**TOPIC: THE KIDNAP AND MURDER OF GRAMPA**

**Discipline**

Language Arts, Civics, Government, Mock Trial

**Grade Level**

9-12

**Type of Activity**

Small Group, Entire Class, Discussion, Debate, Oral Presentation

**Objectives**

* Students will gain a greater understanding of the moral implications of the characters’ actions.
* Students will judge the characters’ actions citing evidence from the novel itself.
* Students will learn the basics of the jury trial system.

**Overview**

Although initially excited to leave Oklahoma and head to California, Grampa adamantly refused to leave home at the last minute. The rest of the Joad family, however, decide to bring Grampa on the trek west anyway. Shortly afterwards, Grampa dies.

In this activity students will engage in a beginner level mock trial with the Joad family facing charges of kidnap and murder. This interactive approach will help students analyze the motivations of the family.

**Relevant Sections**

* Note: this is not a complete list of references to Grampa, his feelings about the trip to California, and his death. These sections are to help groups get started.
* Chapter 8 (82-83)
* Chapter 10 (92-93, 108-114)
* Chapter 12 (124-125, 135-145)

**Materials Needed/Preparation**

* *The Grapes of Wrath*
* Familiarity with basic courtroom proceedings. Teachers should review this website (via LCD projector, computer lab, or hard copies) with the students so that they will have a rudimentary understanding of legal proceedings.

**Estimated Time**

This will vary greatly depending on the class, its level, and size.

Generally:

* One class period for an introduction to the legal system and the roles involved.
* Students will need to meet in their small groups to prepare their cases—at least one class period.
* A minimum of one class period for the trial

**Procedures**

* Divide the class into two groups: defending the family and prosecuting the family.
	+ Each group is to divide up the duties of their side which include:
		- Attorneys (prosecution or defense, depending on which side the group is on)
		- Plaintiffs and Defendants (again, depending on which side the group is on)
		- Witnesses (a caveat – it would be acceptable to allow Grampa as a witness; this gives the students the ability to have Grampa speak his dialogue from the novel as evidence).
			* Witnesses who are not characters in the novel may be used (such as a police officer who found Grampa’s buried body and the note that was included).
	+ Each group is to work on preparing for the case.
		- Writing notes, finding passages in the novel for evidence, drafting opening and closing statements, writing questions to ask the witnesses, etc.
* The jury can be made up of students who do not have an acting role to play during the trial.
* The judge can either be a student or the teacher
* The Trial
	+ - The novel is to be used as the source for all claims and accusations. Quoting from the novel is encouraged. Basically, the trial should proceed as follows:
			* The prosecution and defense lawyers will make their opening statements—in essence, what they hope to prove during the trial.
			* The prosecuting lawyer will call the accused to the stand and question him or her.
			* The defense lawyer will then cross examine and question the accused.
			* Each lawyer will then call witnesses to the stand. In turn, each lawyer can cross examine and question the other lawyer’s witnesses.
			* After questioning, both lawyers will give closing arguments to the jury. This closing should, in essence, be a persuasive speech to convince the jury of his/her arguments to convict or acquit the defendant.
			* The jury (student audience) will deliberate and present their verdict to the judge and the court.
			* The judge will then free the defendant (if acquitted) or sentence the defendant (if found guilty).

**Post Activity/Takeaways/Follow-up**

* Post Activity
	+ Students can write their brief reactions to each trial and share with the class.
	+ Students can also hold a post-interview “press conference” and ask questions of the lawyers.
	+ Revisit this trial after completing the novel: was the family right to try to stay together at all costs?
* Takeaways
	+ This activity helps create a stronger connection to the events in the novel while introducing students to the process of a trial by jury.
	+ This activity reinforces students’ abilities in critical thinking and argumentative writing/speaking.

**Assessment**

* During trial preparation, teachers should ensure that students are on task, taking the project seriously, and are cooperating with each other.
* After the trials, teachers can grade students based on preparation, execution, persuasiveness of arguments, evidence, and level of seriousness.

**Standards Met**

* Reading Standards for Literature 6-12
	+ Key Ideas and Details: 1, 2, 3
	+ Craft and Structure: 4, 5, 6
	+ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 8
	+ Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10
* Reading Standards for Informational Text 6-12
	+ Key Ideas and Details: 1, 2, 3
	+ Craft and Structure: 4, 5, 6
	+ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 7, 8
	+ Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10
* Writing Standards 6-12
	+ Text Types and Purposes: 1, 2, 3
	+ Production and Distribution of Writing: 4, 5
	+ Research to Build and Present Knowledge: 7, 8, 9
	+ Range of Writing: 10
* Speaking and Listening Standards 6-12
	+ Comprehension and Collaboration: 1, 2
	+ Presentation and Knowledge of Ideas: 4
* Language Standards 6-12
	+ Conventions of Standard English: 1, 2, 3
	+ Knowledge of Language: 3
	+ Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: 4, 5, 6
* Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12
	+ Key Ideas and Details: 1, 2
	+ Craft and Structure: 4, 5
	+ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 8
	+ Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10
* Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6-12
	+ Text Types and Purposes: 1, 2
	+ Production and Distribution of Writing: 4, 5
	+ Research to Build and Present Knowledge: 7, 8, 9
	+ Range of Writing: 10