

Lesson 1: Steinbeck

☐ Getting Started

In this unit, you will read the novella *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck. A novella is a book that is longer than a short story but shorter than a typical novel.

The Pearl, written in 1947, is considered a literary classic. Steinbeck's story is based on a Mexican folktale and the Parable of the Pearl of Great Price from the Bible. The novella explores the nature of man and the disastrous and evil effects that can occur when man becomes obsessed with wealth. The novel also explores the theme of racism and how oppression leads to injustice. Many of Steinbeck's novels deal with the plight of the impoverished.

Ideas to Think About

- How do people's experiences shape and change their perspectives?

Things to Know

- **covey** (n.) - a group or set of something
- **incandescence** (n.) - the quality of being intensely bright or brilliant
- **almsgiver** (n.) - a person who gives money or food to the poor and needy
- **subjugation** (n.) - forced submission or control by others
- **consecrated** (adj.) - sacred
- **clamber** (v.) - to climb using both hands and feet
- **intercession** (n.) - a prayer on behalf of another person
- **petulant** (adj.) - unreasonably irritable

Activities

☐ Activity 1: John Steinbeck

John Steinbeck is among the most famous American authors. He won a Pulitzer Prize for his novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*. The Pulitzer Prize is one of the highest honors presented in literature.

Today you will research the life of John Steinbeck on the websites listed below. You will learn more about the life of this American legend and how his novels have influenced our culture. Many of his books are assigned reading in schools around the country. As you learn about the author, answer the questions on the page, "John Steinbeck."

**John Steinbeck - Biography**www.beyondthepage.com/link/835/**John Steinbeck Biography**www.beyondthepage.com/link/836/**John Steinbeck Biography**www.beyondthepage.com/link/11840/☐ **Activity 2: Vocabulary**

Today you will learn some of the more challenging vocabulary words found in the story. You will find the definitions for the words on the "Vocabulary" page. You will also find the sentence from the book that has the word. Your job is to write your own sentence that uses the word correctly. Pay careful attention to the word's part of speech and use them correctly in your sentences. Continue to review the words a few minutes each day; many of the words will be on the end-of-unit test.

Wrapping Up

Steinbeck's experiences of working on farms with laborers made him aware of their hardships and struggles. These experiences greatly influenced his writings and brought awareness to the plight of poor farm laborers. As a writer, you will find some of your best writing most likely flows from your own experiences and interests.



John Steinbeck

Directions: Read about the life of John Steinbeck and answer the following questions.

Where did Steinbeck grow up?

Where did Steinbeck go to college? What year did he graduate?

What are some common themes in Steinbeck's novels?

How do some of the themes in his literature reflect his own life experiences?

When Steinbeck was a teenager what was his summer job?

How did Steinbeck develop a love of books?

Are there any similarities between Steinbeck's life and your own?

VOCABULARY

Directions: Read each vocabulary word, its definition, and a sentence from the book that contains the word. Next, write your own sentence for each word.

covey (n.) - a group or set of something

"Outside the brush house in the tuna clump, a covey of little birds chattered and flurried with their wings."

incandescence (n.) - Having the quality of being intensely bright or brilliant

"It captured the light and refined it and gave it back in silver incandescence."

almsgiver (n.) - a person who gives money or food to the poor and needy

"...it made them [the beggars] giggle with pleasure, for they knew there was no almsgiver in the world like a poor man who is suddenly lucky."

subjugation (n.) - forced submission or control by others

"Kino stood in the door, filling it, and hatred raged and flamed in back of his eyes, and fear too, for hundreds of years of subjugation were cut deep in him."



consecrated (adj.) - sacred



"He could see the little image of the consecrated candle reflected in the soft surface of the pearl..."

clamber (v.) - to climb awkwardly and with difficulty

"But Kino had lost his old world and he must clamber on to a new one."

intercession (n.) - a prayer on behalf of another person

"...Juana whispered her combination of Hail Marys and her ancient intercession, against the black unhuman things."



petulant (adj.) - unreasonably irritable

"And the baby was weary and petulant, and he cried softly..."



Lesson 1: Steinbeck

Getting Started

✿ Ideas to Think About

- How do people's experiences shape and change their perspectives?



Things to Know

- **covey** (n.) - a group or set of something
- **incandescence** (n.) - the quality of being intensely bright or brilliant
- **almsgiver** (n.) - a person who gives money or food to the poor and needy
- **subjugation** (n.) - forced submission or control by others
- **consecrated** (adj.) - sacred
- **clamber** (v.) - to climb using both hands and feet
- **intercession** (n.) - a prayer on behalf of another person
- **petulant** (adj.) - unreasonably irritable

⦿ Skills

- Extend vocabulary knowledge by learning and using new words. (LA)
- Identify all parts of speech and types and structure of sentences. (LA)
- Identify, use, and understand the function of different parts of speech. (LA)

Introducing the Lesson

Today your child will learn more about the life of John Steinbeck and his contributions to American literature. He will also explore some of the more challenging vocabulary words that he will find in the novel.

Activities

Activity 1: John Steinbeck

Answer Key:

- Where did Steinbeck grow up? (Salinas, California)
- Where did Steinbeck go to college? (Stanford) What year did he graduate? (He didn't graduate. He took classes that interested him until 1925.)
- What are some common themes in Steinbeck's novels? (poverty, rural labor issues, war)
- How do some of the themes in his literature reflect his own life experiences? (He spent a lot of time working on farms with farm labor and migrant workers, and many of his novels reflect this experience. He was a war correspondent in World War II, and some of his books are about wartime.)
- When Steinbeck was a teenager what was his summer job? (working on ranches)
- How did Steinbeck develop a love of books? (from his mother who was a teacher)
- Are there any similarities between Steinbeck's life and your own? (Answers will vary.)

Activity 2: Vocabulary

Review your child's sentences for the vocabulary words. Check to see that the vocabulary words are used correctly in the sentences he developed.

Wrapping Up**Questions to Discuss**

- What did you find most interesting about Steinbeck's life? (Answers will vary.)
- Were you familiar with any of the vocabulary words? If so, which ones? (Answers will vary.)
- What do you think *The Pearl* will be about? Based on your assumptions, do you think you will enjoy the story? Why or why not? (Answers will vary.)

Things to Review

Review the vocabulary words from the novel.