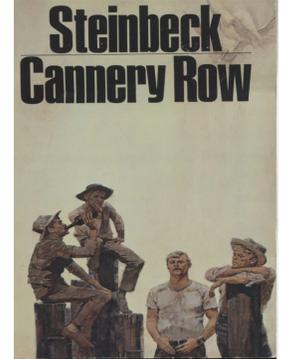


Building Community on *Cannery Row*

*Read * Respond * Discuss * Interpret * Reflect * Analyze * Celebrate*

Part of the lingering magic of the 2022 Steinbeck Institute is that everyone involved--including participants and, it seems, instructors--achieved a cohesive community, one characterized by genuine curiosity, the willingness to consider multiple perspectives, an effective and inclusive balance of voices, and abundant helpings of humor. As an extension, I will provide the structures for a similarly meaningful and enjoyable experience in my AP Literature classes this fall, and I plan to recycle several strategies from this summer's study.



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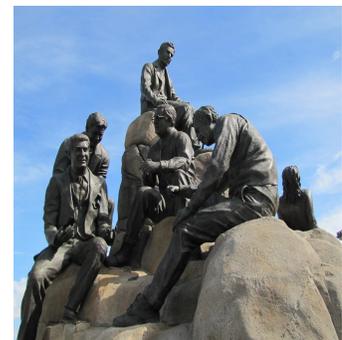
Introductory Elements

- Provide students with an overview of the following elements:
 - Author's bio.
 - Author's friendship with Ed Ricketts
 - Amplification of Rickett's contributions to science
 - Amplification of Rickett's lab/business
 - Teleology vs. non teleology
 - Setting of *CR*, time and place
 - Metaphorical conceit: Community like a tidepool



Active Reading Strategies--Journals and Discussions

- As students read, they will
 - keep a reading journal, offering one response per chapter and rotating through the following prompts (or others we may add):
 - Which characters, ideas, and actions does Steinbeck seem to celebrate and which does he criticize?
 - What idea(s) encountered in the chapter provoked thought? Unpack your thinking.
 - What sentence, image, description, or word caught your attention. Explore why.
- Students will also record at least two discussion questions per entry.
- Students will discuss readings in both small and large groups, using student-generated questions to fuel conversations--and build community.



Assessments:

- **Pastiche 1, Ch. 1:**  **Cannery Row Pastiche 1, Ch. 1**

- Read Chapter 1 aloud in small groups
- Reread and annotate first two paragraphs while attending to these guiding questions:
 - What descriptors do you find especially meaningful, vivid, shocking, etc.?
 - Which images are most evocative and why?
 - Which passages best convey the author's tone--his attitude/feelings towards the place and the people who populate it?
 - Where are you confused/left with questions?
- In response students will compose a pastiche that imitates Steinbeck's style in describing a place that is significant to students.
- In small groups (3-4), students will read and respond to one another's writing. Each student will read their work aloud, then students will pass copies around so that each group member can identify a particular passage they find especially meaningful and/or well written; each will identify the passage, then write the author a note in the margin to celebrate what was done especially well, thereby building community.
- All will be published to class's Google Classroom

- **Theatrical Interpretations**

Post-reading, students will be organized into small (3 person +/-), theatrical production groups to perform 2-3 minute interpretations of select scenes, e.g. the negotiations between Mack and Lee Chong (pp. 14-15), the tide-pool conversation between Doc and Hazel in Ch. 6, the portrait of the Malloy's in Ch. 8, etc. Students will propose passages for approval and will have a single class period to assemble a script, practice script with acting, blocking, and all things theatrical: perhaps adding costumes, lighting, props, and more.

- 2-3 minute productions will be presented chronologically, thereby creating another "reading" of the novel.
- After each presentation, audience members will respond to presenters with comments/questions about interpretive choices.
- After all presentations, class will discuss how "theatricalizing" the text helped them to see features more clearly, i.e. perhaps offering a new understanding of character or perhaps amplifying a conflict or thematic concern.
- Community!

- **Pastiche 2, Post-Reading:**  **Cannery Row Pastiche 2, Post**

- Students will add a short chapter or vignette to the novel. They will
 - endeavor to shed light on both a character(s) and a thematic concern
 - align added chapter with the plot, characters, and tone of *CR*, all while emulating Steinbeck's style.
 - Again, writers will share with groups--new groups--and comment on one another's writing. More community development.
 - All will be published to class's Google Classroom

- **Essay:**  **Cannery Row Final Analytical Essay**

As a final assessment, students will compose a short essay focusing on a single feature of the novel--a sentence, a motif, an image, a use of figurative language, an apt description, a syntactical choice, etc.--and their objective will be to explain how selected feature functions within the work as a whole. Put differently, students will explore how a single element is essential to the meaning of the work as a whole, like how each life form in a tide pool contributes to the community in unique, essential ways .

- Again, students will have the opportunity to offer feedback to one another.
- Again, essays (with permission) will be published to Google Classroom.
- Again, community.

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This unit offers the following benefits as a first, community-building text in AP Lit:

- It features an accessible, yet layered text--one that yields more meaning with closer reading, like all titles selected for the course.
- It asks students to consider foundational questions that will fuel our studies throughout the year, including the importance of setting, characterization, and point of view. Additionally, it establishes our "social criticism lens," one that is applied throughout the year, by examining which ideologies are reinforced and which are criticized.
- It requires students to flex their creative muscles while sustaining firm connections with the novel.
- It weaves in many community-building opportunities--from small group work to entire class discussions, from celebratory critiques to theater.
- It establishes a focus on analysis by amplifying the interconnectedness of elements of the text, and it offers a choice-driven essay opportunity, which will set the stage for the analytical essays to follow.