The Grapes of Wrath

• You will need a folder for this study. Please have a separate folder and label it *Grapes of Wrath Study. Have it by this Friday.*
• In it, you will keep your Grapes of Wrath syllabus, annotation rubric, archetypes and allusion handouts, as well as any extra study guide or practice AP Multiple Choice selections.
• Every Friday I will grade annotations and your paragraphs while you do a timed writing over the selection for that week.
• This is six-week study.
• Late work will not be tolerated. If you miss a Friday, you will need to bring me your annotations and paragraphs the first day you return to class. *I will not remind you.* I will not take it after that. Don’t tell me you forgot it or left it beside your bed. Timed writings and quizzes must be completed within the allotted time in student handbook.
Annotation examples:

repetition: shows the division of Oklahoma into red dirt and grey dirt. Neither are green or alive.

To the red country and part of the grey country of Oklahoma, the last rains came gently, and they did not cut the scarred earth.

Last rains: no more to come.
Foreshadowing the Dust Bowl.

The rains were too gentle to disturb the scarred earth.

Implies the earth is injured and hurt.

The first sentence itself is reversed in its syntactical order. It more properly would read, “The last rains came gently to the red and grey country of Oklahoma, but they did not cut the scarred earth.” This device is called chiasmus. It creates a very formal tone--and Steinbeck is marking this occurrence as something of biblical proportions, thus the use of chiasmus adds to that tone. The repeated “ands” show his love of polysyndetons. It creates a smooth, uninterrupted sentence.
The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck


-From Salinas, California, born 1902, died 1968. Won both the Pulitzer and Nobel Prizes for literature. Also wrote Of Mice and Men, Cannery Row, East of Eden.


-Sharecroppers: Land owned by companies

-Propaganda: promised jobs out “west” in California

-Between 1935-1938--300,000-500,000 Okies arrived in California. (Included Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri.)
Structure of Novel:


- Heavily influenced by the King James version of the Bible.

- He also borrows from Melville’s *Moby Dick* structure, juxtaposing the slow-paced narrative chapters with jazzy, rapid-fire chapters of exposition. These intercalary chapters are biological (pragmatist) and lyrical in style as they express an “atemporal, universal, synoptic view of the migrant condition.” Steinbeck called these staccato chapters “pace changers” that express the rhythms and symbols of poetry,” ironically using them to halt any kind of sentimentality the reader might feel for the Joads.
Basic Belief: Steinbeck does not advocate revolution; he defines and describes the conditions that produce revolution.

Features: heroes, cameo pieces, purple passages, honesty, realism, plain-speaking, unorthodox views.

Title: comes from the Revelation 14, Numbers, Exodus, and Jeremiah 30:31. The grapes of wrath is a reference from Revelation indicating judgment day when the Lord will trample the harvest, sort out the oppressors from the wronged and bring justice to the earth. Also from “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.” (see bookmark.)
A Classic: Classic literature can be read at different levels for different depths of meaning.

EXAMPLE:

**Level 1:** Joads (note similarity to Job), Okies, the dispossessed, all sharecroppers.

**Level 2:** An allegory for all dispossessed peoples across the world and across time.

**Level 3:** Moral meanings: salvation from sin to grace (not necessarily Christianity). Correcting inhumanity’s disconnectedness with his true nature to connect with one another.

**Level 4:** Beacon of hope: Steinbeck’s Tom Joad as reformer: “Whenever there’s a fight so hungry people can eat, I’ll be there.”
Literary/Narrative Techniques

- **30 Chapters:** 16 intercalary and 14 narrative
- **Language:** colloquial; poetic prose; figurative language; verismilitude. Intercalary chapters utilize: poetic prose, fragmentary language, stream of consciousness elements.
- **Biblical allusions:** Jim Casey (Jesus Christ); Tom (disciple of Jim Casey), Rose of Sharon, Rev. 14:19
- **Archetypes galore!**
- **Exodus:** across desert to Promised Land; Joad/Job. Noah and the Flood. The Book of Job.
- **Style:** Realist or Naturalist: Which? Arguments for both. Realism: seeks to expose/ Naturalism: seeks to explain (Darwin)
- **Similarities to Hemingway.**
- **Perspective:** Wrote during Fitzgerald and Hemingway’s lifetime.
Basic outline of the Book

- Follows the Joad family for about half a year of their lives.
- We meet them after they have been thrown off their land, probably in April or May.
- We go with them on a long cross-country trek which lasts slightly longer than a month. (Starts around Sallisaw)
- The last time we see them, they are in a hillside barn seeking refuge from wintry rains and floods, perhaps in November or December. Exact time cannot be pinned down.
- Joad story is told chronologically. Steinbeck occasionally fills us in on details of the characters’ past lives in two ways:
  1. He just tells us.
  2. He lets his characters tell us.
If we examine the intercalary chapters, we see a colorful background montage of migrant life. The novel can be divided into three parts:

1. Oppression: the time of drought and dust in Oklahoma
2. Exodus: the second section, about the journey
3. The Promised Land: the final portion: California