

Name _____ Date _____

1. Describe John Steinbeck's attitudes toward the migrants.
2. How did he prepare himself to write about the migrants' lives?
3. Why is it difficult to "write history while it is happening?"
4. How accurately does *The Grapes of Wrath* reflect this description of the Okie experience?

*"The large growers . . . were glad to see this new labor pool arrive. They had over 200 commercial crops on their farms, most of them needing hand labor for brief periods: peaches and prunes, lemons and oranges, lettuce and asparagus, cotton and flax, all to be picked and boxed or baled. Their former supply of cheap Mexican workers had been cut off in 1929 by immigration restrictions . . . Most of the farms provided temporary lodging—tents or rude cabins—but with only three state inspectors and 8,000 camps to inspect, the quarters were bound to be generally poor. Any family entering this stoop-and-pick life could expect to work about half the year and earn \$350 to \$450, only 50 per cent of what the California Relief Administration estimated to be a subsistence level. It was take it or leave it; strikes for higher wages were squelched and radical organizers beaten, shot, and jailed. With only 175,000 workers needed at peak seasons and at least two or three desperate migrants for every job, the growers could name the terms."*⁴

4. Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 52–53.