

Questions for *The Grapes of Wrath*

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1. Early in the book, rain clouds come over Oklahoma, but don't release any rain, and simply blow over. What could the clouds symbolize?
2. Look for color imagery in the first chapter. What colors are used? What is the significance of these colors?
3. Steinbeck describes the women and children watching to see if their men will break. Nowadays, many people would find this description sexist. Is it? Do men watch to see if their women will break? Under what circumstances?
4. When Tom decides to wait around for the truck driver despite the No Riders sticker, in what is he trusting?
5. Is the truck driver nosy?
6. Tom says that the truck driver is forced by his company (The Man) to put the No Riders sticker on his truck. When the bank men in tractors come along, the Okies object to oppression by The Man. Is this anti-corporate spirit common to all Oklahomans? All farmers? What group? Why?
7. Tom encounters J.C. on the way back home. Is this encounter one with Jesus, or merely with an adulterous minister?
8. The land turtle is said to symbolize the Joad family. Are there any other animals that would symbolize the Joads as well?
9. Is there anything that the land turtle would symbolize better than it does the Joad family?
10. When the turtle urinates on Tom, what symbolism is involved?
11. What is symbolized by the tractor drivers' all-consuming desire to keep straight lines?
12. The tractor drivers say that they shouldn't be shot at because they are merely pawns. Is there anyone to shoot at? What kind of resistance would work?
13. What made J.C. lose his faith?

14. Is there a strategy that the banks could have adopted that would have kept the farmers on their side while still breaking even in the long run?
15. Who is responsible for the dislocation of the farmers?
16. Who owns the land?
17. Would non-tilling farming techniques have helped the farmers? Would they have cost too much to implement to be practical?
18. What is significant about the names used in the book?
19. Are any colors used in imagery much more than all the others? Why?
20. What biblical references are present in the book?