



**Title:** The Grapes of Wrath

**Author:** John Steinbeck

**Imprint:** Penguin Classics

**Publisher:** Penguin  
Publishing Group

**On sale date:** March 28,  
2006

**ISBN:** 9780143039433

**Format:** Paperback

# BOOK RESUME: THE GRAPES OF WRATH

## BOOK SYNOPSIS

First published in 1939, Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize-winning epic of the Great Depression chronicles the Dust Bowl migration of the 1930s and tells the story of one Oklahoma farm family, the Joads—driven from their homestead and forced to travel west to the promised land of California. Out of their trials and their repeated collisions against the hard realities of an America divided into Haves and Have-Nots evolves a drama that is intensely human yet majestic in its scale and moral vision, elemental yet plainspoken, tragic but ultimately stirring in its human dignity. A portrait of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, of one man's fierce reaction to injustice, and of one woman's stoical strength, the novel captures the horrors of the Great Depression and probes into the very nature of equality and justice in America. At once a naturalistic epic, captivity narrative, road novel, and transcendental gospel, Steinbeck's powerful landmark novel is perhaps the most American of American Classics.

## REVIEWS AND PRAISE

"Steinbeck is a poet. . . . Everything is real, everything perfect." —Upton Sinclair, *Common Sense*

"I think, and with earnest and honest consideration . . . that *The Grapes of Wrath* is the greatest American novel I have ever read." —Dorothy Parker

"It seems to me as great a book as has yet come out of America." —Alexander Woollcott

"I didn't understand at the time — no one could have — that [*The Grapes of Wrath*] was not just a historical document but also a document about our current world with its depiction of drought and its effects. . . . California, where the Joads went, is no longer the reliably verdant and green paradise they found; it's now coming out of a five-year drought of its own. . . . The other point that Steinbeck makes well, is that when we have huge, natural changes like these, the people who pay the largest price are the people most vulnerable and closest to the bottom. . . . None of them did anything much to cause the problem, and yet they are its early victims. . . . Steinbeck was trying to do something more than just simply tell a story. He's a remarkable writer, and this is his masterpiece." —Bill McKibben, environmentalist

## AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction
- Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature

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### **MEDIA AND RESOURCES**

- [Reading Guide](#)
- [“Teaching Steinbeck and ‘The Grapes of Wrath’ With \*The New York Times\*”](#)

### **RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES**

- [“Banning \*The Grapes of Wrath\* in 1939 California”](#)
- [“Elkhorn Area School District considering changing book policy after parent challenges more than 400 titles”](#)

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