

Reader's Companion

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck



Add depth to your reading and responses with these prompts and [text connection resources](#).

Intercalary Chapters	Traditional Chapters
<p>To paraphrase Steinbeck, these Intercalary Chapters are designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ hit you below the belt ▪ utilize the rhythms and symbols of poetry ▪ open you up on an intellectual level <p>When reading and responding to an Intercalary Chapter, you should look for all types of “text to text” and “text to world” connections.</p>	<p>When reading and responding to one of Steinbeck’s traditional chapters which are “are the slow-paced and lengthy narrative chapters that embody traditional characterization and advance the dramatic plot” (DeMott), you should not only focus on the sequence of events but also consider the Joad family (including Casy) as a microcosm of society. Consider the significance of how/when/why each family member joins or departs from the larger family group.</p>



<p>Chapters 1 – 10 (114 pages)</p> <p><i>These chapters depict life in the Oklahoma dust bowl and then explore the mass exodus along Route 66 to California, the Promised Land.</i></p>	<p>Chapters 11 – 20 (167 pages)</p> <p><i>These chapters depict life in the Oklahoma dust bowl and then explore the mass exodus along Route 66 to California, the Promised Land.</i></p>	<p>Chapters 21- 30 (173 pages)</p> <p><i>These chapters depict the experiences of migrant farmers as they sought to create a sustainable life for themselves and their families in California</i></p>
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Read & tag these chapters <i>before</i> the class posted date for the in-class activity.	In-Class Activity
<p>Chapter 1 (pp. 1-4) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> In chapter 1, how does Steinbeck communicate interdependence in the family structure?</p> <p>Chapter 2 (pp. 5-13) <i>A Traditional Chapter</i> What kind of person is Tom Joad? Would you want him on your side in a fight?</p> <p>Chapter 3 (pp. 14 - 16) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> What is the turtle’s struggle like? How do drivers respond to him and how does he respond to setbacks?</p> <p>Chapter 4 (pp. 17- 30) <i>A Traditional Chapter</i> Who is Jim Casy and how does he know Tom?</p> <p>Chapter 5 (pp. 31-39) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> There is a lot of rape imagery in this chapter. Rape is not an act of love but an act of violence. What is being raped – by what and why?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Friday, 2/7</p> <p>Whole-Class Discussion: Chapters 1 - 5</p>
Read & tag these chapters <i>before</i> the class posted date for the in-class activity.	In-Class Activity

<p>Chapter 6 (pp. 40- 60) <i>A Traditional Chapter</i> Tom and Casy move on to Tom's home, but his family is no longer there. Why? Where have they gone and who is Muley?</p> <p>Chapter 7 (pp. 61- 66) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> Why are so many cars being sold? Isn't this the Great Depression?</p> <p>Chapter 8 (pp. 67- 85) <i>A Traditional Chapter</i> What is the Joad family's reunion with Tom like?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Tuesday, 2/11</p> <p>Book Group Discussion: Chapters 6 - 8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">and</p> <div> </div> <p style="text-align: right;">Entry #6</p> <p>Title: <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> Author: Steinbeck Date: 2/11/25 Pages: Chapters 1-8 (pp. 1- 85) Include the following in your reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Significant passage from the discussion or your reading. ■ Analysis of why you selected the passage. ■ Commentary on elements of both the whole-class and book group discussions confirmed or challenged your thinking about the novel.
<p>Read & tag these chapters <i>before</i> the class posted date for the in-class activity.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">In-Class Activity</p>
<p>Chapter 9 (pp. 86- 89) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> Why would anyone burn personal possessions rather than take them on the road</p> <p>Chapter 10 (pp. 90- 114) <i>A Traditional Chapter</i> How is the truck a microcosm of society?</p> <p>Chapter 11 (pp. 115- 117) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> What message is Steinbeck communicating by juxtaposing the death of machines (tractors) with the death of living beings (horses)?</p> <p>Chapter 12 (pp. 118- 122) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> Route 66 was often thought of as a road for vacations and adventures. What does this road represent for the Joads?</p> <p>Chapter 13 (pp. 123- 149) <i>A Traditional Chapter</i> This chapter references Psalm 32. How does this reference shape a reader's interpretation of the events in this chapter?</p> <p>Chapter 14 (pp. 150- 152) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> Steinbeck was investigated by the FBI for writing this book. The Feds were especially troubled by Chapter 14. Why?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Tuesday, 2/18</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fruit-Basket Upset: Chapters 9 - 14</p> <p style="text-align: center;">and</p> <div> </div> <p style="text-align: right;">Entry #7</p> <p>Title: <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> Author: Steinbeck Date: 2/18/25 Pages: Chapters 9-14 (pp. 86- 152) Include the following in your reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Significant passage from the activity or your reading. ■ Analysis of why you selected the passage. ■ Commentary on how playing fruit-basket upset offers a metaphor for Steinbeck's message in these chapters.
<p>Read & tag these chapters <i>before</i> the class posted date for the in-class activity.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">In-Class Activity</p>

<p>Chapter 15 (pp. 153- 162) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> How does the message in Chapter 14 foreshadow events depicted in Chapter 15?</p> <p>Chapter 16 (pp. 163- 192) <i>A Traditional Chapter</i> Tom offers the junkyard attendant some advice about his mindset. What does this advice indicate about Tom’s philosophy of life?</p> <p>Chapter 17 (pp. 193- 200) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> Why does Steinbeck focus on the structure of these roadside camps? What is he hoping to convey indirectly?</p> <p>Chapter 18 (pp. 201- 230) <i>A Traditional Chapter</i> How do the gas station attendants treat the Joads and what does this indicate about how the common man perceived the Okies?</p>	<p>Monday, 3/3</p> <p>Book Group Discussion: Chapters 15-18</p> <p>and</p>  Entry #8 Title: <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> Author: Steinbeck Date: 3/3/25 Pages: Chapters 15-18 (pp. 153- 230) Include the following in your reflection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Significant passage from the discussion or your reading. ■ Analysis of why you selected the passage. ■ Commentary on elements of the discussion that confirmed or challenged your thinking about the novel.
<p>Read & tag these chapters <i>before</i> the class posted date for the in-class activity.</p>	<p>In-Class Activity</p>
<p>Chapter 19 (pp. 231-239) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> How does this chapter relate to chapter 14? Why might this chapter also prompt an FBI investigation?</p> <p>Chapter 20 (pp. 240- 281) <i>A Traditional Chapter</i> Why is this jungle camp burned out? Who did it threaten? Why? How?</p> <p>Chapter 21 (pp. 282- 284) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> What’s Steinbeck saying about money, power, and society here?</p>	<p>Thursday, 3/6</p> <p>Whole-Class Discussion: Chapters 19- 21</p> <p>and</p>  Entry #9 Title: <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> Author: Steinbeck Date: 3/6/25 Pages: Chapters 19- 21 (pp. 231 - 284) Include the following in your reflection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Significant passage from the discussion or your reading. ■ Analysis of why you selected the passage. ■ Commentary on elements of the discussion that confirmed or challenged your thinking about the novel.

Read & tag these chapters <i>before</i> the class posted date for the in-class activity.	In-Class Activity
<p>Chapter 22 (pp. 285- 324) <i>A Traditional Chapter</i> The Joads have left the Hooverville in San Bernardino and moved on to a government camp. How is this different from the Hooverville?</p> <p>Chapter 23 (pp. 325- 330) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> What value do the arts (music & dance) have? Shouldn't the migrants only be concerned with working and surviving?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Monday, 3/10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Book Group Discussion: Chapters 22-23</p> <p style="text-align: center;">and</p> <div> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Entry #10 Title: <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> Author: Steinbeck Date: 3/10/25 Pages: Chapters 22- 23 (pp. 285- 330) Include the following in your reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Significant passage from the discussion or your reading. ■ Analysis of why you selected the passage. ■ Commentary on elements of the discussion that confirmed or challenged your thinking about the novel.
Read & tag these chapters <i>before</i> the class posted date for the in-class activity.	In-Class Activity
<p>Chapter 24 (pp. 331- 345) <i>A Traditional Chapter</i> Why did the deputies want to cause a riot and how is the “committee” successful in “handling” the “rioters”?</p> <p>Chapter 25 (pp. 346- 349) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> What is “pellagra” and why is this reality for so many people living in California (at this moment in time) when there is more than enough food for everyone?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday, 3/12</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Whole-Class Discussion: Chapters 24-25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">and</p> <div> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Entry #11 Title: <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> Author: Steinbeck Date: 3/12/25 Pages: Chapters 24- 25 (pp. 331- 349) Include the following in your reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Significant passage from the discussion or your reading. ■ Analysis of why you selected the passage. ■ Commentary on elements of the discussion that confirmed or challenged your thinking about the novel.

Read & tag these chapters <i>before</i> the class posted date for the in-class activity.	In-Class Activity
<p>Chapter 26 (pp. 350- 405) <i>A Traditional Chapter</i> How does “the company” use credit lines extended at its store to guarantee its labor force?</p>	<p>Monday, 3/17</p> <p>Book Group Discussion: Chapter 26</p> <p>and</p>  <p>Entry #12 Title: <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> Author: Steinbeck Date:3/17/25 Pages: Chapter 26 (pp. 350- 405) Include the following in your reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Significant passage from the discussion or your reading. ■ Analysis of why you selected the passage. ■ Commentary on elements of the discussion that confirmed or challenged your thinking about the novel.
Read & tag these chapters <i>before</i> the class posted date for the in-class activity.	In-Class Activity
<p>Chapter 27 (pp. 406- 408) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> What’s life in the boxcar like?</p> <p>Chapter 28 (pp. 409- 431) <i>A Traditional Chapter</i> How does Tom’s relationship with Casy influence decisions about his own (Tom’s) future? (Biblical Allusion – Ecclesiastes 4).</p> <p>Chapter 29 (pp. 432- 435) <i>An Intercalary Chapter</i> What’s significant about the birth of Rose of Sharon’s baby?</p> <p>Chapter 30 (pp. 436- 455) <i>A Traditional Chapter</i> According to Uncle John, what message is the baby supposed to send? Is there a biblical allusion here? How should we interpret the ending? What’s Steinbeck’s ultimate message here?</p>	<p>Monday, 3/24</p> <p>Whole-Class Discussion: Chapters 27-30</p> <p>and</p>  <p>Entry #13 Title: <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> Author: Steinbeck Date:3/17/25 Pages: Chapters 27 - 30 (pp. 406- 455) Include the following in your reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Significant passage from the discussion or your reading. ■ Analysis of why you selected the passage. ■ Commentary on elements of the discussion that confirmed or

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