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SYNOPSIS

The Gift: At daybreak in Salinas, California, rancher Carl Tiffin takes six milk cows to the butcher. After breakfast, ten-year-old Jody leaves for school and returns at 4:00. At dark, Carl returns. After breakfast the next day, Carl takes Jody to the barn to see the red pony he bought at a sheriff's auction. Jody names his pet Gabilan.

Billy Buck, a hired man, helps Jody train Gabilan. He predicts that the boy can ride the pony by Thanksgiving, which is three weeks away. During a break in a week of steady rain, Jody leaves the pony in the corral. By the time he returns from school, the rain has returned. He dries Gabilan; after supper, Billy covers him with a cotton comforter. By Friday morning, Gabilan sickens with strangles. When Jody returns from school, he finds Gabilan worse.

Concerned that Gabilan will die of pneumonia, Jody sleeps in the barn the next night. During the night, the door blows open and the pony wanders out. Jody tracks the dying pony and locates it, still alive and surrounded by buzzards. After Gabilan dies, Jody kills a buzzard. Carl chastises Jody for killing the buzzard, which was not responsible for Gabilan's death. Billy, interrupting Carl's lecture, comprehends Jody's anger and frustration, lifts the boy in his arms to carry him home, and rebukes Carl for his insensitivity.

The Great Mountains: In midsummer, Jody contemplates the mysterious mountains to the west, which contrast the friendly Gabilan Mountains to the east. To his questions about the region, Carl states, "There's nothing there." In the distance, Joey spies Gitano, an old peasant laborer, who walks from Monterey to the Tiffin ranch to die because he and his father were born in an adobe hut that once stood nearby.

Carl claims he can't afford to support Gitano. Carl allows him to stay the night in the bunkhouse, but tells him that he must leave after breakfast. Jody, fascinated by the old man, questions him about the western mountains. The old man recalls making a journey there in boyhood, but has nothing to add about the trip.

That evening, the old man is drawn to Easter, Carl's 30-year-old horse. That night, Jody follows Gitano to the bunkhouse. The boy is drawn to Gitano's gold-hilted rapier, a relic of the days of the conquistadores. Jody associates the old man with the mysteries of the western mountains.

The next morning, Gitano is gone. Jess Taylor, a neighbor, reports seeing the old paisano riding on Easter through the brush toward the great mountains and assumes that the horse is stolen. Carl decides that Gitano has saved him the trouble of burying the decrepit horse. The image of Gitano, bearing his rapier and riding off to his death, fills Jody with a "nameless sorrow."

The Promise: Carl, remembering how well Jody took care of the red pony, offers him a chance to raise a colt. Carl advances a five dollar stud fee for Jess Taylor's stallion, Sundog, to breed the Tiffins' mare, Nellie, if Jody agrees to work off the debt during the summer.

The next morning, Jody leads Nellie to Jess Taylor's ranch. Three months later, Jody seeks evidence that Nellie will foal. Billy explains that five more months must pass before Nellie will begin to show signs of pregnancy and then another three months before her colt is born. Even then, it will be two more years of waiting before Jody can ride the colt.

Billy adds that sometimes a colt is formed in the wrong position and must be destroyed to save the mare. Remembering the fate of the red pony, he promises Jody that nothing will happen to Nellie's colt, but he notes that other emergencies might endanger the horse. He concludes, "I'll do everything I know, but I won't promise anything."

Nellie does not go into labor until February 2. She strains to deliver a colt that is positioned wrong. Because the colt cannot be turned, Billy realizes that he should destroy it, but he opts to keep his promise to Jody. He kills Nellie and rips open her abdomen to save the colt. Jody tries to concentrate on the joy of the birth, but cannot stop thinking of the sacrifice Billy has made.

The Leader of the People: On a Saturday in March, Jody, who is bored, plans to ask Carl's permission to hunt mice in the haystack. Carl delivers a letter to his mother, Ruth, from her father stating that he will be arriving that day for a two-week visit. Although Jody is pleased, Carl is annoyed because he is tired of listening to Grandfather's repetitious stories about Indians and crossing the plains to the Old West.

Jody loves the stories, even though he has heard them repeatedly. In his eyes, Grandfather is a hero because he once led a wagon train across the plains to California. At dinner, Carl is short-tempered and cynical with the old man, who regales the group with his memories.

Before Grandfather arrives for breakfast, Carl criticizes his stories. Grandfather overhears the remarks, for which Carl apologizes. Grandfather perceives himself as an aged bore. To demonstrate his compassion for his grandfather, Jody makes him a glass of lemonade. Ruth admires her son's empathy.

Junius Maltby: Junius Maltby worked as a clerk in the decade following his father's bankruptcy and death. Soon after his thirty-fifth birthday, he faints at his boarding house. The doctor recommends recuperating away from San Francisco in a drier climate. Junius goes to Pastures of Heaven and boards with Mamie, a Quaker widow. Over 1910, he recovers.

The next year, Junius marries Mamie and settles contentedly on her farm. She dismisses her hired man and tries to

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get Junius to work. By 1917, the couple and their two sons are poor. That year, the flu epidemic strikes during her third pregnancy. Her sons die; she too dies in labor with an infant son. A neighbor curses Junius for reading when he should be helping. She leaves him with his baby in his arms.

Junius becomes the butt of local jokes. He buys a male goat to provide milk for the boy, named Robert Louis. He hires a German man, Jakob Stutz, to help and fails to supervise him. Robbie Maltby grows up as a companion to the two lazy adults. The neighbors disapprove of the family's poverty and squalor.

When Robbie fails to enter school after his sixth birthday, John Whiteside, the school board clerk, notifies Junius. The other children intend to torment Robbie when he arrives at school, but they only stare at him. The younger boys cluster about Robbie and listen to his stories and readings from *Treasure Island*. His teacher, Miss Morgan, admires his learning.

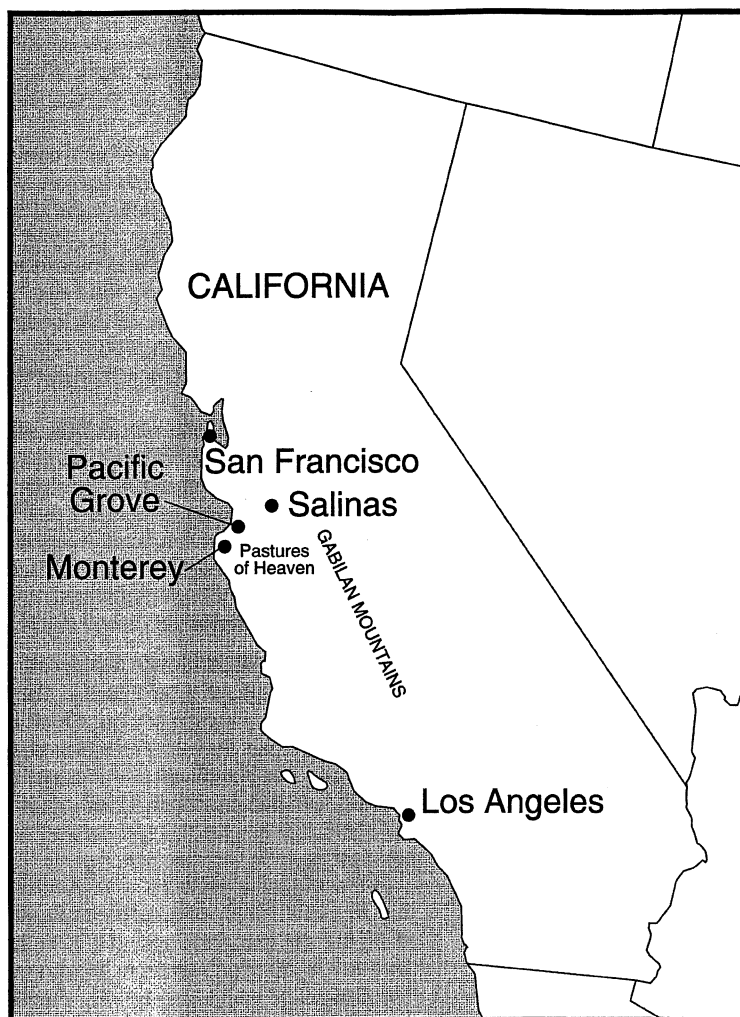
When Robbie wearies of games, he forms the Boys' Auxiliary Secret Service for Espionage Against the Japanese. His company spies on Takashi Kato, whose father fires a shot into the dark at the sight of a white face at the window. The group names Takashi their interpreter and includes him in group activities.

One Saturday in December, Miss Morgan calls on Junius at his place in Gato Amarillo canyon. She is startled to see Junius and Jakob acting out an auto-da-fé. She joins in the make believe. On December 20, as Miss Morgan awaits the bus to Los Angeles for Christmas vacation, she sees Junius and Robbie, who are traveling to San Francisco. Junius intends to get a job in accounting to rescue his son from poverty.

TIME LINE

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|---------|---|--|--|
| 1902 | Feb. 27 Steinbeck is born in Salinas, California. | | |
| 1914 | The Federal Reserve System is created to prevent panics. | | |
| 1917-19 | Worldwide influenza epidemic kills 50 million, including 500,000 in the United States. | | |
| 1919 | spring Steinbeck graduates from Salinas High School. | | |
| | fall Steinbeck enters Stanford University. | | |
| 1920 | America enjoys a post-World War I prosperity, except for agriculture, which is in decline. | | |
| 1925 | spring Steinbeck leaves Stanford and moves to New York City to become a journalist. | | |
| 1926 | fall Steinbeck gives up on newspaper work and returns to California. | | |
| 1928 | The construction boom ends. | | |
| 1929 | Steinbeck publishes <i>Cup of Gold</i> . | | |
| | October The stock market crashes. | | |
| 1930 | Steinbeck marries Carol Henning and moves to Pacific Grove. | | |
| 1931 | The international monetary system is in crisis. Deflation leads to bank failures throughout Europe. | | |
| 1933 | March Franklin D. Roosevelt becomes president. | | |
| | November Steinbeck publishes <i>The Red Pony</i> in the <i>North American Review</i> . | | |
| 1934 | Steinbeck publishes "The Murder" and wins an O. Henry prize, the first of three. | | |
| 1935 | Steinbeck publishes <i>Tortilla Flat</i> . | | |
| | The Wagner Act encourages unions. The Social Security Act creates retirement pensions and unemployment insurance. | | |
| 1936 | Steinbeck publishes <i>In Dubious Battle</i> . | | |
| | May Steinbeck publishes "The Harvest Gypsies" in the <i>San Francisco News</i> . | | |
| 1937 | February Steinbeck publishes <i>Of Mice and Men</i> . | | |
| | August Steinbeck goes west with migrant Okies to gather material for <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> . | | |
| | November Music Box Theatre produces a stage version of <i>Of Mice and Men</i> . | | |
| 1939 | <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> is published. <i>Of Mice and Men</i> is made into a movie. | | |
| 1940 | Steinbeck wins a Pulitzer Prize for <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> . | | |
| March | Steinbeck and Ed Ricketts study marine invertebrates in the Gulf of California. | | |
| | Steinbeck goes to Mexico to make a documentary film, <i>The Forgotten Village</i> . | | |
| 1941 | Steinbeck publishes <i>Sea of Cortez</i> . | | |
| | May 27 President Roosevelt declares an unlimited state of emergency. | | |
| | Aug. 3 Gasoline rationing begins. | | |
| | Dec. 7 Japanese planes bomb Pearl Harbor. | | |
| | Dec. 8 The United States declares war on Japan. | | |
| | Dec. 11 Germany and Italy declare war on the United States. | | |
| 1942 | Steinbeck publishes <i>The Moon Is Down</i> and <i>Bombs Away</i> . | | |
| | <i>Tortilla Flat</i> is filmed. | | |
| 1943 | March Steinbeck marries Gwendolyn Conger and moves to New York. | | |
| | June Steinbeck spends six months in Europe covering the war for the <i>Herald Tribune</i> . | | |
| 1944 | Steinbeck writes <i>Lifeboat</i> , an Alfred Hitchcock film. | | |
| | December <i>Cannery Row</i> is published. | | |
| 1945 | <i>The Red Pony</i> is expanded to four chapters. "The Pearl of the World" appears in the <i>Woman's Home Companion</i> . | | |
| | May 7 Germany surrenders to the Western Allies at Rheims. | | |
| | Aug. 6 The United States drops an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. | | |
| | Aug. 9 A second atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki. | | |
| | Aug. 14 Japan surrenders. | | |
| 1947 | <i>The Wayward Bus</i> and <i>The Pearl</i> are published. | | |
| 1948 | Steinbeck is elected to the American Academy of Letters. | | |
| | Steinbeck writes the screenplay of <i>The Pearl</i> . | | |
| 1950 | December Steinbeck marries his third wife, Elaine Scott. | | |
| 1952 | <i>East of Eden</i> is published. | | |
| | Steinbeck writes the screenplay for <i>Viva Zapata!</i> ; he receives an Academy Award nomination. | | |
| 1954 | Steinbeck publishes <i>Sweet Thursday</i> . | | |
| 1955 | <i>East of Eden</i> is filmed. | | |
| 1957 | Steinbeck publishes <i>The Short Reign of Pippin IV</i> . <i>The Wayward Bus</i> is filmed. | | |
| 1958 | <i>Once There Was a War</i> is published. | | |
| 1961 | Steinbeck publishes <i>The Winter of Our Discontent</i> and <i>America and Americans</i> . | | |
| 1962 | December Steinbeck journeys to Stockholm, Sweden, to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. | | |

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1968 Dec. 20 Steinbeck dies of heart disease in his New York home.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born on February 27, 1902, in Salinas, California, John Ernst Steinbeck published his first fiction in 1929 and continued writing short stories, screenplays, essays, speeches, and novels until his death from heart disease on December 20, 1968. The son of John Ernst Steinbeck, Sr., a county magistrate, and teacher Olive Hamilton Steinbeck, he read widely, attended school in Salinas, played sports, wrote for the school paper, and worked each summer on ranches in the valley. He enrolled as an English major at Stanford University at Palo Alto, pursued a degree in marine biology, then left without a diploma in 1925. While trying to launch a career as a journalist, he lived for a time in New York City, but returned to California. His friendship with biologist Ed Ricketts blossomed into a partnership, which led Steinbeck to explore the Baja peninsula.

Through realistic fiction, Steinbeck stirred controversy by emphasizing the exploitation of illiterate workers by land owners, labor organizers, communists, police, and government. The publication of *Tortilla Flat* produced the first critical attention to his works. In 1942, he reported for the *Herald Tribune* and worked as propagandist for the War Department, then completed "The Pearl of the World" and *Cannery Row*. *The*

Red Pony, a childhood memory, appeared in a collection, *The Long Valley*, in 1938. He also composed the script for the 1949 film version, starring Myrna Loy, Robert Mitchum, Peter Miles, and Louis Calhern, and featuring music by Aaron Copland.

Steinbeck settled with third wife Elaine in Sag Harbor, New York, and wrote political speeches for President Lyndon Johnson as well as Hollywood screenplays, including *Lifeboat* and *Viva Zapata!* He died at his New York home. His ashes were interred in the Hamilton family plot in Salinas. The home where he was born is now a museum. Nearby, the John Steinbeck Library houses 30,000 items of memorabilia, photos, first editions, and taped interviews.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Steinbeck is best remembered for his novels about the poor and socially oppressed, particularly the novella *Of Mice and Men* and his Pulitzer Prize-winning saga of migrant workers, *The Grapes of Wrath*. Because of his success in chronicling the Depression years, he has since risen to the status of a major American author. To prepare himself for writing about labor problems, he traveled with migrants.

Steinbeck achieved immediate success with *Of Mice and Men*. Readers identified with the loneliness and victimization of the wandering farmhands, who dream of escaping to a better life. He earned a Book of the Month Club selection and

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was chosen one of 1937's Ten Outstanding Young Men in America. The Broadway version of *Of Mice and Men* won him a New York Drama Critics' Circle award.

Between *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck wrote *The Red Pony* with similar sensitivity to lower middle class ranchers, the elderly, and the outcast. The brief novel, published along with the short story "Junius Maltby," became a young adult classic. The 1949 screen version starred Myrna Loy, Robert Mitchum, Peter Miles, Beau Bridges, and Louis Calhern. In 1976, a television remake starred Henry Fonda, Maureen O'Hara, Clint Howard, Jack Elam, and Ben Johnson.

In 1962, Steinbeck became the sixth American to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. The honor aroused some derision from mockers who found him too earthy, too centered in mundane themes. Steinbeck himself stated publicly that he didn't feel he deserved the award. Critic Edmund Wilson disagreed. In his words, "There remains behind the journalism, the theatricalism and the tricks, a mind which does seem first-rate in its unpanicky scrutiny of life."

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the value of responsibility
2. To describe the pet/owner relationship
3. To evaluate the need for friendship, nurturance, comfort, acceptance, and emotional support
4. To account for bonding between strangers
5. To define remorse
6. To discuss methods of motivating children
7. To comment on friendships between younger and older people
8. To express the need for pride
9. To characterize disappointment
10. To comment on individual responses to loss

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To explain Jody's relationship with Carl, Ruth, Billy, Grandfather, and Gitano as well as with animals
2. To assess the Tiffin and Maltby families in terms of love and communion
3. To account for the author's focus on realism
4. To order events which affect Jody, especially the loss of Gabilan and the birth of Nellie's foal
5. To describe turning points in Jody's understanding of responsibility.
6. To account for the importance of the California setting on Gitano's wanderings, Jody's yearnings and curiosity, Junius's recovery of health, and Grandfather's stories
7. To predict how Billy and Jody will train the foal
8. To explain why Billy disapproves of Carl's treatment of Jody
9. To evaluate Ruth's role as parent, farm wife, employer, hostess, and daughter
10. To determine how romance and curiosity enliven Robbie's life

LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of John Steinbeck's style, present the following terms and applications to his novel:

bildungsroman literally a "formation novel," which describes the coming-of-age of an untried or naive youth. As

Jody experiences discipline, anticipation of riding Gabilan, Gabilan's death, the mating of Nellie with the stallion, working to pay stud fees, and her foal's birth, he begins to form his own understanding of the positive and negative aspects of life.

realism a re-creation of life in theme, plot, setting, mood, and characterization, as displayed by the old Gitano seeking a place to die, The daily awareness of death permeates the ranch, yet fails to impress Jody until he watches buzzards flock around Gabilan and peck out his eye after he dies. Similarly, Junius Maltby loses four members of his family and, after his wife's death during the flu epidemic, faces the challenge of rearing a newborn son alone. Steinbeck describes such events as normal vicissitudes of life that all people must weather.

symbol a concrete object that stands for a complex or abstract idea or relationship, such as the mice that Jody wants to kill in the haystack. Grandfather compares the fate of the simple creatures to the destiny of westering parties who had to survive hardship, weather, accident, and Piute attacks to arrive safely on the Pacific Coast. The emergence of vulnerability in Jody establishes John Steinbeck's concept of compassion, which he quietly lauds as a civilized trait.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING

The milieu of John Steinbeck's *The Red Pony* is the country he knew from boyhood. Steinbeck imbeds the countryside with lessons for Jody in caring for animals and the land and in seeking the pleasures at hand, such as breaking a pony to saddle and picking melons. He must learn that people, like Gitano's family and the rain-scoured adobe, also leave the land for succeeding generations.

Offsetting the outdoors are indoor scenes of trial and coming to knowledge. Jody ushers Gitano to a barn room and finds the old man rocking in his chair and caressing the rapier that is his heritage from the great era of conquistadores. In the barn, Jody also copes with Gabilan's case of strangles and Billy's healing ministrations. When Billy sleeps in the barn stall and later sacrifices Nellie to save Jody's colt, the boy knows the great test of husbandry and the choices that a rancher must make about life and death from breeding animals.

Also indoors is the terrible social blunder that ends Grandfather's storytelling. Grandfather, the delightful visitor who fills Jody's mind with California history, comes to the breakfast table in time to hear Carl's rude remarks about tediously repeated stories. The unspoken conflict between Carl and his father-in-law puts added stress on the tense family, sending Carl and Billy rapidly from the table.

CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

For more information about death, California, Quakers, conquistadores, Indians, survival, frontier literature, westering, parenting, values, and other subjects and issues deriving from the novel, consult these sources:

Acting on Your Values, Rosen Publishing Group

Dealing with Anger, Guidance Associates

Death and Dying, Guidance Associates

Encyclopedia of Frontier Literature, ABC-Clio

Kroll, Debra, "California's Indian People Are Alive and Well,"

The Mountains of California, John Muir

Understanding Your Parents, Guidance Associates

Also, consult these web sites:

"California History," <www.funkandwagnalls.com>

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"History of the Oregon Trail," <www.mecc.com/MECCHOME/OT11.Files/OT11.History.html>

"Multicultural America," <galenet.gale.com:8888>

"Safety Tips Desert Survival," <esertusa.com/thingstodo/du_safetytips.html>

"Society of Friends," <www.hpl.lib.tx.us/clayton/qk002.html>

"Steinbeck's 'The Pastures of Heaven,'" <www.ac.wvu.edu/~stephan/Steinbeck/past.html>

"Wagon Train," <soli.inav.net/~edzwil/WagonTrain.html>

THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues and situations in John Steinbeck's *The Red Pony* should include these aspects:

Themes

- immaturity
- family
- stewardship
- ranch life
- hardship
- longing
- achievement
- disappointment
- despair
- loss
- compassion

Motifs

- living in a rural area
- accepting the laws of nature
- coping with loss of a parent
- learning an adult's responsibility
- accepting the brutality of animal life

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have a particular meaning in the stories. Explain each. Subtitles and page numbers are given so that you can note the context from which each item is taken.

1. If you will collect tail hair, I might be able to make a hair rope for you sometime. You could use it for a hackamore. ("The Gift," p. 10)
(Billy Buck is offering to make a lightweight slip-noose out of coarse, braided horsehair, which Jody can slip over the bridle. Such pastimes were common to lonely hired hands who lived far from town and who braided lanyards, whittled, or handcrafted quilts and tack during their free time.)
2. The good dogs came stiffly out of their little houses, hackles up and deep growls in their throats. ("The Gift," p. 13)
(Doubletree Mutt and Smasher demonstrate their purpose on the Tiflin ranch—they earn their keep by protecting the family and livestock from intruders or predators. By raising a line of hair down the backbone, a dog indicates caution or anger.)
3. Jody listened carefully, for he knew and the whole county knew that Billy Buck was a fine hand with horses. Billy's own horse was a stringy cayuse with a hammer head, but he nearly always won first prize at the stock trials. ("The Gift," p. 15)
(Billy Buck cares little for beauty in a work animal. His choice of an awkward shaped cayuse, a sturdy desert pony named for the tribe of Pacific Coast Indians famous for breeding and training them, enables him to master

regular cowboy maneuvers, such as steer roping, which requires him to "rope a steer, take a double half-hitch about the horn with his riata, and dismount . . . his horse would play the steer as an angler plays a fish, keeping a tight rope until the steer was down or beaten.")

4. "Strangles," he said shortly, "but don't you worry about that. I'll pull him out of it." ("The Gift," p. 27)
(Gabilan suffers from an infectious streptococcal disease common to horses that inflames the membranes of lungs, throat, and nose and closes breathing passages with swelling and thick accumulations of mucus. Also known as distemper, the disease can cripple or kill if not treated with antibiotics.)
5. It's an old *paisano* man, and he says he's come back. ("The Great Mountains," p. 44)
(Gitano, whose name means "gypsy," is an elderly peasant or farm worker whose ties link to the land. As death approaches, he feels impelled to return to his birthplace, a former rancho where his family lived in a standard Southwestern adobe or baked-clay house.)
6. Jody stood overwhelmed by the thing in Gitano's hand, a lean and lovely rapier with a golden basket hilt. ("The Great Mountains," pp. 52-53)
(Gitano's pride rests in a single possession—an inherited fencing sword, a thin-bladed competition weapon with a decorative hilt or handle and hand protector or basket made of gold. Such a weapon might date to the sixteenth century, when Spanish gold-seekers journeyed across North, Central, and South America looking for the fabled Seven Lost Cities of Gold or Eldorado, the legendary city of gold.)
7. If it's a stallion, we'll have to geld it. Your father wouldn't let you have a stallion. ("The Promise," p. 66)
(Because of the jealous, competitive nature of a full-grown male horse, farmers and horse handlers geld the spirited animals if they intend to use them for work or as mounts for young or inexperienced riders. If a stallion remains ungelded, it may bolt or attack another male when both approach a female in season.)
8. Both hands plunged into the terrible ragged hole and dragged out a big, white, dripping bundle. ("The Promise," p. 78)
(As Nellie's labor becomes more protracted, Billy realizes that he must deliver the foal before it strangles inside the womb. To provide fresh air immediately, he kills the mare with a hammer, then hacks open the abdomen and removes the foal, which is still wrapped in the sac in which it developed. As soon as Billy bites open the viscous membrane, the foal draws its first breath.)
9. The grandfather was dressed in a black broadcloth suit and he wore kid congress gaiters and a black tie on a short, hard collar. ("The Leader of the People," p. 86)
(Grandfather is clad in sedate, old-fashioned finery typical of the late nineteenth century. His kid-skin ankle coverings, short western tie, and disposable celluloid collar contrast with the practical farm gear worn by the Tiflin family.)
10. "I wonder," he began, "I just wonder whether I ever told you how those thieving Piutes drove off thirty-five of our horses." ("The Leader of the People," p. 92)
(Grandfather relates his experience with a band of Piute

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or Paiute raiders. A nomadic tribe, the Paiutes were hunters and fishers native to the southwestern United States. They were also known as the Digger Indians, because the often dug grubs and roots on which to subsist. They formed wide-spaced family groups, lived in wickiups, and kept on the move to locate food. European settlers seized Paiute lands, forcing them to scatter about the Southwest in search of roots, seeds, rabbits, and birds, which formed the bulk of their diet.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages from the novel.

Questions 1-4 (Literal Level)

1. Describe the gift pony and its importance to the story.

(The Red Pony is a compact young adult novella composed of four interrelated episodes in the life of the Tiflin family. The novella, which probes the interconnected themes of loss and responsibility, is set on the Tiflin ranch near the Gabilan mountains outside Salinas, California, in the early 1900s. The central event in this collection of stories is Jody's receipt of a pony, which his father buys at an auction and gruffly presents the morning after the pony's arrival.

Like Carl's gift of the twenty-two rifle, which comes with no cartridges until Jody reaches his twelfth birthday, this gift arrives with strings attached. Gabilan must be curried and fed and his stall kept clean or else be sold. As Jody realizes that the present is indeed his, Carl walks off to himself, "for he was embarrassed." The gift of the red pony begins early to reveal the gulf that separates Carl Tiflin from compassion, sensitivity, and the love of his son.)

2. How does Billy Buck's presence affect Jody's ownership of a horse?

(A skilled horseman and farrier, Billy Buck, who rides an unimpressive, hammer-headed cayuse, knows much horse lore and helps introduce the boy to the upkeep and training of Gabilan. During the three-week rainy season that precedes Thanksgiving, Billy errs in judgment by predicting that Jody may safely leave Gabilan in the corral because the rain has ended. The second fault comes from Billy's failure to pen up the animal, which stands all day in the rain and contracts pulmonary distress. As a result of these errors, Jody learns a hard lesson, symbolized by a buzzard that pecks at the eye fluid of Gabilan's corpse. As though pecking Jody's eye, the buzzard demonstrates that Jody must learn to "see" nature's truths—that animals live and die in an impersonal, capricious milieu.

In the third episode, "The Promise," Billy redeems himself for his earlier errors. Having established his concern for Jody's emotions, Billy explains the year-long gestation period and the likelihood that Nellie, if she was successfully bred by the stallion Sundog, will give birth to a healthy foal. When the February 2 delivery proves treacherous, Billy accepts responsibility for slaughtering the mare to cut free the unborn colt. Without Billy's knowledge of animals and willingness to decide a life-or-death dilemma, both mother and colt might have died,

leaving Jody disappointed a second time and the farm without a horse.)

3. What aspect of Gitano fascinates Jody?

(When the aged paisano rides up unannounced and demands a place to end his life, Jody is at first nonplussed by the abruptness of the arrival and the urgency of Gitano's need to return to his birthplace, an old adobe now worn away by rains. Carl dismisses the old man, allowing a single night's respite from toilsome travel, and entrusts him to Jody. As the boy settles Gitano in the bunkhouse, he questions him about the great mountains, which the old man once visited, but can scarcely remember.

After supper, the mystery of Gitano draws Jody to the bunkhouse. Through a lighted window, he peers in from the dark to spy on Gitano's movements. As the old man sits in the rocking chair holding his treasured rapier, Jody is overwhelmed by the beauty and intricacy of its crafting. The old man, who displays a remarkable amount of dignity for so dependent a drifter, indicates that the rapier is not on display and that its value is a private matter.)

4. How does Jody cope with family unrest?

(Much of Jody's part in the novella is the inward turmoil that colors his periods of lonely contemplation—of mice, of tormented animals, of predatory buzzards, and of isolated beings like himself. When Gitano suddenly departs on Easter, Jody conceals an urge to cry, a feeling that drives him toward the brush line to seek privacy. After Grandfather arrives, a parallel contemplation of age and pride draws Jody to stories of California's past and to his Grandfather's role in westering.

At the breakfast table, Carl's tactless ridicule of the old man's stories results not only in embarrassment and degradation for Grandfather but in unrest for Ruth, who despairs at her husband's shame in having to apologize. Both Carl and Billy quickly depart from eating to their morning's chores. Again, Jody, like the barn mice, resorts to withdrawal to the haystack, but takes no delight in killing them. On his return to the porch, he attempts to compensate for Carl's crudeness by making Grandfather a glass of lemonade.)

Questions 5-8 (Interpretive Level)

5. Describe Carl Tiflin.

(As ranch owner, husband to Ruth, father to Jody, and employer of Billy Buck, Carl demonstrates a harsh exterior—a hardened, insensitive controller of events and people. Concerning Jody, Carl comments on "weakness put into animals and men by too much coddling." Carl's definition of coddling extends to comforting the boy at the death of Gabilan. Other indications of Carl's unyielding tyranny are his sour looks at Ruth and his disdain for Grandfather. As Steinbeck sums up Carl's point of view, "Carl Tiflin hated weakness and sickness, and he held a violent contempt for helplessness."

Carl exhibits passive aggressive tendencies by making comments that are really intended as hurtful barbs. To Gitano, Carl comments that Easter, the tired old horse, should be destroyed because it is useless for ranch work. While Jody overhears, Carl discusses with Ruth Jody's inquisitiveness about the mail, which Carl interprets as prying. In Grandfather's hearing, Carl

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expresses his frustration with retold stories of past glory. Carl's inability to show compassion or acceptance of human foibles suggests that life at the Tiflin ranch is perpetually unpleasant, especially at meal time or any social moment when Carl is not working.)

6. Contrast Carl's and Grandfather's notions of westering. (A survivor of a pioneer wagon train and Piute raids, Grandfather takes pride in having enabled spirited settlers to move across inhospitable deserts and through Indian country to California. The shared belief in national betterment united his acquaintances in a common goal, one which he attempts to impart to his family. Cynics like Carl see no future in such a shared effort. To Carl, history and pride are expendable, as he comments, "That time's done. Why can't he forget it, now it's done?")

To Grandfather, the insult to his stories, and the discourtesy toward his impromptu visit are not as troubling as Carl's rejection of Grandfather's values. The wounded old man comments, "I'm not being mad. I don't mind what you said, but it might be true, and I would mind that." With considerable grace under embarrassing circumstances, he adds, "Maybe you're right. The crossing is finished. Maybe it should be forgotten, now it's done."

Later, as Grandfather shares his philosophy and history with Jody, the old man returns to his proud role in leading people west. "We carried life out here and set it down the way those ants carry eggs," he asserts. To Jody's desire to lead people, Grandfather answers sadly that that moment in history has passed: "Every place is taken . . . Westering isn't a hunger any more. It's all done.")

7. What symbols permeate the story? (The motifs of life and death overlay the four episodes of *The Red Pony* as though Steinbeck were displaying them for illustrative purpose. The natural rhythms of age and death suit a farm setting. The deaths of Gabilan and Nellie seem as appropriate to a livestock ranch as the rendering of hogs in the killing tree or milk cows traded for slaughter. In contrast, the foal's arrival suggests that survival is a possibility, despite the preponderance of death in the story.)

The theme of old age and approaching death predominate in the story of *Gitano* and Grandfather. Like *Easter*, the faithful farm animal that Carl considers euthanizing because it is useless to farm productivity, *Gitano* has arrived at the "useless" stage of his life. No longer able to work ranches and out of touch with family, he nobly accepts death. Still in possession of pride, as symbolized by the gold-hilted rapier that once belonged to his father, *Gitano* refuses to degrade himself by begging at the family's door. Instead, he allies with *Easter*, a horse named for a day of resurrection, and rides away toward the mysterious mountains, themselves symbolic of Jody's questions about life and death.

Grandfather, whose pride resides in memories of westering, differs from *Gitano*, the wanderer. Grandfather moved west with a purpose. As leader of a band of pioneers, he held fast to his goal until he reached the Pacific Ocean. Unlike *Gitano*, whose strength gives out, Grandfather lets go his belief in a future bright with renewal and conquest. Whereas *Gitano* mounts *Easter* and departs toward his fate, Grandfather sits on the

Tiflins' porch and accepts the gift of lemonade, a sweet-sour blend reflecting the charm of his imaginative grandson and the bitter taste of Carl's denigration.)

8. What picture of masculinity does Steinbeck construct? (The contrast of *Gitano* with Grandfather and *Billy Buck* with Carl presents a quartet of possibilities for Jody, who is too young to have solidified a personality or point of view. Like *Gitano*, Jody stokes his imagination with questions about the mountains to the west and dreams of adventure. Like Grandfather, Jody holds on to shreds of family pride and tentatively honors them with a simple act of courtesy.)

The sharp contrast between *Billy Buck* and Carl delineates the question of what kind of man Jody will become. From Carl, Jody learns that benevolence and generosity come at a price and that work, not praise, is the measure of a man's worth. *Billy Buck*, who claims to be more horse than man, demonstrates that gifts take numerous forms, especially the bestowal of understanding and compassion. Simultaneously, *Billy* teaches Jody that expertise is a satisfying goal for even the humblest worker. Jody learns from both Carl and *Billy Buck* that responsibility is the hard lesson of life and work, particularly ranch work. The blend of Carl's authoritarianism and *Billy's* acceptance and nurturance create a workable environment from which the child can grow into manhood.)

Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. How does this book fit into the canon of Steinbeck's losers? (Steinbeck, who earned fame and admiration for his respect of simple laborers, wanderers, the elderly, outcasts, and animals, demonstrates in *The Red Pony* some of the motifs that color *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Cannery Row*, *East of Eden*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *The Pearl*. A central theme, exploitation, tinges the relationship between Jody and his father, who robs the boy of the wonder and anticipation inherent in childhood while forcing him to perform chores. By choosing an appropriate putdown for every occasion, Carl not only dampens the child's enthusiasm but cheats himself as well. Father Tiflin, stern and unyielding, never knows the fulfillment of admitting his humanity, of demonstrating grace or welcome, or of enjoying the hospitality of family, employees, friends, and guests. Other examples of Steinbeck's losers are found in *Gitano*, the wanderer; Grandfather, the burned-out "leader of the people"; and *Easter*, a rejected creature that takes a final moment of glory in bearing *Gitano* to his destination. Of all these losers, Carl is the greatest fool, the most blameworthy for devaluing the treasure that lies at his gate—a loving family, loyal laborer, and productive work.)
10. Explain why Steinbeck profited from studying English and biology. (Steinbeck's work possesses a characteristic blend of language skill and respect for the animal kingdom, humanity included. By juxtaposing human beings and animals, he makes salient observations about life, pleasure, destruction, and helplessness. After Jody invites Grandfather to hunt mice in the haystack, Grandfather compares the pursuit to Indian hunting, a period when white settlers and cavalry "were hunting Indians and

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shooting children and burning teepees."

Overall, Steinbeck laces his novella with descriptions of nature, animals in their habitats, and human beings in social situations. His use of contrast sets the story of coming of age in an environment where nature and humanity must understand each other in order to thrive. The brief hints that Jody harbors a love of tormenting lesser creatures leaves the reader wondering what Steinbeck foresees in Jody's future—a proud leader like Grandfather, a hard worker who appreciates animals, like Billy Buck, or another Carl Tiflin, too stony-hearted to value much of anything but the treadmill of work that dominates his waking hours.)

Questions 11-13 (Creative Level)

11. Design a monument honoring men like Grandfather who assisted pioneers in settling California and other parts of the west. Select a quotation from one of Steinbeck's works as a fitting dedication.
12. List moments that indicate that Billy Buck or Robbie Maltby might make a worthy family man and ranch owner. Project how his life would change if he had a wife, children, and livestock of his own.
13. Create a scene in which Grandfather visits the bunkhouse to talk with Gitano. Indicate interests and concerns they share, particularly an appreciation of the past and a shared pride in accomplishment.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Art

1. Draw cover sketches which reflect life on a small California ranch during the early twentieth century. Depict different chores, such as tending a garden, following stock to the water trough, rubbing down a chilled pony, and driving milk cows to an auction.
2. Draw a cartoon strip depicting a trainer teaching a horse to accept bridle, saddle, and rider. Show the steps by which the horse is trained to walk, trot, and gallop.
3. Make a mural of the ocean, mountains, and farmland that surrounds Monterey County, California. Include animals and plants mentioned in the novel.

Drama and Speech

1. Draw stage settings for a dramatization of Nellie's death or Robbie's first day at school. Include a list of characters, props, music, make-up, costumes, and lighting necessary to the scene, such as hammer, knife, horse, blanket, rope, overalls, and copy of *Treasure Island*.
2. Dramatize in a short skit some ways that Billy and Carl complement each other's beliefs about children, animal husbandry, and ranching. Emphasize their importance in Jody's impressionable years.
3. Write a scene in which Robbie arrives in San Francisco and settles in a new residence. Mention sights, foods, exhibitions, and entertainments that he can share with Junius.
4. Characterize in an oral theme Robbie's relationship with neighbors and Miss Morgan or Jody's friendship with his peers, Billy Buck, Grandfather, and Gitano.

Education

1. Describe the activities of a ranch that are suited to children. Name chores that Jody Tiflin and Robbie Maltby could manage without close supervision. Explain why agriculture and animal husbandry build self-esteem and

sensitivity to nature and ecology. Contrast ranching with scouting, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and other youth organizations that emphasize responsibility.

2. Role-play situations that cause Carl to chastise Jody. Determine alternate methods of correcting laziness, nosiness, forgetfulness, irresponsibility, and disobedience.

Geography

1. Draw a map indicating Salinas, Monterey County, Gabilan Mountains, San Francisco, Laguna Seca, Gato Amarillo, Los Angeles, Tahoe country, Paiute communities, and Pacific Grove. Insert routes followed by conquistadores and wagon trains. Contrast major highways, particularly U. S. 1.
2. Compose a paragraph in which you explain how childhood experiences and a knowledge of California history influenced John Steinbeck's writing style and choice of subjects.

History and Social Studies

1. Explain in a paragraph the difficulty of surviving on a small Pacific Coast ranch. Discuss variances of weather, soil, inadequate rainfall, disease, and other threats to a stable income.
2. Make a short oral presentation describing ranching methods in California. Explain the use of implements and small tools. Include an explanation of good breeding practices.
3. Read about the history of California, particularly the roles of conquistadores, ranchers, minor religious sects such as Quakers, and westering wagon trains. Compose a short statement about characteristics these legendary figures have in common. Discuss why Jody thrills to Grandfather's stories and to Gitano's rapier.
4. Compute the cost of keeping up a foal and mare, breeding, equipping the horses with saddle and bridle, and annual veterinary fees for inoculations and general care.
5. Explain in a paragraph the reason that care for the aged can be prohibitively expensive.
6. Summarize the history of succeeding waves of immigrants to California. Describe the political and economic climate the year California entered the Union.
7. Report on the racial makeup of California since pre-Columbian times. Note the current breakdown of races, including Hispanic, native American, Asian, and African-American populations.
8. Compute the distances between the Gabilan Mountains and the mountains to the west.

Language Arts

1. Write a brief explanation of Grandfather's comment about westering: "When the troops were hunting Indians and shooting children and burning teepees, it wasn't much different from your mouse hunt." Explain how the search for gold and land fueled the killing.
2. Compose an extended definition of parent. Explain why Carl and Junius fall short of the ideal father. Apply the definition of authority figure to Grandfather, Mamie, Ruth, Miss Morgan, John Whiteside, Jess Taylor, and Billy. Determine the admirable qualities of each.
3. Create a glossary of terms pertaining to ranching and livestock, such as hackamore, pith and stalk, and adobe.

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4. Make a short oral presentation explaining images from the novel, such as "As the boys stood at salute, the President marched down the line and to each overall bib pinned a leaden slug on which the word HERO was deeply scratched." Create a bulletin board illustrating the purpose of these images.
5. Compose an extended definition of realism. Use examples from the texts.
6. Write a diary entry describing life on a California ranch. Include activities that involve helping with household chores, feeding stock, running errands, tending animals, guarding property, and passing the time.
7. Compose a theme on maturity. Explain how maturity is achieved through small increments of awareness and appreciation, such as Jody's realization that the colt carries the high price of Nellie's death. Relate Jody's maturation to events in your own life when you learned a valuable lesson through pain, loss, or humiliation.
8. Join a discussion group to determine the reasons for Carl's cynical, uncompromising ways and grim view of life. Explain what debt means to him. Analyze his attitude toward his son and wife, his father-in-law, and Billy Buck. Suggest reasons why Ruth is glad to see Jody prepare lemonade for Grandfather.
9. Locate examples of similes from the texts, such as "He had seen that happen to men before, had seen how they writhed on the ground like squashed bugs." Compose a paragraph explaining why each simile is effective in creating a graphic mental image. Comment on why John Steinbeck selects many comparatives from nature.
10. Explain in a theme the significance of Gitano's departure on old Easter. Suggest an ending for their ride into the mountains. Contrast Gitano's choice of a noble death with Grandfather's withdrawal from the mouse hunt to sit in the sun.
11. Sample some books about the hardships connected with farm and ranch life, such as *The Yearling*, *Old Yeller*, *Little House on the Prairie*, *The Education of Little Tree*, *Giants in the Earth*, or *The Good Earth* or watch some classic movies or videos, especially *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Witness*, *Places in the Heart*, *East of Eden*, or *Comes a Horseman*. Discuss with a group the aspects of ranching that give strength and a sense of place and commitment to rural families.
12. Write a theme in which you characterize Jody as rancher and head of the household. Predict how he will cope with hard choices and loss, such as euthanizing a suffering animal, Grandfather's death, or with the aging of his parents.
13. Lead a discussion of John Steinbeck's philosophy of the importance of a dignified retirement and death for the aged. Draw on Forrest Carter's novel *The Education of Little Tree* or Robert Frost's sentiments in the poem "Death of a Hired Man."
14. Read aloud chapters from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *A Child's Garden of Verse*, or *The Master of Ballantrae*. Select passages that young readers could act out to help them understand risk and danger.
15. Collect lines from *The Red Pony* that disclose passage of time and the relative ages of characters. Include infor-

mation about the conquistadores and the train that Grandfather led over the mountains.

Law

1. Conduct a mock hearing to determine whether Junius Maltby is guilty of denying Robbie an education or the old Gitano of stealing Easter. Assign fellow students roles as the other characters, particularly Ruth and Carl Tiflin, Billy Buck, John Whiteside, Miss Morgan, and Maltby's neighbors.
2. Make an oral report on horse stealing. Explain why the crime was rated a capital offense in the Old West. Compare the crime to rustling and auto theft.

Music

1. Compose a ballad about the conquistadores. Mention their flashing rapiers, bold journeys into the California hills, and excellent horsemanship.
2. Listen to recorded music, such as "On the Trail" from Ferde Grofe's *Grand Canyon Suite* or Aaron Copeland's *Rodeo* or *Appalachian Spring*, which suggests the emotions that Jody feels for the great mountains and for Gabilan and the newborn colt. Describe to classmates the way that music captures human feelings.

Psychology

1. Explain in a short speech the effect of ridicule, sarcasm, and prejudice on a boy like Robbie Maltby or Jody Tiflin. Make reference to defenses by Billy Buck and Miss Morgan.
2. Contrast the style of discipline used by Junius Maltby and Carl Tiflin. Determine which is the better way of rearing a child.
3. Lead a panel discussion of how old age alters people. Discuss ways in which Gitano and Grandfather are adjusting to changes of body and outlook. Suggest ways in which Jody makes the two men feel welcome and accepted. Project how Billy, Carl, and Ruth will accustom themselves to old age.
4. Lead a discussion of how pets help isolated people deal with boredom and loneliness. Suggest types of animals that might benefit different ages and personalities. Refer specifically to Jody's pets and to Gitano's interest in Easter.

Religion

Explain why Mamie Maltby is known as "the Quaker." Contrast Quakers with Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, and adherents of other faiths.

Science and Health

1. List home remedies and methods that Billy Buck uses on horses. Explain why steaming, draining an abscess, and cutting a hole in the throat relieve Gabilan's breathing and why quick action is necessary to save Nellie's foal.
2. Describe the flu epidemic of 1917-1918. Cite figures on the number of people who survived and died and the types of medications available for fighting fever in the era before aspirin and antibiotics.
3. Make an oral report on animal gestation and incubation. Compare the length of time required for the gestation or incubation of sheep, cows, goats, pigs, chickens, turkeys, mice, dogs, cats, and horses.
4. Compose a paragraph on the treatment of injured or ailing animals, such as a pony or pregnant mare. List local sources of information on diet, handling, and medication,

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particularly a zoo, veterinary clinic, biology department, humane society, or animal shelter.

5. Explain the role of buzzards in the environmental cycle.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Relate the following literary terms to *The Red Pony*: adage, denouement, symbol, simile, flat and round characters, alliteration, setting, dialogue, conflict, atmosphere, mood, motivation, rising action, climax, falling action, flashback, and tone. Determine why Jody's experience with horses, like a stage drama, has a beginning, middle, and end.
2. Lead a discussion of adult responsibilities to children. Determine why Billy is more open to Jody's emotional needs than Jody's father and why Miss Morgan tries to protect Robbie Maltby from do-gooders who threaten his self-esteem.
3. Contrast Junius and Jody's responses to loss with the biographies of other people who have experienced similar sufferings. Discuss your findings with a small group.
4. Listen to recorded poems about animals and plants, such as Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "The Eagle," Gerard Manley Hopkins's "The Windhover," Christina Rossetti's "The Woodspurge," and Joseph Bruchac's "Birdfoot's Grandpa." Compose poetic lines to express your own experiences with farm animals, pets, wild birds, insects, and other life forms.
5. Read Marjorie Kinnan Rawling's *The Yearling*, Jane Wagner's *J.T.*, or William Armstrong's *Souder*. Explain what the main character has in common with Jody. Discuss qualities that give the protagonists strength in difficult situations. Explain how they respond to discipline.
6. List the chores necessary to the running of a ranch in the early 1900s, such as providing firewood, straining clabbered milk, attending to the horses' feet and coats, mending bridles, and storing hay. Break down the chores into those performed by Ruth, Carl, Jody, and Billy.
7. Listen to recorded tall tales about the Old West. Compose your own versions of stories about the area where you live.
8. Write a newspaper account of Gitano's visit. Describe his friendship with Jody. Strengthen your writing with direct quotations from Carl, Billy, Ruth, Jess Taylor, Jody, and Gitano.
9. Role-play the arrival of Grandfather or Gitano to the Tiflin ranch. Demonstrate the difficulty Carl has with feelings of remorse, sympathy, tenderness, or charity. Project how Gitano and Grandfather feel as they depart or how the two men would get along if they met.
10. Lead a debate concerning whether or not Jody is at fault for Gabilan's death. Consider all possibilities before placing blame.
11. Compose a letter to Jody or Billy in which you ask questions that the book does not answer, such as the name of the colt, Carl's response to Nellie's death, the cost of replacing Nellie, Ruth's grief for Nellie, and Jody's experiences in raising the colt. Create a reply giving likely answers to your questions.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. Make a list of scenes from the texts that express con-

trasting attitudes toward guilt, hope, friendship, self-esteem, loss, kinship, responsibility, discourtesy, understanding, and acceptance. Next to each, indicate what you think is the author's personal philosophy.

2. Compose brief definitions of devotion or loyalty as they apply to Easter, Billy Buck, Gitano, Miss Morgan, Grandfather, Takashi, Junius, Carl, Mamie, Ruth, and Jody.
3. List scenes that depict conflict, particularly Billy's insistence that Jody leave the barn, Carl's dislike of Grandfather's visit, the school board's insistence that Junius go to school, Carl's threats against Easter, Gitano's attempt to conceal the rapier, and Jody's fight against the buzzard.
4. Compose a scene in which Jody or Robbie describes life on the ranch to an outsider. Explain what he tells about helping with household chores, working in the fields, feeding and training horses, learning about animals, studying the western mountains, walking to school, learning to use a twenty-two rifle, hunting mice, sharing a pony with friends, reading aloud, listening to stories, and playing at the water trough.
5. Make a thorough list of items essential to a movie version of the texts. Beside the items, explain how they fit into the action.

OTHER WORKS BY JOHN STEINBECK

Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights (1976)
America and Americans (1966)
Bombs Away! (1942)
Burning Bright (1950)
Cannery Row (1945)
A Cup of Gold (1929)
East of Eden (1952)
The Grapes of Wrath (1939)
In Dubious Battle (1936)
Lifeboat (1944)
The Long Valley (1938)
The Moon Is Down (1942)
Of Mice and Men (1937)
Once There Was a War (1958)
The Pastures of Heaven (1932)
The Pearl (1947)
A Russian Journal (1948)
The Sea of Cortez (with Edward F. Ricketts) (1941)
The Short Reign of Pippin IV (1957)
Sweet Thursday (1954)
Their Blood Is Strong (1938)
To a God Unknown (1933)
Tortilla Flat (1935)
Travels with Charley in Search of America (1962)
The Wayward Bus (1947)
The Winter of Our Discontent (1961)

RELATED READING

William Armstrong, *Souder*
Toni Cade Bambara, "Blues Ain't No Mockin' Bird"
Hal Borland, *When the Legends Die*
Joseph Bruchac, *Bowman's Store: A Journey to Myself*
Pearl S. Buck, *The Good Earth*
Forrest Carter, *The Education of Little Tree*
Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!*
David Feintuch, *Midshipman's Hope*
Hamlin Garland, "Under the Lion's Paw"

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Janice Holt Giles, *The Believers*
Fred Gipson, *Old Yeller*
Robert Heinlein, *Have Spacesuit, Will Travel; The Star Beast; and Tunnel in the Sky*
Irene Hunt, *No Promises in the Wind*
Lois Lowry, *The Giver*
Francis Parkman, *The Oregon Trail*
Charles Portis, *True Grit*
Marjorie Kinman Rawlings, *The Yearling*
Wilson Rawls, *Where the Red Fern Grows*
Charles Sheffield and Jerry Pournelle, *Higher Education*

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ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. panic | 10. beak | 18. putrified |
| 2. rage | 11. fluid | 19. quartz |
| 3. winding | 12. brotherhood | 20. spurted |
| 4. route | 13. battered | 21. fearless |
| 5. winded | 14. groped | 22. impersonal |
| 6. clearings | 15. fierce | 23. detached |
| 7. convulsively | 16. naked | 24. pulp |
| 8. plunged | 17. vomited | 25. calm |
| 9. muffled | | |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Identification (20 points)

Answers will vary.

Part II: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F |
| 2. T | 7. T |
| 3. F | 8. T |
| 4. F | 9. F |
| 5. F | 10. T |

Part III: Quotation Completion (30 points)

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. rapier | 6. 'dobe | 11. wagon train |
| 2. pony | 7. strangles | 12. Mule-Tail |
| 3. hammer | 8. cartridges | 13. packer |
| 4. Big-Britches | 9. milk cows | 14. January |
| 5. stallion | 10. haystack | 15. teeth |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Short Answer (30 points)

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. rapier | 6. hammer | 11. hackamore |
| 2. Ruth | 7. adobe | 12. Jody |
| 3. ten | 8. Gitano | 13. Grandfather |
| 4. mountains | 9. Jess Taylor | 14. buzzard |
| 5. lunch bucket | 10. Black Demon | 15. Piutes |

Part II: Completion (20 points)

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1. boar | 6. horses |
| 2. milk cows | 7. cayuse |
| 3. newt | 8. steers |
| 4. coyote | 9. buzzard |
| 5. mare | 10. crowbait |

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

1. make lemonade for Grandfather
2. without cartridges
3. a brother-in-law in Monterey
4. iron plates
5. beheading a bird
6. went to the western mountains
7. supervising all ranch activities
8. arriving at the ocean
9. cuts a hole in his windpipe
10. the weather changes

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

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VOCABULARY TEST

From the list that follows, select a word to replace each boldfaced synonym in the passage below. Write your answer in the blank. You will have answers left over when you finish.

battered	convulsively	groped	potential	sidled
beak	detached	impersonal	pulp	spasm
bellowed	fearless	muffled	putrified	spurted
brotherhood	fierce	naked	quartz	vomited
calm	fluid	panic	rage	winded
clearings	fragile	plunged	route	winding

Jody ran faster then, forced on by (1) **fear** _____ and (2) **anger** _____. The trail entered the brush at last and followed a (3) **curving** _____ (4) **path** _____ among the tall sagebrushes. At the top of the ridge Jody was (5) **breathless** _____. The blood pounded in his ears. Then he saw what he was looking for. Below, in one of the little (6) **openings** in the brush, lay the red pony. In the distance, Jody could see the legs moving slowly and (7) **jerkily** _____. And in the circle around him stood the buzzards, waiting for the moment of death they know so well. Jody leaped forward and (8) **ran** _____ down the hill. The wet ground (9) **softened** _____ his steps and the bush hid him. When he arrived, it was all over. The first buzzard sat on the pony's head and its (10) **mouth** _____ had just risen dripping with dark eye (11) **liquid** _____. Jody plunged into the circle like a cat. The black (12) **flock** _____ arose in a cloud, but the big one on the pony's head was too late. As it hopped along to take off, Jody caught its wing tip and pulled it down. It was nearly as big as he was. The free wing crashed into his face with the force of a club, but he hung on. The claws fastened on his leg and the wing elbows (13) **struck** _____ his head on either side. Jody (14) **felt** _____ blindly with his free hand. His fingers found the neck of the struggling bird. The red eyes looked into his face, calm and fearless and (15) **savage** _____; the (16) **featherless** _____ head turned from side to side. Then the beak opened and (17) **ejected** _____ a stream of (18) **rotten** _____ fluid. Jody brought up his knee and fell on the great bird. He held the neck to the ground with one hand while his other found a piece of sharp white (19) **rock** _____. The first blow broke the beak sideways and black blood (20) **poured** _____ from the twisted, leathery mouth corners. He struck again and missed. The red (21) **brave** _____ eye still looked at him, (22) **unfeeling** _____ and unafraid and (23) **uninvolved** _____. He struck again and again, until the buzzard lay dead, until its head was red (24) **mush** _____. He was still beating the dead bird when Billy Buck pulled him off and held him tightly to (25) **quiet** _____ his shaking.

THE RED PONY

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

Briefly describe each of the characters listed below.

1. Jody
2. Grandfather
3. Ruth
4. Billy
5. Jess Taylor
6. Mule-Tail Buck
7. Carl
8. Gitano
9. Sundog
10. Piutes

Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- _____ 1. Billy feels obligated to save the colt.
- _____ 2. Nellie begins to deliver her foal on February 2.
- _____ 3. Carl admits that he once journeyed with his father to the western mountains.
- _____ 4. Jody may not saddle Gabilan until Thanksgiving.
- _____ 5. Grandfather is an aged *paisano* who once lived in an adobe on a former rancho.
- _____ 6. Carl purchases Nellie at the sheriff's auction in Salinas and also buys a red leather saddle.
- _____ 7. Easter, like Gitano, is old and useless.
- _____ 8. Jody invites Grandfather to help kill mice.
- _____ 9. Billy defends Jody's killing of Nellie.
- _____ 10. Grandfather recalls how Paiutes drove off thirty-five horses.

THE RED PONY

Part III: Quotation Completion (30 points)

Complete each quotation below with a word or phrase from the list that follows. You will have answers left over when you finish.

Big-Britches	February	knife	packer	stallion
buzzards	Gitano	March	Piutes	strangles
cartridges	hammer	mice	pony	Jess Taylor
'dobe	haystack	milk cows	rapier	teeth
Easter	January	Mule-Tail	riata	wagon train

1. Jody stood overwhelmed by the thing in Gitano's hand, a lean and lovely _____ with a golden basket hilt.
2. "He's getting to be almost a trick _____," he complained.
3. Then Billy stepped to the rack under the manure window and picked up a horseshoe _____ with his wet right hand.
4. "_____ Jody told me."
5. Your father wouldn't let you have a _____.
6. The old _____ that's washed almost away, you mean?
7. "_____, " he said shortly, "but don't you worry about that. I'll pull him out of it."
8. . . . he didn't shoot for he had no _____ and wouldn't have until he was twelve.
9. He watched them mount their horses and drive six old _____ out of the corral and start over the hill toward Salinas.
10. For eight months [the mice] had lived and multiplied in the _____.
11. He led a _____ clear across the plains to the coast, and when it was finished, his life was done.
12. I knew his father, old _____ Buck.
13. He was a government _____ when I was your size, and I helped him some.
14. The fifteenth of _____ came, and the colt was not born.
15. His _____ tore a hole in the covering.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain why Billy Buck promises to deliver Nellie's colt.
2. Discuss how Jody learns about horse care.
3. Describe Carl's treatment of Gitano and Grandfather.
4. Compare Jody's relationships with Carl and Billy Buck.
5. Discuss Robbie Maltby's qualities as a friend and schoolmate.

THE RED PONY

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Short Answer (30 points)

Supply a word or phrase in answer to the following questions.

- _____ 1. What does Gitano hold on his lap?
- _____ 2. Who recognizes that Jody is compassionate toward Grandfather?
- _____ 3. How old is Jody at the beginning of the story?
- _____ 4. For what does Jody name his pony?
- _____ 5. Where does Jody suffocate lizards and a snake?
- _____ 6. With what does Billy Buck kill Nellie?
- _____ 7. Where was Gitano born?
- _____ 8. Who steals Easter?
- _____ 9. Who offers a stallion to breed Nellie for five dollars?
- _____ 10. What horse does Jody fantasize about?
- _____ 11. What does Billy make out of Gabilan's hair?
- _____ 12. Who sleeps in the barn with Gabilan during the pony's illness?
- _____ 13. Who arrives from Pacific Grove?
- _____ 14. What does Jody kill with a piece of quartz?
- _____ 15. Who drove off thirty-five horses?

Part II: Completion (20 points)

Complete each of the following statements with a word from the list below. You may use some answers more than once and you will have answers left over when you finish.

boar	cayuse	mare	newts	stallion
buzzard	crowbait	mice	pigs	steers
coyote	horses	milk cows	rabbit	turkeys

1. The _____ suffocates under a haystack.
2. Carl sells six _____ in Salinas.
3. On the way home from school, Jody collects three horny-toads, four lizards, a snake, sixteen grasshoppers, and a brown _____.
4. Doubletree Mutt limps because he got caught in a _____ trap.
5. Billy was raised on _____'s milk.
6. Billy tells Jody that _____ love conversation.
7. Billy's horse is a stringy _____.
8. Billy wins first prizes at the rodeo for roping _____.
9. Carl declares that the _____ didn't kill Gabilan.
10. Jess refers to Easter as _____.

THE RED PONY

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Underline the word or phrase which will complete each statement below.

1. Ruth realizes that Jody plans to (sleep in the barn with Gabilan, make lemonade for Grandfather, buy something from the Montgomery Ward catalog, ride Easter to the western mountains).
2. Carl allows Jody to have a twenty-two rifle (without cartridges, to kill buzzards, for hunting mice in the haystack, on his twelfth birthday).
3. Gitano explains that he has (a rapier in his pack, a room in the bunkhouse for the night, an old horse named Easter, a brother-in-law in Monterey).
4. Grandfather bores Carl with a story about (the adobe hut, iron plates, the Horseshoe Club, the Maxwell brothers).
5. Jody demonstrates his meanness by (hanging a pig from the tree, leaving the barn door open, teasing Sundog, beheading a bird).
6. Gitano recalls a time in his boyhood when he (went to the western mountains, moved into the adobe hut, rode Easter in a race, killed mice with a flail).
7. Carl insists on (selling Nellie, supervising all ranch activities, answering the letter from Grandfather, saddling Gabilan before Thanksgiving).
8. Grandfather is saddened by (Jody's misbehavior, the theft of Easter, arriving at the ocean, Nellie's death).
9. To help Gabilan breathe, Billy (knives open his abdomen, cuts a hole in his windpipe, lances a lump of pus, leaves the barn door open).
10. While Jody is in school, (the weather changes, Billy and Carl go to meet Grandfather, Gitano examines the rapier, buzzards peck at Gabilan's eye).

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain how Billy saves the colt.
2. Describe the Tiflin ranch.
3. Discuss Billy's knowledge of horses and children.
4. Account for Grandfather's boring stories.
5. Account for Miss Morgan's reaction on seeing the Maltby family returning to San Francisco by bus.



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