

AP English Language & Composition: Summer Assignments

Estimated Time: 5-7 Hours

Carefully read John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley* (available at the LBHS library). As you are reading, pay close attention to Steinbeck's informal writing style and shifts in tone involving his observations about Americans. You will have a reading test on the book during the first week of school.

Thoughtfully complete any **5 of the following 10 short answer questions**. Each response needs to be 4-10 sentences in length and should reveal thoughtful and original insight. You must submit a **HARD COPY** of your responses on the first day of school. If you are new to our school district, you are still required to complete this assignment. Be sure to **SAVE** an electronic copy of your short answer responses for submitting to **Turnitin.com** during the first week of class.

1. "And then I saw what I was to see so many times on the journey -- a look of longing" (25). Wanderlust is a strong desire for many of us during these summer months. However, the desire to be "anywhere" other than where one lives is something else entirely. Spell out what you feel Steinbeck's argument is about Americans and the urge to move.
2. Early on in Massachusetts, Steinbeck interacts with a man who is "one of very few contented people I met on my whole journey" (27). Look up the word contented in the dictionary. Reading into the text as a whole, what do you feel is Steinbeck's general message about how one obtains contentment in life? Provide textual evidence to support your opinion.
3. "And that's what I found all over the country -- no arguments, no discussion" (31). Steinbeck wrote this in 1960. To what extent do you feel his claim is still relevant in America today?
4. Reread the paragraph on page 47 beginning "I went back to my clean little room." In your mind, what specifically do you think Steinbeck is arguing here?
5. "I knew beyond all doubt that the dark things crowding in on me either did not exist or were not dangerous to me, and still I was afraid. I thought how terrible the nights must have been in a time when men knew the things were there and were deadly. But no, that's wrong. If I knew they were there, I would have weapons against them, charms, prayers, some kind of alliance with forces equally strong but on my side. Knowing they were not there made me defenseless against them and perhaps not afraid" (61). Analyze the nature of fear and rationality.
6. "We Americans bring in mercenaries to do our hard and humble work. I hope we may not be overwhelmed one day by peoples not too proud or too lazy or too soft to bend to the

earth and pick up the things we eat” (64). Proud, soft, lazy. Argue the extent to which you feel these characteristics are an actual threat to America’s future.

7. “The new American finds his challenge and his love in traffic-choked streets, skies nested in smog, choking with the acids of industry, the screech of rubber and houses leashed in against one another while the townlets wither a time and die” (72). Are “challenge” and “love” the right words here? Do you feel that Steinbeck’s claim about Americans is still applicable today? How and why?
8. “Just as our bread, mixed and baked, packaged and sold without benefit of accident or human frailty, is uniformly good and uniformly tasteless, so will our speech become one speech” (106). Argue the extent to which Steinbeck’s words are modern day prophecy.
9. “If anywhere in your travels you come on a man with guts, mark the place. I want to go see him. I haven’t seen anything but cowardice and expediency. This used to be a nation of giants. Where have they gone? You can’t defend a nation with a board of directors. That takes men. Where are they?” (168). Look up the word nostalgia. To what extent do you feel that the older one becomes the more one idealizes the past.
10. Steinbeck describes being filled with anticipation and expectation when he returns home to the California coast. Upon arriving at California’s redwoods, he “opened the back door and let Charley out and stood silently watching, for this could be dog’s dream of heaven in the highest” (190). Charley’s reaction then disappoints Steinbeck. Thoughtfully examine the nature of our expectations.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ETHICS POLICY

(Board Policy 5038)

Honesty and integrity are highly valued as part of both our PRIDE matrix and our expectations of all students at Laguna Beach High School. Rules and policies are designed to teach and reinforce those values during the course of a student’s high school experience. Each student is expected to do his or her own work, including the original creation of written assignments. Failure to do so is considered a violation of our Academic Integrity and Ethics Policy. Examples of violations include (but are not limited to): “working together” on an assignment and multiple students producing similar products, using information acquired online and not properly citing it, copying and pasting from online sources, and using text or ideas from another person with or without permission. In a first offense, the student or students involved receive an automatic “0” on the assignment, meet with the parents, teacher, and administrator to sign an Academic Integrity and Ethics Contract, and complete an assignment assigned by the assistant principal. All ethics violations are reported to the Faculty Committee of the Laguna Beach Scholarship Foundation and may appear in documents viewed by colleges and universities. See the Student Handbook on page 24 for further information about the consequences for an ethics violation.