

American Literature
The Grapes of Wrath

Name _____
Date _____ Period _____

Significance of the Title

The title of the novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, comes from the opening lines of the song [The Battle Hymn of the Republic](#). John Steinbeck had requested that the entire lyrics of the song be published along with the novel, hoping to quell some of the anti-American criticism which he was facing.

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord

He is trampling out the vintage where the **grapes of wrath** are stored"

These lines are themselves an allusion to a passage from the Bible - [Revelation 14:14-20](#).

Assignment: Write a one-page essay analyzing the significance of the title of *The Grapes of Wrath*. In discussing this topic, please be sure to include the following:

- A literal translation of the title
- References to the two literary [allusions](#)
- Analyses of both literary allusions
- As a conclusion, predict what future events in the story the title might refer to
- Whose wrath might it refer to?



Battle Hymn of the Republic

Julia Ward Howe

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored,
He has loosed the fateful lightening of His terrible swift sword
His truth is marching on.

Chorus: Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps
His day is marching on.

Chorus

I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnish'd rows of steel,
"As ye deal with my contemners, So with you my grace shall deal;"
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel
Since God is marching on.

Chorus

He has sounded form the trumpet that shall never call retreat
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment-seat
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

Chorus

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me:
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

Chorus

REVELATION 14:14-20

I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one "like a son of man" with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.

Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.

Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle.

Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe."

The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath.

They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.

allusion - a reference in a story to something outside the story. Writers use allusions to enrich our understanding of something in their story by linking it to something else we might recognize. There are two kinds of allusions:

- a historical allusion is a reference to an actual event, person, or place in history
- a literary allusion is a reference to a fictional event, character, or place that is used in a work of literature