The Grapes of Wrath
QAR—Question/Answer Relationship

Purpose: To help students not only comprehend the text, but connect to the text. By answering the questions they should be able to make personal connections and understand the feelings of loss that Steinbeck is creating.

Rationale: This strategy helps the students understand what is going on in the Grapes of Wrath, helps them understand why Steinbeck writes about people generally and specifically, and helps the students understand how someone different than them would feel.

This activity deals with Chapter 9 of the Grapes of Wrath. Students should have already read the chapter by this point.

Step one: Have the students get into groups of two (preferably previously assigned) and answer the “right there questions.”

1. What kinds of items do the people leave behind?
2. What kinds of items do they take with them?
3. What factors go into making that decision?

Step two: Have the students draw a picture of one item that was taken and one that was left behind. Draw a line down the middle of the white board and assign one side to be taken, one to be left behind. Let the students put their pictures up on the board.

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Step 3: Once they have put their pictures up on the board, have them answer the “Think and Search Questions.”
   1. Besides physical items, what else was left behind when the families left? Personality characteristics, attributes, feelings, etc.
   2. What did they take with them?
   3. What was different in the way the men reacted to leaving their homes and the way the women reacted? Why was it different?

Step 4: Have the students draw parallels between the abstract ideas and the physical items. Let them come up and write an abstract word underneath the pictures up on the board. Tell them to be ready to explain how those to go together.
Ex: If there is a picture of a plow, the students may write: hard work. Explanation: The men were used to working hard. That was part of their identity. When they were forced out of their homes, they went to places where they didn’t have any work to do. They left their plows behind, and lost that part of themselves. Let the students share with the group.

Step 5: On Your Own Questions
   1. What are three items that you own that you feel describe your personality?
   2. What are three character traits that go with those items?
   3. If you lost these items, would you be a different person?
   4. If you were forced to move to a new location, do you think you would become a different person? Why or why not?
   5. Have you had an experience like this before?

Step 6: On a blank sheet of paper, have the students draw their three items and write the characteristics underneath. Have them write their names on their papers. Have them introduce themselves to two or three people they don’t know, by only explaining what items they picked.

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