THE SALINAS VALLEY
1930S AND NOW

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The Salinas Valley is located along the central coast of California, between two mountain ranges; the Gabilan and the Santa Lucia.

The valley has a very mild climate and much of its water is supplied by the Salinas River.
The John Steinbeck novella, *Of Mice and Men*, as well as many of his other works, are set in the Salinas Valley.

John Steinbeck himself was born there in 1902.

- Steinbeck spent his summers working on ranches with migrant workers.
- There, he experienced the harsher aspects of migrant life and the ‘darker side’ of human nature, supplying him with material that he expressed in many of his works, including *Of Mice and Men*. 
In the 1930s, the Salinas Valley was a much less developed place than it is now.

- Ranching and farming existed but on a much smaller scale.
- The population was relatively low, around 5000 people.

During this period, many industrial changes occurred in the valley, including the development of the valley’s infrastructure.
The Great Depression

- The farming economy in Salinas valley saw far less disruptions in terms of productions and markets than other locations in America.
- Many displaced workers came to the Salinas Valley, which led to a vast increase in productivity.
- However, there was a labour strike in 1934 where Filipino workers fought against management.
  - The first California farms labour union was formed from this.
Today, the Salinas Valley is one of the most productive agricultural regions in California, with over 1.4 million acres of land devoted to farming. It is often referred to as ‘America’s Salad Bowl’ as it produces many agricultural staples such as lettuce, cauliflower, broccoli and numerous other crops. The mild climate and fertile soil allow farmers to grow crops for the majority of the year.
Bibliography