

2017 Summer Reading Assignment

Your assignment for the summer is to read the novel *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. The novel, which takes place in the 1930s during the Dust Bowl migration, focuses on the trials and tribulations of one Oklahoma family, the Joads, who are forced to leave their farm and home and travel west to California in search of a new life. As they struggle to survive, the Joads make life discoveries that enable the reader to consider some important lessons about humanity.

THEME is defined as an observation of life that serves as the controlling idea in a literary work. A theme is seldom presented word for word, but is more often implied and found as an abstract idea, often surfacing through the actions and dialogues of characters.

Theme, which the reader most often has to infer, is a literary element that allows the reader to make connections to his or her own life, thereby making the reading more enjoyable and worthwhile. So, after having read John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, you will write a **one-page typed personal response** to analyze theme by connecting your own life experiences to those experiences of one or more members of the Joad family by referring to the list of abstract concepts presented below.

Choose **any 1 of the 6 concepts listed below** and formulate a theme (thematic statement in the form of a **complete sentence**) based on that concept that would be applicable to your own life experiences. Explain in specific detail how your chosen life experiences regarding this theme **compare** to that same theme experienced by one or more of the characters in this novel, perhaps one that teaches an important lesson about what it means to be human.

Remember that a theme is not just one word, but rather an idea (statement) based on an abstract word. For example, the concept of *LOVE* may be evident in a particular novel or in your own life. The **theme** of that novel, however, would **make a statement about that concept**, *LOVE*, such as "*Love often depends on the willingness to accept and make sacrifices.*"

Make a statement about your chosen concept from the list below that could be considered a theme, both for you, personally, and for the character(s) in this novel (follow the example given above for *LOVE*), and elaborate throughout your written response by providing specific details about both your personal experiences and the experiences of the character(s).

1. ACCEPTANCE 2. STRENGTH 3. SELFLESSNESS 4. COMPASSION 5. TOLERANCE 6. INJUSTICE

Please type your response (double-spaced, size 12 font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, **NO MLA HEADERS AT TOP**) and return **along with your book** to Mrs. Peterman by **Thursday, August 31, 2017**. NOTE: You are expected to do your own work – any evidence of plagiarism (including, but not limited to, copying from an outside source or from another student) will result in a grade of zero for this assignment in accordance with Hanover Area School District's Plagiarism/Cheating policy.

In addition to the 50-point writing assignment outlined above, students will complete a written test (also worth 50 points) on Thursday, August 31, 2018

