**TOPIC: FULL CIRCLE**

**Discipline**

Language Arts, History

**Grade Level**

9-12

**Type of Activity**

Small Group, Entire Class, Discussion, Writing

**Objectives**

* Students will examine the language used to describe Muley Graves (Chapters 6 & 10) and Tom Joad (at the end of Chapter 28).
* Students will compare and contrast the two men and their lives.
* Students will connect Muley and Tom to the larger themes of the novel.

**Overview**

At the end of chapter 6 the reader learns the life that Muley Graves has been living since his family was forced off their land and headed to California. Muley stayed behind out of stubbornness and lives an unsettled life resisting and hiding from authorities. Steinbeck metaphorically describes Muley’s life in animal terms – of the hunter and the hunted. In chapter 28 Ma visits Tom who is hiding after the incident outside Hooper Ranch. Much like Muley, Tom is in hiding.

In this activity students will examine Muley and Tom and discuss whether the novel has come full circle at this point.

**Relevant Sections**

* Meeting Muley Graves: Chapter 6 (45-52)
* Muley’s life: Chapter 6 (57-60) & Chapter 10 (110-114)
* Tom’s life after Hooper Ranch: Chapter 28 (415-420)

**Materials Needed/Preparation**

* *The Grapes of Wrath*
* Optional: Full Circle Organizer
* Read through the end of Chapter 28

**Estimated Time**

* 1-2 class periods

**Procedures**

Warm-up:

* Re-read pages 45-52 when Muley Graves is introduced.
  + In notes or using the Full Circle Organizer:
    - List the struggles Muley Graves has gone through at this point.
    - Pair-share: how have the struggles experienced by Muley compare to those endured by the Joad family?
      * Who is better off? The Joad family or Muley?
  + Class discussion
    - What are the themes being introduced in this passage?
      * Hope vs. Despair, powerlessness, the faceless power of the banks and land companies, etc.

Discussion

* Assign students a partner or to a small group
* Re-read/review pages 57-60 and 110-114 (more on Muley’s life).
* Re-read/review pages 110-114 (when Ma visits Tom at his hiding spot).
* In notes or in the Full Circle Organizer:
  + What themes do you find in these passages?
  + Compare and contrast the lives of Muley and Tom
    - Living conditions, experiences, life in hiding/on the run, etc.
    - Ideals
    - Language used by Steinbeck to describe each man and their surroundings
  + Pair-share your findings
* Pair-share topic:
  + When the Joad family departs, is there hope for Muley?
  + When Ma says “Good-by” to Tom, is there hope for him (420)?
    - If students have completed the novel: is there hope for Tom after the flood?
  + Share thoughts in a class discussion

Option: Writing

* This can be done individually or in small groups/partners
* Write a newspaper article (or multiple articles), letters to family, personal journal entries, a narrative, or a general chapter:
  + What happened to Muley after the Joad family left for California?
  + What happened to Tom after the flood?
  + Be certain to connect with one or more of the major themes in the book.

Option: Debate

* Ma describes Tom as different from everyone else (353).
  + Is he?
  + Does Steinbeck want the reader to think Tom is different?
  + Consider everything you know about Tom. Is he different?
    - Recall: he killed a man, is an ex-con, angary, breaks parole, cruel to the man at the junkyard, helps at Weedpatch, kills a man outside Hooper Ranch, consider his speeches, etc.

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

* Takeaways
  + By looking more closely at Tom and Muley students can examine the larger theme of Hope vs. Despair that plays throughout the novel.
* Follow-up
  + After finishing the novel, discuss what students think happened to Tom.
    - Has their opinion changed?
    - Discuss: why was Tom not there during the flood?
* Post Activity
  + Consider these other, related lesson plans:
    - Where are they Now – Epilogues
    - Letters Home
    - Betrayal

**Assessment**

* The key focus of this activity is for students to examine the language used by Steinbeck in describing Muley, Tom, and their lives. Students should be able to connect these scenes to larger themes of the novel.
  + Assess the evidence from the text cited by students to support their conclusions.
  + For writing assignments, students should write appropriately to the genre chosen (i.e. a newspaper article should read differently from a personal journal entry).

**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: 7, 9
  + 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: 2
  + Range of Writing: 10
* Speaking and Listening Standards 6-12
  + Comprehension and Collaboration: 1, 2, 3, 4
  + 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: 6