Teacher Copy:

John Steinbeck: A Brief Biography

- **Life Time:**
  - February 27, 1902 Salina, California – December 20, 1968 in New York at age 66

- **Childhood:**
  - Only child to John Ernst (treasurer) and Olive Hamilton Steinbeck (teacher)
  - Avid reader as a child - specifically Sir Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte d’Arthur*
  - Decided to be a writer at age 14

- **Adulthood:**
  - Started at Stanford University in 1919
  - Left without a degree in 1925 and moved to New York working odd jobs
  - Returned to California in 1927
  - Married Carol (his first wife) in 1930 – Divorced in 1943
  - Published *Of Mice and Men* in 1937
    - Originally written as a play about the Great Depression meant to be performed for illiterate farm workers
    - His dog tore the manuscript and he rewrote the novel
    - The play was produced soon after – both the novel and the play were a huge success
    - Pulitzer Prize in 1939
  - Married Gwendolyn (his second wife) in 1943 – Divorced in 1948
    - Had 2 sons – Thomas and John
  - Married Elaine (his third wife) in 1950
  - Received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962

- **Famous Works:** *Tortilla Flat, The Grapes of Wrath, East of Eden, and of Mice and Men*
  - Wrote 28 novels total
  - Strength and determination of the human spirit
  - Several of his novels take place in Salinas Valley – 25 miles off the Pacific Coast