

East of Eden
Essay Prompts

See [Key Pages and Topics](#) to assist in finding appropriate evidence

Option 1

Choose a major character from the novel and explain what motivates him or her. In other words, what does this character want, need, love, enjoy, fear, and/or hate? Find several behaviors or words from the character that you may interpret in order to prove your assertions about what motivates him/her. Organize your paragraphs in a logical way (chronologically, by importance, or according to some other progression). Begin each body paragraph with a statement about what motivates the character, not with a behavior or quote. In other words, use the evidence to prove your points rather than stating what happens first. After you have shown the character's motivation, identify (as the conclusion, if you like) what parts of the character's personality you see in yourself. It is okay to use the first person (I, my) only in this final section.

Option 2

To assist in your writing, see the [important quotes](#) page

In this novel, Steinbeck often takes a step outside of the telling of the story in order to talk directly to the audience as himself. When he does this, he makes some profound observations about life and the human condition.

Choose a passage in which Steinbeck steps out of the narration of the story in order to make an observation about life. Include this passage in a way that blends into your essay. In other words, do not introduce the long quote before the introduction. Rather, refer to it after you have hooked us in. The thesis statement should indicate that *East of Eden* serves as an illustration of Steinbeck's point through its use of certain characters and events. After introducing the passage, draw connections between his observation about life and the characters and events in the novel. After you have done this, you may even use the first person to agree or disagree with his point.