

Grapes of wrath



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Grapes of Wrath Essay A symbol is an object, action or event that represents something or that creates a range of associations beyond itself. In The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck, there are many things that are used for symbolism and some of these things are the animals that are explained throughout the book. During the setting there is a depression where people are getting kicked out of their homes, losing their jobs and having to pick up everything and move to the west in hopes of a better life.

However the journey is not what they imagined it to be and some things that help show that are the turtle that symbolizes the journey, the old family cat who symbolizes the change and the Goads dog who symbolizes the toughness. The turtle comes into play very early in the book when he is described to be struggling to cross a road and then he appears a little later in the book walking down a dirt road where Tom Goad finds him. The turtle is nearly run over twice while crossing the road, but this does not deter him and he keeps going unlike many animals would.

The second time the turtle appears Tom Goad picks the turtle up, wraps it in his jacket and continues on down the road. The turtle tries in vain to escape his captor and gets away successfully a couple of times before Tom picks him back up. But every time the turtle escapes he continues in the same direction he was going. The turtle is very stubborn and determined in his ways, much like the Goad family and other migrant worker families who persevere even after being kicked off of their farms, cheated by people in positions of power and fall into sickness.

They keep going along the road overcoming so many things and even through all the hardships they press on. The turtle overcomes these challenges too and yet he also keeps going right on course much like the Goad family. Another one of the animals is the old family cat that Tom Goad sees wandering around the abandoned family farm. The cat relates to all the migrant families, including the loads, because they all have been kicked out of their homes.

The cat now must live in the wild and fend for himself with no one to care for him. He has been transformed because of this, from a simple domestic cat to a wild animal. This goes right along with what has happened to the Goads because without a home to live in and without much food or money to buy food they most certainly have to fend for themselves and become a rougher, meaner and tougher person than they were before. It has changed them and it is not certainly completely a good thing.

The final animal that symbolizes part of the novel is the Goads dog. It is not as much his life that symbolizes anything, but his death and the way he died. The Goads were taking their dog with them on their Journey west, but the dog tragically died near the beginning of their Journey when they briefly stopped to get a drink of water for themselves and for the car. The dog wandered out onto the side of the road and was brutally run over by a speeding car that did not even stop to see what they had hit.

All of this symbolizes the gruesome circumstances that lie ahead for the loads, and the tough, unrelenting life that awaits them. Times are hard, and people are so desperate and angry that they will not hesitate to run over a

dog, which clearly shows they would not hesitate to ruin a family's life either. This literary element of symbolism is very important to the work as a whole cause it adds depth to the story and makes it seem more real.

Without this literary element the book, *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, would not be the same as it is. For starters chapter three would not exist at all, the author probably wouldn't have had to make the dog die, at least not so horribly, and the Goads cat probably wouldn't have still been hanging around their old home maybe he would have moved with them or somewhere else. Overall without this literary element, symbolism, and all the other literary elements, books would not be the same.