ALOHA! Below are the updates for this week.

The “Write” Stuff

It was exciting to see the many different activities that were developed around the novel Of Mice and Men this past week. With the upcoming knowledge test, project, and MyAccess! writing prompt, students should have a thorough understanding of this Steinbeck classic.

Below is an interesting journal entry written by John Steinbeck in the late 1938s.

“In every bit of honest writing in the world there is a base theme. Try to understand men, if you understand each other you will be kind to each other. Knowing a man well never leads to hate and nearly always leads to love. There are shorter means, many of them. There is writing promoting social change, writing punishing injustice, writing in celebration of heroism, but always that base theme. Try to understand each other.”

Do you know how many books John Steinbeck wrote in this lifetime? (see end)

Food for Thought:

Frank & Ernest Cartoon Strip - 3/22/99

Wristbands are here!

The wristbands are in and Lynn is working to set up a system for distribution. We’ll let you know more on how it will work very soon.
Here are Dr. Smith’s thoughts for the week

This week, let’s talk about interesting ways to begin a story. Detailed descriptions always help bring a story alive. I’ve seen far too many essays begin with “Once upon a time (...).” While this counts as a legitimate introductory phrase, it is not the best way to invite an audience beyond the age of eight to read on. If high school students are writing for their peers or for adults, and unless they are they skilled in styles of irony, they would be wise to leave “Once upon a time” to early childhood fairy tales.

Beginning an interesting narrative is not easy. However, choosing a thoughtful and interesting beginning can grab the readers’ attention and make the reader want to know where the story will go. For example, compare the following two story beginning sentences:

1. Once upon a time, the little town of Kapa`a had a fire.

2. As the sun rose over the mountains in the sleepy little town of Kapa`a, no one knew that such a peaceful start to a summer day would turn to chaos.

Obviously, the fist sentence has little detail, and it doesn’t make the reader excited to read on. The second example is more descriptive, and it sets the stage for the reader to anticipate the story. Interestingly, when a writer takes time to plan an inviting start to a story, the writer is more motivated to include more descriptions in the body of the story. Happy writing for this week:

Aloha, Julie

Professional Development:

Our next PD Session will take place on February 5th, 2011. It will focus on the many ways of giving feedback on written products, and more about MyAccess! After that, our final PD of this school year will take place in early April, 2011.

Answer: John Steinbeck wrote over 100 books.

It’s not where you start that matters, it’s where you end up!