

A&E Biography of John Steinbeck

Name: _____

Directions: As you watch this biography of Steinbeck, answer the following questions. You should print these questions out and handwrite your answers as you watch. You may scan and submit your handwritten answers as a PDF file, or type the answers into this document after you watch the video. Either way, you should submit this completed guide to the dropbox at the end of today's lesson.

Guiding Questions:

1. Where was John Steinbeck born? What year?

Salinas, CA Feb. 27th, 1902

2. What was John's mother like?

Strong willed, a teacher, harsh, ambitious, a social climber, Victorian,

3. What was John's father like?

White collar, stoic, failed businessman, sullen, he bound books in the basement, an avid reader

4. What was John like as a child?

Shy, socially awkward, had money and position, parents had very high expectations of him—wanted him to be a doctor, he loved books.

5. When did John decide to be a writer?

His freshman year in high school

6. Name one odd thing that John did in college in order to become a better writer.

Took a medical school course, lived in a wood shack and distilled plum wine, took a semester off to work with immigrants

7. How did John meet his wife Carol?

At Lake Tahoe where he was a caretaker from 1926-28

8. Who was Ed Ricketts, and why was he so important to John?

He was a marine biologist whom in in Monterey and he had a lab on the wharf. He became Steinbeck's friend and a character in Steinbeck's novel, *Cannery Row*.

9. How did John react when his mother had a stroke?

Moved back home and did housekeeping and he wrote *The Red Pony*.

10. How did John react to becoming famous?

He didn't like the limelight. He was shy and unable to deal with success.

11. What is *Of Mice and Men* about?

Two itinerant migrant ranch workers who are homeless and traveling together in California during The Great Depression.

12. What was the public's reaction to *Grapes of Wrath*?

The public loved it, but it was controversial because it portrayed land owners as calloused and cruel. Many burned it, but it won a Pulitzer Prize.

13. How did John and Carol react to having money?

It drove a wedge between he and Carol and it was hard for them to handle.

14. What happened when both Carol, John's wife, and Gwen, John's mistress claimed to be pregnant at the same time?

It was a show down between the two women, and Carol was in the lead for a while, but he ended up marrying Gwen. The pregnancies were both falsely claimed.

15. How did John react to being a father?

He didn't want children—he only wanted to be a writer.

16. Why did John leave California forever?

He was dejected because people didn't accept him, so he moved to NY. He wrote about controversial issues.

17. How did John's best friend die?

He was hit by a train.

18. Who is Charlie and where did they go on vacation together?

His dog—they went West.

19. What famous writing award(s) did John Steinbeck receive in his lifetime?

The Pulitzer Prize for literature.

20. When did John die?

Dec. 20th, 1968. He was 66 years old.