

I. *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles

- A. Read *A Separate Peace*
- B. Be prepared to discuss it, write about it, and take an objective test on it during the first week of school**

II. *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck

- A. Read *The Grapes of Wrath* and take notes on the topics below.
- B. FYI - Background information on the structure of the novel: Of the thirty chapters in the book, sixteen are considered “intercalary” chapters. These chapters do not deal directly with the story; they provide a broad social and historic background for the story.
- C. Below is a list of subjects that we will explore once we return to school in the fall. As you read, focus your notes on these subjects, and make sure you include the page numbers.
- D. When we return to school, be prepared to take an objective test on the novel during the second week of school.**
- E. After that, you will be put in groups to discuss these topics, research, write a Works Cited page, create a power point, and present your findings to the class.** Your notes will help you with this portion of the assignment.
- F. The notes are for your reference. They will not be collected nor will they be graded.

Subjects for analysis in *The Grapes of Wrath*

Below are the six critical lenses and a brief explanation of the topic to help you focus as you take notes. Many of the explanations also include questions for you to consider as you read.

Biblical allusions – Look at the Steinbeck’s use of religious names, symbols, and references. Many are from the Old Testament. Look at the title of the novel, character’s names (and actions), and the exodus. Why does Steinbeck use religious allusions in his novel? What purpose do they serve?

Phalanx Theory – The individual is part of a larger whole. Look at the shift in the concept of the family: Individual to Family to Family with others. The well being of the group is more important than the individual; only as a group will the individual be able to survive. What is John Steinbeck trying to reveal to his reader, and why is it important?

Matriarch – a strong female leader. Look at how Ma Joad transforms from a supportive wife (follower) to her position as the leader of the family. What causes Pa Joad to weaken and Ma Joad to gain strength? What is Steinbeck trying to show by this shift in power/leadership?

American Dream – The basic concept of the American Dream is that one (an individual) can gain success, power, wealth, and security through his own efforts and hard work. However, in *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck reveals the disillusionment of the American Dream, which essentially shows that no matter how hard one works forces may prevent him from obtaining success, and really the American Dream is only an illusion. Address the ways that Steinbeck reveals this concept. Look at characters and the family as a whole. What is Steinbeck trying to reveal about the concept of success and the American Dream since it is unobtainable?

Writing style – Look at the author’s structure of the novel, sentence structure, figurative language, word choice, etc. Why is significant about these devices?

Why has the novel received so much criticism? The novel has been banned in many places throughout the US and still continues to be the subject of much controversy. Why? Identify and analyze specific scenes, characters (and their actions), and issues that cause this controversy. Also address why it is important to read this novel since so many people find it objectionable.

If you have any questions, please contact me by email at mhatt@wyoarea.org.

Have a great summer and enjoy the novels.
Ms. Hatt