**Grapes of Wrath Reading Guide 1-12**

**Chapter 1**

1. Describe the setting Steinbeck establishes. What effect does the setting have on the characters?
2. Critics argue that Steinbeck’s descriptions in this chapter have a biblical style. Defend this idea.

**Chapter 2**

1. Discuss your first impressions of Tom Joad. What is the effect of Steinbeck referring to him as Joad?

**Chapter 3**

1. This is the first of several symbolic “interchapters” woven in the novel. If you replace the turtle with a person, what symbolic meaning can be derived from this chapter?

**Chapter 4**

1. Considering your response to question 5, how can Tom picking up the turtle be seen as a symbolic gesture?
2. Discuss your initial impressions of Reverend Casy. What are his beliefs?

**Chapter 5**

1. Discuss the effectiveness of Steinbeck’s imagery in this chapter.
2. According to the voice in this chapter, is there a clear villain? Why or why not?
3. Describe the owner men. What is their role in the problem? How do they deal with it (p31)?
4. How is the change in the land related to cotton (p. 32)?
5. The bank is depicted through a metaphor. Explain how the bank is personified. Is this metaphor effective? (*Bank or Company were a monster GoWp110digital)*
6. What promise does the Joad family buy into? Project how California will be better for them (p34).
7. How is the tractor depicted? Do we still view tractors in the same way today? Rationalize your response.
8. Characterize the tractor driver. Is this a job Tom Joad would do? Explain.
9. What are the circumstances that make people compromise their values? Is the tractor driver justified?
10. Analyze the purpose of the bank offering incentives for tractor drivers to ‘accidentally’ run into houses. How does this serve the bank’s agenda?

**Chapter 6**

1. What happened to Tom’s family?

2. There are several references in this chapter to the pump well. What is the significance of this? What does it represent?

3. In this chapter, there is passage that talks about Tom Joad and his new yellow shoes. What is the meaning behind this? Why mention it?

4. Tom eventually finds out where his family went. Describe his reaction.

5. Whose ‘fault’ is it that the people had to leave their land?

6. On the bottom of p 48 Tom states that, “Well, by God, I’m hungry.” “Four solemn years I been eatin’ right on the minute. My gut is yellin’ bloody murder. What you gonna eat Muley? How you been getting’ your dinner?” What is ironic about this statement?

7. What additional information do we learn about Tom’s crime?

8. Why do ‘they’ go to so much trouble to watch the land?

**Chapter 7**

1. Describe the pace and mood of the ‘car lot’ section of the chapter. What does the car salesman in this chapter illustrate about human nature?

**Chapter 8**

1. How does Tom’s family react when they see him again?

2. Describe the attitude or mood of the Joad family. Would you have a similar attitude in their position? Why, or why not?

3. Characterize Ma Joad

4. Do the events in chapter 7 happen today? Do people lose or get forced from their homes?

5. Who is Noah? How is he described?

6. Casy offers an important speech about humanity during his “grace” before breakfast. What is its essential message?

7. Describe Al.

8. What may be a glitch in Tom going to California with the family? Is this something that he is aware of? How do you know?

**Chapter 9**

1. At the beginning of chapter nine, there is a passage that begins… “The men were ruthless because the past had been spoiled…” Read the passage in the book and describe what it means.

2. How are the tractor and bitterness connected?

3. What is meant by the passage, “When shoes and clothes and food, when even hope is gone, we’ll have the rifle.”

4. What things did the Joad family leave behind? Which of these items would you take? Why?

5. How does burning something in your memory compare to physically burning something?

1. Explain the symbolism of the sentence, “The willow tree is you. The pain on that mattress there-that dreadful pain-that’s you.”
2. The Joads have to “drug” Grampa in order to make sure he comes along on the trip. What does this action say about their values?

**Chapter 10**

1. What is Tom’s advice to his mother in the beginning of chapter 10? (2nd or 3rd page)

2. What is Ma’s dream about California? What does she envision life being like? What does Tom say that contradicts her thoughts?

3. What does the truck represent or symbolize?

4. Why does Ma put her box of treasures on the fire? Explain how this action tells the reader about Ma’s character.

**Chapter 11**

1. How are the tractors described? What literary elements or figurative language is used?

2. The last line in the chapter mentions ragged curtains fluttering in the broken windows. What imagery does this passage suggest?

**Chapter 12**

1. There are numerous cities and mileages listed. Why did Steinbeck include this information?

2. On p119 a paragraph begins… “Listen to the motor. Listen to the wheels….” What rhetorical device does Steinbeck use here? Why?

3. Read the last paragraph on p119, beginning with, “And why’s the --- heat up so hot today?” to the end of the 6th paragraph on p120, “This is a free country.” Describe Steinbeck’s style.

4. On p121, what do they say business is? How is business characterized?

What is courage? Faith?