**Discussing “Flight” by John Steinbeck using the Shared Inquiry Discussion method in a middle or high school classroom**

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If you are unfamiliar with the (non-profit) Great Books Foundation and their Shared Inquiry Discussion method, I encourage you to look into their principles and resources. Below is a brief explanation. I have adapted “Flight” for a Shared Inquiry Discussion.

**Brief Description of Great Books Shared Inquiry**

The goal of Great Books programs is to instill in adults and children the habits of mind that characterize a self-reliant thinker, reader, and learner. Great Books programs are predicated on the idea that everyone can read and understand excellent literature—literature that has the capacity to engage the whole person, the imagination as well as the intellect. Shared Inquiry is a distinctive method of learning in which participants search for answers to fundamental questions raised by a text. This search is inherently active; it involves taking what the author has given us and trying to grasp its full meaning to interpret or reach an understanding of the text in light of our experience using sound reasoning. In Shared Inquiry, participants learn to give full consideration to the ideas of others, to weigh the merits of opposing arguments, and to modify their initial opinions as the evidence demands. They gain experience in communicating complex ideas and in supporting, testing, and expanding their own thoughts. In this way, the Shared Inquiry method promotes thoughtful dialogue and open debate, preparing participants to become able, responsible citizens, as well as enthusiastic, lifelong readers. ([www.greatbooks.org](http://www.greatbooks.org))

To watch a video and get an overview featuring Shared Inquiry in action in a   
middle school classroom, please go to: <http://vimeo.com/6756178>.

For this lesson:

1. Students will each need a copy of “Flight.” You can print and copy this version from on-line or copy the short story from Steinbeck’s The Long Valley. Either way I encourage you to put page numbers on the text so students can easily refer to specific pages when discussing the text or sharing evidence from it. <http://www.nbu.bg/webs/amb/american/4/steinbeck/flight.htm>
2. The Power Point is designed for four days but can be adapted to whatever length best serves your classroom. Steinbeck’s short story would probably best fit in a 7-9th grade classroom. Teacher notes are on each slide. The four days are planned this way: Day One-Text Opener, Read Aloud “Flight,” and Sharing Questions; Day Two-Guided Notes, Second Independent Reading, Sharing Guided Notes in Small Groups; Day Three-Shared Inquiry Discussion; Day Four-Writing After Discussion.
3. These are not necessary but excellent tools from Great Books for assessing and implementing Shared Inquiry in a middle or high school classroom. You might want to print and copy the following two documents for the Shared Inquiry Discussion:

“Building Your Answer in a Shared Inquiry Discussion”

“Middle and High School Critical Thinking Rubric”

<http://www.greatbooks.org/fileadmin/pdf/JGB_7-9_IGB_1-3.pdf>

Copy and paste these links into your browser if they do not open automatically.