

## 2019-2020 PRE-REQUISITE SUMMER READING

### Honors English III Due First Day of English Class

This year for Honors English III, you will read an excerpt about archetypes, a novel, and an essay. With each work there is an associated assignment to complete. Two of these works are short, but they will require a close, thoughtful initial reading followed by (at least) re-readings of selected passages throughout. As you read, keep in mind my expectation that you will be spending significantly more time and thought per page assigned than you are most likely used to doing.

There is one book you will need for these assignments: *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck. Please obtain your own copy; purchasing your own copy will allow you to mark in the margins of the text, which will be helpful as you read and, later on, when you are reviewing and writing about the work. The other two works—"Archetypes in Literature" and "Paradox and Dream"—are included at the end of this assignment.

Please read "Archetypes in Literature" first; this explains what an archetype is and lists examples commonly found in literature. You will apply this knowledge as you read *East of Eden* and complete the four reading passage entries. After you have read *East of Eden*, read "Paradox and Dream" and complete the attached questions. These assignments should be complete and ready to turn in on the first day of English class.

All work (aside from the reading journal) must be according to **MLA guidelines**: typed, double-spaced, and in 12-point Garamond font (which uses 27% less ink than Times New Roman—let's be as green as possible). All assignments can be submitted through Google Drive. Share your documents with [shanson@haywood.k12.nc.us](mailto:shanson@haywood.k12.nc.us) and [tjudy@haywood.k12.nc.us](mailto:tjudy@haywood.k12.nc.us). We prefer you use your school email account.\*

\*You have a student Google email account and can use Drive to create Docs for all these assignments. Your email address is: [computerlogin]@student.haywood.k12.nc.us. The password is the computer login password (last 4 of your student # + year of birth).

#### Assignment #1: Introduction to Archetypes

Read "Archetypes in Literature." This explains what an archetype is and lists examples commonly found in literature. You will apply this knowledge as you read *East of Eden* and complete the four reading passage entries.

#### Assignment #2: Novel

Read *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck. *East of Eden* is divided into four sections. For each of the four parts, you will be expected to write **one** reading passage entry. The following are the requirements for your *East of Eden* journal (template is attached):

1. Create a relevant title for each entry and include both the section number and the chapter.
2. Write a **five** sentence scene summary.
3. For each entry choose a different character to focus on.
  - a. Name the character.
  - b. Choose a passage from the chapter that you think best represents the character. Include the page number.
  - c. Commentary about why you chose that passage (Why is this significant? Plot? Character? Setting? Theme?)
  - d. Describe his/her best and worst qualities.
  - e. In one paragraph describe the character's role in the novel.

4. For each entry choose **one** meaningful passage, and then describe its significance in the novel. Include the page number. This passage does not have to be connected to the character you selected as your focus for #3.
5. For each entry note at least **one** sighting of one of the **archetypes** described in the handout “Archetypes in Literature” or others you notice. Include the relevant page number from the novel.
6. Explain the significance of each archetype. How does the presence of this archetype add to the larger meaning of work (plot, character, setting, or theme)?

After you have finished the novel and completed the four reading passage entries, write a sentence out that sums up the **theme**. Be sure to express it as a complete thought but do not express this theme as a cliché or any other familiar saying.

To help get you started, consider the author’s opinion on ideas such as fate and free will, good versus evil, identity, jealousy, sibling rivalry, pain of parental rejection, and dreams/hopes/plans.

Finally, I want you to come up with the **two** most **important questions** we should discuss as a class regarding this novel. List the questions, along with an explanation of why each question is significant. Then, **in a typed page or two**, answer one of your questions. Do NOT refer to sparknotes, shmoop, cliff notes, or any other online study guide – I want to know what YOUR thoughts and ideas are about the work. This class will focus largely on *how writers create meaning*, and we will be learning to make observations and ask questions about the works we read. The first important step in the process is thinking about what we have just read and trying to construct our own meaning about those works and the techniques writers chose to employ.

### Assignment #3: Non-Fiction

Read “Paradox and Dream” by John Steinbeck (attached below) and answer the questions following the essay. Be prepared to discuss the article and your answers on the first day of class.

### Honor Code:

Copy the following statement at the end of your assignments (or on a sheet of paper with your file name and your name if you submit through Google Drive). Then sign and date below the statement.

**“I certify that no unauthorized assistance has been received or given in the completion of this work.  
All work shown is my own.”**

## Archetypes in Literature

An **ARCHETYPE** is an original model or pattern from which other later copies are made, especially a character, an action, or situation that seems to represent common patterns of human life. Often, archetypes include a symbol, a theme, a setting, or a character that some critics think have a common meaning in an entire culture, or even the entire human race. These images have particular emotional resonance and power. Archetypes recur in different times and places in myth, literature, folklore, fairy tales, dreams, artwork, and religious rituals. The psychologist Carl Jung theorized that the archetype originates in the collective unconscious of mankind, i.e., the shared experiences of a race or culture, such as birth, death, love, family life, and struggles to survive and grow up. These would be expressed in the subconscious of an individual who would recreate them in myths, dreams, and literature. Examples of archetypes found cross-culturally include the following:

- 1) Recurring symbolic situations such as the orphaned prince or the lost chieftain's son raised ignorant of his heritage until he is rediscovered by his parents, or the damsel in distress rescued from a hideous monster by a handsome young man who later marries the girl. Also, the long journey, the difficult quest or search, the catalog of difficult tasks, the pursuit of revenge, the descent into the underworld, redemptive rituals, fertility rites, the great flood, the End of the World.
- 2) Recurring themes such as the Faustian bargain; pride preceding a fall; the inevitable nature of death, fate, or punishment; blindness; madness; taboos such as forbidden love, patricide, or incest.
- 3) Recurring characters such as witches or ugly crones who cannibalize children, lame blacksmiths of preternatural skill, womanizing Don Juans, the hunted man, the femme fatale, the snob, the social climber, the wise old man as mentor or teacher, star-crossed lovers; the caring mother-figure, the helpless little old lady, the stern father-figure, the guilt-ridden figure searching for redemption, the braggart, the young star-crossed lovers, the bully, the villain in black, the oracle or prophet, the mad scientist, the underdog who emerges victorious, the mourning widow or women in lamentation.
- 4) Symbolic colors such as green as a symbol for life, vegetation, or summer; blue as a symbol for water or tranquility; white or black as a symbol of purity; or red as a symbol of blood, fire, or passion and so on.
- 5) Recurring images such as blood, water, pregnancy, ashes, cleanness, dirtiness, caverns, the ruined tower, the rose or lotus, the lion, the snake, the eagle, the hanged man, the dying god that rises again, the feast or banquet, the fall from a great height.

The study of these archetypes in literature is known as archetypal criticism or mythic criticism. Archetypes are also called universal symbols.

### Situational & Thematic Archetypes (these situations must actually occur in the text to be an archetype)

Archetype	Description
The Quest	What the Hero must accomplish in order to bring fertility back to the wasteland, usually a search for some talisman, which will restore peace, order, and normalcy to a troubled land.
Other Quests	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The quest for identity</li> <li>2. The epic journey to find the promised land/to found the good city</li> <li>3. The quest for vengeance</li> <li>4. The warrior's journey to save his people</li> <li>5. The search for love (to rescue the princess/damsel in distress)</li> <li>6. The journey in search of knowledge</li> <li>7. The tragic quest: penance or self-denial</li> <li>8. The fool's errand</li> <li>9. The quest to rid the land of danger</li> <li>10. The grail quest (the quest for human perfection)</li> </ol>
The Task	The nearly superhuman feat(s) the Hero must perform in order to accomplish his quest.
The Journey	The journey sends the Hero in search of some truth that will help save his kingdom.
The Initiation	The adolescent comes into his maturity with new awareness and problems.

The Ritual	The actual ceremonies the Initiate experiences that will mark his rite of passage into another state. A clear sign of the character's role in his society
The Fall	The descent from a higher to a lower state of being usually as a punishment for transgression. It also involves the loss of innocence.
Death and Rebirth	The most common of all situational archetypes, this motif grows out of a parallel between the cycle of nature and the cycle of life. Thus morning and springtime represent birth, youth, or rebirth, while evening and winter suggest old age or death.
Battle between Good and Evil	Obviously, a battle between two primal forces. Mankind shows eternal optimism in the continual portrayal of good triumphing over evil despite great odds.
The Unhealable Wound	Either a physical or psychological wound that cannot be fully healed. The wound symbolizes a loss of innocence.

### Character Archetypes (Characters can fit these descriptions and be these archetypes)

Archetype	Description
The Hero	The Hero is a protagonist whose life is a series of well-marked adventures. The circumstances of his birth are unusual, and he is raised by a guardian. He will have to leave his kingdom, only to return to it upon reaching manhood. Characterized by courage, strength, and honor, the hero will endure hardship, even risk his life for the good of all. Leaves the familiar to enter an unfamiliar and challenging world.
Young Man from the Provinces	The Hero returns to his home and heritage where he is a stranger who can see new problems and new solutions
The Initiates	The Initiates are young heroes or heroines who must go through some training and ceremony before undertaking their quest.
Mentor or Wise Old Man	The Mentor is an older, wiser teacher to the initiates. He often serves as a father or mother figure. He gives the hero gifts (weapons, food, magic, information), serves as a role model or as hero's conscience.
Mentor – Pupil Relationship	In this relationship, the Mentor teaches the Hero/pupil the necessary skills for surviving the quest.
The Threshold Guardian	Tests the hero's courage and worthiness to begin the journey
Father – Son Conflict	In this relationship, the tension is built due to separation from childhood or some other source when the two meet as men.
Hunting Group of Companions	These are loyal companions willing to face hardship and ordeal in order to stay together.
Loyal Retainers	The Retainer's duty is to reflect the nobility and power of the hero.
Friendly Beast	An animal companion showing that nature is on the side of the hero
The Shadow	A worthy opponent with whom the hero must struggle in a fight to the end. Must be destroyed or neutralized. Psychologically can represent the darker side of the hero's own psyche.
The Devil Figure	This character is evil incarnate. Sometimes has a reference to cloven feet or other disfigurements.
The Evil Figure with Ultimately Good Heart	A devil figure with the potential to be good. This person is usually saved by the love of the hero.
The Creature of Nightmare	A monster usually summoned from the deepest, darkest part of the human psyche to threaten the lives of the hero/heroine. Often it is a perversion or desecration of the human body.
The Scapegoat	An animal, or more usually a human, whose death in a public ceremony expiates some taint or sin of a community. They are often more powerful in death than in life.
The Outcast	A character banished from a social group for some real or imagined crime against his fellow man, usually destined to wander from place to place.
The Platonic Ideal	A woman who is a source of inspiration to the hero, who has an intellectual rather than physical attraction to her
Damsel in Distress	A vulnerable woman who needs to be rescued by the hero. She is often used as a trap to ensnare the unsuspecting hero.
The Earth Mother or The Good Mother	Symbolic of fruition, abundance, and fertility, this character traditionally offers spiritual and emotional nourishment to those with whom she comes in contact. Often depicted in earth colors, has large breasts and hips symbolic of her childbearing capacities.
The Temptress, Black Goddess, or Siren	Characterized by sensuous beauty, this woman is one to whom the protagonist is physically attracted and who ultimately brings about his downfall. May appear as a witch or vampire

White Goddess	Good, beautiful maiden, usually blond, may make an ideal marriage partner; often has religious or intellectual overtones.
The Unfaithful Wife	A woman married to a man she sees as dull or distant and is attracted to more virile or interesting men.
Star-Crossed Lovers	Two characters engaged in a love affair fated to end tragically for one or both due to the disapproval of society, friends, family, or some tragic situation.

### **Symbolic Archetypes** (These symbols must appear in the text to be this type of archetype)

<b>Archetype</b>	<b>Description</b>
Light vs. Darkness	Light usually suggests hope, renewal, or intellectual illumination; darkness implies the unknown, ignorance, or despair.
Sun and Moon	Sun is also associated with intellectual illumination as well as with creative energy, law in nature, and the father principle. The Rising Sun represents birth, creation, and enlightenment. The Setting Sun represents death or an ending. The Moon is associated with the female or mother principle.
Innate Wisdom vs. Educated Stupidity	Some characters exhibit wisdom and understanding of situations instinctively as opposed to those supposedly in charge. Loyal retainers often exhibit this wisdom as they accompany the hero on the journey.
Supernatural Intervention	Spiritual beings intervene on the side of the hero or sometimes against him.
Fire and Ice	Fire represents knowledge, light, life, and rebirth, while ice, like the desert, represents ignorance, darkness, sterility, and death.
Nature vs. Mechanistic	World Nature is good while technology is evil.
The Garden	Paradise; innocence; unspoiled beauty (especially feminine); fertility
Trees	Denotes life of the cosmos; its consistence, growth, proliferation, generative and regenerative processes all make it a symbol for inexhaustible life and immortality
The Threshold	Gateway to a new world which the hero must enter to change and grow
The Underworld	A place of death or metaphorically an encounter with the dark side of the self. Entering an underworld is a form of facing a fear of death.
Haven vs. Wilderness	Places of safety contrast sharply against a dangerous wilderness. Heroes are often sheltered for a time to regain health and resources
Water vs. Desert	Because Water is necessary to life and growth, it commonly appears as a birth symbol, as baptism symbolizes a spiritual birth. Rain, rivers, oceans, etc. also function the same way. The Desert suggests the opposite (spiritual barrenness, death, nihilism, hopelessness)
Heaven vs. Hell	Man has traditionally associated parts of the universe not accessible to him with the dwelling places of the primordial forces that govern his world. The skies and mountaintops house his gods, the bowels of the earth contain diabolic forces.
The Crossroads	A place or time of decision when a realization is made and change or penance results
The Maze	A puzzling dilemma or great uncertainty, search for the dangerous monster inside of oneself, or a journey into the heart of darkness
The Castle	A strong place of safety which holds treasure or princess, may be enchanted or bewitched
The Tower	A strong place of evil, represents the isolation of self
The Magic Weapon	The weapon the hero needs in order to complete his quest.

The Whirlpool	Symbolizes the destructive power of nature or fate.
Fog	Symbolizes uncertainty.
Serpent (snake, worm)	Symbol of evil, corruption, sensuality, destruction, temptation, mystery, or wisdom
Colors	Red: blood, sacrifice, passion, disorder Green: growth, hope, fertility; in negative context may be associated with death and decay Blue: highly positive, security, tranquility, spiritual purity Black: darkness, chaos, mystery, the unknown, death, primal wisdom, the unconscious, evil, melancholy White: light, purity, innocence, timelessness (negatives: death, terror, supernatural) Yellow: enlightenment, wisdom
Numbers	3—light, spiritual awareness, unity (holy trinity), male principle 4—associated with the circle, life cycle, four seasons, female principle, earth, nature, elements 7—the most potent of all symbolic numbers signifying the union of three and four, the completion of a cycle, perfect order, perfect number, religious symbol

*East of Eden* Reading Passage Entry #1, from Part 1

Title	Section Number and Chapter
Write a <b>five</b> sentence scene summary	
Character Focus: Quote from the chapter that you think best represents the character. (Include page number)	Commentary on selected quote
Best and worst qualities	
Character's role in the novel	
For each entry choose <b>one</b> meaningful quote, and then describe its significance in the novel. (Include page number)	Commentary (Why is this significant? Plot? Character? Setting? Theme?)
Archetype or archetypal pattern (Include page number)	Commentary on archetype, motif, or pattern (How does the archetype add meaning to the work as a whole?)

*East of Eden* Reading Passage Entry #2, from Part 2

Title	Section Number and Chapter
Write a <b>five</b> sentence scene summary	
Character Focus: Quote from the chapter that you think best represents the character. (Include page number)	Commentary on selected quote
Best and worst qualities	
Character's role in the novel	
For each entry choose <b>one</b> meaningful quote, and then describe its significance in the novel. (Include page number)	Commentary (Why is this significant? Plot? Character? Setting? Theme?)
Archetype or archetypal pattern (Include page number)	Commentary on archetype, motif, or pattern (How does the archetype add meaning to the work as a whole?)



*East of Eden* Reading Passage Entry #3, from Part 3

Title	Section Number and Chapter
Write a <b>five</b> sentence scene summary	
Character Focus: Quote from the chapter that you think best represents the character. (Include page number)	Commentary on selected quote
Best and worst qualities	
Character's role in the novel	
For each entry choose <b>one</b> meaningful quote, and then describe its significance in the novel. (Include page number)	Commentary (Why is this significant? Plot? Character? Setting? Theme?)
Archetype or archetypal pattern (Include page number)	Commentary on archetype, motif, or pattern (How does the archetype add meaning to the work as a whole?)

*East of Eden* Reading Passage Entry #4, from Part 4

Title	Section Number and Chapter
Write a <b>five</b> sentence scene summary	
Character Focus: Quote from the chapter that you think best represents the character. (Include page number)	Commentary on selected quote
Best and worst qualities	
Character's role in the novel	
For each entry choose <b>one</b> meaningful quote, and then describe its significance in the novel. (Include page number)	Commentary (Why is this significant? Plot? Character? Setting? Theme?)
Archetype or archetypal pattern (Include page number)	Commentary on archetype, motif, or pattern (How does the archetype add meaning to the work as a whole?)

Theme:

Important Discussion Question

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**In a typed page or two**, answer one of your important discussion questions. (Share your Google Document with [shanson@haywood.k12.nc.us](mailto:shanson@haywood.k12.nc.us) and [tjudy@haywood.k12.nc.us](mailto:tjudy@haywood.k12.nc.us).)



## “Paradox and Dream” (1966)

John Steinbeck

- (1) One of the generalities most often noted about Americans is that we are a restless, a dissatisfied, a searching people. We bridle and buck under failure, and we go mad with dissatisfaction in the face of success. We spend our time searching for security, and hate it when we get it. For the most part we are an intemperate people: we eat too much when we can, drink too much, indulge our senses too much, Even in our so-called virtues we are intemperate: a teetotaler is not content not to drink--he must stop all the drinking in the world; a vegetarian among us would outlaw the eating of meat. We work too hard, and many die under the strain; and then to make up for that we play with a violence as suicidal.
- (2) The result is that we seem to be in a state of turmoil all the time, both physically and mentally. We are able to believe that our government is weak, stupid, overbearing, dishonest, and inefficient, and at the same time we are deeply convinced that it is the best government in the world, and we would like to impose it upon everyone else. We speak of the *American Way of Life* as though it involved the ground rules for the governance of heaven. A man hungry and unemployed through his own stupidity and that of others, a man beaten by a brutal policeman, a woman forced into prostitution by her own laziness, high prices, availability, and despair--all bow with reverence toward the *American Way of Life*, although each one would look puzzled and angry if he were asked to define it. We scramble and scrabble up the stony path toward the pot of gold we have taken to mean security. We trample friends, relatives, and strangers who get in the way of our achieving it, and once we get it we shower it on psychoanalysts to try to find out why we are unhappy, and finally, if we have enough of the gold we contribute it back to the nation in the form of foundations and charities.
- (3) We fight our way in, and try to buy our way out. We are alert, curious, hopeful, and we take more drugs designed to make us unaware than any other people. We are self-reliant and at the same time completely dependent. We are aggressive, and defenseless. Americans overindulge their children; the children in turn are overly dependent on their parents. We are complacent in our possessions, in our houses, in our education; but it is hard to find a man or woman who does not want something better for the next generation. Americans are remarkably kind and hospitable and open with both guests and strangers; and yet they will make a wide circle around the man dying on the pavement. Fortunes are spent getting cats out of trees and dogs out of sewer pipes; but a girl screaming for help in the street draws only slammed doors, closed windows, and silence.
- (4) Now there is a set of generalities for you, each one of them canceled out by another generality. Americans seem to live and breathe and function by paradox; but in nothing are we so paradoxical as in our passionate belief in our own myths. We truly believe ourselves to be natural-born mechanics and do-it-yourselfers. We spend our lives in automobiles, yet most of us--a great many of us at least--do not know enough about a car to look in the gas tank when the engine fails. Our lives as we live them would not function without electricity, but it is a rare man or woman who, when the power goes off, knows how to look for a burned-out fuse and replace it. We believe implicitly that we are the heirs of the pioneers; that we have inherited self-sufficiency and the ability to take care of ourselves, particularly in relation to nature. There isn't a man among us in ten thousand who knows how to butcher a cow or a pig and cut it up for eating, let alone a wild animal. By natural endowment, we are great rifle shots and great hunters--but when hunting season opens there is a slaughter of farm animals and humans by men and women who couldn't hit a real target if they could see it. Americans treasure the knowledge that they live close to nature, but fewer and fewer farmers feed more and more people; and as soon as we can afford to we eat out of cans, buy microwave dinners, and haunt the delicatessens. Affluence means moving to the suburbs, but the American suburbanite sees, if anything, less of the country than the city apartment dweller with his window boxes and his African violets carefully tended under lights. In no country are more seeds and plants and equipment purchased, and less vegetables and flowers raised.

- (5) The paradoxes are everywhere: We shout that we are a nation of laws, not men--and then proceed to break every law we can if we can get away with it. We proudly insist that we base our political positions on the issues--and we will vote against a man because of his religion, his name, or the shape of his nose.
- (6) We believe in the manliness of our men and the womanliness of our women, but we go to extremes of expense and discomfort to cover any natural evidence that we are either.
- (7) We fancy ourselves as hardheaded realists, but we will buy anything we see advertised, particularly on television; and we buy it not with reference to the quality or the value of the product, but directly as a result of the number of times we have heard it mentioned. The most arrant nonsense about a product is never questioned. We are afraid to be awake, afraid to be alone, afraid to be a moment without the noise and confusion we call entertainment. We boast of our dislike of highbrow art and music, and we have more and better attended symphonies, art galleries, and theaters than any country in the world. We detest abstract art and produce more of it than all the rest of the world put together.
- (8) One of the characteristics most puzzling to a foreign observer is the strong and imperishable dream the American carries. On inspection, it is found that the dream has little to do with reality in American life. Consider the dream of and the hunger for home. The very word can reduce nearly all of my compatriots to tears. Builders and developers never build houses--they build homes. The dream home is either in a small town or in a suburban area where grass and trees simulate the country. This dream home is a permanent seat, not rented but owned. It is a center where a man and his wife grow graciously old, warmed by the radiance of well-washed children and grandchildren. Many thousands of these homes are built every year; built, planted, advertised, and sold--and yet, the American family rarely stays in one place for more than five years. The home and its equipment are purchased on time and are heavily mortgaged. The earning power of the father is almost always over-extended. If the earner is successful and his income increases, right away the house is not big enough, or in the proper neighborhood. Or perhaps suburban life pales, and the family moves to the city, where excitement and convenience beckon.
- (9) Some of these movements back and forth seem to me a result of just pure restlessness, pure nervousness. We do hear, of course, of people who keep the same job for twenty years, or thirty years, or forty years, and get a gold watch for it; but the numbers of these old and faithful employees are decreasing all the time. Part of the movement has to do with the nature of business itself. Work in factories in supermarkets, for contractors on the construction of houses, bridges, public buildings, or more factories is often temporary; the job gets done, or local taxes or wage increases or falling sales may cause a place of business to move to a new area. In addition, many of the great corporations have a policy of moving employees from one of their many branches to another. The employee with the home dream finds that with every removal he loses money. The sellers of homes make their profit on the down payment and on the interest on the loan; but the private owner who wants to turn over his dream home and move on to another finds that he always takes a loss. However, the dream does not die--it just takes another form.
- (10) There is no question that American life is in the process of changing, but, as always in human history, it carries some of the past along with it. Automobile manufacturers discovered and developed the American yearning for status. (Substitute TV, computers, CD players, etc.). By changing the appliances and gadgetry on each new model, they could make the car owner feel that his perfectly good automobile was old-fashioned and therefore undesirable. His children were afraid to be seen in it; and, since a family's image of success in the world, or status, is to a certain extent dependent on the kind of a car the man drives, he was forced to buy a new one whether he needed it or not. The pattern has not changed: and none of this has in any way affected the American dream of home, which remains part Grandma Moses and part split-level ranch house in an area where to keep a cow or a pen of chickens is to break the law.
- (11) Of course, the home dream can be acted out almost anywhere. Every summer morning about nine o'clock, on Third Street in New York, a stout and benign-looking lady came down the stairs from her flat to the pavement carrying the

great outdoors in her arms. She set out a canvas deck chair, and over it mounted a beach umbrella of the kind which has a little cocktail table around it--and then, smiling happily, this benign and robust woman rolled out a little lawn made of green raffia in front of her chair, set out two pots of red geraniums and an artificial palm, brought a little cabinet with cold drinks-Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola-in a small icebox; she laid her folded copy of the Daily News on the table, arranged her equipment, and sank back into the chair--and she was in the country. She nodded and smiled to everyone who went by, and somehow she conveyed her dream to everyone who saw her, and everyone who saw her was delighted with her. For some reason I was overwhelmed with a desire to contribute to this sylvan retreat, and so one day when she had stepped inside for a moment, I deposited on her table a potted fern and a little bowl with two goldfish; and the next morning, I was pleased to see that these had been added to the permanent equipment. Every day through that summer the fern and the goldfish were part of the scene.

(12) The home dream is only one of the deep set American illusions which, since they can't be changed, function as cohesive principles to bind the nation together and make it different from all other nations. It occurs to me that all dreams, waking and sleeping, are powerful and prominent memories of something real, of something that really happened. I believe these memories--some of them, at least--can be inherited; our generalized dreams of water and warmth, of falling, of monsters, of danger and premonitions may have been pre-recorded on some kind of genetic tape in the species out of which we evolved or mutated, just as some of our organs which no longer function seem to be physical memories of other, earlier processes. The national dream of Americans is a whole pattern of thinking and feeling and may well be a historic memory surprisingly little distorted. Furthermore, the participators in the dream need not have descended physically from the people to whom the reality happened. This pattern of thought and conduct which is the national character is absorbed even by the children of immigrants born in America, but it never comes to the immigrants them-selves, no matter how they may wish it; birth on American soil seems to be required.

(13) I have spoken of the dream of home that persists in a time when home is neither required nor wanted. Until very recently home was a real word, and in the English tongue it is a magic word. At first the word "home" meant safety, then gradually comfort. In the immediate American past, the home meant just those two things; the log houses, even the sod houses, were havens of safety, of defense, warmth, food, and comfort. Outside were hostile Indians and dangerous animals, crippling cold and starvation. Many houses, including the one where President Johnson was born, built only a few generations back, have thick walls and gunsits for defense, a great hearth for cooking and for heat, a cellar under the floor and an attic for the storage of food, and sometimes even an interior well in case of siege. A home was a place where women and children could be reasonably safe, a place to which a man could return with joy and slough off his weariness and his fears. This symbol of safety and comfort is so recent in our history that it is no wonder that to all of us it remains dear and desirable.

(14) It is an American dream that we are great hunters, trackers, woodsmen, deadshots with a rifle or a shotgun; and this dream is deeply held by Americans who have never fired a gun or hunted anything larger or more dangerous than a cockroach. But I wonder whether our deep connection with firearms is not indeed a national potential; not long ago we had to be good hunters or we starved, good shots or our lives were in danger. Can this have carried over? Early in World War II, I spent a good deal of time at the schools for aerial gunnery. The British, having been in the war for a long time, sent teams of instructors to teach our newly inducted men to handle the tail and ball-turret guns in our B-17 bombers, but the instruction began with small arms, since all shooting is pretty much the same. I remember an Englishman saying to me. "It is amazing how quickly these men learn. Some of them have never handled a weapon, and yet it seems to come to them as though they knew it; they pick it up much faster than the English lads do. 'Maybe they're just born with the knack.'"

(15) The inventiveness once necessary for survival may also be a part of the national dream. Who among us has not bought for a song an ancient junked car, and with parts from other junked cars put together something that would run? This is not lost; American kids are still doing it. The dreams of a people either create folk literature or find their way into it; and folk literature, again, is always based on something that happened. Our most persistent folk tales--constantly retold in

books, movies, and television shows--concern cowboys, gunslinging sheriffs, and Indian fighters. (What could you substitute for cowboys today?) These folk figures existed--perhaps not quite as they are re-called nor in the numbers indicated, but they did exist; and this dream also persists. Even businessmen in Texas wear the high-heeled boots and big hats, though they ride in air-conditioned Cadillacs and have forgotten the reason for the high heels. All our children play cowboy and Indian; the brave and honest sheriff who with courage and a six-gun brings law and order and civic virtue to a Western community is perhaps our most familiar hero, no doubt descended from the brave mailed knight of chivalry who battled and over-came evil with lance and sword. Even the recognition signals are the same: white hat, white armor--black hat, black shield. And in these moral tales, so deepset in us, virtue does not arise out of reason or orderly process of law--it is imposed and maintained by violence.

(16) I wonder whether this folk wisdom is the story of our capability. Are these stories permanent because we knew within ourselves that only the threat of violence makes it possible for us to live together in peace? I think that surviving folk tales are directly based on memory. There must have been a leader like King Arthur; although there is no historical record to prove it. The very strength of the story presumes his existence. We know there were gunslinging sheriffs--not many, but some; but if they had not existed, our need for them would have created them. It interests me that the youthful gangs in our cities, engaging in their "rumbles" which are really wars, and doing so in direct and overt disobedience of law and of all the pressures the police can apply--that these gangs take noble names, and within their organizations are said to maintain a code of behavior and responsibility toward one another and an obedience to their leaders very like that of the tight-knit chivalric code of feudal Europe; the very activities and attitudes which raise the hand of the law against these gangs would, if the nation needed them, be the diagnostics of heroes. And indeed, they must be heroes to themselves.

(17) A national dream need not, indeed may not be clear-cut and exact. For Americans too the wide and general dream has a name. It is called "the American Way of Life." No one can define it or point to any one person or group who lives it, but it is very real nevertheless, perhaps more real than that equally remote dream the Russians call Communism. These dreams describe our vague yearnings toward what we wish were and hope we may be: wise, just, compassionate, and noble. The fact that we have this dream at all is perhaps an indication of its possibility.



## “Paradox and Dream” by John Steinbeck

**DIRECTIONS:** Complete the following activities based on the essay, *Americans: Paradox and Dream* by John Steinbeck. Type your responses and share your Google Document with [shanson@haywood.k12.nc.us](mailto:shanson@haywood.k12.nc.us) and [tjudy@haywood.k12.nc.us](mailto:tjudy@haywood.k12.nc.us).

**A)** Read the attached article at least twice: read through it once for general ideas, and then read more slowly and closely for meaning. Highlight or underline any ideas, quotes, or other examples of supporting evidence you think are important.

**B) SUMMARY PARAGRAPH:** In your own words, write a *brief* paragraph (3-5 sentences maximum) summarizing Steinbeck’s thesis and other main ideas.

**C) SHORT-RESPONSE QUESTIONS:** Answer the questions below in complete sentences. Include direct quotes from the essay where needed. Use *specific* examples when giving your opinion.

1. In your opinion, what is Steinbeck’s thesis in this essay? Where is it located?
2. Identify an example Steinbeck uses to show that Americans are “restless and dissatisfied.”
3. In your opinion, what are two modern-day examples of Americans acting “restless and dissatisfied?” Be specific and briefly explain your choices.
4. Identify an example Steinbeck uses to show that Americans “function by paradox.”
5. In your opinion, what are two modern-day examples of Americans functioning by paradox (you might interpret this as hypocrisy)? Be specific and briefly explain your choices.
6. Identify an example Steinbeck uses to show how Americans respond to advertising and consumerism.
7. In your opinion, what are two modern-day examples of how Americans respond to advertising or exhibit signs of blatant consumerism? Use specific examples from your own observations or experiences.
8. According to Steinbeck, what is most puzzling about the “American Dream?”
9. According to Steinbeck, what functions are served by dreams and illusions? Do you agree or disagree? Briefly explain why.
10. Based on your reading of the essay and your personal experience, do you tend to agree or disagree with Steinbeck’s ideas about the paradoxical nature of Americans and the “American Dream?” Briefly explain why.