Writing Assignment

The Grapes of Wrath

By John Steinbeck

Objective: To help students make connections to the novel by writing.

**Step 1:** Assign students to read the part of the novel where Grandpa dies and is buried.

**Step 2:** Discuss the different acts the family performed to pay respect. i.e. buried him, didn't leave a grave stone, wrote a note.

**Step 3:** Discuss traditions we have to pay respect to the dead. i.e Why do we bury people? Why do we have coffins? Why do we have grave stones? Why are people buried with items that they cared about?

**Step 4:** Discuss the note: Why did the Joads feel the need to leave a note? Why couldn’t they leave a gravestone?

**Step 5:** Have the students in small groups read through the note that the family leaves. What are the most important things included? Are there some parts that you find unnecessary? What would you write in a note for a loved one that died.

**Step 6:** As a class have students share opinions on the note. Why did the family leave a note?
Step 7: Students will draft two formal notes. One they will write about a family member, either pretending he or she has died, or someone who has already passed away. This should be a note that is worthy to be buried with the person.

The second note will be one they would like to have someone write about them.

**It would be fun to show the clip from Christmas Carol here where the beggars are dividing up Scrooge’s things.**

Step 8: This will be a Level 3 writing assignment (formal), even though it is relatively short. The students will need to draft, revise, and finalize their eulogies.

Step 9: Peer editing.

Step 10: Let the students be creative with the final draft. They can handwrite it on a sheet of brown paper, make it look old, or make it very formal.

Step 11: Reflect: What did you learn from this assignment? How do you look at that part of the novel differently? What helped you connect to the characters? What can you do in the future that will help you connect to the characters in a novel?
A Remembrance

Dear Students:

Now that you have analyzed Tom’s note, it is your turn to write your own. You will compose two notes:

1) A note for a family member. It can be someone living or someone who has passed on, but it should be something that you and your whole family would approve of burying with the person.
2) A note that you would like someone to write about you, if you were to die today.

You will be graded on creativity and content, although I do expect your final product to be error free.

Rough Draft due: ___________________________

Peer Editing due: __________________________

Final Draft due: __________________________

Your rough draft should be on a normal piece of paper, but feel free to be creative with your final draft. You can make it seem like an old document, make a very formal modern note that you would use today, or come up with one of your own ideas.