

# AP: The Grapes of Wrath

Content Area: **English Language Arts**  
Course(s): **Language Arts Literacy III Honors**  
Time Period: **6 weeks**  
Length: **6 weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Unit Overview

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This unit will use *The Grapes of Wrath* as a thematic and contextual background for understanding fact of, reasons for, and results of wealth inequality, social inequality, and political/social/class uprising. The unit will emphasize non-fiction texts to accompany the novel as a means of exposing the students to possible AP Language exam questions modern political documents, political journalism, protest music, photo-journalism, et cetera. Finally, students will use the context of the book to write a variety of essays exploring the issues in the unit as well as responding and persuading others about issues in the unit.

## Transfer

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Students will be able to independently use their learning to...

- Understand the role of historical context and its importance in a novel's meaning.
- Evaluate the effects of the Great Depression on rural farm families and agriculture.
- Identify examples of humanism and transcendentalism and analyze how they reflect the beliefs of the author.
- Recognize and apply themes of family, fellowship, strife, and dignity to future pieces of literature.
- Make connections between historical context and current events/personal relationships.
- Analyze and evaluate structure, voice, tone, and other rhetorical techniques in a variety of texts and documents.
- Synthesize ideas drawn from primary source documents (letters; essays) to write analytical and persuasive essays.

## Meaning

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## Understandings

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Students will understand that...

- Understand the following in all readings:

- Thesis or Claim
- Tone or Attitude
- Purpose
- Audience and Occasion
- Aristotelian Triangle: Audience, Speaker, Subject
- Evidence or Data
- Appeals: Logos, Ethos, Pathos
- Assumptions or Warrants
- Style (how the author communicates his message: rhetorical mode, rhetorical devices, which always include diction and syntax)
- Organizational patterns found in the text, i.e., main idea detail, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, extended definition, problem/solution, etc.
- Use of detail to develop a general idea.
- Natural disasters and governmental policy make individuals face difficult choices of survival for both themselves and their families.
- Societal constructions lead naturally towards inter- and intra-class warfare.
- Greed and desperation influence the actions of all levels of society.
- Family and fellowship in times of strife have the ability to outweigh man's inhumanity towards other men.
- Realism in setting and characterization is essential to understanding historical context and making connections between the text and self.

## **Essential Questions**

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1. What is Steinbeck saying about the interplay between poverty, wealth inequality, and class struggle in American society?
2. How does Steinbeck use realism, naturalism, determinism, and colloquialism to celebrate the struggle, tragedy, and small triumphs of the working class?
3. How do writers with political and social agendas make effective arguments?

## **Application of Knowledge and Skill**

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### **Students will know...**

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- Understand the following in all readings:
- Thesis or Claim
- Tone or Attitude

- Purpose
- Audience and Occasion
- Aristotelian Triangle: Audience, Speaker, Subject
- Evidence or Data
- Appeals: Logos, Ethos, Pathos
- Assumptions or Warrants
- Style (how the author communicates his message: rhetorical mode, rhetorical devices, which always include diction and syntax)
- Organizational patterns found in the text, i.e., main idea detail, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, extended definition, problem/solution, etc.
- Use of detail to develop a general idea

Students will also know the following:

- How natural disasters and governmental policy make individuals face difficult choices of survival for both themselves and their families.
- How societal constructions lead naturally towards inter- and intra-class warfare.
- How greed and desperation influence the actions of all levels of society.
- How family and fellowship in times of strife have the ability to outweigh man's inhumanity towards other men.
- How realism in setting and characterization is essential to understanding historical context and making connections between the text and self.

### **Students will be skilled at...**

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Students will be able to independently use their learning to...

- Understand the role of historical context and its importance in a novel's meaning.
- Evaluate the effects of the Great Depression on rural farm families and agriculture.
- Identify examples of humanism and transcendentalism and analyze how they reflect the beliefs of the author.
- Recognize and apply themes of family, fellowship, strife, and dignity to future pieces of literature.
- Make connections between historical context and current events/personal relationships.
- Utilize the following in writing (in-class and take-home essays):
- a wide-ranging vocabulary used appropriately and effectively;
- a variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordination and coordination;
- logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques to increase coherence,
- such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis;
- a balance of generalization and specific illustrative detail; and
- an effective use of rhetoric including controlling tone, establishing and maintaining voice, and achieving appropriate emphasis through diction and sentence structure.

## Academic Vocabulary

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- Realism
- Transcendentalism
- Humanism
- Pragmatism
- Naturalism
- Allusion
- Colloquial

\*Other vocabulary used contextually within specific texts.\*

## Learning Goal 1

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Students will understand Steinbeck's view of the interplay between poverty, wealth inequality, and class struggle in American society, and how he structures and builds upon his arguments about the interplay of these ideas in a variety of essays.

## Objective 1

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Identify and describe overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument's structure.

LA.RI.11-12.2

Determine two or more central ideas of a text, and analyze their development and how they interact to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

LA.RI.11-12.5

Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

## Objective 2

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Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.

LA.RI.11-12.2

Determine two or more central ideas of a text, and analyze their development and how they interact to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

- LA.RI.11-12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
- LA.RI.11-12.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

### **Objective 3**

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Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument's overarching thesis.

- LA.RI.11-12.2 Determine two or more central ideas of a text, and analyze their development and how they interact to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
- LA.RI.11-12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
- LA.RI.11-12.5 Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

### **Objective 4**

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Explain how the organization of a text creates unity and coherence and reflects a line of reasoning.

- LA.RI.11-12.5 Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
- LA.RI.11-12.10a By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above with scaffolding as needed.

### **Objective 5**

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Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose.

- LA.RI.11-12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

### **Learning Goal 2**

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Students will write synthesis and argumentative essays which pay close attention to the rhetorical situation of Steinbeck's novel, the selection of evidence to advance the claim, organization to develop the line of reasoning, and especially the word choice and elements of composition that should be used to advance the argument.

### **Objective 1**

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Demonstrate and understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.

LA.W.11-12.1.D Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose (e.g., formal and objective for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

## **Objective 2**

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Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives.

LA.W.11-12.1.A Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

LA.W.11-12.1.B Develop claim(s) and counterclaims avoiding common logical fallacies and using sound reasoning and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

## **Objective 3**

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Use transitional elements to guide the reader through the line of reasoning of an argument.

LA.W.11-12.1.C Use transitions (e.g., words, phrases, clauses) to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

LA.W.11-12.2.C Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

## **Objective 4**

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Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument.

LA.W.11-12.1.B Develop claim(s) and counterclaims avoiding common logical fallacies and using sound reasoning and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

LA.W.11-12.1.C Use transitions (e.g., words, phrases, clauses) to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

LA.W.11-12.2.B Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

LA.W.11-12.2.C Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

## **Objective 5**

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Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument.

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|----------------|---|
| LA.L.11-12.3   | Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.                             |
| LA.L.11-12.3.A | Vary syntax for effect, apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts.   |
| LA.W.11-12.1.D | Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose (e.g., formal and objective for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing. |
| LA.W.11-12.2.D | Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.   |
| LA.W.11-12.2.E | Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose (e.g., formal and objective for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing. |

## **Objective 6**

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Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments.

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| LA.L.11-12.3.A | Vary syntax for effect, apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts.  |
| LA.W.11-12.2.C | Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts. |

## **Learning Goal 3**

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Students will be able to evaluate how the political/social exigency of a text influence the components of the rhetorical situation and the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.

## **Objective 1**

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Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.

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| LA.RI.11-12.1 | Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence, (e.g., via discussion, written response, etc.), to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. |
| LA.RI.11-12.2 | Determine two or more central ideas of a text, and analyze their development and how they interact to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.   |

## **Objective 2**

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Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.

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|---------------|---|
| LA.RI.11-12.1 | Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence, (e.g., via discussion, written response, etc.), to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. |
| LA.RI.11-12.2 | Determine two or more central ideas of a text, and analyze their development and how they interact to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.   |
| LA.RI.11-12.6 | Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.  |

### **Objective 3**

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Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.

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| LA.RI.11-12.5 | Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.               |
| LA.RI.11-12.6 | Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text. |

### **Objective 4**

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Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas.

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| LA.L.11-12.5.B | Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.  |
| LA.RI.11-12.5  | Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging. |

### **Formative Assessment and Performance Opportunities**

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- Chapter Quizzes/Reading Checks
- Timed Practice Synthesis Essay (In-Class)
- Timed Practice Persuasive Essay (In-Class)
- Timed Practice Analysis Essay (In-Class)
- Practice AP Multiple Choice (based on essay of related content to provide context for the reading)
- In-Class Discussion
- Journaling
- Quotation Explication
- Group Activities Analyzing Specific Essays
- Graded Socratic Dialogues
- Discussion Boards
- Alternating Roles of Discussion Leaders



## **Summative Assessment**

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- Unit Test
- Presentation Relating Issues in the Novel to Current Times

## **21st Century Life and Careers**

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| CRP.K-12.CRP1  | Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.                        |
| CRP.K-12.CRP2  | Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.                                   |
| CRP.K-12.CRP4  | Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.                               |
| CRP.K-12.CRP5  | Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.              |
| CRP.K-12.CRP6  | Demonstrate creativity and innovation.   |
| CRP.K-12.CRP8  | Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them. |
| CRP.K-12.CRP10 | Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals.                         |
| CRP.K-12.CRP12 | Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.                 |

## **Accommodations/ Modifications**

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- Allowing students to read fewer essays outside of class
- Grouping students with others of greater ability
- Additional outside reading from teacher-generated list
- Leading class discussions/dialogues

## **Interdisciplinary Connections**

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- Alienation of minorities
- Biblical Allusions
- Dust Bowl
- Geography of California
- Great Depression

- History of Mexico and California
- Inequality Based on Entrenched Wealth/Political/Social Power
- Migrant workers
- Poverty
- Social class and structure

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|------------------|--|
| SOC.6.1.12.A.1.b | Analyze how gender, property ownership, religion, and legal status affected political rights.  |
| SOC.6.1.12.A.9.a | Analyze how the actions and policies of the United States government contributed to the Great Depression.  |
| SOC.6.1.12.B.9.a | Determine how agricultural practices, overproduction, and the Dust Bowl intensified the worsening economic situation during the Great Depression.  |
| SOC.6.1.12.D.6.a | Assess the impact of technological innovation and immigration on the development of agriculture, industry, and urban culture during the late 19th century in New Jersey (i.e., Paterson Silk Strike 1913) and the United States. |
| SOC.6.1.12.CS9   | The Great Depression and World War II: The Great Depression: The Great Depression resulted from government economic policies, business practices, and individual decisions, and it impacted business and society.                |
| SOC.9-12.1.1.1   | Compare present and past events to evaluate the consequences of past decisions and to apply lessons learned.   |
| SOC.9-12.1.1.2   | Analyze how change occurs through time due to shifting values and beliefs as well as technological advancements and changes in the political and economic landscape.   |
| SOC.9-12.1.2.2   | Relate current events to the physical and human characteristics of places and regions.   |

## Unit Resources

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- Stuart Chase, “The Enemy of Prosperity”? (essay; Harper’s)
- William Cullen Bryant, “On the Right to Strike” (essay)
- Pete Seeger, “Which Side Are You On?” (song)
- Pete Seeger, “This Land Is Your Land” (song)
- Pete Seeger and Rage Against the Machine, “The Ghost of Tom Joad” (song)
- James Baldwin, “My Dungeon Shook” (*WA*; essay)
- NYCGA, “Principles of Solidarity” (public statement)
- NYCGA, “Declaration of the Occupation of New York City” (speech)
- Andrew Jackson, “On Indian Removal” (speech)
- Marianne Robinson, "Is Poverty Necessary?: An Idea That Won't Go Away"