

The Grapes of Wrath Study Guide
Chapters 17-19

Chapter 17 (Interchapter)

1. Steinbeck writes, "Twenty families became one family," and "the group was welded to one thing." How do these statements reinforce one of the themes of this novel?
2. What are the strengths of the "migrant men"?

Chapter 18

1. What information about California do the Joad men gather while they are washing in the river?
2. Explain the effect that land and cattle companies have on agriculture in California.
3. "Okies" becomes a derogatory term. Why are the land owners afraid of Okies?
4. Prophetically, Ma says to Tom, "Family's falling apart." Give three instances from Chapter 18 in which the family becomes smaller.
5. What is significant about the food being prepared for the night in the Joad tent, especially the vegetable being served?
6. How does the behavior of Ma Joad, considered a pillar of the family, begin to change throughout this chapter?
7. Why does the California border patrol allow the Joads to cross without too much trouble?

Chapter 19 (Interchapter)

1. Explain the negative results of "farm[ing] on paper."
2. A contrast is made between the physical activity of a farmer working his own land and the type of labor involved here. Cite two examples of this contrast.
3. Quote the description of the homes in Hooverville camps.
4. Explain this paradox: "the great owners ... had become through their holdings more and less than men."

Enrichment

1. Draw sketches of a Hooverville from the details provided in the novel.
2. Make an enlarged map of the travels of the Joads.