

**BMI**

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Literature Study Guide and Student  
Workbook

John Steinbeck's

*The Pearl*

*By*

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Created for Teachers by Teachers

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## Table of Contents

Objectives	3
Note to Teachers	4
About the Author Worksheet	5
Vocabulary Worksheets	6
Characters Worksheets	8
Study Questions Worksheets	9
Literary Analysis Questions	19
Writing Assignments	22
Vocabulary with Definitions	25
Characters Worksheet Answer Guide	27
Study Questions Answer Guide	29
Vocabulary Crossword Games	39
Vocabulary Word Search Games	45
Vocabulary Matching	51
Unit Test	63
Unit Test Answer Key	70
Graphic Organizers	71

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## STUDY GUIDE OBJECTIVES

### Rationale:

The reality of today's educational world is that students need to be prepared to be successful on state standardized tests. Traditional test preparation has been to use previous tests as practice exercises. For those who relish in the teaching of writing and literature, time for standardized test preparation might be better spent with exercises linked to the literature units. In this way, the literary work is analyzed in depth, critical thinking skills are enhanced, and the students are linking the literature units with the types of tasks they will be required to perform on state tests.

### Objectives:

After working through this study guide, students will be able to:

- demonstrate critical thinking skills through interpreting a literary work beyond general plot line.
- show an understanding of the writer's craft through the analysis of literary devices.
- increase vocabulary skills to enhance performance on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).
- demonstrate thorough knowledge of the literary work through a unit test comprised of:
  - utilizing vocabulary words in sentences
  - matching vocabulary words to their definitions
  - matching character names to brief character statements/sketches
  - multiple choice questions
  - a thoughtful essay
- recognize cross curriculum connections through the writing assignments.
- demonstrate proficiency in preparing writing assignments based on state standardized tests such as:
  - **reading and writing for critical analysis:** students are presented with a quotation (critical lens) and the students must show how the literary work supports the main idea of the quotation.
  - **reading and writing for information and understanding:** students will research a topic linked to the novel and perform a writing task linked to their research.
  - **reading and writing for information and understanding:** students will perform a writing task in which they will use quotes from the text as evidence to support a position.

## ***The Pearl***

### **Note to Teachers**

#### **About the Author**

The About the Author Worksheet can be used to gather general information about the author. This may be reviewed in a class discussion or for the basis of a writing assignment.

Author information available at: <http://www.notablebiographies.com/Sc-St/Steinbeck-John.html>

#### **Vocabulary**

A list of vocabulary words has been selected to improve students' vocabulary and understanding of the text. A Vocabulary Worksheet lists the vocabulary words by chapter and/or reading assignment. Students may complete the worksheet or you can provide them with the definitions prior to the reading assignment. Each chapter and/or reading assignment has a Vocabulary Matching Test. These may be used to quiz students or done as a class to review the vocabulary. Crossword and Word Search games have been included for additional vocabulary work.

#### **Study Questions**

The study questions are both text-based and inference questions. Students can find the text-based answers in the text, but careful reading must be applied for inferences. Reviewing the study questions as a class will ensure students have the correct answers, while hearing different points of view in response to the inference questions.

#### **Literary Analysis Questions**

These questions are designed to analyze the author's use of literary devices and his/her particular writing style in the work. These questions are essential in preparation for some of the state standardized tests administered across the country.

#### **Written Assessments**

The writing assignments are patterned after many of the state standardized tests across the country. These may be used as practice tasks in an effort to prepare students for these state tests as well as to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the individual work explored in this study guide. Some of these assessments include cross-curricular topics, which allow for enrichment in a holistic approach.

As a collection, these writing assignments lead students to explore various approaches to literary analysis. Furthermore, students may reflect their comprehension and understanding through original compositions.

#### **Tests**

The Unit Test includes: Cumulative Vocabulary, Vocabulary Matching, Character Matching, Multiple Choice, and Essay.

#### **Other Topics**

Listed below are topics related to the novel. These may be used for individual or group projects or additional writing assignments.

- Pearl hunting or pearl diving
- La Paz, Mexico
- Father Eusebio Francisco Kino

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Full Name:

Date and Place of Birth:

Date and Place of Death:

Educational Background:

Family Life:

Describe a significant historical event or personal experience that occurred during the author's life that may have had an influence upon his writing.

Interesting Facts and Other Works:

*The Pearl*  
**Vocabulary Worksheet**

**Chapter One:**

alms - \_\_\_\_\_  
avarice - \_\_\_\_\_  
bougainvillaea - \_\_\_\_\_  
covey - \_\_\_\_\_  
dank - \_\_\_\_\_  
fainted - \_\_\_\_\_  
indigent - \_\_\_\_\_  
plaintively - \_\_\_\_\_  
pulque - \_\_\_\_\_  
strenuous - \_\_\_\_\_  
suppliant - \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter Two:**

bulwark - \_\_\_\_\_  
deftly - \_\_\_\_\_  
estuary - \_\_\_\_\_  
incandescence - \_\_\_\_\_  
perceptible - \_\_\_\_\_  
poultice - \_\_\_\_\_  
reluctant - \_\_\_\_\_  
speculatively - \_\_\_\_\_  
undulating - \_\_\_\_\_  
unsubstantial - \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter Three:**

benediction - \_\_\_\_\_  
consecrated - \_\_\_\_\_  
cozened - \_\_\_\_\_  
distillate - \_\_\_\_\_  
disparagement - \_\_\_\_\_  
essence - \_\_\_\_\_  
judicious - \_\_\_\_\_  
lucence - \_\_\_\_\_  
precipitated - \_\_\_\_\_  
semblance - \_\_\_\_\_  
subjugation - \_\_\_\_\_  
transfigured - \_\_\_\_\_

***The Pearl***  
**Study Questions**

**Preface:**

1. What insight does Steinbeck provide in the preface?
  
2. What is a parable? Why might Steinbeck have chosen this genre for this story?

**Note to students:** Be sure to read the entire chapter before completing the study questions. Use the **Characters Worksheet** to identify and characterize the key characters in the novel. Be sure to identify who you believe to be the protagonist and the antagonist of the story. Include how you believe the characters relate to and affect the plot of the story.

**Chapter One:**

1. How would you characterize Kino and Juana's relationship? Provide evidence from the text to support your answer.
  
2. Compare and contrast Kino's village and the city. What is the relationship between Kino's people and the people who live in the city?
  
3. What is Juana's reaction when she sees the scorpion move down the rope toward Coyotito? Why is this significant to the understanding of changes in the native culture of Kino's village?
  
4. After the scorpion stings Coyotito what does Juana say that surprises Kino? Why does this surprise Kino? What does he do?

***The Pearl* Chapter One page 2**

5. How do Juana and Kino's neighbors react to the situation? What does this tell the reader about the community in which Kino lives?
  
6. Why do the church beggars join the procession to the doctor's home?
  
7. Why does the doctor refuse to treat Coyotito?
  
8. In a work of literature, a motif is an idea or theme that is repeated throughout the story. Identify the motif in Chapter One and explain how it relates to the story.

## ***The Pearl Chapter Two:***

1. What is the one thing of value to Kino? Why?
2. What is Coyotito's condition when Juana places the seaweed poultice on the scorpion sting?
3. How might the first quote relate to the second?  
**"Thus it might be that the people of the Gulf trust things of the spirit and things of the imagination, but they do not trust their eyes to show them distance or clear outline or an optical exactness."**  
**"She had not prayed directly for the recovery of the baby—she prayed that they might find a pearl with which to hire the doctor to cure the baby, for the minds of people are as unsubstantial as the mirage of the Gulf."**
4. The first quote is associated with Kino as he collects the oysters, while the second quote is associated with Juana when she sees the excitement on his face when he returns to the boat with his catch. What do these quotes reveal about Kino's and Juana's characters?  
**". . . , and this was the Song of the Pearl That Might Be, for every shell thrown in the basket might contain a pearl. Chance was against it, but luck and the gods might be for it."**  
**"It is not good to want a thing too much. It sometimes drives the luck away. You must want it just enough, and you must be very tactful with God or the gods."**
5. After finding the pearl, Juana and Kino see that Coyotito is improving. Describe Kino's reaction and explain why you believe he reacted this way.

### ***The Pearl Chapter Three:***

1. How does Steinbeck describe the town? Why is this significant? What literary device does Steinbeck use to describe the town?
2. What is the overall reaction of the townspeople to the news of Kino's pearl? Provide specific examples from the text to support your answer.
3. While Kino and Juana sit with their family and friends, Juan Tomás asks, "What will you do now that you have become a rich man?" How does Kino respond? What frightens Kino as he talks about the future the pearl will provide?
4. How would Kino finding the pearl affect time and the future of his village?
5. What comes to Kino's mind when the priest enters his home?
6. What does Kino realize as he is standing outside his hut listening to Juana preparing their dinner?
7. What is Kino's reaction when the doctor arrives to treat Coyotito? Explain. Why does Kino allow the doctor in to see Coyotito?
8. Coyotito's physical condition has improved, however, an hour after the doctor leaves he becomes seriously ill. What could have caused the sudden change?

***The Pearl* Chapter Three** page 2

9. What ploy does the doctor use to find the location of the pearl?

10. Why does Juana become so upset that she insists the pearl must be destroyed?

11. How does Kino feel about the pearl?