

***The Grapes of Wrath* Constructed Responses**

30 Points

Directions: For the following, write a constructed response in which you address the prompt. Be sure your responses 1) are as complete and focused as possible, 2) are well thought out, **THOROUGH and COMPLETE**, and 3) **are supported with specific text from the novel**. You may also find it helpful to think past the questions I've given or think about them in a novel way.

Chose one (1) of the following prompts and write a constructed response in which you formulate a thesis which you then prove using ALL PARTS of the book for support.

1. Even though the novel was published in 1939, *The Grapes of Wrath* has value for the modern reader—which is why we read it for this class. Using socio-economics situations, family hierarchies and relationships, religion beliefs and secular philosophy, Steinbeck addresses the “truths” of the human condition. Write a constructed response that highlights the reasons YOU believe students of literature and history—and every other reader—would find this book worth reading.

In your response, be sure to consider how the book is structured—the way it begins and ends, the “lose” of characters, the uncertainty of the narrative, and the use of the symbolic intercalary chapters.

PLEASE NOTE: Responses consisting of negatives (“There is no value to this book...”, “No one should read this...” or the like) are not appropriate and will not be considered.

2. After seeing the indignities faced by the migrant workers, the greed and oppression of years of capitalism, and the lack of motivation or ability of the government to make significant, lasting change in the country, Steinbeck wrote *The Grapes of Wrath* as a novel of social protest. The book makes challenges to organized religion, capitalism, anti-union activities, and men as well as government beholden to the “monster” of wealth and influence. Steinbeck’s audience, seeing the plight of the country during the Depression and even living lives similar to his characters themselves, made the novel a bestseller the year of its publication. Write a constructed response in which you address the use of the novel—its characters, structure, plot, and themes—as a protest against the grief and indignities suffered by the poor.
3. Like the intercalary chapters in *The Grapes of Wrath*, it can be argued that Steinbeck’s characters in the novel all represent some aspect of society or a dilemma faced by human beings. From the dogmatic and intolerant religious to the generous, secular humanist; from the unwittingly holy to the guilt-ridden sinner; from responsibilities taken by the characters to the uncertainty and bewilderment; and from the protest and rebellion to the complacency and acceptance in life, each of the following characters plays a vital role in the narrative and in the message Steinbeck is trying to convey to the reader. Choose one (1) of these characters (or more if they tie together) and explain the “purpose” or “message” (theme) this character is meant to express. In other words, 1) why is the character in the story, 2) what role does he/she play, and 3) what aspect of society, religion, survival, etc. does Steinbeck want you to understand by creating this individual? You may also wish to address the way in which the character “enters/exits” the book.

1. Tom Joad (Jr.)
2. Ma Joad
3. Jim Casy
4. Rose of Sharon

5. Uncle John
6. Pa Joad
7. Muley Graves
8. Granpa/Granma (they are combined; act as 2 sides to same principle)