

Advanced Placement in  
English Literature and Composition

Individual Learning Packet

**Teaching Unit**

**The Pearl**

by John Steinbeck

written by Priscilla Beth Baker

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# The Pearl

## Objectives

By the end of the Unit, the student will be able to:

1. articulate the significance of the novel's title.
2. discuss the credibility of the narrator and how that is measured.
3. analyze the use of foreshadowing in the novel.
4. analyze the use of symbolism in the novel.
5. discuss the function of setting and the role of nature in the novel.
6. examine the impact of the social and political issues on the novel's plot, character, and theme.
7. analyze prominent themes in the novel.
8. analyze and explain the relevance and the meaning of the symbols and motifs present in the novel.
9. analyze and explain the effects of the literary and rhetorical devices used in the novel.
10. trace the character development of the novel's protagonist.
11. evaluate the novel as allegory.
12. respond to multiple choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
13. respond to writing prompts similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
14. offer a close reading of *The Pearl* and support all assertions and interpretations with direct evidence from the text, from authoritative critical knowledge of the genre, or from authoritative criticism of the novel.

## Introductory Lecture

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND SETTING

While the action in *The Pearl* is easy to follow, there is one historical point to keep in mind when reading the novel. In the sixteenth century, the Spanish landed in Mexico and proceeded to subjugate and enslave the native peoples who inhabited the area. Today, while their descendants are no longer enslaved, the descendants of the Native Americans are still the underclass; the descendants of the Spanish settlers are the richer, more powerful, professional ruling class. In the story, it should be noted that the doctor, the priest, and the pearl buyers are all of Spanish descent.

Spain's influence is seen not just in the classist society in which the "Indian" people are often treated no better than animals, but in the religious influence of Catholicism. Struggling to maintain their spiritual ties with their native gods, the "Indian" people of the region did, nonetheless, embrace aspects of Christianity as well. Their religion became a blend of gods and God as the natives of the area reached out to *any* spiritual forces for guidance and hope.

*The Pearl* takes place in a Mexican coastal village called La Paz, probably on the Baja Peninsula where Steinbeck spent a great deal of time. The exact time period is unclear—possibly the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. It is important to note that at the time of the novel's story, the native culture had been oppressed by its Spanish colonizers for close to four hundred years. Though they sought to maintain traditional dress, homes, livelihoods, and communal living, the native "Indians" could not maintain true respect for their heritage in the presence of those who felt far superior.

### NATURALISM

Many of John Steinbeck's more socially-aware novels have been tied to a literary movement called *Naturalism* which grew out of the *Realism* movement of the 1870s and 1880s. In realistic literature, the author makes no attempt to hide the hardships or ugliness of human existence; life is depicted as it really is, but the movement sought only to cover topics associated with middle-class America or "local color" topics.

The naturalism movement took place between the 1880s and the 1940s largely as a reaction to both World Wars and the Great Depression. While naturalist literature was, to an extent, not unlike the realist portrayals of society, naturalism also explored such issues as sexuality and violence, which were formerly considered taboo. In particular, naturalists sought to reveal the lives of America's lower-class, often destitute, immigrant populations; this was a dramatic change from the realists who sought only to depict the hardship of maintaining individualism within the bourgeois class.

*The Pearl* shares several defining characteristics of literary naturalism, but it is also important to note how Steinbeck's novel diverges from traditional naturalist texts.

The basic premise of the movement is that the human race, much like other members of the animal kingdom, is a victim of its natural surroundings, basic instincts, and heredity. Naturalism, then, seeks to show the primal yet complex relationship between the individual and the environment, and that environment is often seen as indifferent to that struggle. Steinbeck illustrates this principle throughout the novel as Kino struggles to maintain his integrity and virtue despite his animalistic inclinations towards violence.

Kino's Indian heritage also plays a key role in his inability to protect his family and his future. Like the naturalists before him, Steinbeck chose a lower-class population as his primary subject while simultaneously chastising the oppression of the bourgeois class. Kino's people are seen as simple, yet honest, whereas the Spanish are ruthless and superior. Though the native Indians were not immigrants, as was the case in most naturalist texts, their role, or lack thereof, in modern society was identical.

Another characteristic that defines naturalism is the prevalence of pessimism in the text. Kino's songs, the dangers, the evil, the darkness, the violent animal imagery, the doctor, the priest, the pearl buyers all serve to cultivate a pessimistic view of human nature. Often in naturalist literature, there is a repetition of a line or phrase that further emphasizes this pessimism. In *The Pearl*, the phrase "it will destroy us" is repeated multiple times in reference to the pearl, and that is precisely what happens.

There is also an element of narrative detachment in literary naturalism. The author attempts to create an objective tone through the use of an impartial narrator and one-dimensional, flat characters. The focus, then, is on the story itself and what happens to the main character rather than on the characters themselves. *The Pearl* does maintain a somewhat objective and factual narration, but the author also injects his narrator, through his diction, with certain prejudices against characters—namely the priest, the doctor, and the pearl buyers. Even Kino himself is not immune to the narrator's judgments. As a result, Steinbeck's narrator, perhaps, makes even more of a social commentary than do other writers of his generation.

Another major principle of naturalism is an emphasis on determinism, or a lack of free will. The fate of the characters is pre-determined, frequently by environmental factors, and nothing can change that course. In *The Pearl*, there is certainly an aspect of determinism, particularly with reference to Steinbeck's discussion of "the gods...who do not love men's plans," who "take their revenge on a man if he is successful through his own efforts." And the fate of Kino's son is ultimately determined by the light of the moon and the sounds of the night. However, Kino freely chooses to open the oyster, to voice his dreams, to reject the pearl buyers' offers, to beat his wife, to flee his village, and finally, to throw the pearl "with all his might" back into the ocean.

It is, perhaps, this blend of naturalism and humanism that has made *The Pearl* such an accessible and popular novel. Despite the tragic and inevitable ending, there is still the sense that the world is not entirely black and white, people can change their paths, and there is hope for a better future.

The physical setting plays a major role in the story in terms of character and theme. Steinbeck uses natural imagery extensively throughout the novel to highlight several themes: the struggle for survival, appearance versus reality, fate versus free will, and the natural world versus the civilized world. And Kino's physical and spiritual character is tied intrinsically to his surroundings.

Steinbeck portrays the natural world as one which parallels human existence. There is a symbiotic aspect to nature where all creatures live and work together in harmony, and there is the contentious side of nature where all is conflict and the Darwinian survival of the fittest. *The Pearl* embodies both of these sides of the natural world: Chapter One epitomizes the serenity possible in nature and in life, but as the greed over the pearl gains momentum, tensions in both the natural and human worlds abound.

### SOURCES OF *THE PEARL*

The sources of the story of *The Pearl* are two-fold. While travelling throughout the lower California Peninsula, Steinbeck heard a story about a young Indian boy from La Paz who found a "pearl of great size." That story undoubtedly makes reference to the parable of the "Pearl of Great Price" from the Christian New Testament (Matthew 13:45-46):

<sup>45</sup>Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. <sup>46</sup>When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

The most accepted interpretation of this parable is that the merchant represents the individual seeking rightness with God, and the pearl is the state of grace, the "Kingdom of God," that the merchant is seeking. The parable essentially asks what a person is, or should be, willing to sacrifice in order to gain a state of grace, a sense of rightness with God. According to the parable, one should sacrifice "everything he ha[s]."

The allusion to this parable in Steinbeck's novel is obvious, but its meaning is less clear. Certainly, the course of Kino's life after the discovery of the pearl and the outcome of the story do not suggest that the pearl represents anything as desirable as the "kingdom of God," yet whatever it does represent, it is something for which Kino sacrifices "everything he ha[s]."

The story Steinbeck heard about the boy in La Paz, a supposedly true account, was recorded in the author's novel, *The Sea of Cortez*:

*An Indian boy, by accident, found a pearl of great size, an unbelievable pearl. He knew its value was so great that he need never work again. In this one pearl he had the ability to be drunk as long as he wished, to marry any one of a number of girls, and to make many more a little happy too. In his great pearl lay salvation, for he could in advance purchase masses sufficient to pop him out of purgatory like a squeezed watermelon seed. In addition, he could shift a number of dead relatives a little nearer paradise.*

The original story continues with the interactions the boy has with the pearl buyers, all of whom try to swindle him. The boy decides not to sell it and instead hides it under a rock. He is assaulted two nights in a row and tortured on the third night but still refuses to reveal the spot where the pearl is hidden. At the end of the story, the boy throws the pearl back into the Gulf.

Though Steinbeck clearly borrowed the tale for his premise in *The Pearl*, there are several notable differences of which the reader should be aware. Kino is not a frivolous boy but a man with a wife and son to protect. Unlike the inconsequential wishes of the boy, Kino's dreams involve the sanctity of a church wedding, items his family needs to survive, and an education for his son. The boy is a caricature whereas Kino is a complex character with whom the reader can more readily sympathize. Kino's struggles and aspirations, though exaggerated, are also universal.

Steinbeck adds a much more complex layer to the story not just with Kino's character but with the theme of colonial oppression. It is not just Kino's struggle, then, but a struggle for all of his people. They are captives in their own land struggling against the prejudices and whims of their oppressors and they must daily fight to maintain their spiritual and cultural heritage.

#### FORM AND GENRE OF *THE PEARL*

The form of the novel can be discussed on a number of different levels. It is, technically, a "novella"—longer than the typical short story and shorter than the typical novel. It is a tragedy—the protagonist is categorically defeated by both outside forces and his own tragic flaws of pride, ambition, and greed. It is a story influenced by the naturalism movement and is, therefore, a work of social commentary.

*The Pearl* is all of these things, but the most significant form of the novel is one the author himself tells the reader:

*If this story is a parable, perhaps everyone takes his own meaning from it and reads his own life into it.*

Like Jesus, teaching through the use of parables, Steinbeck illustrates a moral lesson through his story of Kino and the pearl. Like all parables, the story is a simple one, and not even necessarily a realistic or plausible one. It is then for the reader to decide the exact symbolic and allegorical significance of the moral lesson.

If the pearl symbolizes goodness and a brighter future, then Kino's struggles to protect the pearl may represent the difficulty of maintaining virtue and honor in a world full of ambition and greed. If read from this perspective, the fact that Coyotito dies in the end would suggest that these external forces are insurmountable, that both physical and emotional destruction are inevitable.

If the pearl symbolizes wealth and material possessions, then Kino's struggles may represent the effects of materialism at the cost of personal spiritualism—that wealth, or even the promise of wealth, can turn a simple man content with his life into an obsessive, dissatisfied man. The predictable outcome is that he must lose something of value that material wealth cannot replace.

There is even a third level to be considered when reading *The Pearl* as a symbolic parable. So much of the novel centers around the effects of colonialism on the native people. If Steinbeck is making a statement about Spain's colonization of Mexico specifically—or colonialism in general—this story undoubtedly serves as an indictment. The only reason Kino searched for the pearl was that the doctor refused to help a lowly “little Indian” with an “insect bite.” It is surely the colonial Spanish who ransack his house and hunt Kino down. The Indian people have been mistreated and exploited for centuries, and Kino's story may be Steinbeck's historical allegory of their plight.

## Themes

### IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY

The novel opens with a portrayal of the natural world and Kino's place within that world. He has a loving and supportive family and is well-respected in his village. His people have bonded together through centuries of oppression. When Kino finds the pearl, it represents hope not just for Kino but for all of his people, and when he goes to town to sell the pearl, it becomes a "neighborhood affair."

As Kino senses the opportunists around him—the priest, the doctor, the pearl buyers—he begins to withdraw and distances himself from his people; "he had broken through the horizons into a cold and lonely outside" and "felt alone and unprotected." Kino knows that he has lost both the physical and emotional comfort of his former life as a poor villager, but he still has not yet realized his dreams of all the pearl promises for a better future for him and his family. He is afraid because he fears what is ahead, yet he knows he cannot go back.

In returning to their village at the end of the novel, Kino and Juana seem to be professing their desire to reenter their former support system. They no longer care about their canoe or their home, but they care enough about their people to return to the place where the evil began. They could have thrown the pearl back anywhere but instead choose to return to their traditional roots because they see the value of the community they have lost and know that their friends and family will help them cope with their grief.

### FICKLE NATURE OF HUMANITY

The narrator notes that for the neighbors, "time would now date from Kino's pearl." If he succeeded, they would say "what a great man he has become"; if he did not, "those same neighbors would say...a foolish madness came over him," and in both cases, they would claim that "I myself saw it." The narrator is addressing the fickle nature of humanity, that succeed or fail, the neighbors would desire to participate and claim to be a witness.

The neighbors muse over what they would do if they were in Kino's situation; they think of all the "charities, benefits" and "rescues one could perform if one had money." They express hope that wealth would not "turn Kino's head" to the "evil limbs of greed and hatred and coldness." They know humanity's indecisiveness but hope for a better future for Kino and, as a result, a better future for themselves; what benefits the individual "colonial animal" also helps the whole community.



When the original appraiser calls for the other dealers to come and look at Kino's pearl, Kino's neighbors whisper that they had "been afraid of something like this" and falsely claim that they "had been suspicious of it from the first" though the reader knows this is not the case. They think that he should, perhaps, take the thousand pesos offered, for "only yesterday he had nothing." This is the exact mentality the pearl buyers count on, and it is this attitude that keeps the Indians trapped in a place where their only option is to be cheated. Some of the community feel that Kino has "cut off his own head and destroyed himself" and others admire his "fierce" bravery and hope that they "may all profit...from his courage." Again, Steinbeck seems to be commenting on the capricious nature of humanity.

After Kino kills the man, his brother knows that Kino must leave the village, despite Kino's naïve belief that his "friends will protect [him]." Juan Tomas knows that this is true "only so long as they are not in danger or discomfort from it."

## ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN

Juana and Kino are seen in traditionally segregated roles at the opening of the novel. She tends to the baby and does the cooking. He surveys his land and revels in his good fortune. When they go to town to sell the pearl, Juana dresses Coyotito in his baptism clothes, she braids her hair and puts on her marriage clothes. Her actions are inherently feminine—taking care of her child and her appearance and showing sentimentality toward the two most important days of her life: the baptism of her child and her wedding day. In contrast, the simple act of placing a hat on his head becomes a statement in masculinity for Kino, who is attempting to put on the appearance of worldliness and acuity that are traditionally expected of men.

Juana challenges her husband, and her role as a woman and as a wife, when she desperately implores Kino to rid their lives of the "evil" pearl and insists that it will destroy them if they keep it. Kino repeats three separate times: "I am a man" in response to her pleas to affirm his ultimate authority in his home. Juana then makes several astute observations about the roles of men and women in her society. She knows and accepts the male propensity for stubbornness, perseverance, and strength, and she also realizes that the feminine qualities of "reason...caution" and "preservation" often serve to also to protect and save.

At the novel's close, Steinbeck portrays a shift in their relationship that redefines their roles as a man and woman. In the past, Juana has always walked behind her husband (and eaten after him and spoken after him). Now, they are walking side by side. The reader repeatedly notes throughout the novel that Kino and Juana's relationship is far more equal than their patriarchal culture would dictate, but here we see an outward expression of that equality.

## THE OPERATION OF FATE AND FREE WILL

There are several examples in the novel of the examination of the roles of fate and free will in determining a human's destiny. The making of a pearl is an accident of fate, occurring when a simple grain of sand happens to enter an oyster's shell. The valuable pearl is merely the oyster's attempt to protect itself from irritation. If the making of the pearl can be considered an accident, so too is the finding of one. Kino's people believe that some combination of Providence and luck intervenes on the diver's behalf, and even an unskilled diver can find the most valuable pearl.

When Kino verbalizes his plans for the money he will get from the sale of the pearl, he also knows that this same Providence, or fate, or divine intervention can absolutely thwart the fulfillment of his intentions. He may plan, but ultimately, he is powerless to guarantee the success of those plans.

Though the making and the finding of the pearl may be matters of fate, Kino's mistrust of those around him, his rejection of the pearl buyers' offers, and his self-imposed isolation are all matters of choice—the exercise of his free will. Fate does not “cause” him to beat his wife, to kill a man, or to flee his village. In the end, it is free will that allows Kino to choose to return to the safety and support of his village and to throw the pearl back into the water where he found it.

## DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN APPEARANCE AND REALITY

The narrator explains that for the people of the Gulf, “all sights were unreal and vision could not be trusted.” They are a spiritual people who trust instinct and intuition more than mere sensory information. The narrator states, “in this Gulf of uncertain light there were more illusions than realities.” Ironically, the people of the city trust *only* their sight, and they cannot understand the strange ways of the Indian culture.

Another example of this theme is evident in the scene with the pearl buyers. The entire process of appraising and making offers for Kino's pearl appears to all who are there as a fair and just process. However, the reader is keenly aware that it is all a sham, that the manipulative actions and verbal offers of the pearl buyers are all rehearsed and pre-determined, and Kino is a victim of that deception, as are all of his people.

## EFFECTS OF GREED ON INNOCENCE AND VIRTUE

After finding the pearl, Kino's desires are initially the simple dreams of a simple man. But as greed and ambition take hold of both Kino and those around him, he begins to spiral into animalistic, selfish desires which leave his family vulnerable to the dangers surrounding the pearl. He literally and figuratively abandons the spiritual alliance he has with nature in favor of a life of desperate isolation, in which innocence and virtue have no place.

In drastic contrast to the serene man the reader sees in the beginning of the novel, Kino becomes excessively violent and paranoid. It is no longer just the doctor, or the priest, or the pearl buyers, or the beggars, or the townspeople; he fears even his own people, and he fears even his own emotions. Greed has prompted Kino to replace his spiritualism with materialism.

## EFFECTS OF COLONIALISM ON NATIVE CULTURES

The doctor, the priest, and the pearl buyers all provide significant examples of the effects of colonialism on native cultures.

Kino pauses before knocking on the doctor's door because he is torn between his son's need and his own pride. For Kino and his people, the doctor represents four hundred years of Spanish colonialism during which the native people were exploited and maltreated, in Steinbeck's words: "beaten and starved and robbed and despised ... and frightened." Kino feels a mixture of anger, fear, and weakness as he prepares to ask a representative of his oppressor for help. So firmly rooted is Kino's resentment toward his oppressors, that he feels it would be easier to kill the doctor than speak to him. This is the fundamental conflict for his people. Ultimately, Kino does humble himself and essentially beg the man for the kind of miracle this Spanish doctor has convinced Kino's race only he can provide.

The priest relays the story of the history of pearl-buying and contributes to the Indians' continued poverty by appealing to their fears, ignorance, and superstition. Because the Indian people believe their gods "do not love men's plans" and take revenge on those who act of their own free will, the priest is able to manipulate effectively the Indians into believing that they must stay in the station of life into which they were born. Any aspiration, any desire to rise in class, is a sin against God or the gods. The Indians' trust of the priest, however, is ambiguous because Kino's people know the priest is one of the Spanish oppressors. The fact that the speech is the same every year further proves the priest's desire to keep them in a position of subjugation.

When Kino's neighbors discuss the transaction with the pearl buyers, they are more willing to believe the word of their oppressors, who they have been taught all their lives to believe are superior, than the evidence of their own eyes. From the discovery of Kino's pearl, the Indians know he has a thing of great value, but they quickly revise their assessment of the pearl and Kino with the pearl buyers' evaluation. They seem to have no idea that the buyers' low evaluation and offer have been long established, and they have always cheated the Indians out of the rightful value of their livelihood.

In all of these cases, the oppressors rely on not only the ignorance of the Indian people but also on their complete lack of options. Even when the Indians suspect they are being exploited, they know that there are no other doctors, no other messiahs, and no one else to buy their pearls. Kino's people are trapped, and the doctor, the priest, and the pearl buyers are their captors.

## Motifs

There are three primary motifs in *The Pearl*, and all of them are closely tied to several of the novel's themes: discrepancies between appearance and reality, the effects of ambition and greed on innocence and virtue, the struggle for survival, the effects of colonialism on native cultures, and the operation of fate and free will.

### KINO'S SONGS

Because Kino is of the poor and illiterate Indian class, his people's culture and history were, of necessity, entrenched in the Oral Tradition. Songs became their primary way of sharing their experiences, of passing history and tradition to the next generation. The songs have become the outward manifestations of their internal feelings.

For Kino, the songs he hears indicate shifts in his emotions on the most primal level; these songs subsequently control the overall tone in certain passages and chapters. As Kino envisions the things he will do when he is a rich man, the "music of the pearl" is a triumphant chorus. As he stares at the pearl for the first time, its music is full of promise. In contrast, when the priest enters their home, the music of the pearl is gone, and Kino hears instead something he believes to be the "music of evil." Listening to Juana cook brings Kino back to the "Song of the Family."

Later in the novel, the music of the pearl is again triumphant, while the music of the family is a "quiet melody...underlay[ing] it." This is important for two reasons. It provides a contrast to Chapter One in which the Song of the Family was the only song that mattered to Kino; now it is merely background music. It also shows that Kino has not fully given up the hope that this pearl will bring him triumph, despite the crimes he has committed and the dangers which lie ahead.

At the novel's close, when all has been lost for Kino and Juana, and they return forlorn to their village without their son, the Song of Family is like a battle cry, and the music of the pearl has essentially grown silent.

It should be noted that *The Pearl* was originally conceived as a film project; the songs were to be actual musical scores played during appropriate moments. As with any film, the changes in music would indicate shifts in mood, foreshadow future events, and provide commentary on the action. Students will gain a better understanding of how the novel is to be read with that in mind.

### NATURE IMAGERY

Steinbeck portrays the natural world as a parallel to the human world in both its symbiotic communal existence and in its fierce struggle for survival.

While Juana is preparing her family's breakfast, and Kino is beginning his day, roosters crow, birds skitter about, and pigs root through the rubbish to find food. An ant tries to escape the trap set by an ant lion, two roosters make an attempt at a cock fight. Small fish and mice try to escape their predators, the larger fish and the night hawks. Every living being strives to survive in a Darwinian world of survival of the fittest. These natural struggles also serve to highlight Kino and Juana's own struggles to survive, not just because they are poor, but because they are of a class oppressed for centuries by the Spanish colonists.

Steinbeck also uses natural imagery to describe his characters. When Kino discovers his wife has stolen the pearl and intends to get rid of it, he hisses at her "like a snake." His transition from loving husband to desperate animal seems almost literal rather than metaphorical: "He was an animal now, for hiding, for attacking, and he lived only to preserve himself and his family." Kino's struggle, formerly internal, becomes an external one as well, which Steinbeck reinforces this through his use of animal imagery.

Later in the novel, when Kino must defend his family against the trackers, he is described in terms of a great jungle cat, "crouch[ing] low," and threading his way through the brush." Steinbeck makes a direct comparison as well: "And Kino ran for the high place, as nearly all animals do when they are pursued." Similarly, the trackers "scuttled over the ground like animals;" they make a noise "like excited dogs on a warming trail." Both Kino and the trackers are portrayed as animals. They are engaged in a battle for survival, and the reader senses, from this language, that it will be a visceral and brutal one.

Steinbeck effectively maintains the parallels between the human and the natural world in the novel's closing. Kino has, once again, made peace with the natural world by throwing the pearl back into the ocean. The pearl becomes, once again, a beautiful thing, and a part of the natural world, when it is returned home to the natural world, the sea.

## LIGHT AND DARKNESS

In an overall sense, the prevalence of light and dark images in the novel conveys the predictable forces of good and evil at play in various scenes. As Kino dreams of his son reading, he sees the page growing dark, perhaps foreshadowing his son's, or at least his dream's, demise. A "dark thing" comes to Kino's home to steal the pearl. The pearl is described in terms of light and beauty.

The burning of their home is described as a "fierce light." Ironically, light has become the danger, the source of fear. It is the light of the moon that prevents Juana and Kino from hiding from the trackers.

Ultimately, the light and dark motif serves to symbolize the complex nature of the pearl and of humanity. A "dark residue" results from the combination of "essence" of pearl and man. News of the pearl stirs up something "infinitely black and evil." Though the pearl is beautiful and bright and holds the promise of a better future, it also induces the black evil of greed and conflict.

## Symbols

### THE SCORPION AND COYOTITO

The scorpion represents unadulterated evil whereas Coyotito symbolizes pure innocence. The baby has no basis for suspecting the danger presented by the scorpion. He laughs at the sight of the insect and acts as if he had been given a toy, shaking the rope until the scorpion falls.

The adults, of course, are all too familiar with the darkness of mankind and with their own limitations in protecting their son.

The introduction of the scorpion—superimposed over a moment of supreme joy and serenity—also serves to parallel the testing of Kino's own innocence and virtue as he struggles with both internal and external ambition and greed. The reader could make an additional parallel in looking at the relationship between the Spanish colonists and Kino's people. The Indian culture's traditional and natural way of life is threatened by the colonizing of their land by a people who have only their own materialistic interests in mind. Like Coyotito, Kino and his people are at the mercy of evil forces.

### KINO'S CANOE

On a literal level, the canoe provides a means of survival for the family. The canoe not only provides transportation but also a means to catch food and, most importantly, a means of making a livelihood. On a symbolic level, the canoe represents Kino's heritage and the pride he and his people derive from their craft and their culture. Kino pays his canoe homage, caressing the bow and giving thanks, for he knows that he'd be helpless without it.

### LEGERDEMAIN

The pearl buyer's practice of legerdemain symbolizes the exploitation Kino's people have suffered for centuries. All of the actions of the pearl buyers are well-practiced, and even though the Indians understand on some level that they are being cheated, they also know that there is no remedy.

## THE ANTS

The ants symbolize a fundamental shift in Kino's perspective from his life before and after the discovery of the pearl. In Chapter One, Kino watches as the ants try to escape the ant lion's sand trap. He is detached and described as godlike. While it would be in his power to, he makes no effort whatsoever to help the struggling ants. In contrast, in Chapter Six, as Kino watches the ants again, he blocks their path. His attitude has fundamentally altered from a position of indifference to one of control. Unlike the detached God of Chapter One, he seeks to be the powerful, commanding God in this scene. Ironically, Kino is unable to change the course of the march as the ants simply climb over his foot and continue on their way. He is unable to alter the course of nature just as he is unable to control the course of events of his own life. Later in this chapter, Steinbeck compares the trackers to ants. Kino will not be able to change the course of that situation either.

## THE PEARL

The pearl, as the central symbol in the novel, is never explicitly defined but instead left to the reader's own interpretation, and the understanding of the significance of the pearl shifts throughout the course of the novel.

Initially, the pearl can be said to symbolize hope, goodness, and a brighter future for Kino and his family. Kino wishes for a proper wedding in a church, clothing, new tools and weapons to help his family and his community survive, and most importantly, a formal education for his son. It is with his son's education that Kino can envision a future free of colonial oppression: "because he will know—he will know and through him we will know."

The pearl's symbolism shifts as the town embraces the news of "The Pearl of the World." It is a pearl of great beauty and size, but it also brings the destructive forces of the outside world into Kino's innocent and hopeful world. Once Kino determines that he is being swindled by the pearl buyers, his own attitude changes towards what the pearl represents. The pearl no longer symbolizes just hope for a better future; it represents ambition and materialistic desires.

Kino is eventually consumed, and tortured, by his greed. He beats his wife. He kills a man in desperation. He flees his village not only to escape the wrath of the law but to sell the pearl in the city, evidence that he still clings to his original dreams despite what he has done. Whereas previously Kino felt it was the luck of the gods to have found the pearl, he now feels entitled to his dreams. Once a simple man with simple needs, Kino is now sacrificing his spiritual life for one of animalistic and irrational desire. The pearl has now come to represent the destructive nature of materialism.

Even the language describing the pearl itself changes drastically through the course of the novel. In the beginning, it is a "great pearl, perfect as the moon." It "captured the light...and gave it back in silver incandescence." It was as "large as a sea-gull's egg" and its "curve was perfect." And at the novel's close, the pearl is "ugly" and "gray, like a malignant growth." The luster of the pearl itself, and of their future, has fallen prey to the cancer of greed, ambition, and grief. Ultimately, Kino throws the pearl back into the ocean after he has lost almost everything that matters to him, namely his son, his former life, and his pride.



### **Questions for Essay and Discussion**

1. What social and political views does the author express? What techniques does Steinbeck use to reveal those views? And how do these issues affect the characters?
2. Discuss the significance of the novel's title.
3. Evaluate the point of view of the novel and the narrator's reliability as a storyteller. What other options might the author have considered for point of view and what would the effects of those alternate choices have been?
4. Analyze the roles of men and women in the novel. What does the author's attitude toward men seem to be? Towards women? And how do these roles change throughout the novel?
5. Explore the role of religion and spirituality. What is the difference between the two as presented in the novel? How does the character of the priest function as a mockery of religion?
6. Discuss the effects of greed, power, and materialism on the characters in the novel.
7. Reflect on the theme of appearance versus reality in the novel. Why is this theme so specific to and significant of Kino's people?
8. Consider the function of setting in the novel and how it serves to parallel theme and character.
9. Discuss the function of the animal imagery prevalent in the novel.
10. Compare and contrast Kino's life and attitude before and after he finds the pearl.
11. Reflect on the role of family and community in the novel. What commentary does Steinbeck seem to be making about the fickle nature of humanity and our changeable position within society?
12. Discuss the author's use of foreshadowing and the devices Steinbeck uses to accomplish this.
13. What does the author seem to be saying about how we measure happiness?
14. Why does the author find it necessary to include a preface to the story?
15. List possible symbolic meanings for the pearl and the corresponding lessons this allegory might be teaching.



## **Practice Free Response Items**

### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 1

Read the opening paragraphs of Chapters 3 and 4 in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*. Then, write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the function of the extended metaphor in establishing setting, character, and theme.

### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 2

Read Chapter One of John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*. Then, in a well-organized essay, compare and contrast the portrayal of the doctor both before and after the reader actually meets him. Pay particular attention to the diction, the narrator's attitude toward the doctor, and the overall tone created by the author.

### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 3

Read Chapters 1 and 6 of John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* and analyze the relationship between Kino and Juana. In a well-written essay, compare and contrast these chapters' portrayals of this relationship. How does Steinbeck achieve these contrasting views?

### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 4

Consider the following quotation from the novel's epigraph:

*If this story is a parable, perhaps everyone takes his own meaning from it and reads his own life into it.*

In a well-organized essay, evaluate John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* as a parable and consider the multiple layers of moralistic meaning possible for the novel. Make certain to pay particular attention to the symbolism inherent in the pearl itself.

### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 5

Authors make careful, conscious choices when deciding what point of view to use to tell a story because those choices directly affect how the reader perceives the characters, the plot, the setting, and every other aspect of the novel.

In a well-organized essay, analyze John Steinbeck's choice of point of view in *The Pearl* and explain the effect(s) on the novel as a whole.

## PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 6

A symbol is an object, person, or place that has a meaning in and of itself and also stands for something other than itself, usually an idea or a concept. In a well-organized essay, analyze the symbolic significance of the literal pearl in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* including a discussion of what the symbol reveals about theme and character. Be sure to address how the symbol's meaning might evolve as the novel progresses.

## PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 7

Authors often use their novels and plays as a forum to criticize a particular social or political issue in their society. In a well-organized essay, analyze the narrative techniques John Steinbeck uses to express his attitude towards a particular social or political ill in *The Pearl*. Include in your analysis an explanation of the relevance of the issue to the overall meaning of the novel.

## PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 8

A common theme in literature is the role of fate versus free will in human life. Write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the literary and narrative techniques John Steinbeck uses in order to develop this theme in *The Pearl*. Do not merely restate the plot and be certain to address the relevance of the theme to the novel as a whole.

## PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 9

Central themes in works of literature are often developed through scenes in which a death takes place. Write a well-reasoned and –supported essay in which you explain how a specific death in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* serves to highlight the meaning of the novel as a whole. Avoid merely restating the plot.

## PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 10

Light and darkness often serve as important motifs in literature, frequently with symbolic significance. In a well-organized essay, analyze John Steinbeck's use of light and dark in *The Pearl* and explain the significance to the overall meaning in the novel.

### Practice Multiple-Choice Questions

#### PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 1 – 5

Carefully read Chapter One of John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* before selecting the best answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. The tone of the opening paragraphs of the chapter can best be described as
  - A. tragic.
  - B. expectant.
  - C. tranquil.
  - D. indifferent.
  - E. sinister.
2. "Kino had wondered often at the iron in his patient, fragile wife" is an example of a(n)
  - A. allusion.
  - B. hyperbole.
  - C. cliché.
  - D. analogy.
  - E. metaphor.
3. Consider the following passage: "And the yellow sun threw their black shadows ahead of them so that they walked on their own shadows." The primary function of this sentence is to
  - A. foreshadow the unavoidable evil ahead for Kino and Juana.
  - B. hyperbolize the threat of Coyotito's scorpion bite.
  - C. illuminate the theme of the effects of colonialism on native cultures.
  - D. juxtapose the natural world and the civilized world.
  - E. symbolize the hopelessness Kino and Juana feel.
4. Consider the paragraph starting with "And the newcomers." The passage's function is to reveal the beggars' opinions about all of the following EXCEPT
  - A. the doctor.
  - B. the priest.
  - C. Kino.
  - D. Juana.
  - E. Coyotito.
5. The doctor's most ironic comment is
  - A. "I am a doctor, not a veterinary."
  - B. "Have I nothing better to do than cure insect bites for 'little Indians'?"
  - C. "See if he has any money."
  - D. "I, I alone in the world am supposed to work for nothing—and I am tired of it."
  - E. "That was civilized living."

## PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 6 – 10

Carefully read Chapter Two of John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* before choosing the best answers to the multiple-choice questions below.

6. The chapter addresses all of the following themes EXCEPT the
  - A. discrepancies between appearance and reality.
  - B. struggle for survival.
  - C. operation of fate versus free will.
  - D. effects of colonialism.
  - E. struggle to preserve virtue.
7. All of the following are possible reasons that Juana prays for a pearl and not a cure for Coyotito EXCEPT that she
  - A. thinks only the doctor can save her son.
  - B. is afraid to want the cure too much.
  - C. is worried about offending "God or the gods."
  - D. believes their chances of finding a pearl are better than finding a cure.
  - E. hopes to control the events that shape her life.
8. The "ghostly gleam" of the pearl is an example of all of the following literary devices EXCEPT
  - A. antithesis.
  - B. synesthesia.
  - C. onomatopoeia.
  - D. alliteration.
  - E. foreshadowing.
9. The primary function of Steinbeck's repetition of "God or the gods" is to
  - A. emphasize the religious effects of colonialism.
  - B. contrast the natural world and the civilized world.
  - C. illustrate Juana and Kino's desperation.
  - D. parallel the experiences of the Indians and the Spanish settlers.
  - E. chastise Juana and Kino's lack of a singular faith.
10. With reference to this chapter, the narrator's attitude towards the doctor and the King of Spain can best be described as
  - A. reverent.
  - B. indifferent.
  - C. sarcastic.
  - D. condescending.
  - E. contemptuous.

## PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 11 – 15

Carefully read Chapter Three of John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* before selecting the best answers to the following questions.

11. In the opening two paragraphs of Chapter Three, the author employs the use of all of the following literary devices EXCEPT
  - A. anaphora.
  - B. onomatopoeia.
  - C. analogy.
  - D. assonance.
  - E. personification.
12. Kino's overall mood in this chapter shifts from
  - A. anxious to hopeful.
  - B. hopeful to paranoid.
  - C. peaceful to tragic.
  - D. apathetic to apprehensive.
  - E. resigned to contemptuous.
13. The narrator's main source of commentary in this chapter is tied to the theme of
  - A. survival.
  - B. fate.
  - C. prejudice.
  - D. guilt.
  - E. greed.
14. Kino's songs do all of the following in this chapter EXCEPT
  - A. reveal Juana's anxiety and fear.
  - B. announce the arrival of evil.
  - C. symbolize the hope of the pearl.
  - D. highlight the importance of family to Kino.
  - E. mirror Kino's conflicting feelings.
15. Of the many desires Kino has for the future, the most prominent one in this chapter would be for a/an
  - A. new harpoon.
  - B. church wedding.
  - C. education for his son.
  - D. adequate rifle.
  - E. new suit.

## PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 16 – 20

Carefully read Chapter Four of John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* and then select the best answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

16. In the following sentence: "Nothing could break down this wall, and they could remain whole within the wall." The "wall" most likely refers to their
  - A. homes.
  - B. livelihoods.
  - C. pride.
  - D. families.
  - E. future.
17. The attitude of the narrator towards the pearl buyers can best be described as
  - A. sorrowful.
  - B. reverent.
  - C. jovial.
  - D. sarcastic.
  - E. disdainful.
18. The most significant clue that Kino is being swindled is the pearl buyers'
  - A. facial expressions.
  - B. rehearsed comments.
  - C. use of the magnifying glass.
  - D. stumbling of the coin.
  - E. refusal to offer a fair price.
19. "If that is so, then all of us have been cheated all of our lives." In the context of this chapter, this sentence is an example of
  - A. irony.
  - B. paradox.
  - C. chiasmus.
  - D. litotes.
  - E. juxtaposition.
20. Kino repeats "I am a man" for all of the following reasons EXCEPT to
  - A. prove that he is more cunning than his opponents.
  - B. make Juana afraid of defying him.
  - C. insist that he will persevere against those who have wronged him.
  - D. show that he is the ultimate authority in his home.
  - E. illustrate that he is a dominant, masculine force.

## PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 21 – 25

Carefully read Chapter Five of John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* and then select the best answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

21. The overall tone of this chapter shifts from
  - A. light-hearted to desperate.
  - B. apprehensive to reflective.
  - C. frantic to conciliatory.
  - D. ominous to mournful.
  - E. desperate to resigned.
22. The object most frequently personified in this chapter is the
  - A. pearl.
  - B. light.
  - C. darkness.
  - D. wind.
  - E. moon.
23. The chapter serves to convey all of the following EXCEPT
  - A. Kino's remaining virtue.
  - B. Juana's desire to rid their lives of the evil pearl.
  - C. the narrator's condemnation of the community.
  - D. Kino's deep despair.
  - E. the essential differences between men and women.
24. All of the following prevent Kino from returning to his former life EXCEPT
  - A. his broken canoe.
  - B. the pearl buyers' attitudes.
  - C. his burned-down house.
  - D. the murdered man in the path.
  - E. his wife's and brother's warnings.
25. In the sentence, "I do not know. It is all darkness—all darkness and shape of darkness," Kino is most likely referring to the
  - A. people of his village.
  - B. pearl buyers.
  - C. doctor.
  - D. men who tried to kill him.
  - E. sky.

## PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 26 – 30

Carefully read Chapter Six of John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* before selecting the best answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

26. The example of foreshadowing occurring with the most frequency in this chapter is
- A. the knife.
  - B. Coyotito's cries.
  - C. the music of the enemy.
  - D. Kino's dreams.
  - E. the rifle.
27. All of the following are examples of irony in the chapter EXCEPT
- A. "Perhaps the dealers were right and the pearl has no value."
  - B. "Do not touch it, for if you do and then touch your eyes, it will blind you."
  - C. "His own brown skin was a better protection for him."
  - D. "Kino had a rifle across his arm" as he walked into town.
  - E. "They saw the little splash" of the pearl "in the distance."
28. "And beware of the tree that bleeds...For if you break it the red blood will flow from it, and it is evil luck." The author employs the use of all of the following literary devices EXCEPT
- A. symbolism.
  - B. foreshadowing.
  - C. oxymoron.
  - D. malapropism.
  - E. personification.
29. Kino draws the greatest amount of emotional strength from
- A. himself.
  - B. the knife.
  - C. the pearl.
  - D. Coyotito.
  - E. Juana.
30. The image most prevalent in this chapter is of the
- A. rifle.
  - B. water.
  - C. animals.
  - D. knife.
  - E. heat.



### Answers with Explanations

1. The key to this question is that it is in reference to the “opening” paragraphs and not the chapter as a whole. There are certainly elements of potential tragedy (A), anxiety and evil (E) further into the chapter, but these opening paragraphs provide a stark contrast to those upcoming elements. Likewise, a careful reader might expect (B) the serenity of the opening to be shattered by some surprising event, but that is what the reader brings to the novel, not anything Steinbeck infuses into his opening. Nor do we find indifference (D) in the beginning of the novel, or anywhere for that matter. The tone here, rather, is one of peaceful tranquility (C). Despite his poverty, Kino seems completely satisfied with his life. The author provides multiple direct and indirect examples of Kino’s feelings. The novel opens with references to the calmness and light of the natural world and Kino seems to be one with that world. When he awakens, he looks first to the “lightening square” as he wakes with the dawn, then to his son, and then to his wife. Once he sees all these things that make up the “perfect...Whole” of his existence, he thinks, “It was very good” and closes his eyes again to listen to the music of his life, the Song of the Family.
2. The quotation does not allude to any other person, place, event, or concept. Therefore, (A) is not the correct choice. Neither is it an overuse or overly familiar turn of phrase, so that cliché would not apply either (C). A reader might speculate that Kino is hyperbolizing his wife’s character (B), but given his overall opinion of her as revealed in the chapter, one can assume that Kino means the comparison quite literally. And while it is an analogous comparison—comparing Juana’s spirit to iron—it is a metaphor, not a simile (D). Therefore, paradox, choice (E) would be the best answer. Kino is awed by the paradoxical coexistence of his wife’s iron-strength with her patient fragility.
3. Although Coyotito’s scorpion bite is the reason Kino, Juana, and all of their neighbors are going to town, the author does not need to hyperbolize the threat of the scorpion bite because all of them know the grave threat of potential death for the child (B). The theme of the effects of colonialism is present in this chapter as a whole but does not seem applicable in this case (C). There is no juxtaposition of the natural and the civilized world in this particular quotation, though they do enter “the city of stone and plaster” in the following paragraph (D). This then leave choices (A) and (E) as the most viable options. Were it later in the chapter, choice (E) would be more feasible, but as of this point in the plot, Kino and Juana might feel helpless, but they do not yet have a sense of hopelessness (E). The best answer, then, is choice (A). As the Indian community leaves the light and safety of their village and enters the city, walking “on their own shadows,” the reader senses foreboding evil ahead.

4. The beggars, ironically, represent the conscience and condemnation of society. The narrator hyperbolizes that they are “great experts in financial analysis” as they successfully assess Juana’s “old blue skirt” and “read the age of Kino’s blanket and the thousand washings of his clothes, and set them down as poverty people” (A) and (C). They are on an endless search of “perfect knowledge of their fellow men.” They know the “fat, lazy doctor ... his ignorance, his cruelty, his avarice, his appetites, his sins” (E). And they know that the doctor will look with disdain on the “indigent baby with a scorpion bite.” The use of the word “indigent” carries the negative connotation of being destitute (D). **Though the church and church-goers are mentioned in the passage, the priest is not, so choice (B) is the best answer.**
5. Each of these quotations reveals something important about the doctor’s character, but only one of them is predominantly ironic. Choice (A) reveals his attitude toward the Indian culture—he views them merely as animals unworthy of proper medical care. These are not real people to the doctor, and more importantly, they are not people with money; choice (C) highlights his greed but is a literal comment. He reminisces about his life in Paris, which he considers to have been far more “civilized” than his current circumstances (E), and this serves primarily to show his joyless pomposity. The doctor knows the potentially fatal scorpion bite is not just a simple matter of an “insect bite” and the statement of having “nothing better to do” is, in itself, ironic, since the doctor seems to do little else besides eat fine foods and order his servants around (B). However, the doctor further insults Kino’s race in this same quotation by labeling Kino’s people with the degrading phrase of “little Indians.” This is not ironic—it is the doctor’s genuine opinion. **Choice (D), then, is the only phrase that exists as a purely ironic example. The doctor’s claim that he “alone in the world” is “supposed to work for nothing” is completely absurd given that he is surrounded by hardworking, poverty-stricken people who *do* work for almost nothing and can barely make ends meet, yet he surrounds himself with lovely and expensive possessions and servants whom he mistreats.**
6. The theme of appearance versus reality is addressed several times in the chapter. The narrator explains that the people of the Gulf “trust things of the spirit and ... imagination, but they do not trust their eyes” and says that “there are more illusions than realities” in the “uncertain light” of the Gulf (A). There is an abundance of oceanic imagery which highlights the struggle for survival in nature, and Kino and Juana are clearly struggling to ensure the survival of their child (B). Making and finding the pearls are both accidents of fate while the choice to open the oysters is man’s free will (C). The repetition of “God or the gods” suggests the role of Spain’s colonization of this Mexican coastal village with respect to religion; the Indians’ superstitious faith has become intertwined with the Christian beliefs of their colonizers (D). **The only theme not addressed in this chapter is the struggle to preserve virtue (E), though it will play a predominant role later in the novel.**

7. Curiously, Juana prays not for a cure for her child but instead “that they might find a pearl with which to hire the doctor” because their years of social and religious oppression at the hands of the Spanish have made them question their own medicinal powers (A). She is afraid to wish for a cure because it is “not good to want a thing too much” (B). She “looks away” from the pearl in order to avoid offending the “God or the gods” (C), yet simultaneously attempts to use “the magic of prayer ... to tear the luck out of the gods’ hands (E).” **The only unlikely reason listed is choice (D) because there is no indication in the text that Juana believes their chances of finding a pearl are better than finding a cure.**
8. Antithesis is a rhetorical device that emphasizes opposites or contrast, which is the case in this example; ghosts are not normally associated with an adjective like “gleaming” (A). Both words in the phrase begin with the “g” consonant sound (D) and both are onomatopoeic where sound imitates meaning (C). The author’s use of the word “ghostly” to describe what should be a profoundly joyous occasion for Kino and Juana suggests a foreshadowing of potentially negative future events (E). **Synesthesia, or the merging of two sensory experiences to create an image, is the only literary device not employed in this phrase (B).**
9. Though the use of both the Christian “God” and the pagan “gods” of the Indian culture does serve to provide a contrast, it is more a contrast of religious philosophies than one between the natural and civilized world (B). Juana and Kino are certainly desperate to save their child, and do implore “God or the gods” to help them, but the phrase is also used in reference to the making and finding of pearls, so that choice (C) is not the best answer either. The narrator is clearly not chastising Kino and Juana for calling upon multiple faiths for help (E), nor is the narrator comparing the experiences of the Indians and the Spanish settlers. In fact, the Spanish want nothing to do with the Indians (D). **The most logical answer, then, is choice (A). Through the repetition of “God or gods,” Steinbeck emphasizes Spain’s religious influence over the Indian culture which has a resulted in an intermixing of Christian and pagan beliefs.**
10. There is nothing in the text to suggest that the narrator is either reverent toward or indifferent to the doctor and the King of Spain (A) and (B). Contemptuous is too strong given the tone of the relevant passages, so choice (E) is not correct either. The two remaining choices are both possibilities and require a close reading of the text. Because we have already seen evidence in the previous chapter of the condescending disdain the narrator feels for the doctor, it is understandable that the reader might assume the same tone here. However, the tone is not so much condescending (D) **as it is sarcastic. With reference to the doctor, the narrator states that Juana’s “remedy lacked his authority because it was simple and didn’t cost anything.” And the bed of pearl oysters “had raised the King of Spain to be a great power” and “had decorated the churches for his soul’s sake.” Choice (C) is, therefore, the best choice.**

11. Anaphora refers to the repetition of a word or group of words within a short section of writing; Steinbeck repeats “a town” and “the town” eight times in the opening two paragraphs (A). The author employs the use of onomatopoeia with the “nerves” of the town were “pulsing” and “vibrating” (B) and personifies the town as having “emotion” with a “nervous system and a head and shoulders and feet” (E). Because the whole of the passage serves as an analogy comparing “a town” to a ‘colonial animal,’ choice (C) would not be the choice either. **Only assonance (D), the repetition of interior vowel sounds, is not used by the author.**
12. Kino’s mood is anxious in other parts of the chapter but not at the beginning of chapter three, so that choice (A) is not correct. Initially his mood is peaceful because he “thought everyone shared their joy,” but “tragic” does not accurately describe the shift in tone later in the chapter. There is certainly potential for tragedy given the circumstances, but there is nothing tragic in and of itself (C). Having just found “the Pearl of the World,” Kino is definitely not apathetic (D), and though he is contemptuous later in the chapter, to describe his mood as “resigned” at the beginning of the chapter would not be accurate (E). **Only choice (B) appropriately describes Kino’s mood shift. He and Juana are hopeful for a better future at the start of the chapter, despite the unknown greed surrounding them. Then Kino gradually becomes increasingly more paranoid about the pearl as the chapter progresses, as the “music of evil, of the enemy” drowns out “the Song of Family.”**
13. With the exception of guilt (D), the narrator does provide commentary on all of the themes above. The battles between the fish and the mice and the hawk illustrate the theme of survival (A). Kino reflects on the role of the gods who “do not love success unless it comes by accident,” exemplifying the theme of fate versus free will (B). The priest’s and the doctor’s attitudes towards the Indians clearly represent the theme of prejudice (C). **The greatest source of commentary, however, comes from the concept of greed (E). It engulfs the town, the priest, the doctor, and even Kino himself.**
14. The songs indicate shifts in Kino’s mood and the overall tone in the chapter (E). As Kino recounts the things he will do when he is a rich man, “the music of the pearl rose like a chorus of trumpets in his ears...shrilling with triumph” and, at the close of the chapter as Kino stares at the pearl, “its own music came from it—its music of promise and delight, its guarantee of the future, of comfort, of security” (C). In contrast, when the priest enters their home, “the music had gone out of Kino’s head” and the “music of evil, of the enemy sounded...faint and weak” at first, but eventually “shrilling against the music of the pearl” (B). Listening to Juana cook brings Kino back to the “Song of the Family” like the “purring of a kitten” (D). **Because the songs seem only to mirror Kino’s emotions, choice (A), revealing Juana’s anxiety and fear, would be the correct choice.**

15. Kino first wishes to marry Juana in a church (B), then for clothing and new shoes (E), then a harpoon (A) and a rifle (D), and, finally, for Coyotito to attend school (C). It is this last wish that garners the most momentum in the chapter. Kino's desire to educate his son is by far the most daring and speaks to the "trap" of the "hundreds of years of subjugation" thrust upon Kino's people. He wants his son to escape that trap and to be able to "tell him the truth of things" from the books that leave the Indian people in blind, trusting, yet desperate ignorance. Kino's hope is not merely just for his son but for his people as well: "And these things will make us free because he will know—he will know and through him we will know."
16. It is important to note the context in which this is said to determine the meaning of the "wall." In this particular paragraph, the brothers are walking to town, "squint[ing] their eyes a little" as generations of their ancestors had done before them, dating back to when the Spanish came "with argument and authority and gunpowder to back up both" to colonize their land. A "slight slitting of the eyes and a slight tightening of the lips" is the Indian people's only tangible defense "wall" against their oppressors. And though that wall could literally mean their homes (A), their jobs (B), or their families (D), or even metaphorically their (E) future, since any of these things could be and have been easily destroyed by the Spanish, none of those choices aptly describe "the wall." Choice (C) is the best answer because what the Spanish cannot take away from the Indian people is the pride they feel in their ancestry, for "nothing could break" that down and only there can they "remain whole."
17. Beginning with the paragraph, "A stout slow man," the reader should pay particular attention to the author's word choice to deduce the narrator's attitude (which should not be confused with the overall tone of the passage, which is notably sarcastic) (D). Though it may initially appear a favorable description—"his face fatherly and benign ... his eyes twinkled with friendship ... a caller of good mornings, a ceremonious shaker of hands" (C) whose "eyes could become wet with sorrow" at the memory of "the death of your aunt" (A)—it is all an illusion, a studied practice in manipulation. There is no suggestion in the text that the narrator reveres the pearl buyers at all (B), but there is every indication that the narrator looks on them with disdain. They have been deceiving Kino's people for so long that their trickery is now second-nature. They prey on ignorance and on trust so that "while the rest" of their faces "smile in greeting," their eyes are "as steady and cruel and unwinking as a hawk's eyes" getting ready to pounce on their next victim.

18. Though Kino looks at the buyer's face, the appraiser is far too adept at his work to provide any "sign [or] movement, the face did not change" (A). The reader is told outright even before Kino arrives in town that the pearl buyers "knew what price they would offer, how high they would bid, and what method each one would use." They manipulate Kino with rehearsed comments about "fool's gold" and "paste" (B), they offer Kino a magnifying glass to see the "strange-looking surface" because they know he has never actually seen a pearl's surface magnified (C), and they have already agreed not to go above 1,500 pesos (E). However, the most significant clue to the reader is in noting the appraiser's hand behind the desk which normally performs legerdemain "mechanically, precisely," but when he first sees the pearl, his hand actually "missed its precision" and the coin "stumbled...and slipped silently" into his lap. Even though Kino himself has no outward physical clues as to the buyer's opinion of the value of his pearl, the reader is made even more keenly aware of their ruse, so that choice (D) is the correct response.
19. Because the statement is not self-contradictory, paradox (B) is not the correct choice, nor is there a juxtaposition (E) of phrases. Chiasmus refers to the use of two consecutive phrases in which the structure of the second is an inversion of the first, so that (C) would not be correct either. Some readers might consider the use of litotes (D) because the statement is, in fact, an understatement, but it is because the audience knows it is ironic that they understand this, so (A) is the better choice. The key to answering this question is to look at the context in which it is said. Kino's neighbors are all discussing "the great theme of the morning," namely, what the reality of the situation is with regards to the pearl buyers. Because none of the buyers made a worthwhile offer, some neighbors speculate that their ruse might have been pre-arranged. But that notion is quickly dismissed because it would mean admitting that they "had been cheated all of our lives." The irony, of course, is double-fold: the pearl buyers *did* cheat Kino, as they have been cheating Kino's people for centuries.
20. Kino repeats three separate times: "I am a man" in response to Juana's pleas to get rid of the pearl. The obvious explanation would be that Kino is asserting his masculine dominance (E) which is, in part, true, but the reader can see further implications with a close reading of the text. In addition to the obvious, these three identical yet distinct utterances seem to indicate that he believes himself to be far more cunning than his opponents—"I am a man." And his face grew crafty" (A), that he must persevere against those who have wronged him—"We will not be cheated. I am a man." (C), and that he has the ultimate authority in his home—"Hush," he said fiercely. "I am a man." (D). At the chapter's close, it appears that Juana has, again, lost the argument, and she agrees to follow him to the capital, but there is no indication that she does so out of fear, nor is there evidence that instilling fear in his wife has been Kino's primary goal, so choice (B) would be the best response.



21. Though there is a quality of desperation, there is nothing light-hearted in this chapter, so that choice (A) is not correct. The reader might incorrectly choose (B) because Kino is reflective about the choices he has made at the chapter's end, but apprehensive does not accurately describe the beginning. Juana is frantic in her actions as she tries to get rid of the pearl, just as Kino frantically tries to stop her, but the tone is not one of conciliation at the end (C). There are both ominous and mournful aspects in the chapter, but neither of these accurately describes the overall tone (D). **Juana is desperate to rid their lives of the "evil" of the pearl and Kino is equally desperate to "[wrench] the pearl from her."** He is so desperate, in fact, that he slaps and kicks her to stop her from throwing away what he still considers to be their future. Their desperation continues in Kino's altercation with the "dark figure," their broken canoe, their burning house, and their hiding out at Juan Tomas's. It is only after his brother and his wife convince him of his lack of options that Kino resigns himself both to leaving his village and to keeping the pearl: "it is my misfortune and my life and I will keep it." Choice (E) is, therefore, the best answer.
22. The pearl itself is personified only once as "winking" from "behind a little stone" (A). Light (B) and darkness (C) play a key role in providing contrast, foreshadowing, and paralleling key events, but neither is personified, and the moon merely provides the "pale light" juxtaposed with the "darkness" and "shadows" (E). **The wind, however, is personified on several occasions. The wind is "nervous" and "restless" with the "smell of storm on its breath"; it "screamed" and "drove off the clouds and skimmed" and "drifted."** Choice (D), then, is the best response.
23. Though animalistic in his actions through much of this chapter, particularly in the beating of his beloved wife Juana (D), Kino is clearly disgusted with himself afterwards and later does not even consider taking one of his neighbor's canoes even though his is broken, and they are desperate to escape; both of these facts provide proof that his conscience is still intact (A). Juana sneaks away in the middle of the night in order to throw the pearl back into the sea (B) and makes several astute observations about the roles of men and women in her society. She knows and accepts the male propensity for stubbornness, perseverance, and strength, and she also realizes that the feminine qualities of "reason ... caution" and "preservation" often serve to "cut through Kino's manness and save them all." (E). **The only information not conveyed in this chapter is the narrator's condemnation of the community, so that choice (C) is the best answer.**
24. The main reason Kino and Juana must flee is the murder Kino has committed, and even though he was first attacked, Juana knows that the "explanation" of a powerless Indian in possession of a pearl of great value will mean nothing (D). Several other factors preclude Kino's return to his village as well. His canoe has been sabotaged (A) and his house ransacked and burned to the ground (C). Both Juana and Juan Tomas provide the voices of reason, convincing Kino that he has no other choice but to leave (E). **And though the pearl buyers were unwilling to give Kino a fair price and have prevented him from realizing the promise of a better future, their attitudes are not necessarily a factor in his inability to return to his former life, so that choice (B) is the best answer.**

25. In the context of this passage, it is unlikely that Kino is referring to the sky (E). The various people who have cheated him, ransacked his home, or attacked him throughout the novel could be any number of people, so that when he refers to “all the darkness” and the “shape of darkness,” he could be referring to: the pearl buyers (B), the doctor (C), or the men who tried to kill him (D). **However, the reader should recall Juana’s question in Chapter Three: “Who do you fear?” she asks, and Kino’s response is simply, “Everyone.” That is the case here as well; Kino fears everyone and everything and cannot realistically or effectively distinguish between any of these threats. All he can do is attempt to survive. Choice (A), then, is the most appropriate response.**
26. The key to responding correctly is in noting the word “frequency” in the question. All five of these choices appear in the chapter, but one occurs with greater regularity. In this particular chapter, Kino has only one dream that could be considered foreshadowing, so choice (D) is not correct. The music of the enemy appears only just before Kino strikes against the trackers (C). There are several references to Kino’s knife and the tracker’s rifle, but the weapons are more a statement of fact rather than of foreshadowing. Because they are weapons and they are necessary for survival, neither (A) nor (E) would be correct. **It is Coyotito’s cries which provide the greatest amount of foreshadowing in this chapter. Juana quickly tries to silence his “gurgl[ing]” at the beginning of the chapter by feeding him. Later, Kino fears “that the baby may cry” and warns Juana: “You must see that he does not cry.” Juana replies that Coyotito “knows” not to cry, but the reader knows that he is only a baby and cannot possibly be aware of the situation they are in. As Kino prepares to descend to the trackers’ camp, he hears “a murmur behind him” and then Juana “begging him to be quiet.” It is, therefore, no surprise to the reader that Kino hears a “little murmuring cry” from above just as he is about to attack. Choice (B) is, then, the best answer.**
27. In choice (B) Kino is, ironically, telling Juana “things she already knew” and she pretends that this is not so to reinforce his superior position. It is ironic that Kino’s “brown skin” served any kind of “protection” for him, since the color of his skin has suppressed his people’s race for centuries (C). The image of Kino walking through town at the end with the “rifle across his arm” is ironic in that he does, indeed, return home with one of the things he dreamed of the pearl bringing him, but it is at the cost of his son’s life (D). And, finally, the “little splash” made by the pearl is especially ironic given the havoc the pearl has created in their lives. **Only choice (A) is not ironic—Juana expresses a genuine opinion with no alternate meaning.**
28. The tree is both symbolic of and foreshadows evil (A) and (B). “Evil luck” is an example of an oxymoron (C) and a tree “that bleeds” illustrates personification (E). **The only device not employed is malapropism—there is no misuse of a word for comedic effect, so that choice (D) would be the best answer.**



29. Though reliant on and proud of his strong masculinity, Kino is erratically insecure and unsure (A). The pearl inspires rash action and desperate greed but not necessarily strength (C). The promise of an education for his son drives Kino's ambition, but he does not derive strength specifically from his son (D). The reader may erroneously choose choice (B), the knife, since Kino relies so heavily on his weapon as a threat of strength, but that is physical not emotional (B). **It is from Juana that Kino derives the greatest emotional strength, not just here but in previous chapters as well. After she refuses to leave him alone, "He shrugged his shoulders helplessly then, but he had taken strength from her. When they moved on it was no longer a panic flight." And because she is by his side at the end, he has the strength to face his guilt and hurl the pearl back into the sea.**
30. Kino duly notes the tracker's rifle throughout the pursuit (A). After being trapped in the dry, hot, and rocky desert (E), Steinbeck describes a "little spring" bubbling out of the mountain (B). His knife is particularly prominent in the final altercation with the trackers (D). **All of these images are present in Chapter Six, but by far the most prevalent are the animal images. Steinbeck describes animals not only literally in their natural surroundings trying to survive, but also figuratively in his descriptions of Kino and the trackers. Kino has an "animal light in his eyes," he "crouched low, he threaded his way through the brush"; he "crept" and "peered" and "stiffened." Similarly, the trackers "scuttled over the ground like animals"; they "whined a little, like excited dogs on a warming trail...circling and searching, peeping" and "stooping" to hunt him down. They are engaged in a battle for survival and the reader senses, from this language, that it will be a visceral and brutal one. Choice (C) is, therefore, the best answer.**

# The Pearl

## Chapter One

1. What is the narrative purpose of the epigraph at the start of the novel?

*The narrator establishes that this is a story in the tradition of oral storytelling passed down through generations. It “has taken root in every man’s mind.” Kino’s story of the great pearl has taken on the form of a parable where there is “no in-between anywhere” in terms of good and evil, and the characters and the events will therefore exist as symbolic representations.*

2. From the first two paragraphs in the novel, what immediately gives the reader a sense of place, class, and the social standing of the characters? What details support this interpretation?

*The reader knows two things: Kino lives within the natural world, and he is poor. He hears the roosters crowing, the birds chirping, and the pigs searching to find food. He lives in a brush house, his son lies sleeping in a “hanging box,” and he and his wife sleep on mats.*

3. In paragraph 3, the reader is introduced to the prevalent motif of songs. What is the significance of these songs? What might the reason(s) be that there were “no new songs added”?

*Because Kino is of the poor and illiterate Indian class, his people would out of necessity communicate their stories orally, and songs became their primary medium. Songs have become the outward manifestations of their internal thoughts and feelings. There are two possible reasons for the fact “no new songs were added.” They are a simple people with simple needs and only need a limited number of emotions to describe how they are feeling. An alternate explanation might be that the Spanish colonization of their land, which subjugated their people for centuries, has prevented them from developing their cultural voice any further.*

4. What is the tone of the opening paragraphs? How does the author achieve this tone?

*The tone is tranquil. Despite Kino’s poverty, he seems satisfied with his life. The author provides multiple direct and indirect examples of Kino’s feelings. The novel opens with references to the calmness and light of the natural world, and Kino seems to be one with that world; when he awakens, he looks first to the “lightening square,” then to his son, and then to his wife. Once he sees all these things that make up the “perfect ... Whole” of his existence, he thinks, “It was very good” and closes his eyes again to listen to the music of his life, the Song of the Family.*

5. Note the repetitive tasks Juana performs in the opening pages. What is their significance? How do they help to characterize Juana before we even hear her speak?

*While her husband goes outside to watch the dawn, Juana starts the fire—as she has done every morning of her life—and begins to prepare “the morning cakes.” The author’s use of the article “the” suggests this is the only breakfast they have ever had, which Kino confirms on the following page. It was “like all other mornings ... Kino could see these things without looking at them”—Juana taking Coyotito out of his hanging box, cleaning him, feeding him, as she “sang softly an ancient song.” Despite her poverty, Juana takes pride in her appearance and ties her hair with ribbons. These things suggest that Juana is equally satisfied with her life and finds comfort rather than resentment in the repetition of her daily routine.*

6. Assess the relationship between Juana and Kino in the first part of Chapter One. How does Steinbeck paint a vivid portrait of them as a couple despite a complete lack of dialogue?

*When Kino awakens, Juana “was looking at him as she was always looking at him when he awakened.” Kino hears the Song of the Family as she happily completes her tasks, and he deems it “perfect ... like all other mornings” with his wife and child. She comes to the fire to eat her breakfast only after Kino has finished, suggesting an old-fashioned hierarchy of men over women appropriate to their culture, yet they seem emotionally and fundamentally equal. The mere absence of the need for conversation corroborates this.*

7. Discuss the examples of nature imagery present in the opening pages of the chapter and how they highlight the theme of the struggle for survival. What other purpose might this imagery serve?

*The roosters crow, birds “chattered and flurried,” the pigs begin their “ceaseless turning of twigs and bits of wood” to find food, an ant tries to escape the trap set by an ant lion, two roosters “bowed and feinted at each other,” as “wild doves” take flight. All of these beings struggle to survive in a Darwinian world of the survival of the fittest. These struggles also serve to highlight Kino and Juana’s own struggles to survive, not just because they are poor but because they are of a class oppressed for centuries by the Spanish colonists.*

8. Note the marked shift in tone in this chapter. Where exactly does it occur and how is it a dramatic contrast to the tranquil imagery that preceded it?

*The shift occurs with the start of the paragraph, “It was a tiny movement.” Kino has just “sighed with satisfaction” at the simplistic fortune of his existence and then evil enters their lives in the form of the scorpion. Now he hears the Song of Evil, with the Song of the Family struggling to prevail.*

9. What does the scorpion symbolize? What does Coyotito's reaction suggest about the nature of this symbol?

*The scorpion represents unadulterated evil whereas Coyotito symbolizes pure innocence. The baby laughs and reaches for the creature and shakes the rope until the scorpion falls. Coyotito knows nothing of evil. He reaches for the scorpion simply because he has no concept of the consequences of his desires. Kino and Juana, frozen in fear, are all too familiar with the darkness of mankind and with the inevitable limits to their ability to protect their son.*

10. What is significant about what Juana says "under her breath" while watching the scorpion move "delicately down the rope toward the box"?

*Juana repeats both a pagan spell and a Catholic prayer. The reader can deduce two ideas from this: Juana and her people have been fundamentally influenced by the religious affiliations of their Spanish oppressors (although remnants of the indigenous have apparently not been completely eradicated) and, more importantly, Juana will call upon any power greater than herself to save her child.*

11. Contrast Kino and Juana's reactions to the scorpion bite and what their actions reveal about their characters? What do their reactions suggest about the roles gender is going to play in the novel?

*Kino's reaction is animalistic whereas Juana's is protectively maternal. Kino "snarls...teeth were bared and fury flared in his eyes" as he grabs the scorpion, demolishes it to a "paste" and then beats it into the earth with his fist. His ineffectual actions do nothing to resolve the situation or to soothe Coyotito's cries. In contrast, Juana immediately grabs the child and begins to suck the poison out of the puncture wound. Kino is "helpless" and "in the way," whereas Juana takes effective, meaningful action to protect her child. She is the one to suggest that they take Coyotito to the town doctor; Kino merely goes along. Their reactions suggest the predictable, stereotypical patterns associated with each gender. This stereotype is fitting given the allegorical nature of the novel in which the elements of the narrative are condensed to their simplest form.*

12. Analyze the dual layers of meaning of "And all of these people knew about the scorpion."

*The Indian community of brush houses, literally, knows about the event because of the baby's cries and the oral passing of information. On another level, however, it is not just this scorpion that they know about. Dealing with scorpions, and other dangers, both natural and civilized, is a daily threat for this community and they share this common reality.*

13. What textual clues provide evidence of the narrator's attitude toward the doctor?

*The narrator's attitude of contempt for the doctor is clear in the progression of the author's diction: "A wonderful thing, a memorable thing to want the doctor" but "To get him would be a remarkable thing" because he "never came" to the brush houses. The narrator petulantly and judgmentally asks, "Why should he, when he had more than he could do to take care of the rich people ... of the town." Despite any doctor's moral duty to heal the sick, the fact that the narrator specifically comments on the "rich people" suggests this particular doctor's greed. Further evidence is the repetition of "He would not come" from Kino's community and from Kino himself.*

14. Explain the significance of the order of procession out of Kino's village and how it exemplifies the theme of community.

*It is significant that Juana is first since her culture dictates a lesser role for women in matters of such importance, but Kino is still feeling helpless and respects his wife's ability to act. As would be the custom in their culture, extended family comes next, with Juan Thomas, Kino's brother, and Apolonia, followed by the rest of the community. "The thing had become a neighborhood affair" and the community follows out of both support and curiosity.*

15. What is the effect of the paradoxes and juxtaposition of ideas in the passage that begins, "They came to the place..."?

*There are several contrasting ideas in this paragraph. First, "the brush houses stopped and the city of stone and plaster began," denoting a marked change not just in the actual physicality of their homes but in economic and social class as well. Steinbeck juxtaposes the city's "harsh outer walls" and "inner cool gardens" to show not only the "harsh" sterility and the perceived need for "walls" in the city, but also to illustrate the wealthier class's desire for a piece of the natural world so common to Kino's people. The wealthy have "secret gardens" and "singing birds," but those birds are "caged," just as they are caged behind their walls of stone.*

16. What do the beggars represent? How does the reader know the narrator's attitude toward them? And the beggars' attitude toward the doctor?

*The beggars, ironically, represent the conscience of society. The narrator hyperbolizes that they are "great experts in financial analysis" and "students of ... expression" on an endless search of "perfect knowledge of their fellow men." They "knew every little scandal and some very big crimes." The beggars, in turn, knew the "fat, lazy doctor...his ignorance, his cruelty, his avarice, his appetites, his sins." The reader gets a candid portrait of the doctor whom we have yet to meet. It seems a foregone conclusion that this man will do nothing for "an indigent baby with a scorpion bite."*

17. Examine the complicated emotions Kino feels when he reaches the doctor's door. How do these feelings exemplify those of his race as a whole?

*Kino pauses before knocking on the doctor's door because he is torn between his son's needs and his pride. For Kino and his people, the doctor represents four hundred years of the effects of Spanish colonialism during which his people were "beaten and starved and robbed and despised ... and frightened." Kino feels a mixture of anger, fear, and weakness as he prepares to ask a member of the oppressor-race for help. He acts subserviently and deferentially to the man who represents a race he has been taught his entire life is superior to his own.*

18. Contrast the doctor's and Kino's homes and their attitudes toward life.

*Kino lives in a community of one-room brush houses, sleeps on a mat, and has the same breakfast every morning; yet he love his life and considers himself to have experienced good fortune. In contrast, the doctor lives behind a big gate in a home with multiple rooms. He sleeps in a "high bed" in "his chamber" in a "dressing gown of red watered silk that has come from Paris." His breakfast of hot chocolate and sweet biscuits is delivered by servants on a "silver tray with a silver chocolate pot and a tiny cup of eggshell china." Despite all his wealth and education, though, the doctor is a miserable human being whose mouth "droop[s] with discontent."*

19. What theme is highlighted with the doctor's comment: "Have I nothing better to do than cure insect bites for 'little Indians'? I am a doctor not a veterinary."

*The common belief is that doctors are noble healers who will do anything to save lives. This doctor, however, claiming he is not a veterinarian, obviously views the Indians as mere animals, echoing a sentiment introduced by Kino two pages earlier: "for all the doctor's race spoke to all of Kino's race as though they were simple animals." He further insults Kino's race by calling them "little Indians." These are not real people to the doctor, and, more importantly, they are not people with money. His comments highlight the themes of the effects of colonialism on native cultures and the racial, class, and social prejudices associated with those conflicting cultures.*

20. Examine the contrast and similarity of Kino's two actions in the final paragraph of the chapter.

*The contrast is of Kino as a passive beggar and Kino as an angry aggressor. The similarity is that, in both cases, he is ineffectual. Kino puts his "suppliant hat" back on his head. "Suppliant" denotes one who begs or prays for help, as Kino, despite his fear and resentment, was doing at the doctor's door only moments before. Then, "without warning, he struck the gate a crushing blow with his fist." Much like his ineffectual squashing of the scorpion earlier in the chapter, a masculine physical action is his primary response here as well. He is helpless and hopeless, and his physical actions are the outward response to those feelings.*



## Chapter Two

1. Contrast the nature imagery in the second and third paragraphs with the tone each paragraph sets. How does the author accomplish this contrast?

*Paragraph two portrays a peaceful, symbiotic relationship amongst the sea life. Steinbeck's primary literary device is onomatopoeia: the crabs "bubbled and sputtered," the lobsters "popped," the sea bottom is rich with "crawling ... swimming .... growing things," the algae "waved," the eel "swayed," and the sea horses "clung." The tone establishes a harmonious and "gentle" existence in which the creatures are interlinked and seem blissfully interdependent. In contrast, in the third paragraph, "the hungry dogs" and the "hungry pigs ... searched endlessly for any dead fish or sea bird." Steinbeck uses no imagery, except for the repetition of "hungry" for emphasis. Unlike the sea creatures in the preceding paragraph who coexist and sustain one another, the dogs and pigs must rely on luck, and on man, for sustenance in competition with each other for food.*

2. Explain the fundamental conflict between the attitude of the "people of the Gulf" and the people in the city. What theme or themes are introduced in this conflict?

*The narrator explains that, for the people of the Gulf, "all sights were unreal and vision could not be trusted." They are a spiritual people who trust things of "spirit" and "imagination." Ironically, the people of the city trust only their sight, and they cannot understand the strange ways of the Indian culture. There are two themes addressed with this conflict: appearance does not necessarily constitute reality, and the natural world is spiritual while the civilized world is more material.*

3. Examine the literal and symbolic function of Kino's canoe.

*On a literal level, the canoe provides a means of survival for the family. The canoe not only provides transportation but also a means to catch food and, most importantly, a means of making a living by finding and selling pearls. On a symbolic level, the canoe, which has been "preserved for generations," represents Kino's heritage and the pride he and his people derive from the technological mysteries that only they understand. The canoe is almost sacred, and Kino pays his canoe homage "as he always did" by "tenderly" touching the bow and giving thanks. He knows that he'd be helpless without it.*

4. Reflect on the essential difference between Kino's and Juana's reactions to the scorpion bite in Chapter One. How does this advance the examination of conventional male and female roles?

*While Kino is concerned only with attempting to find a pearl to be able to afford the doctor, Juana takes practical action by making the poultice and putting it on Coyotito's shoulder for comfort.*

5. Note two examples of the interjection of the narrator's personal opinions in this chapter. What commentary is made in each scenario?

*The first example occurs when Juana makes the healing poultice. The narrator interjects that it is "as good a remedy as any and probably better than the doctor could have done." However, the apparently cynical narrator further notes that Kino's people, subjugated by the Spanish settlers for hundreds of years, have, ironically, become convinced that their own ways of healing, which worked for centuries, are no longer valid because of their simplicity. The narrator supplies further commentary on the Spanish when describing the bed of pearl oysters: "This was the bed that had raised the King of Spain to be a great power ... had helped to pay for his wars," and most ironically, "had decorated the churches for his soul's sake." What should have been a source of wealth for the Indian culture, ironically became the motive and medium of their oppression.*

6. How does the discussion of pearls advance the novel's examination of the roles of fate and free will in this chapter?

*The making of a pearl is an accident that occurs when a simple grain of sand irritates the oyster, and the oyster coats the grain with the smooth substance that becomes a pearl. If the making of the pearl can be considered an accident, so too is the finding of one. Kino's people believe that "God or the gods or both" intervene with a "little pat on the back" of luck, determining the pearl-diver's fate no matter what his skill might be. But, warns the narrator, "you must be tactful with the God or the gods" so as not to "drive the luck away."*

*The elements of free will in the process are: the decision to look and the opening of the oysters themselves. The price of man's free will in this case is the "dying flesh" of the oyster as man's choice serves to seal the oyster's fate.*

7. Explain why Juana prays not for a cure but for a pearl. How does this highlight the complex role of religion in this chapter?

*Curiously, Juana prays not for a cure for her child but instead "that they might find a pearl with which to hire the doctor." She is afraid to wish for a cure because it is "not good to want a thing too much," and their years of social and religious oppression at the hands of the Spanish have made them question their own medicinal powers. She "looks away" from the pearl in order to avoid offending the "God or the gods," yet simultaneously attempts to use "the magic of prayer...to tear the luck out of the gods' hands." The repetition of "God or gods" suggests not only the Spanish influence but also the lingering survival of the indigenous culture.*



8. Analyze the repetition of the “secret melody” of the “Song of the Pearl That Might Be” and the language the author chooses in these passages. How does the song change over the course of Kino’s quest?

*In the beginning of Kino’s search for a pearl, his song is a conglomeration of “everything that happened or existed”; it is his “pounding heart,” the “gray-green water...scuttling animals and the clouds of fish.” Kino is metaphorically singing from his heart and to the life forms surrounding him. The “Song of the Pearl that Might Be” is only a “counter-melody” at this point and is “hardly perceptible.” Significantly, though, Steinbeck juxtaposes several telling pairs of words: the song is “sweet” yet “secret”; it is “little” yet “clinging, almost hiding” as well. As his search progresses, the “little secret melody” becomes “stronger... Whole phrases of it came clearly and softly.” Ultimately, the song takes over, “clear and beautiful, rich and warm and lovely, glowing and gloating and triumphant.”*

9. Consider the last three paragraphs of the chapter, paying close attention to the diction Steinbeck uses. What words or phrases indicate a possible transition in Kino’s character?

*Amidst the string of adjectives in the first of the last three paragraphs, the most notable ones are “rich” and “gloating.” All the other descriptors—“clear, beautiful, warm, lovely, glowing, triumphant”—denote humbled awe and appreciation. There is also a subtle transition from “the” pearl to “his” pearl in the final paragraph. For a man who previously was completely content with his life and possessed nothing of economic value, this change in attitude is significant. Perhaps most noteworthy is the fact that his fist protectively “closed over the pearl,” just after his wife reveals that “the swelling was going out of the baby’s shoulder” and “the poison was receding.” The whole point of finding the pearl was to pay the doctor to heal their child, but Kino’s focus seems to be elsewhere, foreshadowing future greed and conflict.*

### **Chapter Three**

1. Trace the spreading of Kino’s news throughout the town. What is the significance of the order in which the news is received? What does each person want?

*After travelling through the brush houses, the news first reaches the priest who dreams of repairs needed in his church and wonders, ironically, whether or not he married Kino and Juana or baptized their child. It then travels to the doctor who claims that Kino’s son is a patient of his as he reminisces about his life in Paris. Next are the beggars who laugh, for they know that a poor man turned rich is a most generous almsgiver, then pearl buyers who prepare to reach the lowest price possible. And finally, the news reaches the rest of the town—anyone who might have things to sell or favors to ask. It is worth noting Steinbeck’s intentional progression within the town—the news moves from the highest position of power to the lowest, but all of them want the same thing, “and only one person stood in the way and that was Kino.”*

2. Note the dramatic change in tone between the first six paragraphs and the seventh. What does Kino and Juana's attitude reveal about their characters? And what is the narrator's commentary on the character of man? To what does the narrator compare the town and why is this particularly significant?

*In the opening paragraphs, the reader traces the progression of greed through the town. Paragraph seven, however, emphasizes Kino and Juana's naivety: they believe their friends and neighbors are happy for them. The narrator wisely notes that "the essence of pearl mixed with the essence of men and a curious dark residue was precipitated"; ambition, money, and power beget evil. The comparison of the town to the poison sacs of a scorpion is particularly noteworthy and ironic given that it is a scorpion that put Kino and Juana on this path in the first place.*

3. How does the repetition of the article "the" contribute to the overall tone of paragraph six?

*The tone of greed in this paragraph is partially created by the passage which lists a series of desires: "the dreams, the speculations, the schemes, the plans, the futures, the wishes, the needs, the lusts," and "the hungers." The repetition of "the" not only serves to illustrate the collective nature of those desires as applying to everyone in the town but also shows that greed produces a seemingly endless list of needs that man is wholly unaware of before the object of their greed manifests itself.*

4. Compare and contrast Juana and Kino's responses to Juan Thomas's question, "What will you do now that you have become a rich man?" Is their behavior consistent with the reader's view of each of them in Chapter One?

*Juana looks down and covers her face with her shawl to shield her excitement, behaviors which are completely consistent with the shy and humble woman we have already seen in Chapter One. In contrast, Kino, who said virtually nothing in Chapter One, verbally elaborates on the specifics of those things he had given up as impossible to hope for; the promise of the pearl has given him courage and a voice.*

5. Trace the significance of the progression of the things Kino wants from the sale of his pearl.

*The order in which Kino utters his desire, and his escalating courage as he gathers momentum, are important to note: he first wishes to marry Juana in a church, then for clothing, then a harpoon and a rifle, and finally, for Coyotito to attend school. His hopes start from the spiritual (marriage), then move to sustenance (clothing and shoes) and survival (weapons), and finally to the intellectual (education). This final culminating wish is by far the most daring and speaks to the trap of the hundreds of years of subjugation thrust upon Kino's people. He wants his son to escape that trap and to be able to tell him what the books say—the books which leave the Indian people in trusting, yet desperate ignorance. Kino's hope is not merely just for his son but for his people as well: "And these things will make us free because he will know—he will know and through him we will know."*

6. Read the two paragraphs starting with “Now the neighbors knew...” and reflect on the narrator’s commentary about humanity.

*The narrator notes that for the neighbors “time would now date from Kino’s pearl.” If he succeeded, they would say what a great man he has become; if he did not, those same neighbors would say he was a fool, and in both cases, they would claim that they had seen it with their own eyes. The narrator is addressing both the fickle nature of humanity and an inability to be happy for someone else’s success because it is human nature to revel in their demise.*

7. Examine the importance of Steinbeck’s repeated reference to Kino’s knuckles in this chapter.

*To answer this question, the reader must recall the scene at the close of Chapter One when Kino delivers a crushing blow to the doctor’s gate and splits his knuckles as a result. Kino, utterly helpless at that point, felt he had no hope to offer his wife and child and therefore reacted physically in frustration. Now in Chapter Three, Kino does have hope, and a probable solution, to their problem. “Kino looked down at his closed hand and the knuckles were scabbed over and tight where he had struck the gate,” but this time, he holds the pearl in his fist—a symbol of hope and of the future. Two pages later with the entrance of the doctor and his servant, Kino’s right hand burned when he saw the doctor and his servant at the door; they who both rejected him as he stood humbly, hat in hand, at their iron gate. Kino, who once found it unfathomable that everyone would not be happy for him, has now grown wise to the effect of other men’s desires on his own fate.*

8. Analyze the ways in which the priest manipulates Kino in this chapter.

*Upon entering Kino’s home, the priest uses flattery, telling Kino that he is named after a great man. He further takes advantage of Kino’s ignorance by claiming that his name is in the books. The priest is preying on the fact that Kino has no knowledge of books and therefore would not be able to know whether he is actually paying him a compliment or not. And though Kino’s people have their own religion, the priest knows the conflicting effects of Spanish oppression on their religious beliefs and manipulatively reminds Kino that he must remember to thank God for his treasure.*

9. Consider the paragraph beginning “The neighbors slipped away...” and compare and contrast this passage, in action and tone, to Chapter One.

*Similar to Juana’s making the fire and meal in Chapter One, here again she is, wordlessly, squatting by the fire cooking. Kino, too, seems to be engaged in similar actions. He steps outside, smells the smoke, and notes the stars. Even the thin dog approaches him again in this scene. The difference this time is that Kino does not even see it. Not only is Kino distancing himself from the natural world but also his own community: “he had broken through the horizons into a cold and lonely outside” and “felt alone and unprotected.” While the tone in Chapter One was one of communal satisfaction, the tone here is of paranoid isolation.*

10. Discuss the theme(s) addressed in the paragraph beginning “Behind him he heard Juana...” and examine the conflicting emotions present in the passage.

*The paragraph begins with a reference to the theme of how we define happiness; Kino simply hears Juana patting the cakes for their meal and feels the warmth and security of his family behind him. The paragraph shifts to a discussion of the theme of fate and free will as Kino evaluates his plan. He knows that “the gods do not love success unless it comes by accident,” like the finding of a pearl, that the gods “do not love men’s plans” and may take revenge, but he is undeterred from his course. The closing of the paragraph addresses both the themes of community and survival. Kino continues his internal and external retreat from the community by hardening himself against the world in an attempt to prepare for the inevitable attacks from those around him.*

11. Analyze the ways in which the doctor manipulates Kino in this chapter. Pay particular attention to the author’s diction.

*The doctor lies and says he was not in when Kino and Juana came that morning, now claiming that he has come at the first opportunity. Knowing that Kino’s race love the tools of any craft and trust them, he cunningly makes sure the light falls on his doctor’s bag. The doctor, calling Kino “friend,” casually lists possible ramifications of the scorpion bite, despite the fact that the poison seems to have receded: a withered leg or a blind eye or a crumpled back. He falsely professes that the blue under the baby’s eyelid is proof of the poison having gone into the baby’s bloodstream. Though Kino is well aware that he is being manipulated, the doctor shrewdly knows that he could not take the chance with his son’s life at stake. The doctor looks thoughtful, he shrugs, he seems to think, he dramatically takes a deep breath and wonders whether his white powder might perhaps save the baby. His manipulation is rehearsed to the point of looking at his watch after a decadent lunch and knowing exactly when to return to Kino’s hut to miraculously save the child. And, finally, after performing his own personal miracle, the doctor maintains no knowledge of the Pearl of the World yet offers to put it in his safe and tricks Kino into looking toward the place where it was buried.*

12. Explain the dual layers of meaning associated with the paragraph beginning “Out in the estuary...” Note the paragraphs that immediately precede and follow this one for contextual clues.

*On the surface, this paragraph seems to be just another example of natural imagery exemplifying the survival theme: the small fish attempt to escape the slaughter of the great fish, and the mice creep about as the night hawks hunt them down. However, in the previous paragraph, the narrator comments that the neighbors would be watching Kino and Juana very closely to see whether wealth changes them, and in the following paragraph, we see yet another example of Kino’s break with the natural world as he looks away again from the skinny black puppy; his own metaphorical hunger is too great to notice. Their community is listening to the bouncing and swishing as the fish battle for survival, just as they are watching Kino’s own struggle. The battle between the great and small may also be foreshadowing the continuing conflict between Kino’s small Indian culture and the great Spanish oppressors.*

13. Juana asks Kino, "Who do you fear?" What does Kino's response indicate about his state of mind?

*Kino's response is that he fears "everyone." It is no longer just the doctor, or just the priest, or the pearl buyers, or the beggars, or the townspeople; he fears even his own people, and he fears even the rage and hate within himself. His solution is to draw a "shell of hardness" around himself and do whatever he needs to do to protect the pearl and his family.*

14. Analyze the function of the light and darkness motif in the chapter.

*The light and dark motif serves to symbolize the complex nature of the pearl and of humanity. A dark residue results from the combination of "essence of pearl and man." News of the pearl stirs up something "infinitely black and evil." Kino, afraid of his talking, cuts the light away from the pearl. Juana's fire threw shadows on the brush walls. The doctor lets the light of the lamp fall upon his doctor's bag to manipulate Kino and Juana. Kino's eyes search the darkness for whatever or whoever is in the house. The beauty of the pearl is "glimmering in the light." Though the pearl is beautiful and bright and holds the promise of a better future, it also induces the black evil of greed and conflict.*

15. Analyze the function of Kino's songs in the chapter. How does the music in this chapter contrast with that of the first chapter?

*Kino's songs indicate shifts in mood and tone in the chapter. At the start of the chapter when Kino and Juana are excited, hopeful, and blissfully unaware of the greed surrounding them, the music of the pearl merges with the music of the family, and both are beautiful. As Kino recounts the things he will do when he is a rich man, the music of the pearl intensifies. In contrast, when the priest enters their home, the music goes out of Kino's head and the music of evil begins, faint at first and eventually drowning out the pearl's music. Listening to Juana cook brings Kino back to the pleasant and gentle Song of the Family, but when Coyotito is wracked with convulsions, the music of evil throbs in Kino's head and nearly drives out Juana's song. At the close of the chapter as Kino stares at the pearl and again hears its unique music. It is interesting to note the predominance of the music of the pearl in this chapter over the Song of the Family, which was Kino's primary song in Chapter One. His focus has substantially shifted not just within this chapter but as a whole, and his songs reflect that noteworthy transformation.*

16. Reread the section in which Juana confronts Kino about throwing the pearl away. Examine the central conflict and the result, both literally and emotionally.

*Juana sees the pearl as evil and three times utters the fear that it will destroy them and their son. Interestingly, Kino, though conflicted by his newfound ambition, does seem to understand the evil inherent in the pearl and says that in the morning they will sell it; then the evil will be gone from their lives. He still clings to the hope of an education for his son, so that Coyotito can rise above those who have oppressed them for so many years. Kino eventually convinces Juana that his is the better plan, and they begin the day with renewed hope.*



## Chapter Four

1. How does the opening of this chapter parallel the opening of Chapter Three? How is it different?

*The chapters parallel each other with the use of imagery and differ in content. In Chapter Three, Steinbeck uses an extended analogy and personification to compare the town to a colonial animal. Here in Chapter Four, the author employs the use of personification to provide further commentary on the function and actions of a town. Whereas Chapter Three's passage comments on how news travels through a town, the opening to this chapter comments on the need for cohesion within the community. The town, personified, "keeps track of itself and all its units" if everyone acts in a predictable pattern and differs from no one. If someone steps out, though, the cohesion of the trusted pattern is broken and the news of such a breach "travels over the nerve lines of the town." Kino has broken the steady flow of the town and the town, in turn, prepares for the possible consequences.*

2. How does the pearl buyers' station in life parallel the Indians'? What is the primary difference?

*Each of the pearl buyers sits alone in their offices, yet they act as a community of buyers, just as Kino and his people live within a community made up of parts that function as a whole. Like Kino's people, the pearl buyers are controlled by an oppressive regime that makes decisions for all those under its realm. The primary difference is the pearl buyers' attitude—they revel in the manipulation, just as their oppressors do, and have tricked Kino's people into thinking that the pearl buyers are individuals acting independently.*

3. Consider the paragraph starting with "In the brush houses..." Why is it so easy for Kino's neighbors to talk about what they would do in Kino's situation? How do they know human nature so well? How is Kino's situation different?

*The neighbors muse over what they would do if they were in Kino's situation; they think of all the charities, benefits and rescues they could perform if they had money. They express hope that wealth will not spoil Kino. They repeat the fear that the pearl could destroy him. For centuries, Kino's people have seen the effects of greed from their oppressors, from their day-to-day dealings in town where the Indians are considered merely animals. They know the fickleness of humanity but hope for a better future for Kino and, as a result, a better future for themselves; what benefits the individual colonial animal also helps the whole community. However, it is easy for Kino's community to speculate what they would or would not do in his position because they do not possess the pearl and therefore cannot truly feel his hunger for a better life, nor can they comprehend the lens of fear and paranoia facing Kino in his struggle to protect that future.*

4. Despite Juana's worries in the previous chapter that the pearl would "destroy" them, why now is this day "comparable only to the day when [Coyotito] had been born"?

*Juana is clinging to the hope that she is wrong about the pearl's being evil. She wants to believe that the pearl could actually represent a better future for them, and if it does, then this day truly would be the beginning of a new life, just as the day of Coyotito's birth was.*

5. Compare and contrast Kino and Juana's preparations for going to town. What theme do these preparations highlight? How is the rest of their community involved?

*Juana dresses Coyotito in his baptism clothes, she braids her hair with two little red bows, and puts on her marriage clothes. Her actions are inherently feminine—taking care of her child and her appearance and showing sentimentality toward the two most important days of her life: the baptism of her child and her wedding day. In contrast, the simple act of placing a hat on his head becomes a statement of masculinity for Kino who is attempting to show aggressiveness and seriousness and vigor with the tilt of his hat. The rest of the town prepares to join them; it was expected and would be “almost a sign of unfriendship” not to go.*

6. What is the significance of the priest's yearly speech to the Indian people? What themes does it address?

*The priest relays the story of the history of pearl buying and why it went back to the old way because those men were punished for trying to leave their assigned station in life. He stresses that each must remain faithful to his post or risk assault from Hell. There are two themes addressed here: fate and free will, and the effects of colonialism. Because the Indian people believe in the idea that the gods “do not love men's plans” and take revenge on those who act of their own free will, the priest is able to manipulate the Indians into believing their current station in life is right and proper for them. However, there is also an element of suspicion because Kino's people know the priest is of the race of Spanish oppressors, and the fact that the speech is the same every year further proves the priest's desire to keep them in a position of subjugation.*

7. How does the reader know the narrator's attitude toward the “stout slow man”?

*Beginning with the paragraph, “A stout slow man,” the reader should pay particular attention to the author's word choice to deduce the narrator's attitude. The most important thing to note is that this entire passage is sarcastic as the narrator reveals the pearl buyer's disingenuous nature. Though it may initially appear a favorable description—“his face fatherly and benign... his eyes twinkled with friendship... a caller of good mornings, a ceremonious shaker of hands” whose “eyes could become wet with sorrow” at the memory of “the death of your aunt”—it is all an illusion, a studied practice in manipulation. The hidden legerdemain, or sleight of hand, he practices is the outward manifestation of that manipulation. The coin appears and disappears; he makes it “spin and sparkle,” and, most tellingly, he “did not even watch his own performance.” He has been deceiving his audience for so long that his trickery is now second-nature. He preys on ignorance and on their trust so that “while the rest of his face smiled in greeting,” his eyes are “as steady and cruel and unwinking as a hawk's eyes” getting ready to pounce on its victim.*

8. What is the main indication to the reader that Kino is being swindled?

*Though Kino studies the buyer's face, the appraiser is far too adept at his work to fall for such a trick and provides no tangible reaction. However, behind the desk, his hand, which normally performs legerdemain mechanically and precisely actually misses its mark, and the coin stumbles. Even though Kino himself sees no outward physical clues to the buyer's opinion of the value of his pearl, the reader is made even more keenly aware of the ruse.*

9. How do the pearl buyers' actions mimic those of the priest and the doctor?

*Like the priest and the doctor, the pearl buyers' attitudes and actions are condescending and manipulative. The appraiser shrugs, much as the doctor did in Chapter Three, "And his shoulders rose a little to indicate that the misfortune was no fault of his." The first dealer dramatically casts the pearl contemptuously back into the tray and offers Kino nothing at all. The second dealer, knowing Kino has never seen the surface of a pearl magnified, pretends to use a magnifying glass to measure the pearl's worth and laugh[s] softly at the "paste." And the third dealer offers a paltry 500 pesos for a fictitious client who "likes such things." In all of these cases, the manipulators rely on not only the ignorance of the Indian people but also on their complete lack of options. Even though they know they are being manipulated, they also know that there are no other doctors, no other saviors, and no one else to buy their pearls. Kino's people are trapped, and the doctor, the priest, and the pearl buyers are their captors.*

10. Examine the various reactions of the crowd in the scene with the pearl buyers. What do these reactions say about humanity?

*When the original appraiser calls for the other dealers to come and look at Kino's pearl, Kino's neighbors whisper and falsely claim that they had suspected it of being a fake, though there is nothing in the text to indicate that to be true. They think that Kino should, perhaps, take the thousand pesos offered and be satisfied, since he had nothing only a day before. This is the exact mentality the pearl buyers count on, and it is this attitude that keeps the Indians economically and politically oppressed. Some of the community feel that Kino has hurt his own chances of success on any level; others admire his fierce bravery. These hope that they may all profit from his courage. Steinbeck seems to be commenting on the fickle nature of humanity.*

11. What is the significance of the "great theme of the morning," which the neighbors discuss?

*Kino's neighbors discuss the events that occurred with the pearl buyers and come to the conclusion that the dealers must know more about the value of pearls than they do and that Kino's pearl must, indeed, be valueless. They think the fact that the dealers did not discuss anything in front of them provides conclusive proof of the veracity of their claims. To consider the possibility that the deal was pre-arranged is to acknowledge that they have always been cheated.*

12. What is meant by the statement that "Kino had lost one world and not gained another"? How does this make Kino feel?

*Kino knows that he has lost both the physical and emotional comfort of his former life as a poor villager, but he still has not yet realized his dreams of everything the pearl promises for a better future for him and his family. He is afraid because he knows he cannot go back, yet he fears what lies ahead.*



13. What is Juan Thomas's primary fear for Kino? What fundamental aspects of humanity does Juan Thomas understand that his brother does not?

*Juan Thomas fully comprehends that his people are cheated in every aspect of their lives, whereas Kino sees only the actions of the pearl buyers. He feels as if his justified refusal of the pearl buyer's offer is a single event. His brother sees that Kino has not only defied the pearl buyers but the whole structure of their society. To question the judgment and fairness of their colonial oppressors is to invite an unavoidable game that he can't possibly win. In addition, Kino is naïve about even his own community. He believes that his friends will protect him, but Juan Thomas knows that this is true only as long and protecting him poses no threat to them.*

14. What effect does the series of oxymorons have in the paragraph starting "Long after Juan..."?

*Kino hears the "sleep complaint" of the birds, the "love agony" of the cars, the "strike and withdrawal" of the waves, and the "simple hiss of distance." These antitheses serve to parallel Kino's own conflicting feelings about the day's events and what he feels he must now do to combat the Song of Evil.*

15. Reread the two paragraphs starting with "Kino did not move..." What is the primary literary device employed and what is its significance?

*Steinbeck personifies evil in this passage: evil is "wary, watchful...shadowy and dreadful"; it "called" to Kino, it "threatened him" and it "challenged him." This personified evil seems to know that Kino will respond to such a masculine call to battle, and Kino responds, predictably, by feeling for his knife and walking to the doorway to invite the "hidden...crouched...hovering" evil in.*

16. Analyze the argument Kino and Juana have at the close of Chapter Four. What is the significance of each character's repetitive phrases?

*As she did in Chapter Three, Juana again desperately implores her husband to rid their lives of the evil pearl and insists that it will destroy them if they keep it. She believes that ridding their lives of the pearl will bring peace back to them. Kino, in turn, repeats three separate times: "I am a man" in response to her pleas. The differing implications of these three identical yet distinct utterances seem to indicate that he believes himself to be far more cunning than his opponents ("I am a man." And his face grew crafty.), that he must persevere against those who have wronged him ("We will not be cheated. I am a man."), and that he has the ultimate authority in his home ("Hush," he said fiercely. "I am a man.")). At the chapter's closing, it appears that Juana has, again, lost the argument, and she agrees to follow him to the capital.*

## Chapter Five

1. What is the overall function of this chapter? What is the predominant imagery used to convey that function?

*Though Kino has displayed animalistic instincts and behaviors in previous chapters, he has made a significant transition in this chapter: "He was an animal now, for hiding, for attacking, and he lived only to preserve himself and his family." The transition seems almost literal rather than metaphorical. This same man who cherished the Song of the Family, who sighed with satisfaction at his perfect life, who looked on his wife softly and lovingly has now transformed into a desperate man prone to violence and rash action. He strikes Juana in the face and then kicks her in the side; his "teeth were bared...He hissed at her like a snake." Kino's struggle, formerly internal as paralleled by his songs, is now an external one as well, which Steinbeck reinforces this through his use of animal imagery.*

2. What textual clues are there that Kino has not completely transformed into an animal?

*Immediately after hitting Juana, his "rage" is quickly replaced by a "sick disgust." And though someone has destroyed his canoe, and therefore his means of survival, he does not respond as an animal would. Instead of just stealing someone else's canoe, there is an indication that Kino has preserved a sense of virtue in the face of his adversity, for never once does he think of taking one of his neighbors' canoes. Kino knows that he would then be stealing his neighbor's primary means of survival, proof that he still has a conscience.*

3. Beginning with the paragraph starting, "Juana dragged herself," examine Juana's perspective on the primary differences between men and women. How does she view her role as a woman and as Kino's wife? What commentary is Steinbeck making about the roles of men and women in their society?

*Kino again reiterates the phrase, "I am a man." In this chapter, we learn what manhood means to Juana. She ambivalently sees men as "half insane and half god," still knowing that she could not live without a man. She accepts the male gender's stubbornness, perseverance, and strength, and she appreciates men's role in protecting their wives and children. There is no question of her loyalty despite the fact that Kino has beaten her only moments before. She also realizes that it is the feminine qualities of reason, caution, and preservation that often serve to temper the more brutal aspects of Kino's nature. It is she who quiets Kino like a sick child; it is she who reminds him that they must flee for no court will side with a powerless Indian, much less one possessing a thing of such value; and it is she who, as the text states, restores his manhood.*

*As it is true for Juana, it is also true for the rest of the wives in Kino's culture; in a sense, women are subjugated, yet they are strong and influential nonetheless.*

4. Why does Juana not let Kino believe that the pearl is gone?

*Juana knows it is too late for them, that they must abandon their past and save themselves. The reader may, justifiably, be confused by the fact that Juana does not let her husband believe the pearl is gone. After all, if they no longer have the pearl, they will not be hunted down. But Juana is wise and knows several things about their situation and about mankind: she knows their former life is over and that they cannot ever go back, with or without the pearl; she knows that regardless of whether or not they have the pearl, they will be pursued by those who want it; and she knows that even if those pursuers do not claim the pearl, they will claim her husband for his murderous crime. The reader can also see another level of understanding here that is not quite as literal. Juana says, "Here is your pearl," not "the" pearl but "your" pearl. Juana, perhaps, wants her husband to take responsibility for all he has caused with his greed and ambition, and the pearl will be a painful reminder of that as they flee the only life they have ever known.*

5. What is the symbolic effect of the juxtaposition of the pearl and Kino's knife?

*The pearl, previously a symbol of good, beauty, wealth, security, prestige, and change, is juxtaposed with Kino's knife, symbolic of death, violence, threats, power, strength, bloodshed, and struggle. The effect is jarring to the reader and shows how intertwined the two forces have become. The fact that Kino still refers to it as "the great pearl" is particularly telling and exemplifies how much perspective he truly has lost.*

6. What is the significance of the discoveries Kino and Juana make when they return to their village?

*Their canoe has been destroyed and their house burned down. These represent the final ties to their old life, and now they must flee to survive.*

7. What is the role of the light and darkness motif in this chapter? In what way has this motif notably shifted in this chapter?

*The chapter opens with a contrast between the pale light of the moon and the darkness in Kino's home. Juana rises like a shadow to sneak out of the house with the pearl and "for a second she was black." In the pale light, Kino sees the waves crash over his wife after he brutally beats her, and then the dark figure attacks Kino himself. In the paragraph starting, "A flight of herring," Juana finds herself in "darkness for a moment and in light the next." The pearl glimmers and the moon goes into the darkness of the clouds again. And as she considers throwing the pearl back into the sea for a second time, the light comes again, and she sees two dark figures lying in the path ahead. All of these examples provide an illustration of the predictable forces of good and evil at play in these scenes. The shift comes when Kino and Juana discover the light of their burning home, and Kino realizes that this light is a source of fear and danger. He and Juana must fear not only the "dark ones" but also the light itself, for in the light they can be discovered. They are not safe anywhere.*

8. At the closing of Chapter Five, Kino says, “This pearl has become my soul. If I give it up I shall lose my soul.” Explore the variety of meanings this comment could possibly signify.

*On one level, greed has prompted Kino to replace his spiritualism with materialism. In another sense, the pearl has come to represent his pride and masculinity, and he does not want to give those up. There is also the possibility that Kino wants to keep the pearl as penance for not getting rid of it sooner; “It is my misfortune and my life and I will keep it.” He may feel the need to keep the pearl as a reminder of his wrongdoing, despite the further danger the pearl may bring. And, finally, it is also possible that Kino still holds out hope for a better future if he succeeds in selling it. The reader knows how unlikely that scenario is but, perhaps, Kino does not.*

### Chapter Six

1. If the tone of the previous chapter can be described as one of desperate greed, how would you characterize the overall tone of this chapter?

*In this chapter, Kino is much less focused on the pearl itself and far more concerned with his own survival and with protecting his family. The music of the pearl is triumphant only briefly and quickly takes on its evil overtones. The hope for a better future present in Chapters One-Three is completely absent here; Kino’s only hope now is that he can outrun the trackers and defend his loved ones.*

2. What is the “ancient thing” stirring in Kino? How will this serve him in this chapter?

*For centuries, Kino’s people depended not on reading or factual knowledge for survival but on natural instincts and swift decisions. These cunning instincts are awakened in Kino, and he feels a sense of exhilaration from this ancient, animal instinct moving through him. His life has become an equation of the hunter and the hunted, recalling his former simple life.*

3. Consider the paragraph starting with “All night they walked...” and analyze how Kino’s relationship with nature has changed since the beginning of the novel.

*Though Steinbeck at times does address the theme of survival in his natural imagery, in general, the more prevalent use is to describe the beauty and symbiotic relationships found in nature. In this paragraph, however, the author creates a tense scene of survival, largely through his use of personification and onomatopoeia: the coyotes “cried and laughed”; the owls “screeched and hissed” while Kino “gripped the handle of the big working knife.” Rather than a scene of peaceful coexistence, the reader sees an adversarial relationship. Kino needs the knife for reassurance and his ambition and greed have precluded the feeling of harmony he formerly felt in the natural world.*

4. What is the significance of the prevalence of the songs in Kino's head at the start of the chapter?

*The music of the pearl is described as "triumphant" and is clearly the main theme. The music of the family is a "quiet melody...underlay[ing]" the grander music of the pearl. This is important for two reasons. It provides a contrast to Chapter One in which the Song of the Family was the only song that mattered to Kino; now it is merely background music. It also shows that Kino has not fully given up the hope that this pearl will bring him triumph, despite the crimes he has committed and the dangers that lie ahead.*

5. Note the scene in which Kino is watching the ants moving. How does this serve as a contrast to a similar scene in Chapter One? What do these two scenes reveal about Kino's attitude toward nature and his own position in the natural order of things?

*In Chapter One, Kino watched "with the detachment of God" as the ants try to escape the ant lion's sand trap. Kino is an intrinsic part of nature but also, like God, above it and detached from all the minor workings. In contrast, in Chapter Six, as Kino watches the ants again, he puts his foot in their path. His attitude has fundamentally altered from a position of indifference to one of control. Unlike the detached God of Chapter One, he seeks to be the powerful, commanding God in this scene. Ironically, Kino is unable to change the course of the ant march. He does not succeed in changing the course of nature, just as he has been unable to control the course of events surrounding the pearl. Later in this chapter, Steinbeck compares the trackers to "scurrying ants and behind them" the man with the rifle, "a larger ant." Kino will not be able to change the course of that situation either.*

6. Reread the paragraph beginning with "He looked into his pearl..." and analyze the effects of the author's use of juxtaposition.

*As he did in Chapter Three, Kino proclaims the things the pearl will bring him: a rifle, marriage in a church, and an education for his son. However, these former wishes are juxtaposed with the reality of Kino's situation: instead of the rifle, he sees "only a huddled dark body on the ground with blood dripping from its throat;" instead of the marriage, he sees Juana "with her beaten face crawling home"; instead of the education, he sees Coyotito "thick and feverish from the medicine." His dreams have been tarnished by ambition and greed, and he realizes that they may all be just an illusion.*

7. What is the effect of these visions on Kino?

*The effect is that these visions compel Kino to thrust the pearl back into his clothing because its music had become sinister and evil. He drifts off to sleep, but it is a paranoid, fitful slumber as he "moaned...eyes wide...nostrils flaring...in symbolic fighting." When Juana wakes him and says he has just been dreaming, his response of "perhaps" serves to foreshadow the altercation to come. Kino readies himself by lifting the big knife and feeling its edge.*

8. How does the language Steinbeck uses to describe both the trackers and Kino parallel each another?

Kino has an “animal light in his eyes,” he “crouched low, he threaded his way through the brush”; he “crept” and “peered” and “stiffened.” Steinbeck makes a direct comparison as well: “And Kino ran for the high place, as nearly all animals do when they are pursued.” Similarly, the trackers “scuttled over the ground like animals”; they “whined a little, like excited dogs on a warming trail.” Kino knows they would be “circling and searching, peeping” and “stooping” to hunt him down. Both Kino and the trackers are portrayed, largely through the use of onomatopoeia, as animals, not just figuratively but literally. They are engaged in a battle for survival and the reader senses, from this language, that it will be a visceral and brutal one.

9. How does the imagery in the paragraph beginning, “This land was waterless ...” symbolize Kino and Juana’s current situation?

Steinbeck uses a great deal of imagery related to barren deprivation and obscurity. The land was “waterless,” yet the cactus could sustain itself and “get along on very little”; the sparse grass is “sad” and “dry” and hides “between the stones;” and the jackrabbit “bumped away and hid behind the nearest rock.” Like their natural surroundings, Kino and Juana must subsist on very little food and water and must find places to hide amongst the stones, despite the scorching heat of the desert.

10. “The music of evil sang loud in Kino’s head now, it sang with the whine of heat and with the dry ringing of snake rattles. It was not large and overwhelming now but secret and poisonous.” Analyze the significance of this shift in the music.

The music of evil has played in Kino’s head intermittently since the arrival of the scorpion. In this scene, Kino is imagining the trajectory of the trackers’ quest to find him. Their hunt through the desert parallels the “whine of heat” and the “ringing of snake rattles” of Kino’s song. It is interesting to note the current descriptors of “secret” and “poisonous” as opposed to “large” and “overwhelming.” Kino’s struggle has gone from one of external threats to internal vices. His hunger for material things, his masculine pride, and his voracious drive have all corrupted his simple, unpretentious life.



11. Why is Kino's reaction to Juana covering her "cut and scratched" ankles significant? How does this interaction help to characterize their relationship?

*Kino sees several things when he notices Juana's ankles and the way she quickly covers them with her skirt. He sees the literal: she is struggling physically with their journey. And, more importantly, he sees the figurative: her bare, scratched ankles are a reminder of Juana lying in the ocean after he punched and kicked her, the waves crashing over her and her skirt clinging to her legs. Kino's immediate reaction is to demand, three separate times, that she hide with their son while he goes ahead. And she, likewise, three separate times, refuses. She is as brave and resolute as he. Her responses are especially risky, given that he has already beaten her for defying him. Despite his culpability in destroying their old life, she remains loyal and will not leave him, but she apparently will no longer blindly submit to his wishes. He, in turn, has learned to draw strength from her and moves forward on their journey. Because of her strength and faith in him, this journey is no longer a panicked flight. There has been prior evidence of their emerging equality, but this scene serves as a pivotal transition in their relationship.*

12. How does the paragraph beginning with "The night seemed a little..." forebode potential danger ahead?

*The key to interpreting this passage lies in the prevalence of the light/dark motif. The night is less dark, brightened by flashes of lightening; the moon is about to appear on the horizon, and Juana can see the light of the cigarette of the man on watch. There is too much light for Kino to remain safely hidden, and they are at the mercy of timing—timing of the day, the flashes of lightning, and the appearance of the moon.*

13. In the paragraphs beginning "Kino edged..." how does Kino's symbiotic relationship with nature work to his advantage? How does the Song of Family gain presence as a result?

*He "edged like a slow lizard down the smooth rock shoulder"; he crept silently and crouched. Kino tries to remain as quiet as possible, but the night is not silent either and helps to mask his movements. Mirroring his stealthy movements, the Song of Family is described in feline terms. The harsh cicada chirps the melody, and the tree frogs called little phrases of Kino's song. As the puma protects her young, so too shall Kino protect his family.*

14. Contemplate the author's choice of words in describing Kino as a "terrible machine" rather than as an animal. What connotation does this description, and the rest of the paragraph, conjure for the reader? Why would the author choose this kind of diction?

*Kino "whirled" and his "strength...movement and...speed" were "like a machine" and he became as "cold and deadly" as the "steel" of a machine. Kino is methodically, mechanically, and predictably acting like a machine because, this time, he is protecting his child and his wife, not just the pearl. It is this sense of survival and revenge which allows Kino to look a man right in his "frantic frightened eyes" and to shoot right between those eyes. The scene necessitates inhuman diction to parallel the inhuman actions occurring.*

15. What is unusual about the way Kino and Juana walk as they return to the village? How is this action repeated later in the chapter? What might this signify?

*In the past, Juana has always walked behind her husband (and eaten after him and spoken after him). Now, they are walking side by side. The reader has repeatedly noted throughout the novel that Kino and Juana's relationship is far more equal than their patriarchal culture would foster, but here we see an outward expression of that equality. It also appears that, though Juana would have much cause to blame Kino for the death of their son, she intends to remain loyally side by side with him through this tragedy.*

16. Discuss the multiple meanings of: "The people say that the two seemed to be removed from human experience."

*There are two levels of meaning here, and both are equally significant. Since leaving the safety of their village, Kino and Juana have had to survive in the desert like animals and, therefore, have literally been "removed from human experience." They also, in their grief, have removed themselves from all of humanity as a coping mechanism; Juana is remote but calm, and Kino is restless with pent-up energy. As part of their defense against their pain, there is "almost a magical protection" about them as they prepare to rid their lives of the cause of their suffering.*

17. Analyze the order in which Kino and Juana pass the sights of their old life and their reactions to that life. What theme(s) is the author illustrating in this section?

*Kino and Juana first pass all the people who had followed them through town to sell the pearl, and they do not speak to them. They walk through the city as though it were not there. They pass the burned square where their house had once been without even looking at it, and on the shore, they do not look toward Kino's broken canoe. The people, the village, the canoe used to hold such sacred places in their lives, but without Coyotito, these things mean nothing. Steinbeck is highlighting several themes here: the effects of greed and ambition, materialism versus spiritualism, and how people measure happiness.*

18. What textual clues lead the reader to know that Kino and Juana are on a singular mission to get rid of the pearl? What is significant about Kino's offer, and Juana's reaction, on the beach?

*They spoke to no one, they stared only straight ahead, they looked at nothing that was once important to them until they came to the water's edge. Here, Kino offers Juana the opportunity to throw the pearl back, which is significant for several reasons: Juana tried repeatedly to convince Kino to get rid of the pearl and he refused; when she took action and tried to throw it away herself, he beat her for it; now, Kino offers her the very thing she had been trying to rid them of all along. His offer is an olive branch. He knows he has wronged her and destroyed their family, and he hopes his action will prove his remorse. Juana's reaction is equally noteworthy—she says, "No, you." Her reasoning may be twofold: as a chastising mother, she wants her husband to take responsibility for what his actions and greed have caused; and as a loving wife, she wants her husband to release himself metaphorically from his overwhelming guilt by flinging the pearl "with all his might" back into the ocean.*



19. How does the description of the pearl in these final paragraphs differ drastically from the description in Chapter Two?

*In Chapter Two, it was a “great pearl, perfect as the moon.” It “captured the light...and gave it back in silver incandescence.” It was as “large as a sea-gull’s egg” and its “curve was perfect.” In Chapter Six, the pearl is “ugly” and “gray, like a malignant growth.” The luster of the pearl itself, and of their future, has fallen prey to the cancer of greed, ambition, and grief.*

20. “If this story is a parable,” as the narrator establishes in the epigraph, what are the possible symbolic meanings for the pearl? What are the lessons being taught?

*If the pearl symbolizes goodness and a brighter future, then Kino’s struggles to protect the pearl may represent the difficulty of maintaining virtue and honor in a world full of ambition and greed. If read from this perspective, the fact that Coyotito dies in the end would suggest that these external forces are insurmountable, that both physical and emotional destruction are inevitable.*

*If the pearl symbolizes wealth and material possessions, then Kino’s struggles may represent the effects of materialism at the cost of personal spirituality—that wealth, or even the promise of wealth, can turn a simple man content with his life into an obsessive, dissatisfied man. The predictable outcome is that he must lose something of value that material wealth cannot replace.*

*There is a third level to be considered when reading The Pearl as a parable. So much of the novel centers around the effects of colonialism on the native people. If Steinbeck is making a statement about Spain’s colonization of Mexico specifically, or colonialism in general, this story undoubtedly serves as an indictment. The only reason Kino searched for the pearl was that the doctor refused to help a lowly little Indian with an “insect bite.” And it is surely the colonial Spanish who ransack his house and hunt Kino down. The Indian people have been mistreated and manipulated for centuries, and Kino’s story may be Steinbeck’s historical allegory of their plight.*

# The Pearl

## Chapter One

1. What is the narrative purpose of the epigraph at the start of the novel?  

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2. From the first two paragraphs in the novel, what immediately gives the reader a sense of place, class, and the social standing of the characters? What details support this interpretation?  

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3. In paragraph 3, the reader is introduced to the prevalent motif of songs. What is the significance of these songs? What might the reason(s) be that there were “no new songs added”?  

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4. What is the tone of the opening paragraphs? How does the author achieve this tone?  

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5. Note the repetitive tasks Juana performs in the opening pages. What is their significance? How do they help to characterize Juana before we even hear her speak?  

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6. Assess the relationship between Juana and Kino in the first part of Chapter One. How does Steinbeck paint a vivid portrait of them as a couple despite a complete lack of dialogue?
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7. Discuss the examples of nature imagery present in the opening pages of the chapter and how they highlight the theme of the struggle for survival. What other purpose might this imagery serve?
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8. Note the marked shift in tone in this chapter. Where exactly does it occur and how is it a dramatic contrast to the tranquil imagery that preceded it?
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9. What does the scorpion symbolize? What does Coyotito's reaction suggest about the nature of this symbol?
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10. What is significant about what Juana says "under her breath" while watching the scorpion move "delicately down the rope toward the box"?
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11. Contrast Kino and Juana's reactions to the scorpion bite and what their actions reveal about their characters? What do their reactions suggest about the roles gender is going to play in the novel?

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12. Analyze the dual layers of meaning of "And all of these people knew about the scorpion."

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13. What textual clues provide evidence of the narrator's attitude toward the doctor?

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14. Explain the significance of the order of procession out of Kino's village and how it exemplifies the theme of community.

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15. What is the effect of the paradoxes and juxtaposition of ideas in the passage that begins, "They came to the place..."?

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16. What do the beggars represent? How does the reader know the narrator's attitude toward them? And the beggars' attitude toward the doctor?

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17. Examine the complicated emotions Kino feels when he reaches the doctor's door. How do these feelings exemplify those of his race as a whole?

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18. Contrast the doctor's and Kino's homes and their attitudes toward life.

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19. What theme is highlighted with the doctor's comment: "Have I nothing better to do than cure insect bites for 'little Indians'? I am a doctor not a veterinary."

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20. Examine the contrast and similarity of Kino's two actions in the final paragraph of the chapter.

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## Chapter Two

1. Contrast the nature imagery in the second and third paragraphs with the tone each paragraph sets. How does the author accomplish this contrast?  

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2. Explain the fundamental conflict between the attitude of the “people of the Gulf” and the people in the city. What theme or themes are introduced in this conflict?  

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3. Examine the literal and symbolic function of Kino’s canoe.  

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4. Reflect on the essential difference between Kino’s and Juana’s reactions to the scorpion bite in Chapter One. How does this advance the examination of conventional male and female roles?  

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5. Note two examples of the interjection of the narrator’s personal opinions in this chapter. What commentary is made in each scenario?  

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6. How does the discussion of pearls advance the novel's examination of the roles of fate and free will in this chapter?

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7. Explain why Juana prays not for a cure but for a pearl. How does this highlight the complex role of religion in this chapter?

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8. Analyze the repetition of the "secret melody" of the "Song of the Pearl That Might Be" and the language the author chooses in these passages. How does the song change over the course of Kino's quest?

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9. Consider the last three paragraphs of the chapter, paying close attention to the diction Steinbeck uses. What words or phrases indicate a possible transition in Kino's character?

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### Chapter Three

1. Trace the spreading of Kino's news throughout the town. What is the significance of the order in which the news is received? What does each person want?

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2. Note the dramatic change in tone between the first six paragraphs and the seventh. What does Kino and Juana's attitude reveal about their characters? And what is the narrator's commentary on the character of man? To what does the narrator compare the town and why is this particularly significant?

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3. How does the repetition of the article "the" contribute to the overall tone of paragraph six?

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4. Compare and contrast Juana and Kino's responses to Juan Thomas's question, "What will you do now that you have become a rich man?" Is their behavior consistent with the reader's view of each of them in Chapter One?

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5. Trace the significance of the progression of the things Kino wants from the sale of his pearl.

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6. Read the two paragraphs starting with “Now the neighbors knew...” and reflect on the narrator’s commentary about humanity.

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7. Examine the importance of Steinbeck’s repeated reference to Kino’s knuckles in this chapter.

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8. Analyze the ways in which the priest manipulates Kino in this chapter.

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9. Consider the paragraph beginning “The neighbors slipped away...” and compare and contrast this passage, in action and tone, to Chapter One.

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10. Discuss the theme(s) addressed in the paragraph beginning “Behind him he heard Juana...” and examine the conflicting emotions present in the passage.

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11. Analyze the ways in which the doctor manipulates Kino in this chapter. Pay particular attention to the author’s diction.

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12. Explain the dual layers of meaning associated with the paragraph beginning “Out in the estuary...” Note the paragraphs that immediately precede and follow this one for contextual clues.
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13. Juana asks Kino, “Who do you fear?” What does Kino’s response indicate about his state of mind?
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14. Analyze the function of the light and darkness motif in the chapter.
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15. Analyze the function of Kino’s songs in the chapter. How does the music in this chapter contrast with that of the first chapter?
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16. Reread the section in which Juana confronts Kino about throwing the pearl away. Examine the central conflict and the result, both literally and emotionally.
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### Chapter Four

1. How does the opening of this chapter parallel the opening of Chapter Three? How is it different?  
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2. How does the pearl buyers' station in life parallel the Indians'? What is the primary difference?  
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3. Consider the paragraph starting with "In the brush houses..." Why is it so easy for Kino's neighbors to talk about what they would do in Kino's situation? How do they know human nature so well? How is Kino's situation different?  
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4. Despite Juana's worries in the previous chapter that the pearl would "destroy" them, why now is this day "comparable only to the day when [Coyotito] had been born"?  
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5. Compare and contrast Kino and Juana's preparations for going to town. What theme do these preparations highlight? How is the rest of their community involved?  
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6. What is the significance of the priest's yearly speech to the Indian people? What themes does it address?

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7. How does the reader know the narrator's attitude toward the "stout slow man"?

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8. What is the main indication to the reader that Kino is being swindled?

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9. How do the pearl buyers' actions mimic those of the priest and the doctor?

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10. Examine the various reactions of the crowd in the scene with the pearl buyers. What do these reactions say about humanity?

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11. What is the significance of the "great theme of the morning," which the neighbors discuss?

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12. What is meant by the statement that “Kino had lost one world and not gained another”? How does this make Kino feel?

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13. What is Juan Thomas’s primary fear for Kino? What fundamental aspects of humanity does Juan Thomas understand that his brother does not?

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14. What effect does the series of oxymorons have in the paragraph starting “Long after Juan...”?

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15. Reread the two paragraphs starting with “Kino did not move...” What is the primary literary device employed and what is its significance?

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16. Analyze the argument Kino and Juana have at the close of Chapter Four. What is the significance of each character’s repetitive phrases?

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## Chapter Five

1. What is the overall function of this chapter? What is the predominant imagery used to convey that function?

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2. What textual clues are there that Kino has not completely transformed into an animal?

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3. Beginning with the paragraph starting, “Juana dragged herself,” examine Juana’s perspective on the primary differences between men and women. How does she view her role as a woman and as Kino’s wife? What commentary is Steinbeck making about the roles of men and women in their society?

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4. Why does Juana not let Kino believe that the pearl is gone?

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5. What is the symbolic effect of the juxtaposition of the pearl and Kino's knife?

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6. What is the significance of the discoveries Kino and Juana make when they return to their village?

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7. What is the role of the light and darkness motif in this chapter? In what way has this motif notably shifted in this chapter?

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8. At the closing of Chapter Five, Kino says, "This pearl has become my soul. If I give it up I shall lose my soul." Explore the variety of meanings this comment could possibly signify.

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## Chapter Six

1. If the tone of the previous chapter can be described as one of desperate greed, how would you characterize the overall tone of this chapter?  
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2. What is the “ancient thing” stirring in Kino? How will this serve him in this chapter?  
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3. Consider the paragraph starting with “All night they walked...” and analyze how Kino’s relationship with nature has changed since the beginning of the novel.  
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4. What is the significance of the prevalence of the songs in Kino’s head at the start of the chapter?  
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5. Note the scene in which Kino is watching the ants moving. How does this serve as a contrast to a similar scene in Chapter One? What do these two scenes reveal about Kino’s attitude toward nature and his own position in the natural order of things?  
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6. Reread the paragraph beginning with “He looked into his pearl...” and analyze the effects of the author’s use of juxtaposition.

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7. What is the effect of these visions on Kino?

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8. How does the language Steinbeck uses to describe both the trackers and Kino parallel each another?

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9. How does the imagery in the paragraph beginning, “This land was waterless ...” symbolize Kino and Juana’s current situation?

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10. “The music of evil sang loud in Kino’s head now, it sang with the whine of heat and with the dry ringing of snake rattles. It was not large and overwhelming now but secret and poisonous.” Analyze the significance of this shift in the music.

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16. Discuss the multiple meanings of: "The people say that the two seemed to be removed from human experience."

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18. What textual clues lead the reader to know that Kino and Juana are on a singular mission to get rid of the pearl? What is significant about Kino's offer, and Juana's reaction, on the beach?

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19. How does the description of the pearl in these final paragraphs differ drastically from the description in Chapter Two?

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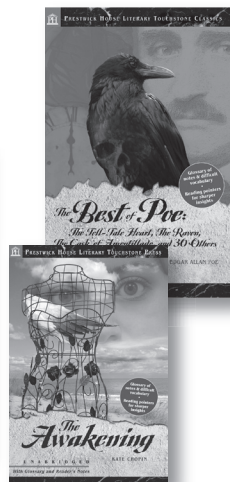
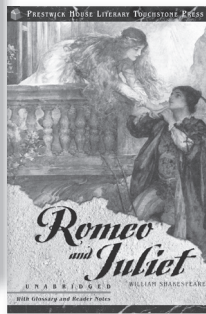
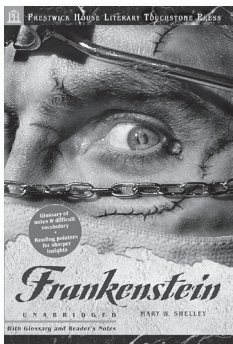
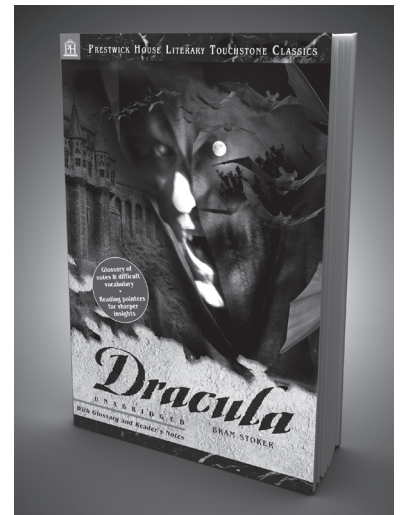
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