

Lesson Description	This lesson will provide students with an introduction to the writing process through examination of John Steinbeck's writing process as a guide and backdrop to scaffold their own narrative writing. Steinbeck's archived journal pages and drafts of <i>East of Eden</i> will serve as a relevant, real-world example of the complexities involved in the process of crafting a text that communicates a specific message, thereby achieving a desired intent.
Objective	After reviewing and discussing Steinbeck's writing process from the archived documents, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brainstorm, draft, revise/edit, and "publish" a short narrative.• Self-evaluate their writing process.
Enduring Understanding(s) & Essential Questions	Analyzing an author's writing process as shown in archived materials and drafts allows writers to expand their own approach to the writing process and deepen their understanding of an author's intent. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does an author's purpose affect his editorial decisions? (c)• How can editing affect a book's ending? I.e., how do the author's editorial decisions ultimately affect a text's meaning or message? (c)• How can an author's writing process impact a story's development? (c)• Why is investment in the entire writing process important for achieving the writer's purpose? (p)

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (Target standards)**English I-III, grade 9-11:**

(13) Writing/Writing Process. Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text. Students are expected to:

- (A) plan a first draft by selecting the correct genre for conveying the intended meaning to multiple audiences, determining appropriate topics through a range of strategies (e.g., discussion, background reading, personal interests, interviews), and developing a thesis or controlling idea;
- (C) gr 9-10 revise drafts to improve style, word choice, figurative language, sentence variety, and subtlety of meaning after rethinking how well questions of purpose, audience, and genre have been addressed;
- gr 11 revise drafts to clarify meaning and achieve specific rhetorical purposes, consistency of tone, and logical organization by rearranging the words, sentences, and paragraphs to employ tropes (e.g., metaphors, similes, analogies, hyperbole, understatement, rhetorical questions, irony), schemes (e.g., parallelism, antithesis, inverted word order, repetition, reversed structures), and by adding transitional words and phrases;
- (D) edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling; and
- (E) revise final draft in response to feedback from peers and teacher and publish written work for appropriate audiences.

(18) Oral and Written Conventions/Handwriting, Capitalization, and Punctuation. Students write legibly and use appropriate capitalization and punctuation conventions in their compositions. Students are expected to:

- (A) use conventions of capitalization; and
- (B) use correct punctuation marks including:
 - (i) quotation marks to indicate sarcasm or irony;
 - (ii) comma placement in nonrestrictive phrases, clauses, and contrasting expressions; and
 - (iii) dashes to emphasize parenthetical information.

(19) Oral and Written Conventions/Spelling. Students spell correctly. Students are expected to spell correctly, including using various resources to determine and check correct spellings.

Pre-requisite Knowledge and Skills

- Familiarity with the various phases of the writing process (*generative writing or prewriting; drafting; revision; editing; etc.*)
- Background information on Steinbeck's life and career; we recommend showing the A&E Biography documentary *Steinbeck: An American Writer* (50 minutes) the class day prior to implementing this lesson.

Vocabulary

- Writing Process
- Author's Purpose/Intent

Time Required

~135 minutes (*approximately 1.5 90-minute block periods or three 45- to 50-minute periods*)

**Materials
Required**

- Student notebooks, writing utensils
- Projector, doc cam, and computer for projecting corresponding lesson slides, including images of Steinbeck's personal writings and drafts. *Contact Lori Hahn at the UTeach-LA office to request an electronic copy of the PDF titled "Steinbeck and the Writing Process Resource."*
- Laptops or smartphone access to provided website (see Resources) for students. *Alternate option: handouts of printed timeline from website.
- Copies of *East of Eden* with various covers
- Blank notecards for exit ticket

Procedure

Students should be seated in groups assigned by the teacher in a formation conducive to seeing the screen as well as conferring with group members.

Engage
5-10 minutes

While displaying slide 2 of the "Resource" PDF, ask students to raise their hands if they have ever heard of any of the following names:

- Eminem
- Lady Gaga
- BJ Novak ("Ryan" or "The Temp" from The Office)
- Jennifer Aniston
- Emma Watson
- Oprah Winfrey
- James Franco
- Kendrick Lamar
- Drake

With slide 2 remaining on the projector, ask students:

- "What is something all of these celebrities have in common?"
- Is there something about their 'jobs' that share a similarity(ies)?
- In some form or fashion, what do they all have to do to make a living?"

They are lyricists, composers, actors and performers, prose writers, screenwriters, etc. They all, in some form or fashion, regularly engage in the writing process.

Together, examine the variation of these artists' interaction with the writing process (slides 3-7).

Show images of select artists and evidence of their writing process represented in the image, making sure to describe what's shown and add any corollary information to help contextualize for students.

Introduce
~20 minutes

“Knowing that modern-day celebrities participate in the writing process to perfect their final products that we enjoy is encouraging for amateurs. It means that we need not feel intimidated by the thought of engaging in the writing process or of trying to create something worthy of publication. In order to illustrate this point further, we will more closely examine the process used by a writer whose work we will read and study in our next unit - John Steinbeck.” (slide 8)

“Last class period we watched a documentary that introduced us to Steinbeck’s life and writing career. It’s important that you remember the major milestones of his life that might have influenced his writing process.” (slide 9)

**Note: If teachers elect to forego showing this documentary in class, time should be added here to briefly review the information on his life that was shared previously or to introduce said information.*

Using the timeline on the SJSU website (URL provided in “Resources below” and hyperlinked in slide 10) or via print copies, students will work in small groups to peruse a comprehensive list of milestones and events in Steinbeck’s life and either jot down or circle the top 5-10 events in Steinbeck’s life that they believe would most deeply impact his writing process singularly or as a whole. (10-15 minutes)

Debrief of each group’s list as a class. *Each group shares the noteworthy events and makes note of the similarities across groups’ selections.* (5-7 minutes)

Explain & Explore 1
10-15 minutes

“Now that we better remember Steinbeck the man and the writer, let’s consider him as an example of a writer engaged in the writing process to guide reflection on and practice with our own writing processes.

The first step of the writing process is generative writing: brainstorming and drafting. Let’s examine some archived material from the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin. These first two pictures will show us how Steinbeck drafted a novel titled *In Dubious Battle*, which was published in 1936.”

Show slide 11 – list/outline for first 15 chapters of *In Dubious Battle* in diary.

“Look back at the timeline of Steinbeck’s life and consider the significant events in his life from around this time. Consider years before and after 1936.

- What do you notice about this image? What can you infer about Steinbeck and his writing process from this image?”

Possible responses: *It’s on notebook paper, it’s in a journal or diary, it’s in his handwriting, it’s in pen, it’s a list of 15 things, maybe it’s a list of ideas per chapter for the book, it’s just a set of ideas and sentences to convey big ideas for the book.*

- “Does it look as though anyone gave him a handout to structure his thoughts? Did a teacher tell him how to set this up? Does this look

like he chose to brainstorm this way or was the structure imposed upon him? Why?"

- Show slide 12 – diary entry with handwritten drafting for *In Dubious Battle* with “Xs” to mark the paragraphs.

- “What do you notice about this page of drafting and brainstorming? What can we infer about Steinbeck’s writing process from this image?”
- Is there any sort of structure or organization? What does this reveal to us about his process? Why/how?”

“Now we’re going to transition to Steinbeck’s initial drafting for his novel *East of Eden*” (slides 13-14 shows image of handwriting on green paper in the form of epistolary letters).

- Here the teacher will display a published copy of *East of Eden* via doc cam and show students the final version of the text as a point of comparison to slides 13-14, emphasizing how drastic and influential the drafting and brainstorming phase is in the writing process. **The published copy is in narrative form and drafts are personal letters and stories to his two sons.*
- Teacher will then read aloud the first two to three paragraphs of *East of Eden*.
 - “What do we know about where Steinbeck grew up? What part of California does he know well?”
 - What is he writing about in the opening portion of this book? Does he seem to have an understanding of his subject?”
 - How is it that he provides such immense detail or realism of a scene? How does his opening chapter create verisimilitude?” (slide 15)

**Apply &
Elaborate 1**
~20 minutes

Your turn, students! “John Steinbeck is from the Salinas Valley and writes so intimately about a place he knows so well. This resonates in his writing and for the reader.

Think of a place you are fond of, a place you know really well—perhaps as intimately as Steinbeck knows the Salinas Valley. Draft and brainstorm (in any form or fashion) a description of this special place.

- What makes it special?
- What does it look like?
- Appeal to all five senses and transplant your reader to that exact location making them feel what you feel when you are there. Help them to see all of the intimate details of this location.

Ready? Write!”

(slide 16)

Students write for 10-12 minutes to produce a substantial paragraph or more of writing.

Differentiation note: Some students will require more think time; some students may want to draw or sketch prior to writing. Teachers can expand time to make sure all students get a chance to write a

decently lengthy paragraph.

Once all students have finished drafting or when timer goes off (*after 15 minutes*), students will turn a shoulder partner at their table and share their draft by reading directly or paraphrasing.

**Explain &
Explore 2**
5-10 minutes

“After generation or drafting, the next phase of the writing process is revision. Writers revise to improve content and style. Revision for style is commonly called editing.

Let’s look at more of Steinbeck’s drafts of *East of Eden*. Like most professional prose writers, Steinbeck worked closely with a professional editor. His editor made not only proofreading marks but also offered input on content revisions.”

Show slides 17-18 – editor’s marks of *East of Eden* draft, including input re: the ending (slide 18).

- “What do you notice about the marks? What does the editor point out or emphasize?”

Show slide 19 and show first few paragraphs of novel and how the first paragraph was cut and moved to further illustrate aspects of a committed writer’s revision process.

**Apply &
Elaborate 2**
25-30 minutes

II. Revising and Editing: Students’ turn, again!

“Now, take the paragraph you drafted earlier and make revisions to improve your content and style. Here is a list of things to consider for revision:

1. Circle verbs - make them active and expressive
 2. Circle adjectives - make them expressive and vivid
 3. Sentence variety - make sure each sentence isn’t structured the exact same way
 4. Sentence length - make sure all of your sentences serve to emphasize the purpose of the paragraph
 5. Mechanics - grammar, usage, mechanics and spelling
 6. Capitalization - check for needed capitalization
 7. Imagery - check for the representation of all five senses”
- (slide 20)

Students will have 10-15 minutes to revise their own paragraph. *If time allows, have students rewrite or type their paragraphs when finished will prove beneficial to the success of the next step in this activity.*

When time’s up, ask students to switch their work with a peer at their table and independently revise each other’s paragraph for ~10 minutes, considering the same list on slide 20. At the end of 10 minutes, students should return the partner’s work and take ~5 minutes to discuss their suggested revisions. **Writers should indicate which changes they agree with or would entertain with a check mark or star by the editor’s marks and which changes with which they disagree with an ‘X’ before moving on.*

**Explain &
Explore 3**
~10 minutes

“The final phase of the writing process is polishing and publishing. Steinbeck’s drafts of *East of Eden* were revised and edited multiple times before arriving at a final draft to be published. Take a look at the editor’s

changes and revisions to the cover of the novel before publication.” (slide 21)

- “What do you notice? What do you think of the editor’s choices?”
- Why is a book cover so important? What does it suggest about the book itself, if anything?
- Is it a reflection of the time and society in which Steinbeck lived? If so, why/how?”

Show the various incarnations of the book cover that have been published over time (slide 22) and compare to the original, first edition version.

- “What does the evolution of cover designs say about the book?”
- How do the designs vary?
- Does they reflect anything about society or the times in which they were published?

“Sometimes, special pages are added to books in the publishing process. For instance, Steinbeck wrote a ‘Prologue’ to this novel that never made it to the final, published version.” (slide 23 – prologue in handwritten form)

- Why might Steinbeck include a Prologue for this novel? And why might he remove this after writing it? What factors might influence Steinbeck to either include or discard a prologue in a novel that is personal and pseudo-autobiographical in nature?
- Would (or could) an editor remove such a page? If so, why or why not?

**Apply &
Evaluate**
25-30 minutes

III. Publishing: You try, students!

“Now, take your revised and edited paragraph and copy down the final version of the paragraph until it’s in a polished version you’re happy with. Afterward, you’ll design a book cover for your *novel*. **You can sketch it out; it doesn’t have to be perfect.*

Students will have ?? minutes to create their polished paragraph and book cover.

“Now that everyone has sketched or drawn out a book cover concept, turn to your group and pass around each other’s sample book covers. As you receive each group member’s cover sketch, mark comments at the bottom or in the margins with suggestions for improvements just as you saw with Steinbeck’s markings.”

Students will have 10-15 minutes to exchange book covers and offer revision suggestions.

**Differentiation note: Some students will need more time and/or more prompting to arrive at cover ideas and possibly revision suggestions.*

Consider adding specific time limits for exchanging covers, announcing each rotation’s expiration, and be sure to provide examples of specific revisions suggestions to support students who struggle to provide specific affirmations or tactful, constructive feedback.

Closure
~5 minutes

Students will write independent answers to the following questions on the blank notecard provided—

- What surprised or motivated you about approaching the writing process

this way?

- What did it feel like to see a Pulitzer and Nobel Prize winning author's words and writing as they were drafted, revised, edited, and finally published?
- How do you feel about approaching the writing process now that you've seen evidence from a professional's process?

Teacher will collect these responses on notecards as students leave class.

With any extra time that remains in class, students will lay their created book covers on their desks and peruse the room to examine peers' book covers.

Future Lessons

This lesson serves to introduce students to the writing process and John Steinbeck's life and writing. With this in mind, future lessons will focus on one or more selected works by John Steinbeck and/or students production of a prose piece that moves more extensively through the various phases on the writing process, including conferencing or grouping for feedback on content and style and publishing the finished work by sharing it with an authentic audience.

Resources:

John Steinbeck: An American Writer - A&E Biography, DVD, 50 minutes

Harmon, Robert B. "John Steinbeck's Life and Works." *Chronology*. San Jose State University, 10 June 2014. Web. 17 June 2016.
<<http://sits.sjsu.edu/context/biographical/chronology/index.html>>.

Steinbeck, John. Handwritten draft of *In Dubious Battle* on lined hardcover Standard No. 362 Diary, 1905. Box 5, Folder 3. John Steinbeck Collection, Series I. Works, 1902-1968. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

Steinbeck, John. Last page of typed draft of *East of Eden* with editor revisions of T + Teems with Emendations, 1952. Box 3, Folder 2 (6 of 6). Clear Sleeve 2. John Steinbeck Collection, Series I. Works, 1902-1968. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

Steinbeck, John. Publisher's book cover mock-up to *East of Eden*, 1952. Box 3, Folder 2 (6 of 6). Clear Sleeve 4-5. John Steinbeck Collection, Series I. Works, 1902-1968. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

Steinbeck, John. Handwritten draft of the last page of *East of Eden* on lined paper, 1952. Box 4, Folder 5. Last clear sleeve. John Steinbeck Collection, Series I. Works, 1902-1968. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

Steinbeck, John. Handwritten draft of *East of Eden*, 1952. Box 4, Folder 1. Clear Sleeve 1. John Steinbeck Collection, Series I. Works, 1902-1968. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

Steinbeck, John. Handwritten discarded pages (2 of 2) of a draft of a prologue of *East of Eden*, 1952. Box 3, Folder 4. Clear Sleeve 2. Page 2. John Steinbeck Collection, Series I. Works, 1902-1968. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

Steinbeck, John. Handwritten discarded pages (1 of 2) of a draft of Chapter 1 of *East of Eden*, 1952. Box 3, Folder 3. White Sleeve 1. Page 1. John Steinbeck Collection, Series I. Works, 1902-1968. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.