**TOPIC: THE CITADEL**

**Discipline**

Language Arts

**Grade Level**

9-12

**Type of Activity**

Small Group, Entire Class, Cumulative

**Objectives**

* Students will closely examine the role of Ma throughout the novel.
* Students will understand and analyze the central role Ma played.

**Overview**

“She seemed to know, to accept, to welcome her position, the citadel of the family, the strong place that could not be taken” (74).

In chapter 8 Steinbeck gives the reader a first, vivid description of Ma. While much of the narrative follows Tom, it is Ma who is the center of the family – the “citadel.”

**Relevant Sections**

Note: This is not a complete list.

* Introduction of Ma: Chapter 8 (74, 77)
* Ma’s “revolt”: Chapter 16 (169)
* Ma at the border of California: Chapter 18 (225-226)
* Ma tells the family about Granma: Chapter 18 (228-230)
* Ma and Jim Rawley, Ma and the Committee: Chapter 22 (301-317)
* Ma says it’s time to leave the boxcar: Chapter 30 (450-454)

**Materials Needed/Preparation**

* *The Grapes of Wrath*
* Students have completed the novel
* Internet connection
* Bookmark “We are holding our own,” Steinbeck reading the introduction of Ma
* Notes on Ma
* Character chart for Ma (optional)
* Consider preparing students for this cumulative activity by giving the character chart for Ma an advanced organizer.

**Estimated Time**

* 1 class period to prep
* Estimate of 3-5 days for students to gather evidence and produce a final product.

**Procedures**

In Class:

* Consider preparing students for this cumulative activity by giving the character chart for Ma an advanced organizer.
* Warm up
  + Play “We are holding our own,” have students read along. Encourage them to listen only, not to take notes yet.
    - Play the clip a second time, this time students are to take notes on the characteristics of Ma.
  + With a partner or in a small group
    - Pair-share notes on Ma
    - Either from memory or by consulting their notes, students create a list of passages from the novel that reveal more about Ma.
* Pre-writing
  + Allow students the remainder of the class period to organize and pre-write.

Cumulative Assignment Options:

* Essay
  + Students write an essay centered around Ma. Sample topics:
    - Ma was the citadel of the family.
    - Ma was the most important, central character of the book.
    - Ma failed in her duty as the citadel.
    - Why Ma has no name – and does not need one.
    - Topic of the student’s choice, approved by teacher
* Film or Photo Essay
  + Students create a short film or a photo essay.
  + Objectives:
    - Describe Ma
    - Show her attributes
    - Detail Ma’s role in the family and the novel
    - Have a clear thesis just as if you were writing an essay.

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

* Takeaways
  + Ma can sometimes seem less important because much of the narrative focuses on Tom, Casy, and the conditions that the Joad family suffer through. This activity is meant to direct student attention to the importance of Ma.
* Post Activity
  + Consider the following activities:
    - Letters Home
    - Dignity
    - Betrayal
    - Epilogues
    - The Fambly
    - Characters
    - Identity Charts

**Extensions**

* Compare Ma to Mrs. Tifflin in *The Red Pony*. Neither character is given a name. Why?

**Assessment**

* Assess students on the clarity of their thesis and the strength of their contextual evidence.

**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