit on top of the family truck on their way to California, and our narrator describes, "Their faces were shining with sunburn they could not escape". In this way the sun is almost violent. We also know that there has been a devastating drought in America over the past decade, which has contributed to the arrival of Dust Bowl storms. The sun is a dangerous power.

However, the sun is not always a destructive symbol in this novel. Our narrator describes the sun in hopeful language when he says, "The red sun set and left a shining twilight on the land, so that faces were bright in the evening and eyes shone in reflection of the sky. The evening picked up light where it could".

**Pregnancy** – Well, there's only one main pregnant lady in the novel, and that's Rose of Sharon. Whenever we see signs of babies in books, we sit up straight and pay attention, because babies are usually a sign of new life, new beginnings. Babies are cool because they ensure a family will continue to exist over another generation. So it's a pretty big deal that Rose of Sharon's baby is stillborn. The promise for new life and new start is not realized. However, Rose of Sharon is able to bring life to the world by nursing a nearly starved man.