

**Excerpt from *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck**

The owners of the land came onto the land, or more often a spokesman for the owners came. They came in closed cars, and they felt the dry earth with their fingers, and sometimes they drove big earth augers into the ground for soil tests. The tenants, from their sun-beaten dooryards, watched uneasily when the closed cars drove along the fields. And at last the owner men drove into the dooryards and sat in their cars to talk out of the windows. The tenant men stood beside the cars for a while, and then squatted on their hams and found sticks with which to mark the dust. In the open doors the women stood looking out, and behind them the children—corn-headed children, with wide eyes, one bare foot on top of the other bare foot, and the toes working. The women and the children watched their men talking to the owner men. They were silent...

The owner men sat in the cars and explained. You know the land is poor. You've scabbled at it long enough, God knows. The squatting tenant men nodded and wondered and drew figures in the dust, and yes, they knew, God knows. If the dust only wouldn't fly. If the top would only stay on the soil, it might not be so bad. The owner men went on leading to their point: You know the land's getting poorer. You know what cotton does to the land; robs it, sucks all the blood out of it. The squatters nodded—they knew, God knew. If they could only rotate the crops they might pump blood back into the land. Well, it's too late...

The squatting men raised their eyes to understand. Can't we just hang on? Maybe the next year will be a good year. God knows how much cotton next year. And with all the wars—God knows what price cotton will bring. Don't they make explosives out of cotton? And uniforms? Get enough wars and cotton'll hit the ceiling. Next year, maybe. They looked up questioningly. We can't depend on it. The bank—the monster has to have profits all the time. It can't wait. It'll die... The squatting men looked down again. What do you want us to do? We can't take less share of the crop—we're half-starved now. The kids are hungry all the time. We got no clothes, torn an' ragged. If all the neighbors weren't the same, we'd be ashamed to go to meeting.

And at last the owner men came to the point. The tenant system won't work anymore. One man on a tractor can take the place of twelve or fourteen families. Pay him a wage and take all the crop. We have to do it. We don't like to do it... But you'll kill the land with cotton. We know. We've got to take cotton quick before the land dies. Then we'll sell the land. Lots of families in the East would like to own a piece of land. The tenant men looked up alarmed. But what'll happen to us? How'll we eat? You'll have to get off the land. The plows'll go through the dooryard...

And now the squatting men stood up angrily. Grampa took up the land, and he had to kill the Indians and drive them away. And Pa was born here, and he killed weeds and snakes...An' we was born here. There in the door—our children born here. And Pa had to borrow money. The bank owned the land then, but we stayed and we got a little bit of what we raised...It's our land. We measured it and broke it up. We were born on it, and we got killed on it, died on it. Even if it's no good, it's still ours. That's what makes it ours—being born on it, working it, dying on it. That makes ownership, not a paper with numbers on it...

And now the owner men grew angry. You'll have to go. But it's ours, the tenant men cried. But if we go, where'll we go? How'll we go? We got no money. We're sorry, said the owner men... You're on land that isn't yours. Once over the line maybe you can pick cotton in the fall. Maybe you can go on relief. Why don't you go on west to California? There's work there, and it never gets cold. Why, you can reach out anywhere and pick an orange. Why, there's always some kind of crop to work in. Why don't you go there? And the owner men started their cars and rolled away.

1) In one sentence, summarize what happened in the passage.

2) What do you think the author was trying to communicate in the following sentences? Why do you think he chose to use the word “monster”?

“The bank—the monster has to have profits all the time. It can’t wait. It’ll die.”

3) From whose perspective is this passage written? How do you think this choice influences the passage?

4) Do you think that the tenants and their families should or should not have been asked to leave their farms? Why? Provide at least one piece of evidence from the text to support your argument.

5) Share your argument and evidence with a neighbor. Do you agree or disagree? Discuss whether you and your neighbor are convinced by the arguments that each of you wrote. Revise your argument to make it even more convincing.

## Oklahoma Families Flee Dust

### Scores Abandon Homes; Loss is heavy

Kansas City, April, 1930—(AP)—Grimy wagons and motor cars carried scores of families out of Northwestern Oklahoma tonight in full flight from an eight state dust storm—among the most severe of a devastating series. Crop and livestock damage, already piled high in uncounted millions, increased rapidly, principally in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado. Parts of New Mexico, Iowa, Nebraska, Texas and Missouri also were hit.

### Wheat Crop Doomed

The swirling clouds, which late today reached Kansas City, were viewed by R.I. Throckmorton, head of the Kansas state college agronomy department, as spelling doom for the big wheat acreage in Western Kansas. He said not even rain now would check devastation in the drought-ridden sector, a major source of the nation's wheat. Many schools and stores were closed in Colorado and Kansas. The business district at Scott City, Kansas was shut down for the third consecutive day. More than 100 families have deserted Cimarron and Texas counties in the Northwestern Oklahoma Panhandle. Chester Lamar, a Federal Emergency Relief Administration administrator, said that 100 "normally self-sustaining families" have left Texas county alone within the last 30 days. The Oklahoma refugees told graphically of their distress. "I'm trying to get some place where my children can at least live," said Mrs. Lydia Dower of Hardesty, today as she drove away by truck with her three children for Colorado. Atop the truck was the family goat.

### Sets Out for Utah

"I have no chance to raise a crop here," explained Roy Woods, of Texhoma, as he set out for Utah. "This farm is the fruit of my labor ever since my wife and I married 26 years ago," said T.A. Foster, of Texhoma, "but we are going to leave it. Fortunately, I inherited a farm in Linn county, Kansas, where we can go." Floyd Hudson, member of the corn-hog committee in Cimarron County, said the dust has driven out all but three of the 40 families who once lived in the six townships south of Boise City, Okla.

### Thousands On Relief

Attributing conditions to the dust, Mrs. Mabel Lathorp, relief worker at Guymon, said 4,000 of the 5,500 families in six Northwestern Oklahoma counties are on relief rolls. "We're heading east," was all many of the occupants of 36 truckloads of furniture sighted today between Guymon and Boise City would say.

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(Continued on Page 3, Col. 3)



## NASA Explains “Dust Bowl” Drought

NASA scientists have an explanation for one of the worst climatic events in the history of the United States, the “Dust Bowl” drought, which devastated the Great Plains and all but dried up an already depressed American economy in the 1930’s.



Image: Dust storm approaching Stratford, Texas. (Credit: NOAA Photo Library, Historic NWS collection)

Siegfried Schubert of NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md., and colleagues used a computer model developed with modern-era satellite data to look at the climate over the past 100 years. The study found cooler than normal tropical Pacific Ocean surface temperatures combined with warmer tropical Atlantic Ocean temperatures to create conditions in the atmosphere that turned America’s breadbasket into a dust bowl from 1931 to 1939. The team’s data is in this week’s *Science Magazine*.

These changes in sea surface temperatures created shifts in the large-scale weather patterns and low level winds that reduced the normal supply of moisture from the Gulf of Mexico and inhibited rainfall throughout the Great Plains. “The 1930s drought was the major climatic event in the nation’s history,” Schubert said. “Just beginning to understand what occurred is really critical to understanding future droughts and the links to global climate change issues we’re experiencing today.” By discovering the causes behind U.S. droughts, especially severe episodes like the Plains’ dry spell, scientists may be able to recognize and possibly foresee future patterns that could create similar conditions. For example, La Niñas are marked by cooler than normal tropical Pacific Ocean surface water temperatures, which impact weather globally, and also create dry conditions over the Great Plains.

The NSIPP model was developed using NASA satellite observations, including: Clouds and the Earth’s Radiant Energy System radiation measurements and the Global Precipitation Climatology Project precipitation data. The model showed cooler than normal tropical Pacific Ocean temperatures and warmer than normal tropical Atlantic Ocean temperatures contributed to a weakened low-level jet stream and changed its course. The jet stream, a ribbon of fast moving air near the Earth’s surface, normally flows westward over the Gulf of Mexico and then turns northward pulling up moisture and dumping rain onto the Great Plains. As the low-level jet stream weakened, it traveled farther south than normal. While Mexico was pummeled with rain, the Great Plains dried up and dust storms formed. The research shed light on how tropical sea surface temperatures can have a remote response and control over weather and climate. It also confirmed droughts can become localized based on soil moisture levels, especially during summer. When rain is scarce and soil dries, there is less evaporation, which leads to even less precipitation, creating a feedback process that reinforces lack of rainfall.

Source: NASA Goddard Space Flight Center. Based on Schubert, S.D., Suarez, M.J., Pegion, P.J., Koster, R.D., Bacmeister, J.T. (2004). On the Cause of the 1930s Dust Bowl. *Science Magazine*.

- 10) What do you think the phrase “feedback process” means in this context? If you didn’t know this phrase how might you use context clues from the passage to understand its meaning?
- 11) Based on the information in the passage, briefly explain what caused the dust storms of the 1930s. Make sure your explanation includes at least two of the causes described in the passage.
- 12) Share your explanation with a neighbor. What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of your explanations? Based on your conversation, revise your explanation to make it even better.
- 13) Based on the information in the passage, how could the scientists’ model be used to help today’s farmers?

## Excerpt from *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck

The owners of the land came onto the land, or more often a spokesman for the owners came. They came in closed cars, and they felt the dry earth with their fingers, and sometimes they drove big earth augers into the ground for soil tests. The tenants, from their sun-beaten dooryards, watched uneasily when the closed cars drove along the fields. And at last the owner men drove into the dooryards and sat in their cars to talk out of the windows. The tenant men stood beside the cars for a while, and then squatted on their hams and found sticks with which to mark the dust. In the open doors the women stood looking out, and behind them the children—corn-headed children, with wide eyes, one bare foot on top of the other bare foot, and the toes working. The women and the children watched their men talking to the owner men. They were silent...

The owner men sat in the cars and explained. You know the land is poor. You've scabbled at it long enough, God knows. The squatting tenant men nodded and wondered and drew figures in the dust, and yes, they knew, God knows. If the dust only wouldn't fly. If the top would only stay on the soil, it might not be so bad. The owner men went on leading to their point: You know the land's getting poorer. You know what cotton does to the land; robs it, sucks all the blood out of it. The squatters nodded—they knew, God knew. If they could only rotate the crops they might pump blood back into the land. Well, it's too late...

The squatting men raised their eyes to understand. Can't we just hang on? Maybe the next year will be a good year. God knows how much cotton next year. And with all the wars—God knows what price cotton will bring. Don't they make explosives out of cotton? And uniforms? Get enough wars and cotton'll hit the ceiling. Next year, maybe. They looked up questioningly. We can't depend on it. The bank—the monster has to have profits all the time. It can't wait. It'll die... The squatting men looked down again. What do you want us to do? We can't take less share of the crop—we're half-starved now. The kids are hungry all the time. We got no clothes, torn an' ragged. If all the neighbors weren't the same, we'd be ashamed to go to meeting.

And at last the owner men came to the point. The tenant system won't work anymore. One man on a tractor can take the place of twelve or fourteen families. Pay him a wage and take all the crop. We have to do it. We don't like to do it... But you'll kill the land with cotton. We know. We've got to take cotton quick before the land dies. Then we'll sell the land. Lots of families in the East would like to own a piece of land. The tenant men looked up alarmed. But what'll happen to us? How'll we eat? You'll have to get off the land. The plows'll go through the dooryard...

And now the squatting men stood up angrily. Grampa took up the land, and he had to kill the Indians and drive them away. And Pa was born here, and he killed weeds and snakes... An' we was born here. There in the door—our children born here. And Pa had to borrow money. The bank owned the land then, but we stayed and we got a little bit of what we raised... It's our land. We measured it and broke it up. We were born on it, and we got killed on it, died on it. Even if it's no good, it's still ours. That's what makes it ours—being born on it, working it, dying on it. That makes ownership, not a paper with numbers on it...

And now the owner men grew angry. You'll have to go. But it's ours, the tenant men cried. But if we go, where'll we go? How'll we go? We got no money. We're sorry, said the owner men... You're on land that isn't yours. Once over the line maybe you can pick cotton in the fall. Maybe you can go on relief. Why don't you go on west to California? There's work there, and it never gets cold. Why, you can reach out anywhere and pick an orange. Why, there's always some kind of crop to work in. Why don't you go there? And the owner men started their cars and rolled away.

- 1) In one sentence, summarize what happened in the passage.

**This passage describes a scene in which land owners visit tenant farmers to deliver the news that the farmers must leave the land because tenant farming is not making them enough money.**

- 2) What do you think the author was trying to communicate in the following sentences? Why do you think he chose to use the word “monster”?

“The bank—the monster has to have profits all the time. It can’t wait. It’ll die.”

**I think the author is trying to communicate that the bank is an institution that the characters are afraid of. By using the word “monster,” the author makes clear the role the bank plays in decisions that are made about the land and the farmers.**

- 3) From whose perspective is this passage written? How do you think this choice influences the passage?

**The passage is written from the perspective of one of the tenant farmer family members. This choice influences the passage because we see their struggle during this time, rather than that of the land owners.**

- 4) Do you think that the tenants and their families should or should not have been asked to leave their farms? Why? Provide at least one piece of evidence from the text to support your argument.

**I think it is fair for the land owners to ask the tenants and their families to leave their farms. The land owners have to look out for their own livelihoods and families, too. If the tenant farmers are not producing a profit, the land owners should have the option to try something new.**

- 5) Share your argument and evidence with a neighbor. Do you agree or disagree? Discuss whether you and your neighbor are convinced by the arguments that each of you wrote. Revise your argument to make it even more convincing.

**My neighbor disagreed, saying that it is unfair for the tenant families to be asked to leave because they had been on the farm for such a long time. I would revise my argument to acknowledge the troubles faced by the farming families before arguing that the land owners have a right to decide how the land should be used.**

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### Scores Abandon Homes; Loss is heavy

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The swirling clouds, which late today reached Kansas City, were viewed by H. E. Throckmorton, head of the Kansas state college agronomy department, as spelling doom for the big wheat acreage in Western Kansas. He said not even rain now would check devastation in the drought-ridden sector, a major source of the nation's wheat.

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- 6) What do you think the phrase “relief rolls” means in this context? If you didn’t know this phrase, how might you use context clues from the passage to understand its meaning?

**Based on the context of the paragraph, I think “relief rolls” are lists of workers who need back-up jobs because their crops are failing. A woman referenced in the paragraph is described as a “relief worker,” which implies a kind of job, and “relief” is usually a kind of back-up support or assistance.**

- 7) Provide one piece of evidence from the text that supports the following claim: The wheat crops will not recover from the dust storm.

**“He said not even rain now would check devastation in the drought-ridden sector, a major source of the nation’s wheat.” (Wheat Crop Doomed)**

- 8) How do you think this passage relates to the passage from *The Grapes of Wrath*?

**This passage highlights just how widespread crop failure was, as well as how many families had to leave their farms behind—just like the tenant farmers in *The Grapes of Wrath*.**

- 9) Based on the information in both passages, what do you think it might have been like to be a farmer during this time?

**Being a farmer during this time would have been a time of fear and uncertainty. You would not know whether or not your crop would grow. If your crop failed, you might have to move your family to an entirely new place. If I were a farmer at the time, I would be worried about both these possibilities.**

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10) What do you think the phrase “feedback process” means in this context? If you didn’t know this phrase how might you use context clues from the passage to understand its meaning?

**I think the phrase “feedback process” means a kind of loop that repeats the effect of something. The last paragraph of the passage describes this loop: When there is little rain, the soil dries. When the soil dries, there is less evaporation. When there is less evaporation, there is less rain.**

11) Based on the information in the passage, briefly explain what caused the dust storms of the 1930s. Make sure your explanation includes at least two of the causes described in the passage.

**The 1930s dust storms were initially caused by changing sea surface temperatures. These changing temperatures lowered the amount of moisture from the Gulf of Mexico, which reduced rainfall in the Plains, where the Dust Bowl drought occurred. Without rain, the Plains “dried up” and dust storms formed.**

12) Share your explanation with a neighbor. What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of your explanations? Based on your conversation, revise your explanation to make it even better.

**My neighbor’s explanation included more details about sea surface temperatures changes. I would improve my argument by adding details from the first paragraph of the passage:**

**The 1930s dust storms were initially caused by changing sea surface temperatures. The Pacific Ocean was cooler than it typically is and the Atlantic Ocean was warmer than it typically is. These changing temperatures lowered the amount of moisture from the Gulf of Mexico, which “inhibited” rainfall in the Plains, where the Dust Bowl drought occurred. Without rain, the Plains “dried up” and dust storms formed.**

13) Based on the information in the passage, how could the scientists’ model be used to help today’s farmers?

**According to the passage, understanding droughts that occurred previously can help us try to understand future droughts. The scientist’s model could help us try to predict what will happen in the future by providing information about weather patterns that led to these past droughts.**

## *The Grapes of Wrath* - Lesson Planning Information and Standards Mapping

This close reading and writing task includes an excerpt from *The Grapes of Wrath* and two additional passages designed to connect with and build upon the themes present in the book. These materials were developed to engage students in the level of rigor and types of skills and practices they will encounter on the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW) section of the SAT. Like the EBRW section of the SAT, this activity involves close reading of complex literary, historical, and scientific passages. Based on the rigor of the passages and the themes in *The Grapes of Wrath*, these materials are targeted towards a 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade level.

The questions that follow each passage are aligned with relevant standards from Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and SAT Domains and Dimensions. Each of these questions is mapped to one or more relevant standards below to illustrate the relevant types of thinking and reasoning targeted by each question.

### **Question 1:**

- The student will identify a reasonable summary of a text or of key information and ideas in text. (SAT IISM.01: Summarizing)
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2)
- Summarize key supporting ideas and details in somewhat challenging passages. (CCRS IDT 403)

### **Question 2:**

- The student will analyze the relationship between a particular part of a text (e.g. a sentence) and the whole text. (SAT RTS.02: Analyzing Part-Whole Relationships)
- Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6)
- Identify a clear purpose of somewhat challenging passages and how that purpose shapes content and style. (CCRS PPV 401)
- The student will determine how the selection of specific words and phrases or the use of patterns of words and phrases shapes meaning and tone in text. (SAT RWC.01: Analyzing word choice)
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone). (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4)
- Analyze how the choice of a specific word or phrase shapes meaning or tone in somewhat challenging passages. (CCRS WME 401)

### **Question 3:**

- The student will determine the point of view or perspective from which a text is related or the influence this point of view or perspective has on content and style. (SAT RPV.01: Analyzing Point of View)
- Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6)
- Understand point of view in somewhat challenging passages. (CCRS PPV 402)

### **Questions 4 & 5:**

- The student will identify claims and counterclaims explicitly stated in text or determine implicit claims and counterclaims from text. (SAT RAG.01: Analyzing claims and counterclaims)
- Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both... (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1B)

- Analyze how one or more sentences in somewhat challenging passages offer reasons for or support a claim. (CCRS ARG 401)
- The student will cite the textual evidence that best supports a given claim or point. (SAT IIITE.01: Citing textual evidence)
- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1)

### **Questions 6 & 10:**

- The student will determine the meaning of words and phrases in context. (SAT IIWD.01: Interpreting words and phrases in context)
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper). (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4)
- Analyze how the choice of a specific word or phrase shapes meaning or tone in somewhat challenging passages. (CCRS WME 401)

### **Question 7:**

- The student will cite the textual evidence that best supports a given claim or point. (SAT IIITE.01: Citing textual evidence)
- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1)
- Analyze how one or more sentences in somewhat challenging passages offer reasons for or support a claim. (CCRS ARG 401)

### **Questions 8 & 9:**

- The student will synthesize information and ideas from paired texts. (SAT SMT.01: Analyzing multiple texts)
- Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9)
- Make straightforward comparisons between two passages. (CCRS SYN 301)

### **Questions 11 & 12:**

- The student will identify explicitly stated relationships or determine implicit relationships between and among individuals, events, or ideas (e.g., cause-effect, comparison-contrast, sequence). (SAT IIUR.01: Understanding Relationships)
- Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; trace the text's explanation or depiction of a complex process, phenomenon, or concept... (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.9-10.2)
- Identify clear cause-effect relationships in somewhat challenging passages. (CCRS REL 403)

### **Question 13:**

- The student will draw reasonable inferences and logical conclusions from text. (SAT IIRC.02: Determining implicit meanings)
- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1)
- Draw logical conclusions in somewhat challenging passages. (CCRS CLR 402)