**Introduction to The Pearl**

*"In the town they tell the story of the great pearl--how it was found*

*and how it was lost again. They tell of Kino the fisherman, and of his wife Juana, and of the baby, Coyotito. And because the story has been told so often, it has taken root in every man's mind. And, as with all retold tales that are in people's hearts, there are only good and bad things and black and white things and no in-between anywhere. If this story is a parable, perhaps everyone takes his own meaning from it and reads his own life into it…"*

~from John Steinbeck's Introduction to The Pearl

**I. The Author: John Steinbeck**

[Click here](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1962/steinbeck-bio.html) to answer these questions:

1. When and where was he born?
2. What college did he attend? What year did he graduate?
3. What is his best-known work?
4. What topic does he use for most of his novels?

Search the web to find the following:

1. Find two pictures of John Steinbeck to show the class.
2. What is a “parable”?

## II. The Author: John Steinbeck continued

[Click here](http://www.biography.com/people/john-steinbeck-9493358) to answer these questions:

1. At what age did Steinbeck decide to become a writer?
2. What award did Steinbeck receive in 1940?
3. What year did Steinbeck die?

[Click here](http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/johnstei.htm) to answer these questions:

1. What is the name of the marine biologist Steinbeck met? Where did they travel?
2. When was The Pearl written?
3. Steinbeck served as an advisor to which President?

**III. The Setting - La Paz, Mexico**  
Search the web to find the following:

1. Find La Paz on a map of Mexico to show the class.

[Click here](http://perlas.com.mx/en/history/hist3.html) to answer these questions:

1. How much of a role did pearls play in the New World’s exports?
2. In the sixteenth century, what was La Paz known as?

[Click here](http://www.mexconnect.com/articles/2923-did-you-know-mexico-was-once-the-world-s-major-source-of-pearls) to answer these questions:

1. What is the history of Pearl collecting in Mexico?
2. What was the pearling industry like by 1936?
3. What is La Paz known as today?

**IV. Pearls**

[Click here](http://www.ehow.com/about_6401122_interesting-pearls.html) to answer these questions:

1. How are pearls formed?
2. What is the typical size of a pearl?
3. According to the article, a pearl symbolizes what three things?
4. What is the La Peregrina?

[Click here](http://www.pippinbass.com/Pearl-Myths-Pearl-Facts.asp) to answer these questions:

1. According to the article, different cultures say the pearl has what powers?
2. Where do pearls grow?

**V. Pearl Diving**

[Click here](http://www.artisan-jewelry-online.com/pearl-diving.html) to answer these questions:

1. How are most pearls formed today?
2. How long has pearl diving been taking place? Who most likely originated this custom?
3. What are some dangers of pearl diving?

[Click here](http://www.ehow.com/about_6641881_pearl-diving-history.html) to answer these questions:

1. Before pearl farms, how common was it to find a pearl? What did the worker’s pay depend upon?
2. Pearl divers were typically what gender? Why?
3. What is the bends?

**VI. Scorpions**

[Click here](http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/168230-overview) to answer these questions:

1. Where are scorpion stings a health problem?
2. How many deaths occur in Mexico each year from Scorpions?
3. Which type of scorpion is found in the Baja California peninsula of Mexico? (Find a picture of this type of scorpion to show the class)
4. How do they hunt their prey?

[Click here](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/scorpion-stings/DS01113) to answer these questions:

1. Are scorpion stings dangerous in the US? Why or why not?
2. Who usually needs treatment for a scorpion sting?