



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

THE GRAPES OF WRATH

BY JOHN STEINBECK



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Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter Two

Momentum and Rhythm

Objective: Understanding how an author builds and resolves suspense through detail

Activity I

Steinbeck builds momentum and suspense in Chapter Two through small details about the characters' actions and their environment. The speed of the truck, the silence of Tom, and the nervous movements of the driver all build towards the climax of the chapter.

Trace this buildup by drawing a plot line across a piece of paper. Make the line flat when there is little tension, and record upward movement when the suspense builds. Include plateaus when nothing of significance is happening. Add points to the line to signify major tension-builders in the chapter. Beside each point, explain in words what it signifies.

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Chapter Five**Simile and Metaphor****Objective:** Identifying and interpreting similes and metaphors**Activity**

In Chapter Five, Steinbeck uses similes and metaphors to create instant, vivid pictures in readers' minds.

To complete the SIMILE AND METAPHOR CHART, be aware of similes and metaphors as you read this chapter. When you find one, quote and record it in the first column, making sure to include a page number. In the second column, describe the image or idea the simile brings to your mind. An example from Chapter Four is provided for you. Find and describe the effects of at least five similes and metaphors in Chapter Five.

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Chapter Nine**Characterization****Objective:** Writing a character's resume**Activity**

Ma seems to have two main roles—she is a nurturer and caregiver, but she is also a leader and an organizer. Suppose that Ma is looking for a job that will make use of all of her talents. Write a resume for Ma that will help her secure such a position.

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Chapter Thirteen**Writing****Objective:** Writing an obituary for a character**Activity**

Write a newspaper obituary for Grampa, including the cause of his death, the names of the relatives he is survived by, details about any funeral or burial service, and a tribute to his character and the things he stood for.

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Chapter Eighteen**Letter to the Editor****Objective:** Commentary on a development in the plot**Activity I**

How does Ma's lie for the family (saying that Granma is sick, when in fact she has died) and her subsequent act of courage (lying with Granma all night) strike you?

Pretend this episode has been described in a front-page newspaper article. Write a letter to the editor expressing your opinion about Ma's act.

Activity II

How do the different characters react to the death of Granma and Ma's sacrifice?

- a. Rose of Sharon and Connie:
- b. Ruthie and Winfield:
- c. Al:
- d. Casy:
- e. John:
- f. Tom:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter Twenty

Brochure

Objective: Creating a brochure.

Activity

On page 254, a girl tells Ma about Weedpatch, a work camp where the girl's family used to live. Despite its unpromising name, Weedpatch sounds like an oasis compared to the area in which the Joads are currently camped.

Imagine that Weedpatch has vacancies and is sending a brochure to other poor camps to attract new residents. Building on the details the girl gives Ma on page 254, design the Weedpatch brochure. Include several illustrations of the facility, detailed descriptions of its amenities, testimonials from fictitious residents, and whatever else you think may entice new families to come pay to live in your camp. You might want to consider some of the dreams and fantasies the various Joads have expressed—for example, Rose of Sharon's obsession with movies—and appeal to those fantasies in your brochure. Finally, include a mention of the daily rates and the work-in-exchange-for-shelter program Weedpatch offers.

Name: _____

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Chapter Twenty-One**Collage****Objective:** Creating visuals to enhance comprehension**Activity**

Although Chapter Twenty-One is short, it contains much imagery. Steinbeck describes the land becoming almost clogged with people looking for work, the hunger in their eyes, and the fear in the eyes of those who have never known hunger.

With images culled from magazines and the Internet and/or with illustrations you draw or compose on a computer, create a collage that captures the time in history described in Chapter Twenty-One. Strive to represent the clash of emotions and ideologies visually and to create tension by juxtaposing meaningful images.

Be prepared to present your collage to the class and give a short explanation about why you chose the images and arranged them on the paper in the way that you did.

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Chapter Twenty-Three

Storytelling and Music

Objective: Understanding the role of the storyteller and oral traditions in a tribe or group
Understanding the importance and symbolism of music

Activity I

Oral traditions can become especially important to a group like the migrant workers. Rather than writing down songs, stories, and poems, these things are memorized and shared aloud. In this way, groups that do not have access to luxuries like paper or books can still maintain a cultural heritage.

Using the Internet or reference materials, find a story that was passed down orally within a disenfranchised culture.

1. What are some of the problems that arise from transmitting material this way?
2. How long is the story you found?
3. How did the people who transmitted the story learn it?

Name: _____

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Wrap-Up**Synthesis**

Objective: Assessing the novel
 Creating a new cover for the novel

Activity

Although it's said that you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, there's no denying the power of an intriguing cover to drive us to pick up a book. Imagine that *The Grapes of Wrath* is about to be reissued, and that you are in charge both of developing the cover art and the descriptive comments on the back.

Fold a sheet of paper so that you can provide both a front and a back cover. For the front cover, you may use images collected from elsewhere, draw the artwork, or make the art on a computer. You might depict a key scene from the book that can stand for the entire story; you might simply use a few well-chosen images that evoke the book's mood. Be sure to include the title and the author's name.

On the back cover, write a brief review of the book. Address such topics as

- what you learned from the novel
- what the novel's overall theme seems to be
- whether you would recommend this book to others
- why you do or do not think this is a good novel to teach in schools

Include a paragraph-long biography of the author at the bottom, using facts researched on the Internet or in other books. Be prepared to say why you think your cover design might attract more readers than the current design.