

# *The Grapes of Wrath*

This book shows the devastating effects of the Great Depression of the 1930's. The main part of the book tells the story of the Joad family as they leave the dust bowl of Oklahoma for a better life in California. The sixteen interchapters provide social and historical background of the time. **Ideas include:** hope, class conflict, religious fundamentalism, prejudice, individual vs. society, and social commitment.

## **Tom Joad**

- the oldest son
- just released from state prison
- cautious and emotionally numb
- inquisitive, seeks answers to life
- changes and begins to see the potential of the human spirit
- organizes the migrant farm laborers
- forced to leave his family

## **Al Joad**

- the third Joad son
- fond of cars and girls
- helps drive the family to California
- stays with the family out of love and duty

## **Grampa Joad**

- rowdy and energetic
- refuses to leave the family's farm in Oklahoma
- has to be drugged so that the family can begin their journey
- dies on the first night of the trip

## **Granma Joad**

- deeply religious and energetic
- unable to adapt to a new way of life and the loss of her husband
- dies as the family crosses the Mojave Desert

## **Ma Joad**

- the matriarch and strength of the family
- brave and intelligent
- ignorant and suspicious of strangers
- learns to accept help from people outside the family

## **Noah Joad**

- the eldest child
- slow, deliberate, and never angry
- Pa tried to help deliver Noah and injured his head
- viewed as mentally challenged
- gives up the struggle to survive

## **Pa Joad**

- in Oklahoma Pa is considered the head of the clan
- loses his authority to Ma Joad and his son Al
- carries the family's burdens
- constantly challenged by Ma
- dependable, steadfast, and reasonable