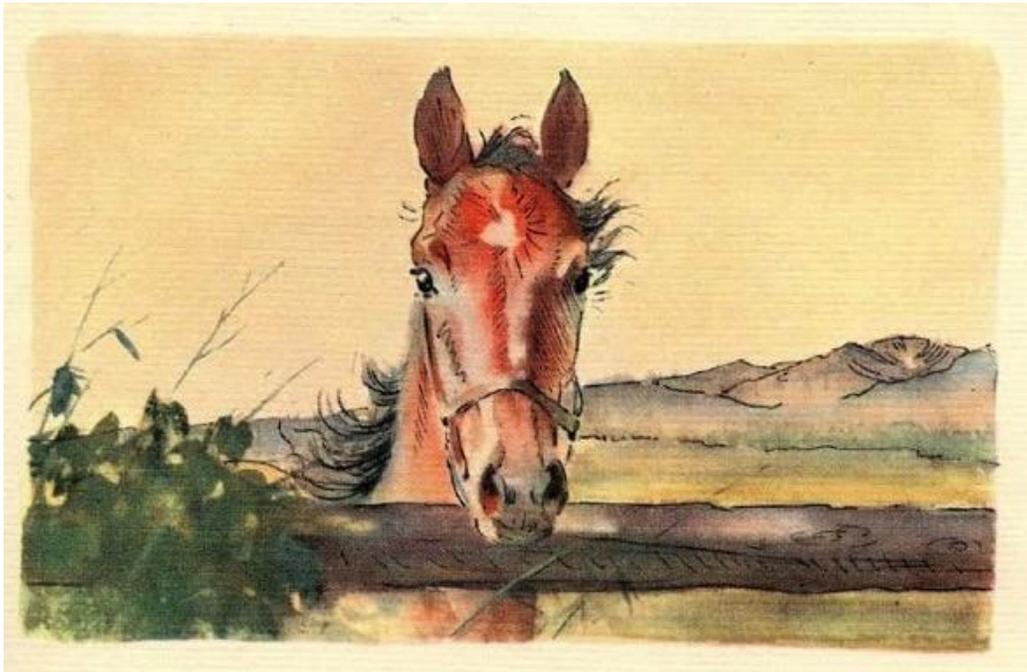


*An Educational Program of the National Steinbeck Center*



# Growing Up in the Salinas Valley

A Middle School Writing Program Based on  
John Steinbeck's *The Red Pony*

# LESSON 11: PREPARING A VETERINARIAN REPORT

## Objective

- Students will explore the theme of responsibility as illustrated by the decisions of the various characters at the onset of Gabilan's illness. Students will use the internet to research *Equine Strangles*, the disease that eventually killed Gabilan.

## Relevant Common Core State Standard:

- Writing 2.0 Writing informative/explanatory texts.
- Writing 3.0 Writing Narratives.

## Materials

- Handout T: Preparing a Veterinarian Report

## Procedures

Introduce the lesson by explaining that Gabilan's illness and each character's response are complex and important aspects of the story. By carefully reviewing the events that transpired, students will be more likely to appreciate Steinbeck's perspective. Assign cooperative groups responsibility for filling out part or all of Handout T: Preparing a Veterinarian Report. Clarify the meaning of the categories: symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and Billy's promise to Jody at each point in Gabilan's illness. Set aside time so that students, individually or in pairs, research the symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of strangles. As a whole class, discuss what students have learned about Steinbeck's treatment of the theme of "responsibility." What was promised? Who was responsible? What did Jody learn? Discuss the course of events and decisions that led to the pony's death.

## Assessment

Ask students to use their completed Veterinarian Reports as the basis for a class discussion of Steinbeck's treatment of the concept of responsibility as it relates to Jody, his parents and Billy Buck. What is Steinbeck's attitude about the subject? Why might the story be titled "The Gift"?

## PREPARING A VETERANARIAN REPORT

As a local veterinarian, you have been called to the Tiflin Ranch to inquire into the recent death of the pony, Gabilan. After having done the research online, fill in the chart below to determine the cause of Gabilan’s death.

Time	Thursday PM	Friday AM	Friday PM	Saturday AM	Saturday PM	Sunday AM	Sunday PM
Symptoms							
Diagnosis							
Treatment							
Billy's Promise to Jody							