

Mr. Suplee  
English III AP

### Summer Reading & Take-Home Exam on The Grapes of Wrath

For your English III AP Summer Reading assignment, you will need to check-out from the English Department or buy a copy of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Read the novel closely, you will have a short-answer reading exam on the entire book during the second week of school. The exam will count for one major grade.

**DO NOT** read discussions on the novel from the *Cliff Notes* or Barron's Notes or *Sparknotes.com* or any other source.

Do not talk with anyone else about the book.

You will receive a zero on this assignment if you use a source outside of the book. Plan on reading the book at least twice: once to get the basic plot, and a second time to examine the book's style and meaning.

I want your reading of the book to be uncluttered by other readers' interpretations. That is why I would like you to stay away from outside sources.

In addition to reading The Grapes of Wrath, I want you to complete the following take home examination after you have read the book twice. I will collect this examination during the second week of class next fall; it will count for a major grade. This take home exam should be typed; all answers must be thorough and in complete sentences. Please use specific examples and evidence from the novel to answer these questions. Identify specific quotes with page numbers from the edition that you are using, like this: (Steinbeck 44).

If you don't have a computer and you cannot get access to one, write down your answers.

1. The Grapes of Wrath is a literary work in which the setting is very important. What is the setting of this novel? (time period; geographical locations; political/historical context as revealed in the book—you are not supposed to read anything outside of the novel itself).
2. For Steinbeck, what is the proper relationship between the people and the land? How have the banks and the new owners of the land violated this relationship?
3. Trace the evolution throughout the novel of Jim Casy's values and beliefs— his philosophy of life. (*Trace* means, you, the reader, find specific quotations and you explain these quotations, and you use them to explain what Casy's values are at the beginning of the novel and then to give specific quotations and interpretations of those quotes from the book. Your quotes and interpretations should show the different stages of Casy's spiritual development, as his values change and evolve. Be sure that you define clearly what Casy comes to understand about life's

- meaning: What does he value in life? How does he define “good”? How does he define “evil”? For Casy, how would a good person act in this world?
4. Trace Tom Joad’s evolving philosophy in the book: How does he grow to see himself as Casy’s spiritual heir? What actions does Tom take that show him growing closer to Casy’s beliefs.
  5. Explain how the Joad family changes as a whole in the course of its experiences as migrants, you have already discussed Tom Joad and Casy, so EXCLUDE them from this discussion). Begin by showing with what concept of “family” the Joad’s begin their journey, and then discuss the concept of family they arrive at by the end of the book. Pay close attention to Ma and Rose of Sharon.

A couple of quick pointers:

Please get the book early and begin to read it.

As you read the book, have a pad of paper nearby, and write down your thoughts in answering these questions.

While summer may look like a long time on the calendar, I can assure you, it is deceptively short.

A few words about English III AP, it is a challenging course, but it is also a rewarding course. The course is geared to prepare you to succeed on the Language and Composition English AP Exam, and while that remains an important focus, the course will also educate students in becoming sharper and better prepared readers and writers.

If you have questions about the course or the assignment, please e-mail me or stop by room 304C. I may not respond immediately, but I can assure you, I will respond.

I look forward to working with you.