

WILLIAMSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

WRITING HANDBOOK

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GUIDE TO PUNCTUATION

- 1. Comma:** Use a comma after (a) introductory words, phrases, or clauses and (b) words in a series; however, do not use commas to separate two items treated as a single unit within a series.

Ex. Before you leave, please wash all the dishes, pots, and pans. She ordered ham and eggs, toast, and coffee.
- 2. Comma:** Use a comma before short direct quotations.

Ex. She said, "If you try, you can reach your goal."
- 3. Comma:** Use a comma to set off (a) words which come together and refer to the same person, thing, or idea and (b) words of direct address.

Ex. John, the outgoing president, said, "Keep up the good work." I'll look forward, Gina, to seeing you at the meeting.
- 4. Comma:** Use a comma to set off nonrestrictive clauses (i.e., those not necessary to the meaning of the sentence); however, do not use commas with restrict clauses (i.e., those that are necessary to the meaning of the sentence).

Ex. The report, which you typed, was just great. The woman seated in the back row is my mother.
- 5. Comma:** Use a comma to separate the day from the year and the city from the state.

Ex. Jane Fonda gave the keynote address in Cincinnati, Ohio. October 12, 1492, is a special day in history.
- 6. Comma:** Use a comma to separate two or more parallel adjectives (i.e., adjectives that could be separated by the word "and" instead of the comma); however, do not use commas to form a single element with the noun they modify. Note: If "and" cannot replace the comma without creating a meaningless effect, the comma should not be used.

Ex. A happy, excited crowd cheered our team to victory. A dozen large red roses were delivered.
- 7. Comma:** Use a comma to separate (a) unrelated groups of

figures which come together and (b) whole number into groups of three digits each; however, policy, year, page, room, telephone, and most serial numbers are typed without commas.

- Ex. During 1980, 2,375 cars were insured under Policy 12-9064. Please call 825-2626 if you need information.
8. **Exclamation mark:** Use an exclamation mark after emphatic exclamations and after phrases or sentences that are clearly exclamatory.
- Ex. Gosh, that was a great game!
9. **Question mark:** Use a question mark at the end of a sentence that is a direct question; however, use a period after a request in the form of a question.
- Ex. How much typewriting have you had?
Will you please type this letter before you leave.
10. **Dash:** Use a dash (a) for emphasis, (b) to indicate an abrupt change of thought, (c) to introduce the name of an author or a reference when it follows a direct quotation, and (d) for other special purposes. Note: For the dash, type two hyphens without a space before, after, or between.
- Ex. The icy road--slippery as a fish--made driving hazardous. He was motivated by power--not freedom--in getting his way. "Hitting the wrong key is like hitting me."--Armour. "Well-er--ah," he stammered.
11. **Colon:** Use a colon to introduce and enumerate a listing.
- Ex. We need the following: a typewriter, a book, and paper.
12. **Colon:** Use a colon to introduce a question or a long direct quotation.
- Ex. This is the question: Did you study for the test?
13. **Colon:** Use a colon between hours and minutes expressed in figures.
- Ex. I plan to arrive at 1:30 p.m.

14. **Hyphen:** Use the hyphen to join compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine.
- Ex. The ages of the group ranged from twenty-three to seventy-six.
15. **Hyphen:** Use a hyphen to join compound adjectives preceding a noun they modify as a unit.
- Ex. The out-of-bounds catch stopped our first down drive.
16. **Hyphen:** Use a hyphen after each word or figure in a series of words or figures that modify the same noun (i.e., suspended hyphenation).
- Ex. Please check the rates on first-, second-, and third-class mail.
17. **Hyphen:** Use the hyphen, when necessary to divide words at ends of lines or to show the syllables of a word.
- Ex. The syllables of hallucination are hal-lu-ci-na-tion.
18. **Parenthesis:** Use parentheses to enclose parenthetical or explanatory matter and added information. (Commas or dashes may also be used.)
- Ex. Enclosed are the contracts (Exhibit A and B).
19. **Parenthesis:** Use parentheses to enclose figures that follow spelled-out amounts when added for clarity and emphasis.
- Ex. The note was for the sum of five hundred dollars (\$500).
20. **Parenthesis:** Use parentheses to enclose identifying letters or figures in lists.
- Ex. She stressed these two factors: (1) speed and (2) control.
21. **Parenthesis:** Use parentheses to enclose a name and date used as reference.
- Ex. Purposeful repetition helps build skill (Robinson et al., 1979).
22. **Underline:** Use the underline to indicate titles or books and names of magazines and newspapers. (Titles may also be

typed in ALL CAPS or put in *italics* without the underline.)

Ex. The book Learning How to Learn was reviewed in Harpers.

23. **Underline:** Use the underline (or use quotation marks) to call attention to special words or phrases. Note: Use a continuous underline unless each word is to be considered separately.

Ex. He misspelled steel, occur, and weird.

24. **Quotation marks:** Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotations. Note: When a question mark applies to the entire sentence, it is typed outside the quotation marks.

Ex. Jane asked, "When did you do this?"
Was it Emerson who said, "To have a friend is to be one"?

25. **Quotation marks:** Use quotation marks to enclose titles of articles, poems, songs, television programs, and unpublished works like dissertations and theses.

Ex. The musical "The Next Fifty Years" got rave reviews.
The children enjoyed watching the TV series "Star Trek."

26. **Quotation marks:** Use quotation marks to enclose special words or phrases for emphasis or coined words (i.e., words not in dictionary usage).

Ex. My problem is that I have "limited resources" and "unlimited wants."

27. **Quotation marks:** Use single quotation marks (i.e., the apostrophe) to indicate a quotation within a quotation.

Ex. He said, "We must take, as Frost suggests, the 'the road not taken.'"

28. **Semicolon:** Use a semicolon to separate two or more independent clauses in a compound sentence when the conjunction is omitted.

Ex. To be critical is easy; to be constructive is not easy.

29. **Semicolon:** Use a semicolon to separate independent clauses when they are joined by a conjunctive adverb (e.g.,

however, consequently, etc.).

Ex. They did not follow directions; consequently, they got lost.

30. **Semicolon:** Use a semicolon to separate a series of phrases or clauses (especially if they contain commas) that are introduced by a colon.

Ex. Our sales were: 1982, \$3,450,289; 1983, \$4,129,285.

31. **Semicolon:** Place the semicolon outside a closing quotation mark; the period is placed inside the quotation marks.

Ex. Mrs. Zane spoke on "Building Speed"; Mr. Paul spoke on "Accuracy."

32. **Apostrophe:** Use the apostrophe as a symbol for feet in billings or tabulations or as a symbol for minutes. (The quotation mark may be used as a symbol for inches or seconds.)

Ex. He ran the mile in 3'54". The room is 12'6" x 18'10".

33. **Apostrophe:** Use the apostrophe as a symbol to indicate the omission of letters or figures--as in contractions.

Ex. Each July 4th, we try to renew "The Spirit of '76."
Use the apostrophe on these contractions: isn't, can't, you'll, etc.

34. **Apostrophe:** Use the apostrophe and "s" to form the plural of most figures, letters, and words (e.g., 6's, A's, five's). In market quotations, form the plural of figures by the addition of "s" only.

Ex. Cross your t's and dot your i's. Sell United 6s this week.

35. **Apostrophe:** To show possession, add the apostrophe and "s" to (a) a singular noun and (b) a plural noun which does not end in "s."

Ex. The boy's bicycle was found, but the men's shoes were not.

36. **Apostrophe:** To show possession, add the apostrophe and "s" to a proper name of one syllable which ends in "s."

Ex. Please pay Jone's bill for \$574 today.

37. **Apostrophe:** To show possession, add only apostrophe after (a) plural nouns ending in "s" and (b) a proper name of more than one syllable which ends in "s" or "z."

Ex. The girls' counselor will visit the Adams' home.

38. **Apostrophe:** To indicate joint or common possession by two or more persons, add the apostrophe after the last noun in the series. Note: Separate possession by two or more persons is indicated by adding the possessive to each of the nouns (e.g., the manager's and the treasurer's reports).

Ex. I read about Lewis and Clark's expedition.
Phil's and Jean's bicycle were left at my aunt and uncle's home.

A GUIDE TO SPACING

1. Space once after , and ; used as marks of punctuation.
2. Space twice after . ending a sentence. Space once after . following an initial (e.g., J. W. Lee) or an abbreviation, but not after . within an abbreviation (e.g., The candidate has a Ph.D in education.).
3. Space once after ? within a sentence (e.g., Was it Al? or Dee?), and twice after ? at the end of a sentence (Is the meeting at ten o'clock? If so, please have coffee set up.).
4. Space twice after : used to introduce a list, an example, or a quotation (e.g., He said: "Return my call at 3 p.m."); do not space after : used to express time (e.g., (3:15 p.m.).
5. Do not space between a figure and \$, %, #, and /.
6. Do not space before or after - used to join words or a figure and a word--not before or after a dash (dash = two hyphens).
7. Do not space between () and the copy they enclose. Space once before the opening (and once after the closing) except if) is followed by a quotation or punctuation mark.
8. Do not space between ' and a preceding or following letter.
9. Do not space between the opening " and the copy it precedes, nor between the closing " and the copy that follows.
10. Do not space between & and the letters it joins (e.g., B&O Railroad); space once before and after & to join words (That letter is for Tom & Jane.).
11. Do not space between * and the copy that it precedes or follows.
12. Between a two-letter state name abbreviation and the ZIP Code, space twice (e.g., Dallas TX 75205-3382). This rule applies to textual copy as well as in addresses.

MLA CITATION GUIDE

This handout is designed to be a quick reference guide to the MLA style of documenting sources. The “Works Cited” section should appear at the end of the research paper with the works arranged alphabetically by the last name of the author (or first significant word of the title, if no author appears in the entry). List only those works actually cited in the paper in the “Works Cited.” Entries should all be double spaced. For further information about types of entries not found here, consult *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed.

Books

One Author

English, Carol. *The Cliffs Won't Do: Read the Book*. Philadelphia: McGraw-Hill, 1997. Print.

Multiple Citations by the Same Author

Small, Chris. *Don't Measure a Chemist by Her Size*. Topeka, KS: Rand, 1993. Print.

---. *Please Help Me Carry My Keys!* New York: Feminist, 1993. Print.

Two or Three Authors

Drucker, Darla, Mary Worth, and Amy Jones. *Surviving a Wedding*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001. Print.

More Than Three Authors

Lewis, Laurel J., et al. *Linear Systems Analysis*. New York: Knopf, 1997. Print.

Corporate Author

The Rockefeller Panel Reports. *Prospect for America*. New York: Doubleday, 1961. Print.

Editor

Valenza, Joyce, ed. *Bagels and More: An Anthology*. New York: Random House, 1991. Print.

More Than Three Editors

Pratt, Robert A., et al., eds. *Masters of British Literature*. Boston: Houghton, 1956. Print.

Edition Other Than the First

Peters, Michael. *Everything You Wanted to Know About a Neat Classroom*. 4th ed. Philadelphia: Lysol, 1995. Print.

Multivolume Series

Doyle, Arthur Conan. *The Oxford Sherlock Holmes*. Ed. Owen Dudley Edwards. 9 vols. New York: Oxford UP, 1993. Print.

One Volume of a Multivolume Series

Lawrence, D. H. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*. Ed. James T. Boulton. Vol. 8. New York: Cambridge UP, 2000. Print.

Churchill, Winston S. *The Age of Revolution*. New York: Dodd, 1957. Vol. 3 of *A History of English-Speaking Peoples*. Print. 4 vols. 1956-58.

Work in an Anthology

Morris, William. “The Haystack in the Floods.” *Nineteenth Century British Minor Poets*. Ed. Richard Wilbur and W. H. Auden. New York: Dell, 1965, 265-279. Print.

Reference Books

Signed Article

Wallis, Wilson D. “Superstition.” *World Book Encyclopedia*. 1970 ed. Print.

Unsigned Article

“Mandarin.” *The Encyclopedia Americana*. 1994 ed. Print.

Electronic Article

“Albatross.” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. CD-ROM. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992.

Magazines/Journals/Periodicals

Article in Journal (with continuous pagination)

Garrett, N. “Technology in the Services of Language Learning.” *Modern Language Journal* 75 (1991): 74-101. Print.

Article in Journal (with pagination per issue)

Mangen, Doreen. “Henry Casselli: Superb Contradictions.” *American Artist* 38.2 (1974): 39-43. Print.

Article in a Biweekly/Weekly Periodical

“Changing Way of Death.” *Time* 11 April 1969: 22. Print.

Hughes, Robert. “Futurism’s Farthest Frontier.” *Time* 9 July 1979: 9-10. Print.

Article in a Monthly/Bimonthly Periodical

Fallows, James. “The Early-Decision Racket.” *Atlantic Monthly* Sept. 2001: 37-52. Print.

Ramsey, Pamela. “Where’s My Smiley Face?” *Natural History* Sept.-Oct. 1997: 86-94. Print.

Newspapers

Goldberg, Grace. “The Insider Track.” *Chicago Defender* 10 Oct. 1971: 17. Print.

“Striking a Post with Sally Miles.” *New York Times* 15 Oct. 1987: C35. Print.

Television/Radio Program

“An Interview with Sadat.” *60 Minutes*. CBS. 11 Nov. 1979. Television.

“The Killing Fields.” *The Great War*. American Experience. PBS. WILL, Champaign. 8 Aug. 1995. Television.

The First American. Narr. Hugh Downs. Writ. and prod. Craig Fisher. NBC News Special. KNBC, Los Angeles. 21 Mar. 1968. Television.

Video/DVD/Film

It’s a Wonderful Life. Dir. Frank Capra. 1946. DVD. Republic, 2001.

Interview**Published Interview**

Hanks, Nancy. Chairperson, National Endowment of the Arts. Interview. *U.S. News & World Report* 7 Oct. 1974: 58-60. Print.

Personal/Telephone Interview

Page, Oscar. President, Austin Peavy State University. Personal interview. 5 Mar. 1991.

E-mail Interview

O’Donnell, Patricia. “Re: Interview Question.” Message to author. 15 Mar. 1991. E-mail.

Internet Citations—Websites

Author (if given). “Title of Webpage.” *Title of Website*. Publisher of Website (if not given, use N.p.), Date of Publication or Update (if not given, use N.d.). Medium (Web). Date of Access. <Internet Address (optional)>.

“City Profile: San Francisco.” *CNN.com*. Cable News Network, 2009. Web. 13 Aug. 2009.

Wald, Matthew L. “Study Details How U.S. Could Cut 28% of Greenhouse Gases.” *New York Times*. New York Times, 30 Nov. 2007. Web. 13 Aug. 2009.

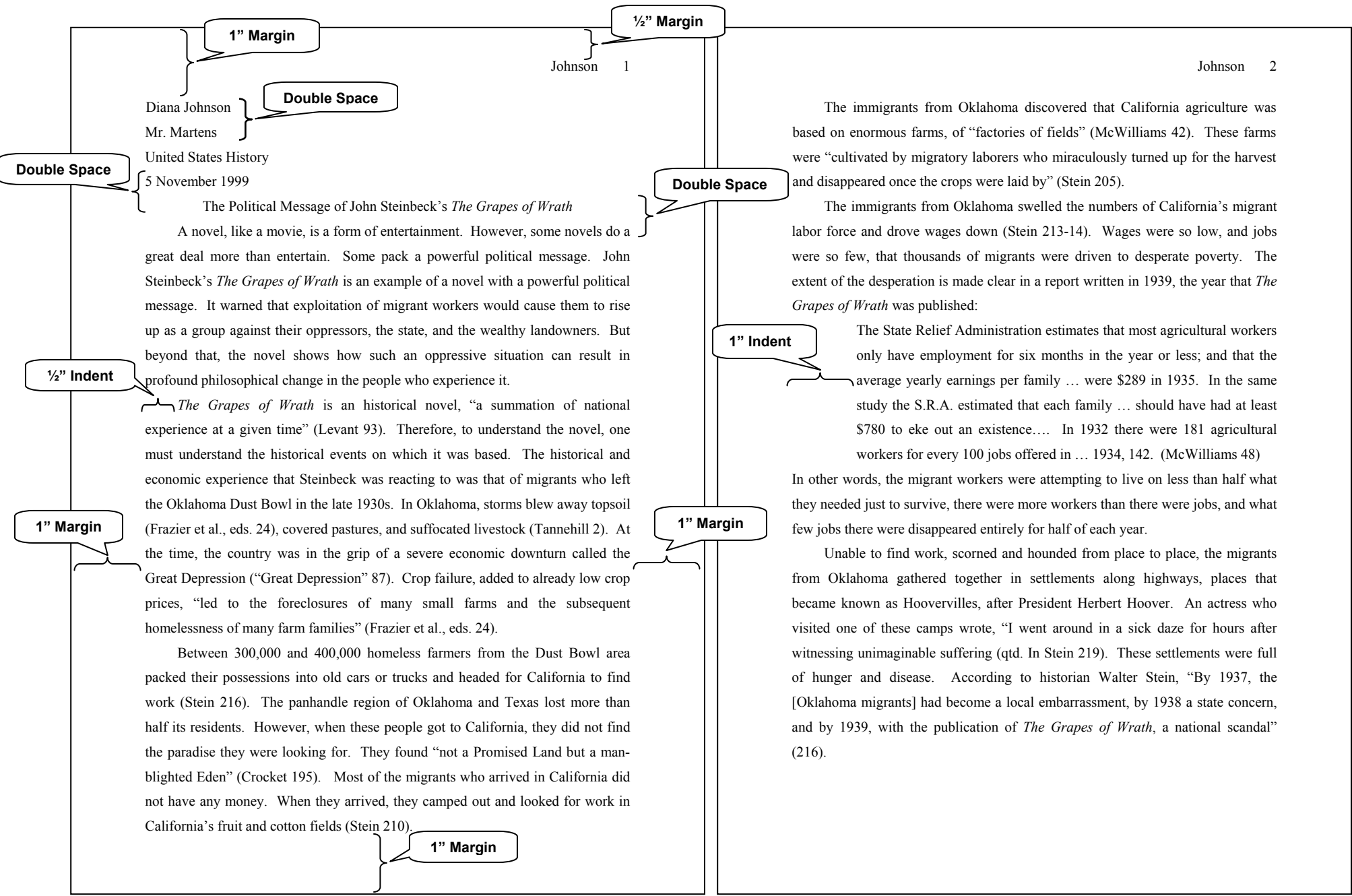
“What Is Cloning?” *Learn Genetics*. Genetic Science Learning Center, University of Utah, 12 Dec. 2008. Web. 13 Aug. 2009.

**Internet Citations—
Articles Found in Database
(FirstSearch, SIRS Knowledge Source, etc.)**

Full Citation of Article. Title of Database. Name of collection of databases. Medium (Web). Date of Access.

Lohr, Steve. “Now Playing: Babies in Cyberspace.” *Chicago Tribune* 3 Apr. 1998: C1+. *Article First*. First Search. Web. 12 Apr. 2003.

FORMATTING AN MLA DOCUMENT



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5 November 1999

The Political Message of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*

A novel, like a movie, is a form of entertainment. However, some novels do a great deal more than entertain. Some pack a powerful political message. John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* is an example of a novel with a powerful political message. It warned that exploitation of migrant workers would cause them to rise up as a group against their oppressors, the state, and the wealthy landowners. But beyond that, the novel shows how such an oppressive situation can result in profound philosophical change in the people who experience it.

The Grapes of Wrath is an historical novel, "a summation of national experience at a given time" (Levant 93). Therefore, to understand the novel, one must understand the historical events on which it was based. The historical and economic experience that Steinbeck was reacting to was that of migrants who left the Oklahoma Dust Bowl in the late 1930s. In Oklahoma, storms blew away topsoil (Frazier et al., eds. 24), covered pastures, and suffocated livestock (Tannehill 2). At the time, the country was in the grip of a severe economic downturn called the Great Depression ("Great Depression" 87). Crop failure, added to already low crop prices, "led to the foreclosures of many small farms and the subsequent homelessness of many farm families" (Frazier et al., eds. 24).

Between 300,000 and 400,000 homeless farmers from the Dust Bowl area packed their possessions into old cars or trucks and headed for California to find work (Stein 216). The panhandle region of Oklahoma and Texas lost more than half its residents. However, when these people got to California, they did not find the paradise they were looking for. They found "not a Promised Land but a man-blighted Eden" (Crocket 195). Most of the migrants who arrived in California did not have any money. When they arrived, they camped out and looked for work in California's fruit and cotton fields (Stein 210).

The immigrants from Oklahoma discovered that California agriculture was based on enormous farms, of "factories of fields" (McWilliams 42). These farms were "cultivated by migratory laborers who miraculously turned up for the harvest and disappeared once the crops were laid by" (Stein 205).

The immigrants from Oklahoma swelled the numbers of California's migrant labor force and drove wages down (Stein 213-14). Wages were so low, and jobs were so few, that thousands of migrants were driven to desperate poverty. The extent of the desperation is made clear in a report written in 1939, the year that *The Grapes of Wrath* was published:

The State Relief Administration estimates that most agricultural workers only have employment for six months in the year or less; and that the average yearly earnings per family ... were \$289 in 1935. In the same study the S.R.A. estimated that each family ... should have had at least \$780 to eke out an existence.... In 1932 there were 181 agricultural workers for every 100 jobs offered in ... 1934, 142. (McWilliams 48)

In other words, the migrant workers were attempting to live on less than half what they needed just to survive, there were more workers than there were jobs, and what few jobs there were disappeared entirely for half of each year.

Unable to find work, scorned and hounded from place to place, the migrants from Oklahoma gathered together in settlements along highways, places that became known as Hoovervilles, after President Herbert Hoover. An actress who visited one of these camps wrote, "I went around in a sick daze for hours after witnessing unimaginable suffering (qtd. In Stein 219). These settlements were full of hunger and disease. According to historian Walter Stein, "By 1937, the [Oklahoma migrants] had become a local embarrassment, by 1938 a state concern, and by 1939, with the publication of *The Grapes of Wrath*, a national scandal" (216).

