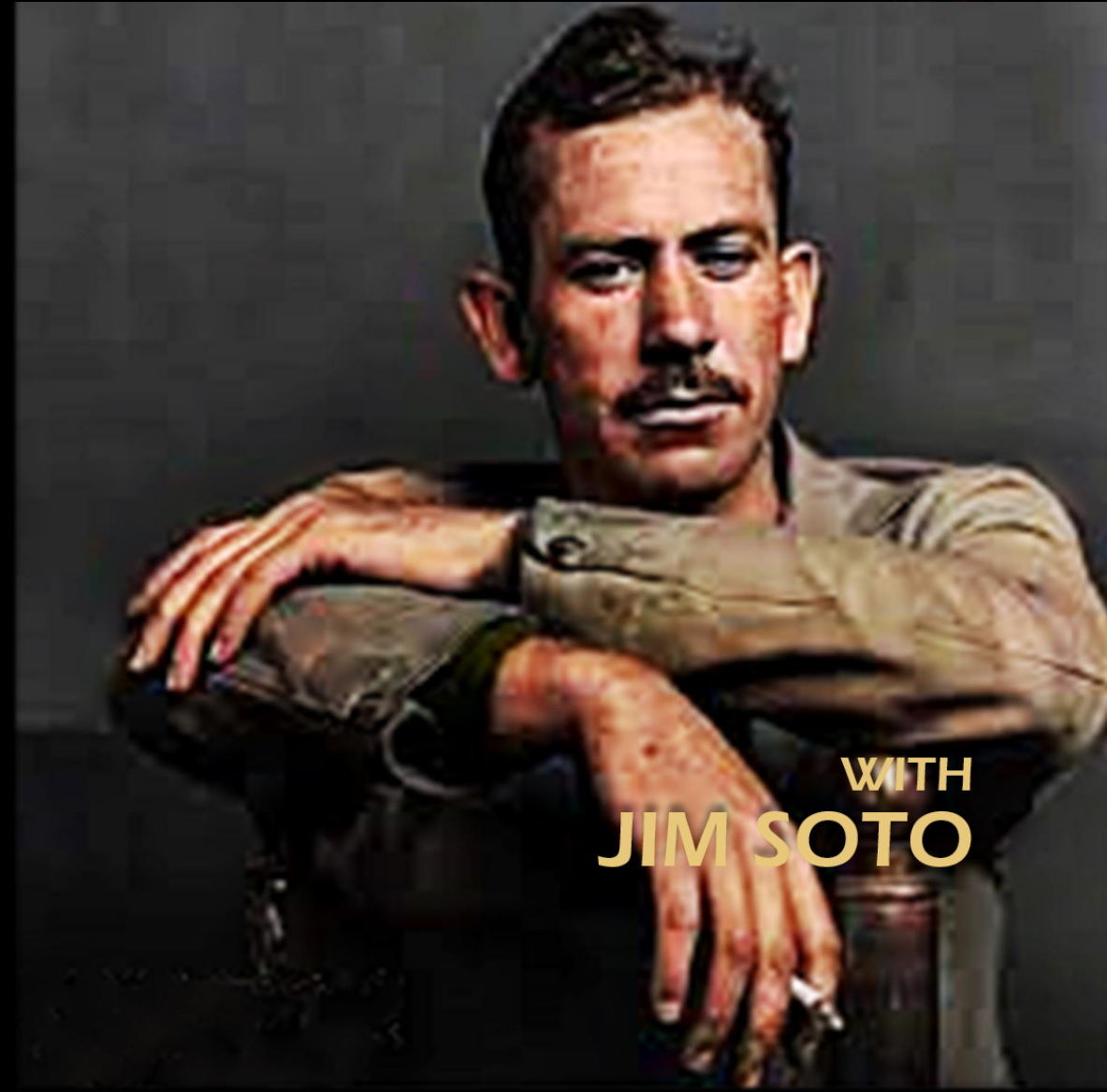


UNIT 6 Hard Times  
Depression and World War II 1929–1945

A STEINBOCH  
FROEBEL  
BILINGUAL SCHOOL  
Home of the Epic Generation

# Author Focus: JOHN STEINBECK



WITH  
JIM SOTO

# **SPEAK YOUR MIND**

We all possess things that have value to us. Some more than others.  
If you had to leave home with only one or two possessions, what would you  
take with you. Why?

Take a minute to consider and answer the question in your notebook.

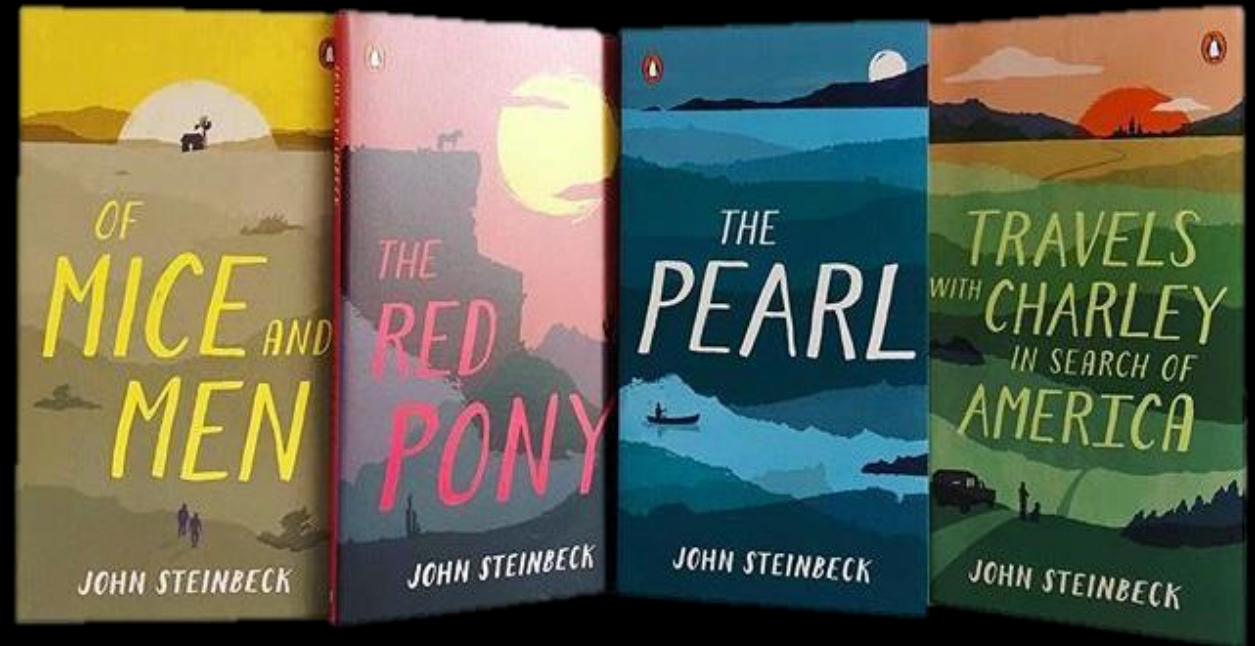
# A GIANT OF AMERICAN LETTERS

John Steinbeck was a Nobel and Pulitzer Prize-winning American novelist. Steinbeck dropped out of college and worked as a manual laborer before achieving success as a writer. His works often dealt with social and economic issues. His 1939 novel, *The Grapes of Wrath* won a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award. He served as a war correspondent during World War II, and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962.



# LITERARY WORKS

Steinbeck is widely known for the comic novels **Tortilla Flat** (1935) and **Cannery Row** (1945), the multi-generation epic **East of Eden** (1952), and the novellas **The Red Pony** (1933) and **Of Mice and Men** (1937). The Pulitzer Prize–winning **The Grapes of Wrath** (1939) is considered Steinbeck's masterpiece and part of the American literary canon.



# THE GRAPES OF WRATH

The Grapes of Wrath deals with the Joad family's migration from Oklahoma to California in search of a better life. Steinbeck created a unique structure for the novel, using alternating chapters to tell the story of the Joads and to describe the plight of the "Okies", the poor migrant farmers who fled the Dust Bowl in the 1930s. Steinbeck's written style alternates by chapter, as well. In the short chapters about the Okies and the social and economic conditions that led to their migration, Steinbeck's writing is descriptive and lyrical, almost poetic. In contrast, the chapters about the Joads are long narratives portraying the hardship of their lives and their colorful native language and mannerisms. These two types of styles of writing are demonstrated in the excerpt that follows.





[CLICK  
HERE](#)

## DUST BOWL

**The Dust Bowl** was a period of severe dust storms that greatly damaged the ecology and agriculture of the American and Canadian prairies during the 1930s.

The phenomenon was caused by a combination of both natural factors and manmade factors.

The resulting agricultural depression contributed to the Great Depression's bank closures, business losses, increased unemployment, and other physical and emotional hardships.

# LITERARY ELEMENTS

## Setting

Is the time and place in which it occurs. It provides the backdrop for a story.

## Dialogue

Refers to a conversation between two or more characters.







As you read this excerpt, pay attention to Steinbeck's description of the setting, including the landscape and other details. Consider how Steinbeck creates a picture of the Joad family farm. In reading the selection, also make note of what is revealed about the characters exclusively through their dialogue.

# ASSESSMENT

After reading pages 473-480 in your book, complete the activities:

1. REFER TO TEXT &
2. REASON WITH TEXT
3. & ANALYZE LITERATURE
  - **Setting and Dialogue** - Compare and contrast the setting of Chapter Nine, which is in or near the barns and sheds, and that of Chapter Ten, which is primarily in the kitchen.
  - How effectively does Steinbeck use dialogue to develop the characters of Ma and Tom Joad? What pieces of dialogue give the most insight into Ma? Into Tom?



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