

Name _____



Lost Land

For generations, the Joad family had lived and worked on their small farm in Oklahoma. The land had been passed down from parents to children, and they believed it was their home forever. But when a terrible drought came, the land dried up. Crops withered in the heat, and dust covered everything. Without crops to sell, many families, including the Joads, could not afford to pay their debts. The banks, which

now owned the land, forced them to leave.

The Joads were heartbroken. They had worked hard on that land, planting and harvesting year after year. To them, the land was more than dirt—it was their history, their hard work, and their home. But the banks saw the land differently. To them, it was just something to buy and sell. When the Joads could no longer pay for it, the banks took it away.

With no home and no work, the Joads set off for California, hoping to find new land and jobs. But when they arrived, they saw that things were not as they had imagined. The land in California was owned by big companies, not families. The workers had no land of their own and were paid very little. The farm owners, who wanted to make as much money as possible, hired too many workers and paid them unfairly. The Joads realized that without land, poor families had no power.

Throughout *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck shows how important land is to families like the Joads. Owning land gave people security and a sense of belonging. But when they lost their land, they lost more than just a place to live—they lost control over their own lives. Steinbeck uses the Joad family's journey to show how unfair the system was, as rich landowners gained more power while poor workers struggled to survive.

The novel makes readers ask important questions: Who should own the land? Should a bank be able to take land from the people who worked on it for years? And what happens when the people who grow the food cannot even afford to eat it? Steinbeck's story reminds us that land is not just property—it is life, history, and home.