

**Mark Twain's**  
*Adventures of Tom Sawyer:*  
**A Discussion Guide**

**David Bruce**

**Dedicated with Love to Rosa Jones**

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## Preface to This Book

The purpose of this book is educational. I have read, studied, and taught Mark Twain's *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* many times, and I wish to pass on what I have learned to other people who are interested in studying Twain's *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. In particular, I think that the readers of this guide to Twain's *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* will be bright high school seniors and college first-year students, as well as intelligent adults who simply wish to study Twain's *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* despite not being literature majors.

This book uses a question-and-answer format. It poses, then answers, relevant questions about Twain, background information, and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. This book goes through *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* chapter by chapter. I recommend that you read the relevant section of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, then read my comments, then go back and re-read the relevant section of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. However, do what works for you.

Teachers may find this book useful as a discussion guide for the novel. Teachers can have students read chapters from the novel, then teachers can ask students selected questions from this book.

The quotations from the novel come from this source:

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Berkeley: University of California Press, [1982] c1980. Foreword and notes by John C. Gerber; text established by Paul Baender.

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### Biographical Notes on Mark Twain

- Samuel Langhorne Clemens (later Mark Twain) was born on November 30, 1835, in Florida, Missouri, but grew up in nearby Hannibal (his family moved there in 1839), which became the village (called St. Petersburg) in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Hannibal was located on the Mississippi River and had 2,000 inhabitants.
- Sam was the sixth child of John Marshall Clemens and Jane Lampton.
- Sam's father owned a grocery store.
- Sam's Uncle Quarles had a farm on which slaves worked. Sam sometimes stayed at the farm during summers, and he saw slaves being beaten.
- Hannibal, Missouri, was a slave-holding community. The slaves were mostly household servants.
- When Samuel L. Clemens was 11, his father died. Young Sam dropped out of school, then began work as an apprentice in a printer's shop to help support his family. Then he worked under his older brother, Orion, at the newspaper called the *Hannibal Journal*.
- In June of 1853, Sam left Hannibal and started traveling, working for a while as a journalist and printer in places such as St. Louis, New York, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and Iowa, then becoming a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River. The man who taught him the Mississippi River was Horace Bixby, pilot of the *Paul Jones*.
- Sam served briefly in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, but deserted and headed West to search for gold (unsuccessfully).

- He became a reporter and humorist for the *Virginia City Territorial Enterprise*, where he adopted the pen name Mark Twain. One story of the name's meaning is that it is the cry given when a river man measures the depth of water in the Mississippi River and finds that it is 12 feet (two fathoms). "Mark Twain" means "Note that there are two fathoms of water." (A fathom is six feet.) Two fathoms of water is enough water for a riverboat not to be in danger of hitting bottom. Sam used the pen name Mark Twain for the first time on February 2, 1863. Another account of the origin of the name is that Sam used to call out "mark twain" when entering a favorite Western saloon. In this case, "mark twain" meant "mark two more drinks on my tab."
- As a reporter, Twain was a social critic. In San Francisco, he wrote about the inhumane treatment of illegal Chinese immigrants and of the poor.
- In 1869, Twain published the book (his 2nd) that was the most popular of all his books during his lifetime: *Innocents Abroad*. This humorous book tells of his travels to Europe and the Holy Land.
- On February 2, 1870, Sam married Olivia Langdon. Her family was prominent in Elmira, New York. Sam and Olivia soon moved to Hartford, Connecticut.
- Twain's next book was *Roughing It*, published in 1872. This humorous book told of Sam's experiences prospecting for gold.
- In 1873, Twain published his first novel, *The Gilded Age*, which was co-written by Charles Dudley Warner, about corruption during the 1800s.
- Twain published *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in 1876.
- Twain published *The Prince and the Pauper* in 1881.



- Twain published *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in 1885.
- Twain published *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* in 1889.
- Many of Twain's investments failed and he became deep in debt, but he went on long speaking tours and earned the money needed to pay his debts and have some money of his own.
- Although Twain was a humorist, late in life he grew deeply pessimistic and pondered the existence of the nature of God (if God in fact does exist).
- Twain died of angina on April 21, 1910.
- In *The Mysterious Stranger*, Twain wrote, "The Human race in its poverty, has unquestionably one really effective weapon — laughter. Power, money, persuasion, supplication, persecution — these can lift at a colossal humbug — push it a little, weaken it a little, century by century, but only laughter can blow it to rags and atoms at a blast. Against the assault of laughter, nothing can stand." Twain often used humor to mock colossal humbugs.

## Introduction to *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

- Twain published *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in 1876.
- Twain wrote to his publisher about *Tom Sawyer*: “It is not a boy’s book, at all. It will only be read by adults. It is only written for adults.” (Later, he agreed with friends that children would read it.)
- Most of the characters in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* are based on real-life people. Tom is a combination of three boys whom Sam knew. Aunt Polly is based in part on Sam’s mother. Sid is based in part on Henry, Sam’s younger brother. Mary is based on Sam’s sister, Pamela. Judge Thatcher is based in part on Sam’s father. Injun Joe is based in part on a harmless drunk, not on a murderer. Huck Finn is based in part on Tom Blankenship, the son of the town drunk. Sam’s early sweetheart, Laura Hawkins, became the main basis of Becky Thatcher.
- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* accepts slavery as a given and does not deal with racism and slavery. It is much less controversial than *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which does directly deal with racism and slavery.
- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is a nostalgic look at childhood. To a child, growing up may be serious business, but in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* childhood is idyllic.
- The character of Tom Sawyer is realistic, especially when compared to all the good little boys in 19th-century church didactic literature. (Didactic literature is literature that is intended to teach.) However, the plot of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is not realistic. Tom has a series of adventures — such as finding treasure — that we can only wish we had.
- The name St. Petersburg means the town of St. Peter. St. Peter holds the keys of Heaven, so St. Petersburg is meant to be heavenly. For the most part, it is, especially for the

children (childhood is heavenly, according to the novel), but occasionally it is not. The graveyard is not heavenly, and the schoolmaster has had his hope of becoming a doctor blighted by poverty.

- Why does Tom live with Aunt Polly? Death in childbirth was common back then. Death at an early age was common back then. Chances are, Tom is an orphan. Tom has a half-brother, Sid, probably because one of his parents died, then the other parent remarried.
- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is set in the 1840s. It is set when Mark Twain himself was a boy.
- Tom Sawyer is a performer. He greatly desires the attention of the villagers and dreams up escapades to get their attention. Huckleberry Finn does not desire attention.
- Tom Sawyer is literate, reads books, and tries to act according to what is in the books. Tom is romantic. Huckleberry Finn is nearly illiterate, does not read much, and acts according to what will work. Huck Finn is pragmatic.
- In *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Twain is subversive, turning these ideas on their heads:

Money: After the whitewashing incident, Tom Sawyer is rich, but any adult looking at his wealth — such as a dead rat to swing on a string — would regard the wealth as trash.

Work: Whitewashing a fence may seem to be work, but Tom turns it into play.

Civilization: Adults may consider civilization to be a good thing, but Huck Finn prefers his freedom. The mothers of the village do not want their children to play with Huck Finn, but the children of the village

envy Huck his freedom. Huck can swear, smoke, and do as he likes.

## PREFACE

### • **When is the novel set, and where is it set?**

The novel is set during the 1840s, and it is set in the small, poverty-stricken village of St. Petersburg, which Mark Twain based on the village in which he grew up: Hannibal, Missouri. Hannibal was an ancient Carthaginian general who was famous for bringing war elephants across the Alps so he could use them to attack the Romans. The Romans were triumphant in this, the Second Punic (“Punic” refers to Carthage) War, and after the Third Punic War they completely destroyed Carthage. Many American cities, towns, and villages are named after ancient historical figures.

### • **What do we learn from the Preface about the trustworthiness of the characters and events of this novel?**

The author of the novel wants us to trust him. He points out that the characters are based on real people, although some of them are based on more than one person. For example, Tom Sawyer himself is based on three real boys.

In addition, the author writes, “MOST of the adventures recorded in this book really occurred; one or two were experiences of my own, the rest those of boys who were schoolmates of mine” (Preface).

Of course, the adventures related in this novel are adventures that most readers wish had happened to them. The boys reading this novel may have dug for buried treasure, as no doubt Mark Twain did when he was a boy. Like Twain, however, the boys reading this novel did not find buried treasure — except in their imagination, which, after all, is not such a bad place to find it.

The main point of the Preface, however, is that although Tom Sawyer may be a trickster, the author is someone whom you can trust.

• **What do we learn about superstitions in the Preface?**

We learn that the superstitions written about were all believed in at the time the novel is set:

The odd superstitions touched upon were all prevalent among children and slaves in the West at the period of this story — that is to say, thirty or forty years ago. (Preface)

Of course, this brings up an interesting point. Children and slaves believed in the superstitions. At the time the novel is set, slaves were uneducated; in fact, teaching a slave how to read and write was illegal. Children spent time around slaves, and no doubt children and slaves influenced each other. One kind of influence is a mutual belief in superstition. Society would have been better off if slaves had been educated. Children, including white children, would be less likely to believe in superstition. I think that most people would agree that it is better to believe in science than to believe in superstition. By not allowing slaves to be educated, white society hurt itself in addition to hurting the slaves.

• **Who is the audience of this novel?**

Twain clearly identifies the audience of his novel:

Although my book is intended mainly for the entertainment of boys and girls, I hope it will not be shunned by men and women on that account, for part of my plan has been to try to pleasantly remind adults of what they once were themselves, and of how they felt and thought and talked, and what queer enterprises they sometimes engaged in.

Apparently, when Twain was writing the novel, he thought that he was writing it for adults; however, friends suggested that its rightful audience was children. After taking some thought, Twain agreed with them. Of course, he also thinks that the novel can be read and enjoyed by adults — and I agree with him.

All of us should read what we find enjoyable and not worry about what other people think of our reading material. In Great Britain, the Prime Minister can read Winnie-the-Pooh and no one thinks any less of the Prime Minister. C.S. Lewis enjoyed reading fairy tales in his middle age, and so he read fairy tales.

In fact, C.S. Lewis once said that our possible actions could be divided into three groups:

- 1) Things we have to do, such as paying our bills and making a living.
- 2) Things we ought to do, such as behaving morally and taking care of our health.
- 3) Things we want to do. As long as the things we want to do don't conflict with the things we have to do and the things we ought to do, then, C.S. Lewis says, go ahead and do them.

## CHAPTER 1: TOM PLAYS, FIGHTS, AND HIDES

• **In chapter 1, Tom eats forbidden jam. Jam is made of fruit, so Tom is eating forbidden fruit. Where else have you heard of forbidden fruit? (Mark Twain is making an allusion here. To what is he alluding, and what is an allusion, anyway?)**

This is a definition of “allusion”:

A brief reference to a person, place, thing, event, or idea in history or literature. Allusions conjure up biblical authority, scenes from Shakespeare’s plays, historic figures, wars, great love stories, and anything else that might enrich an author’s work. Allusions imply reading and cultural experiences shared by the writer and reader, functioning as a kind of shorthand whereby the recalling of something outside the work supplies an emotional or intellectual context, such as a poem about current racial struggles calling up the memory of Abraham Lincoln.

Source:

[http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/literature/bedlit/glossary\\_a.htm](http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/literature/bedlit/glossary_a.htm)

Of course, Twain is alluding to the biblical story of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Tom Sawyer is not an evil-doer, but he is certainly mischievous.

• **Which of these two is able to outsmart the other: Tom Sawyer or Polly?**

Aunt Polly likes to think that she is cunning, but actually Tom is able to outsmart her almost constantly. She thinks that he may have played hooky from school and gone swimming instead of going to school, so she asks if he was warm in school and feels his shirt. This allows her to tell if the shirt is damp. If it is damp, this is a very good indication



that he has been swimming. Tom, however, knows what she is doing. His shirt is dry, but his hair is damp, so he tells her that he and the other boys pumped water over their heads to cool themselves down. Of course, this novel takes place at a time when there is no air conditioning and no way to make ice. The village has a water pump that is shared by its citizens; a chore of little boys and girls is to go to the pump and bring home some water. Thus, we know that the villagers do not have running water in their homes. We also know that the villagers use either a chamber pot or an outdoor privy.

Tom is able to outsmart Aunt Polly almost continually. For example, in chapter 1, she is about to switch him, but he says, "My! Look behind you, aunt!" (2). Aunt Polly turns around, and Tom flees. He was also able to outsmart Aunt Polly about playing hooky, but Sid told on him. Tom had undone his collar where she had sewed it so he could go swimming, then he had sewn the collar back, using black thread. Unfortunately, after Aunt Polly had been satisfied that he had not gone swimming and had not undone the collar, Sid pointed out that the collar was sewn with black thread now, while Aunt Polly had previously sewn it with white thread. Tom, of course, has two needles. One has white thread, and the other black thread. He has trouble remembering which one Aunt Polly used on a certain day. (This shows that Tom is a problem-solver.)

**• Write a character analysis of Aunt Polly based on chapter 1.**

Aunt Polly is kind hearted. We know this because she has taken in both Tom and his half-brother, Sid, who are probably orphans. Their mother, Aunt Polly's sister, died, so she is now caring for them.

Aunt Polly does believe that children should be punished when they are bad. She knows that the Bible says, "Spare the

rod and spoil the child.” (The proverb is often thought to have come from the King James Version of the Bible, Book of Proverbs, 13:24: “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” However, more likely it came from the 17th century poem “Hudibras” by Samuel Butler: “What medicine else can cure the fits / Of lovers when they lose their wits? / Love is a boy by poets styled / Then spare the rod and spoil the child.”) However, we learn that her physical punishments don’t amount to much. She tries to switch Tom and fails. She also hits Jim, the little colored boy, with a slipper on his rump in the next chapter. Furthermore, she sometimes hits a child’s head with a thimble, but Tom (in the next chapter) says that doesn’t amount to much, either. What hurts Tom is when she cries; when she is disappointed in Tom and cries, it hurts Tom. Aunt Polly is an authority figure. One of my students described Aunt Polly as Tom’s “parole officer.”

• ***The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is mostly a light-hearted novel, but hints of the dark side of life appear in it. Which hints appear in chapter 1?**

One hint of the dark side of life is death. Tom and his half-brother, Sid, are probably orphans. That is why Aunt Polly is taking care of them. At this time, people frequently died early. For example, many women died in childbirth.

One of the bad things in life is tattle-tales, and Sid is a tattle-tale, par excellence. Aunt Polly would never have discovered that Tom had undone his collar to go swimming if it weren’t for Sid. Sid told her that Tom’s collar was now sewn with black thread, although previously she had sewn it with white thread.

We see other hints of the dark side of life. For example, Twain refers to St. Petersburg as a “poor little shabby village” (5). Certainly, St. Petersburg is filled with poor people.

Tom Sawyer himself is poor. In chapter 4, Tom's Sunday clothing is known as "his 'other clothes'" (28), so his wardrobe is quite small. In addition, he doesn't wear shoes unless he has to — another example of his poverty (as well as his preference). We will see that the village schoolmaster has been disappointed in life. He wanted to be a physician, but poverty doomed him to become a village schoolmaster.

Speaking about clothing, we never hear of Aunt Polly doing the wash, but of course she must occasionally. My mother grew up in poverty in Georgia, and she had only one suit of clothing — a dress. On washday, one day a week, she would "stand behind the door," take off her dress, and give it to her mother to wash and dry. One day, my mother, then a young teenager, was standing behind the door when her boyfriend came over to visit.

One more point. The illustrations in this book show Tom wearing checked pants. He is always wearing the same pants because except for his Sunday clothes, those are the only pants he has.

In addition, of course, slavery exists in this village, although Mark Twain does not discuss slavery in this novel; that is something that he will do in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

The dark side of life in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*:

- 1) Tom is probably an orphan who has to stay with his Aunt Polly. Aunt Polly's dead sister was Tom's mother.
- 2) Sid is his half-brother, so one of Tom's parents died early and married someone else.
- 3) Aunt Polly is unmarried, so Tom has no father-figure in his life.

4) Twain refers to the “shabby little village of St. Petersburg” (5).

5) The poverty of the villagers quickly becomes manifest.

6) Slavery exists.

**• Twain is a Realist writer as opposed to a Romantic writer. Do some research and explain what Realism and Romanticism are.**

As a Realist writer, Twain wants to show things as they really are. Very often, he does that in a satiric way. The Romantic view of things, on the other hand, is often not realistic.

For example, Tom Sawyer reads a lot of romantic adventure books. From these books, he gets an unrealistic view of the world. For example, he reads about Robin Hood, and he gets the idea that all robbers are honorable. Because of that notion, he wants to be the leader of a band of robbers. Twain, however, is a Realist writer, and he knows that robbers are not honorable men. The robbers that we see in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* — Injun Joe and his companion — are despicable.

In contrast to Twain, Sir Walter Scott is a Romantic writer. He wrote such books as *Ivanhoe*, which glorified knight-errantry. Twain, however, being a Realist writer, mocks knight-errantry in his novel *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. For example, the Yankee goes on a quest while wearing plate armor. He begins to sweat in the hot sun, and he would like to get his handkerchief in order to wipe away the sweat. However, his helmet is of a kind that he can't remove by himself to get at his handkerchief, which he is keeping in his helmet. Therefore, all he can do is cuss because of his discomfort. Later, a fly gets in his helmet, and it buzzes and flies around, lighting on his lip, then on his

nose, then on an eye, and all the Yankee can do is endure the discomfort.

I once saw a *New Yorker* cartoon that mixed elements of the Romantic and the Real. The cartoon showed a beautiful castle on top of a mountain, but at the bottom of the mountain, beside the road that led up to the castle, was a bunch of garbage cans.

Here are a few notes on Realism and on Romanticism:

- Realists center on the here and now with all its warts; Romantics focus on the ideal.
- Realist writers try to render reality in detail. Romantic writers don't want to try to render reality in detail.
- William Dean Howells, Rebecca Harding Davis, John W. DeForest, Henry James, and Mark Twain are all Realist writers. Sir Walter Scott is an example of a Romantic writer. In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Twain criticizes Sir Walter by named a wrecked steamship the *Walter Scott*.
- Realist writers tend to focus on character rather than plot. Plots tend to be believable. Romantic writers sometimes have unbelievable plots, such as spending 40 years to get out of prison. Tom Sawyer, of course, enjoys reading that kind of novel.
- The language of Realist writers such as Twain is realistic; the language of Realist writers is vernacular — the way people really talk. Romantic writers such as Sir Walter Scott often use an elevated language.
- Realist writers often focus on the middle and the lower classes. Romantic writers often focus on the

upper classes. Sir Walter Scott wrote more about knights than about farmers.

**• Write a character analysis of Tom as he appears in chapter 1.**

Tom is a real boy. At the time that Twain was writing, much fiction for children was sentimental and didactic. Boys and girls were supposed to be good little boys and girls. They were supposed to be model children and always do everything right.

Tom, of course, is not a model boy. The first time we see Tom, he is getting in trouble. He is hiding in the closet eating forbidden jam. Tom is not allowed to eat jam without permission, jam is made of fruit, and so Tom is eating forbidden fruit. For that, Aunt Polly is going to punish him.

Tom steals other things as well. When Aunt Polly's back is turned, he steals sugar out of the sugar bowl.

Tom, however, is able to get himself out of a jam, even one that is caused by eating jam. With Aunt Polly about to switch him, he cries, "My! Look behind you, aunt!" (2). Aunt Polly looks behind her, and Tom flees.

Tom also shows his problem-solving skills in the way that he handles Aunt Polly's sewing his shirt collar. He keeps two needles with him, one with white thread and one with black thread. That way, after he unfastens his collar so he can go swimming, he can sew the collar again.

Tom is also willing to get revenge. After Sid tells on him to Aunt Polly, Tom says that he will get him. He does, too, in the next chapter. Therefore, Tom is a real boy, not the kind of model boy who appears in Sunday School books.

Tom also is a bit of a bully. A stranger arrives in the village — a stranger wearing shoes on a Friday. The two fight, and

Tom whips him — this is something that Tom is rather good at, partly because he gets so much practice at fighting. However, Tom does fight the stranger boy fairly. The stranger boy does not fight so fair — when Tom's back is turned, the stranger picks up a stone, throws it, and hits Tom in the back.

Tom also likes to do the things that boys do. He takes an interest in whistling.

In some vivid writing, one of my students wrote that Tom was enough to make Gandhi swear under his breath.

## CHAPTER 2: THE GLORIOUS WHITEWASHER

### • How does Aunt Polly try to punish Tom Sawyer?

Aunt Polly has a good idea. She wants Tom to work instead of play, and so she attempts to make him whitewash a fence. And what a fence it is: “Thirty yards of board fence, nine feet high” (10). Note that the illustration in the book is incorrect. The fence shown is not nearly nine feet high.

### • What is the difference between work and play, and how is the difference shown in chapter 2?

On p. 16, Twain writes, “[...] Work consists of whatever a body is *obliged* to do, and [...] Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do.” He also writes that “in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to obtain” (16).

We see that that is true. One of the illustrations in the book shows a mountain climber. Mountain climbing is hard work, but because climbing to the top of a mountain such as Mount Everest is difficult, people wish to do it, even though they know that they may lose their lives in the process. In addition, working on a dude ranch can be hard: riding horses, mending fences, etc. However, people pay lots of money to do such things. One example that Twain gives is wealthy people in England paying lots of money to “drive four-horse passenger-coaches twenty or thirty miles on a daily line” (16). Because this costs them lots of money, it is Play, but if they were offered money to do it, it would turn into Work, and they would decline to do it.

A man chopping wood for Winter is Working. A man chopping wood in a lumberjack contest is Playing.

In chapter 2, we see that Tom is able to turn Work into Play. Aunt Polly wants to punish Tom, so she has him whitewash a fence. Tom at first regards that as Work, but then he



realizes the important truths described above and he ends up making the other boys do his work by charging them to do it. As he tells Ben Rogers, “Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?” (14). That little question makes whitewashing a fence valuable, and Ben pays an apple for the privilege of whitewashing.

Elsewhere, Twain writes that the best and best-paid jobs are those that people would do for free: writing, acting, etc.

**• At the end of chapter 2, Tom is a wealthy boy. What constitutes wealth to a boy of Tom’s age?**

In chapter 2, Twain is subversive. He turns commonly accepted ideas on their head. As described above, he turns Work into Play. Here, he turns Trash into Wealth. Any adult looking at Tom’s acquired wealth would think that he had a pile of trash, most of which should be thrown away, but to Tom and the other boys, he is one of the wealthiest boys in town.

Tom’s wealth consists of these material objects:

- a kite, in good repair
- a dead rat and a string to swing it with
- 12 marbles
- a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through
- a spool cannon
- a key that wouldn’t unlock anything
- a fragment of chalk
- a glass stopper of a decanter
- a tin soldier
- a couple of tadpoles

- six fire-crackers
- a kitten with only one eye
- a brass door-knob
- a dog-collar — but no dog
- the handle of a knife
- four pieces of orange-peel
- a dilapidated old window sash

Today, a boy might consider himself wealthy if he had lots of baseball cards and candy.

**• What is your opinion of the drawings of the slave boy Jim that appear in chapter 2?**

Slavery is downplayed in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Missouri is a slave state, and slaves are in the village of St. Petersburg, but slavery is taken for granted, and we don't see the evils of slavery.

Jim is a black boy, and he is a slave, but he plays little role in the novel. (Jim in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is an adult; he is not the Jim depicted here.)

We look at the drawings, and we may think that they are racist. Basically, the drawings show a caricature instead of a real person. However, some of my students have not seen anything wrong with these drawings. Twain and the illustrator, True Williams, also did not see anything wrong with these drawings.

**• Define and discuss the differences between omniscient narration (such as we have in *The Adventures of Tom***

***Sawyer*) and first-person narration (such as we have in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*).**

In omniscient narration, the omniscient narrator knows everything. That is what we have in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. The narrator is able to tell us what various characters are thinking, and the narrator is able to move from one scene to another, including to scenes in which the hero of the novel (the protagonist) is not present. Twain does this at the end of chapter 16 and the beginning of chapter 17.

In first-person narration, such as we have in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, we see the world through the eyes of the narrator, who is a character in the novel and who is not omniscient. This means that the narrator does not always know what other characters are thinking, although he can make shrewd guesses. It also means that the narrator can make mistakes. For example, at the beginning of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck observes the Widow Douglas bending her head over the food and grumbling for a while before anyone is allowed to eat. Huck is surprised by this because he thinks that the food tastes good. Huck doesn't realize that the Widow Douglas is praying.

### CHAPTER 3: BUSY AT WAR AND LOVE

**• Has Tom reformed after the fence has been whitewashed (by other boys)?**

No, of course not. Aunt Polly is very happy to see that the fence has been whitewashed. We read:

When she found the entire fence whitewashed, and not only whitewashed but elaborately coated and recoated, and even a streak added to the ground, her astonishment was almost unspeakable. She said:

“Well, I never! There’s no getting round it, you *can* work when you’re a mind to, Tom.” (17-18)

Of course, Tom did not do the work; the boys of the village did.

Aunt Polly is so happy that she gives Tom an apple, and he “hooked” (stole) a doughnut, thus showing that he is still unreformed (18).

**• What do you think about the romantic aspects of Tom’s life?**

Tom is very young — 10, 11, or 12. Therefore, he has not reached puberty yet, and his romances are innocent. His romance with Amy Lawrence is also rather short-lived. He pursued her, she confessed that she loved him, and for a week Tom was “the happiest and the proudest boy in the world” (20). However, he sees a new girl in her yard, and he falls for her immediately.

Tom expresses his love by showing off. In particular, he does some “dangerous gymnastic performances (20). The illustration shows Tom walking on his hands.

The new girl, Becky Thatcher, throws a pansy over the fence, and Tom collects it and keeps it. Of course, Tom can’t

let anyone know that he has collected the pansy, so he tries to balance a straw on the end of his nose, and when his bare foot closes over the pansy his toes pick it up, and he hops away until he reaches a place where he can safely pin the pansy over his heart — or possibly his stomach, since he is not especially knowledgeable about anatomy.

Later, after Tom gets into trouble for breaking a sugar bowl — which was actually broken by Sid, not by him — he feels mournful, and he goes to Becky’s house and lies there, wishing that he could die and be pitied. It doesn’t turn out that way, though. A maid-servant pours water on him from a window — she doesn’t know that he is there — Tom jumps up, and he hurls a rock through the window.

For being in many ways a Realist kid, Tom is a hopeless romantic in some ways.

**• What is a simile? Identify the simile at the top of page 20.**

A simile is a comparison in which two things are directly compared because they are alike. It uses words such as “like.” The simile at the top of page 20 is this (emphasis added):

As he was passing by the house where Jeff Thatcher lived, he saw a new girl in the garden — a lovely little blue-eyed creature with yellow hair plaited into two long tails, white summer frock and embroidered pantalettes. The fresh-crowned hero fell without firing a shot. A certain Amy Lawrence vanished out of his heart and left not even a memory of herself behind. He had thought he loved her to distraction, he had regarded his passion as adoration; and behold it was only a poor little evanescent partiality. He had been months winning her; she had confessed hardly a week ago; he had been the happiest and the

proudest boy in the world only seven short days, and here, in one instant of time **she had gone out of his heart like a casual stranger whose visit is done.**  
(19-20)

Twain, of course, is an excellent writer, and his similes are excellent. Here is a simile from his novel *The Prince and the Pauper*: Miles Hendon “felt much as a man might who had danced blithely out to enjoy a rainbow, and got struck by lightning” (227).

By the way, a metaphor also compares two things, but it does not use words such as “like.” For example, the very profitable novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was a gold mine for Mark Twain.

**• Compare and contrast Tom and his half-brother Sid as they appear so far in this novel.**

Tom is much more likeable and much more interesting than his half-brother Sid. Sid is a tattle-tale, as we saw in chapter 1 with the incident about the thread used to fasten Tom’s shirt collar, and in chapter 3, he gets Tom into further trouble. Sid accidentally breaks the sugar bowl, and Aunt Polly thinks that Tom has done it, so she hits Tom and spills him to the floor. (Quite a wallop, that, although it may have had its effect because Tom wasn’t expecting it.)

We see by this incident that Sid gets special privileges. Tom, the harem-scarum boy, isn’t allowed to help himself to sugar, but Sid can. This annoys Tom extremely. In fact, Sid glorifies in his immunity to punishment for taking sugar, and he takes sugar simply in order to annoy Tom.

Sid is punished for his evil, however. Tom hits him with several clods of dirt for telling Aunt Polly that she had sewn his collar with white thread although it was now sewn with black. For that reason, when Tom creeps into the window late at night with wet clothing, Sid doesn’t tattle on him —

although he does remember the incident for further reference in case he ever needs to get Tom into trouble — or has the opportunity.

## CHAPTER 4: SHOWING OFF IN SUNDAY-SCHOOL

• **Tom Sawyer enjoys being the center of attention — chapter 4 tells about the first of his major performances — but his being the center of attention fails miserably in chapter 4. Why?**

In Sunday-school, children memorize Bible verses, for which they are given tickets. When the children have enough tickets of a certain color, they are awarded a plainly bound Bible.

This is how the system works:

- A blue ticket means that the student has memorized two Bible verses.
- Ten blue tickets equal one red ticket.
- Ten red tickets equal one yellow ticket.
- Ten yellow tickets equal one plainly bound Bible.

This means that if the student can memorize 2,000 Bible verses, he or she can win a plainly bound Bible that was worth 40 cents at the time.

Of course, winning a Bible takes a big effort, but Mary has won two Bibles — “it was the patient work of two years” (30).

Tom doesn’t like memorizing Bible verses, of course. In fact, we see that he is trying to memorize Bible verses from the Sermon on the Mount because they are the shortest that he can find in the Bible. By the way, the shortest Bible verse of all is, “Jesus wept” (John 11:35, King James version). In addition, we note that Tom is a procrastinator; he waits until right before Sunday-school to memorize his verses.

However, Tom is able to win a Bible because he trades all the wealth he received from the whitewashing episode for



the tickets of the other boys and girls. The Sunday-school superintendent knows that Tom — of all people! — did not memorize all those verses, but Tom does have the tickets, so what can the superintendent do? (The superintendent wants someone to win a Bible so he can impress Judge Thatcher.)

Unfortunately for Tom, Judge Thatcher is visiting the Sunday-school and the visitor asks Tom who the first two disciples of Jesus were. Tom, of course, doesn't know, so he answers with the names of two characters from the Bible that he does know: David and Goliath (Goliath).

Twain does not describe what happens after Tom gives this answer, but Tom's first great public performance ends in humiliation for him. Later, he will have triumphs.

This first of Tom's major performances ends in disaster for him.

**• What does Tom think of Sunday-school? Why does he want to win a Bible?**

We find out on p. 29 that Sunday-school is “a place that Tom hated with his whole heart.” However, Tom does want something at the Sunday-school dearly. He wants to win a Bible because that will make him the center of attention. Tom loves performing in front of people, and he loves being the center of attention. Winning a Bible will put him squarely in the center of everybody's attention.

Note that Twain engages in some satire about religion here. A boy of German heritage had memorized a great many Bible verses and had once recited 3,000 verses without stopping, but the effort overtaxed his brain and he became “little better than an idiot” (30).

• **How do the characters “show off” in Sunday-school?**

Pretty much everybody shows off in Sunday-school, with the exception of Mary and Sid and possibly Aunt Polly.

The Sunday-school superintendent showed off with a closed hymn-book in his hand. He never referred to it, but he found it necessary to keep it in his hands as a prop. He also showed off in his speech, which sounded differently on Sundays than on the other days of the week. In addition, he showed off by giving orders.

The other workers at the Sunday-school — the librarian, the young lady teachers, and the young gentleman teachers — also showed off by running around, speaking to boys and girls, and doing little bits of work, often several times. The little girls showed off, and the young boys showed off by getting into trouble.

Finally, the honored guest — the county judge — also showed off by sitting in his seat and beaming.

Very little of genuine worship (except for Mary) appears to happen at this Sunday-school. This is more of Twain’s satire on religion.

• **Write a character analysis of Mary. Why do you think Twain named her Mary? What kind of relationship do Tom and Mary have?**

Mary is named after the Virgin Mary. Like her namesake, Mary is a saint. Twain can be critical of organized religion, but he recognizes goodness when he sees it. In chapter 4, Twain has been making fun of Sunday-school and the showing off that occurs there. However, we learn that Mary is fond of Sunday-school, so where she sits, there genuine worship occurs. (Sid also likes Sunday-school, but he hardly seems to be a good Christian boy.)

In chapter 1, Mary returned home after a week-long trip to the country. When she returned, she brought lightness and gaiety into the house. (That is why Tom left — he was in the mood for darkness and heavyheartedness.)

In chapter 4, we see that Mary is a good person who helps to take care of Tom. She makes sure that he washes before going to Sunday-school. At first, he merely pretends to have washed. He wets the soap, pours the water on the ground, and pretends to dry his face on a towel. The second time, he does wash his face, but the clean territory ends at his chin and the front of his ears. The third time, Mary takes him in hand and cleans him thoroughly.

Tom apparently doesn't take many baths — Aunt Polly should be glad that he plays hooky and goes swimming. Of course, the water comes from the village well, so getting water for baths would be difficult.

Mary also is good at cajoling him to learn his Bible verses. She does it through positive reinforcement — aka a bribe, for those who are cynical. She tells him that if he learns his Bible verses, she will give him something nice. She arouses his curiosity but doesn't tell him what it is, but only that it is nice. In fact, it is nice. It is a brand-new Barlow knife.

Mary is an authority figure whom Tom trusts and obeys because she is so good.

## CHAPTER 5: THE PINCH-BUG AND HIS PREY

**• Does anything approaching true worship occur in Tom’s family worship (chapter 4), Sunday-school (chapter 4), or during church services (chapter 5)?**

The short answer is no.

After breakfast on Sunday, Aunt Polly holds a short family worship. We read that she starts with a prayer that has very little originality but lots of quotations from Scripture and she also reads (“delivered”) a “grim chapter of the Mosaic law, as from Sinai” (26).

The Mosaic law includes the Ten Commandments, but it also includes much other information about rules for eating and about moral conduct.

We have already looked at Sunday-school, which seems to have little to do with religion. In Sunday-school, the focus was on showing off. In addition, the children recited the verses they had memorized, but none of the children recited the verses perfectly.

In chapter 5, we read about the church service, which Tom finds boring, as he does every week. So do most of the people attending the service.

In chapter 5, Tom, who is suffering from boredom, takes out a percussion-cap box that has a pinch-bug in it. The bug bites his finger, and Tom flings it out into the aisle, where a dog finds it. (Yes, dogs could found in village churches in those days. The dog’s owner is also in the church.) From this point, most of the congregation takes much more interest in the punch-bug and the dog than in the sermon, which is about hell-fire and about salvation — two very important topics.

(I remember once in church that one of the lit candles was ill made and kept flickering. The congregation, including

myself (some of the time), paid more attention to the flickering candle than to the sermon.)

In chapter 5, Twain is showing that the people of the church are much more interested in trivial matters such as the pinch-bug and the dog than they are in serious matters. Little of true worship takes place in this church.

However, it is possible that something of true worship does occur in these chapters, although we are not told about it. We know that Mary likes going to church, and therefore, if anyone engages in true worship at the church, it would be her. Sid also likes going to church, but given his character — he is a little weasel, and we greatly prefer the trouble-making Tom to the keeping-out-of-trouble Sid — I doubt if he engages in true worship.

Of course, we should say what true worship is. “Worship” means “adore,” and the true worshipper is a person who truly adores God. If anyone fits that description, I think that Mary would.

• **Mark Twain is a satirist. What is satire?**

This definition of satire comes from *A Handbook to Literature*, by C. Hugh Holman:

Satire: A literary manner which blends a critical attitude with humor and wit for the purpose of improving human institutions or humanity. True satirists are conscious of the frailty of institutions of human devising and attempt through laughter not so much to tear them down as to inspire a remodeling.

The definition of satire below comes from <http://webpages.shepherd.edu/JCLIFF01/descrip3.html>. I downloaded the information on March 9, 2003.

## What is Satire?

Being one of the oldest forms of humor, satire is a type of literate humor that seeks to point out inconsistencies. What makes satire one of the oldest forms of humor is the fact that throughout history inconsistencies have always been present. The satirist's job is to journey to places others fear to go, in order to gain a different perspective. This different perspective can be on many things, such as human nature, aspects of society, a group, or an individual. By exaggerating the discrepancies that exist, the different perspectives are born.

Using humor, criticism, and a moral voice, satirists force us to examine things from different perspectives and help us to think and laugh at ourselves. Satire has been a tool for inciting social unrest by illuminating social injustices, which makes it more than just a form of humor but also an effective agent for social change. The social unrest that occurs often results from the satirists' unwillingness to conform to the beliefs and values of the dominant culture. Satire in written form or spoken word addresses the "big, pink elephant in the room" that many are afraid to acknowledge.

### • How does Twain satirize religion in chapter 5? (Worship)

Satire often points out inconsistencies. The inconsistency that we see in chapter 5 is that church is supposed to be a place for the true worship of God, yet we see that most of the people in church have little interest in true worship. Of course, the same things are true of Sunday-school in chapter 4.

We see quickly that going to church has little to do with true religion for most of the attendees. One of the first things we read is that the young men of the town form a gauntlet for the young ladies of the town to pass through. In other words, they form two lines, through which the young ladies of the town must walk to enter the church and hear the sermon. One purpose of church for these young men is to gawk at the young ladies.

**• How does Twain satirize religion in chapter 5? (The Church Choir)**

We also see that the church choir is ill behaved. Twain writes, “The choir always tittered and whispered all through service” (38). He writes that once upon a time there existed a church choir that was well behaved, but it was a long time ago and in a foreign country. Of course, the members of the church choir ought to be interested in true worship.

We still see this rudeness of church choirs today. I have seen members of a church choir look bored during the sermon, and I have seen them whispering during the sermon. Since the choir was seated behind the minister, the members of the choir should have realized that the members of the congregation could see them.

**• How does Twain satirize religion in chapter 5? (The Minister)**

It seems as if the minister may be interested in showing off, too. He has a peculiar method of singing the verses of the songs sung in church. His voice steadily rises higher, until it stresses a word strongly, then lowers quickly in volume. This is probably more of a custom, however, than it is showing off.

**• How does Twain satirize religion in chapter 5? (The Reading of Notices)**

We also see the reading of notices of meetings and societies and so on, although Twain remarks that in the age of newspapers, such things should be made available in the newspapers and not in church.

**• How does Twain satirize religion in chapter 5? (Prayer)**

The minister prays, and Tom listens, but he notices only when the minister adds something new to the prayer — and Tom resents anything new in the prayer.

**• How does Twain satirize religion in chapter 5? (The Sermon)**

The sermon itself shows an inconsistency in the religion of Christianity. According to some kinds of Christianity, God is a merciful God, but according to the sermon, very few people are going to make it into Heaven. According to Twain's account of the sermon, so few will be saved that it really isn't worthwhile to save them.

In addition, the people who will be saved are predestined to be saved. This means that even before they were born they were destined to go to Heaven. If they were destined to go to Hell, nothing they can do on Earth will save them.

**• What are some things that satirists can target other than religion?**

Of course, politics is a big target for satirists. In general, satirists target human foibles (human weaknesses and failures). An important human failing is vanity, or excessive pride. Another human failure is showing too much respect to wealthy people. For example, when Tom and Huck become rich at the end of the novel, the townspeople treat them with excessive respect and seek their opinions.



- **Write a character analysis of the town's Model Boy, Willie Mufferson.**

Willie Mufferson is the town's Model Boy. Tom Sawyer detests him.

Willie dresses well. He has a handkerchief, and it sticks out of his back pocket — accidentally, as it does every week. (In other words, apparently Willie does this on purpose every week in order to display to everyone that he owns a handkerchief.) Tom thinks that Willie is a snob, since Tom doesn't have a handkerchief and he thinks that all boys who do have handkerchiefs are snobs.

Willie takes good care of his mother and treats her “as if she were cut glass” (38). In other words, he is a mama's boy. The other mothers of the village praise Willie to their sons, so they all hate him.

I get the idea that Willie's father is dead. He doesn't seem to have any male role models.

We can be very happy that this novel stars Tom Sawyer, not Willie Mufferson (or Sid, or the new boy in town).

## CHAPTER 6: TOM MEETS BECKY

• **In chapter 6, Tom shows that he is — or tries to be — a problem-solver. What happens in Tom’s attempt to stay home from school?**

We see a couple of problem-solving attempts in this chapter. One is unsuccessful; the other is successful.

The unsuccessful attempt at solving a problem is Tom’s attempt to stay home from school by pretending to be sick. At first, he thinks of his sore tooth, but he knows that Aunt Polly will pull it and that will hurt. Second, he decides to pretend that his sore toe is bad enough that it will kill him. Therefore, he falls to groaning and wakes up Sid to get Aunt Polly. Aunt Polly is worried enough to come running, although she suspects that nothing is wrong. (Lots of children died young at the time, before modern medicine was invented.) When Tom tells Aunt Polly that his sore toe is “mortified,” she laughs and cries out of relief that Tom isn’t really sick and isn’t going to die. And once she finds out about Tom’s loose tooth, she pulls it.

Of course, Tom’s “mortified” toe is funny. One meaning of mortification is the death of a body part (the rest of the body keeps on living, at least for a while); mortification is gangrene or necrosis. Aunt Polly knows that Tom’s sore toe is not mortified; it is just a sore toe. Another meaning of mortified is severely embarrassed.

• **How is Tom’s loose tooth pulled?**

Tom’s Aunt Polly pulls the tooth herself. She ties one end of a string to a bedpost and one end to the loose tooth, then she thrusts a glowing coal from the fireplace almost into Tom’s face. Tom, of course, jerks his head back and the tooth is pulled out and dangles from the string.

By the way, this happened to me when I was young. The glowing coal terrified me, and I cried. I was so scared that the tooth-pulling did not hurt. In my case, however, being scared was a lot worse than the tooth-pulling.

The pulling of the tooth does have a few advantages for Tom. He is able to expectorate (spit) in an interesting new way, and this makes him the center of attention for a while. In addition, because the tooth is “genuwyne” (52), Tom is able to trade his tooth to Huckleberry Finn for a tick. Like Tom, I lost a front tooth when I was a young boy, and I was able to spit in a new, interesting way.

**• Write a character analysis of Huckleberry Finn as he appears in chapter 6.**

Huckleberry Finn first appears in the novel on p. 47, and a drawing of him appears on p. 48.

Huckleberry is a complete opposite to Willie Mufferson, the Model Boy. Willie is completely respectable, while Huckleberry is completely disrespectable. Willie dresses well, while Huckleberry dresses in the cast-off clothing of men. Willie’s mother is respectable, while Huckleberry’s father is the town drunkard. Willie has adult supervision, while Huckleberry does not.

Huckleberry is also completely free. He can cuss, and we will see later that he smokes. He doesn’t go to school or to church. (At the time, American society did not have the social workers it does today.) Tom envies Huckleberry’s freedom. Twain writes, “In a word, everything that goes to make life precious, that boy had” (48). Tom and the other boys of the village agree with Twain.

The mothers of the village don’t want their children to play with Huckleberry. Therefore, Tom and the other children of the village play with him every chance they get.

• **Twain is subversive in this novel. What opinion do the narrator and the children have of civilization?**

Both Twain and the children have a low opinion of civilization and of civilized behavior. They strongly prefer freedom to the slavery of civilization. We read:

Huckleberry came and went, at his own free will. He slept on doorsteps in fine weather and in empty hogsheads in wet; he did not have to go to school or to church, or call any being master or obey anybody; he could go fishing or swimming when and where he chose, and stay as long as it suited him; nobody forbade him to fight; he could sit up as late as he pleased; he was always the first boy that went barefoot in the spring and the last to resume leather in the fall; he never had to wash, nor put on clean clothes; he could swear wonderfully. In a word, everything that goes to make life precious that boy had. So thought every harassed, hampered, respectable boy in St. Petersburg. (48)

Of course, we are likely to agree only in part with this assessment. We think that it would be better if Huck had enough to eat — we will find out later that he does not, usually. Also, we think that it would be good if he had loving parents, a comfortable home, and education. As it is now, he has none of those things. His father is no longer around, his mother is apparently dead, he sleeps in hogsheads (large barrels), and he does not go to school.

Note: In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, we learn that Huck's mother is dead. Pap says to Huck,

“And looky-here — you drop that school, you hear? I'll learn people to bring up a boy to put on airs over his own father and let on to be better'n what *he* is. You lemme catch you fooling around that school

again, you hear? Your mother couldn't read, and she couldn't write, nuther, before she died. None of the family couldn't before *they* died. *I* can't; and here you're a-swelling yourself up like this. I ain't the man to stand it — you hear? Say — lemme hear you read.” (24)

• **Twain is subversive in this novel. What do the children regard as valuable?**

We see that the children regard some odd things as valuable. For example, Huckleberry Finn has a dead cat that he bought from a boy — actually, he traded for the dead cat. Most of us would not want a dead cat enough to buy one. In addition, Tom trades his newly pulled tooth for a tick. Most of us would not regard a tick as worth trading for.

• **What beliefs and interests do Tom and Huck have in common?**

Tom and Huck do share some similar beliefs and interests. Both are superstitious. We see this as they discuss curing warts with spunk-water and with dead cats. Both regard trash as valuable. We see this when Huck trades the first tick of the year for Tom's tooth. Earlier, Huck traded for a dead cat.

The dead cat is important in chapter 6 because it sets up an important incident in chapter 9, when the two boys go to the graveyard in order to use the dead cat to cure warts. To do that, they will fling the dead cat after the departing soul of an evil person and say an incantation for the cat to follow the dead soul (and the evil spirits taking it away) and for the warts to follow the cat.

• **What can we learn about Huckleberry Finn from his name?**

Huckleberry Finn's name is important. “Finn” is an Irish name, and apparently Huck and his father are Irish. The Irish

were also subject to a lot of prejudice when they came to America, as almost every group has been. Huckleberry shows Huck's connection with nature.

• **What is Huck's social status?**

Huck is what is known as "white trash." His social status is just above that of slaves. We see this in how he gets his information about Bob Tanner's attempt at using spunk water to cure warts:

"Why he told Jeff Thatcher, and Jeff told Johnny Baker, and Johnny told Jim Hollis, and Jim told Ben Rogers, and Ben told a nigger, and the nigger told me. There, now!" (49)

The first name on the list is Jeff Thatcher, who is a middle-class boy. His father is a lawyer, and his uncle is the county judge. At the end of the list, just before Huckleberry, is "a nigger." Apparently, the list goes from the top of the social scale in St. Petersburg (with the exception of the Widow Douglas, who would not be interested in cures for warts), to the lowest. Huckleberry talks to slaves on familiar terms; therefore, his status in society is extremely low.

Huck, of course, will become an important character later in the novel and the most important character in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Of course, the word "nigger" was commonly used at the time and place this novel is set: the 1840s in Missouri, a slave state.

• **In chapter 6, Tom shows that he is — or tries to be — a problem-solver. What happens when Tom arrives late to school?**

Tom's second problem-solving attempt is more successful and results in his sitting by Becky. Tom walks into the school

late, and he sees that only one seat is empty on the girls' side of the school. (The school is divided into two sections. The girls sit on one side, and the boys sit on the other side.) The only empty seat on the girls' side of the school is by the side of the new girl in town — the girl he now loves. Because Tom knows that the schoolmaster will punish him by forcing him to sit with the girls, he tells the schoolmaster the truth about why he is late — he stopped to talk with Huckleberry Finn. Here we see just how Huck is regarded by society. Talking to Huckleberry is no ordinary infraction of the rules, so the schoolmaster uses several switches, breaking them while punishing Tom, then he sends Tom to sit with the girls (that is, beside Becky Thatcher, which is what Tom wanted in the first place).

• **How does Tom and Becky's romance advance in chapter 6?**

Tom and Becky's romance does advance in chapter 6. When Tom is seated by Becky, he gives her a peach, then he makes a drawing for her. By the way, Tom's drawing, which appears on p. 54, is thought to have been created by Mark Twain himself. In addition, Tom writes "*I love you*" on a slate board, and Becky blushes and looks pleased (55).

• **What is Tom's state of mind at the end of chapter 6?**

Tom is in a giddy state of mind because he has told Becky that he loves her and because she seemed pleased by his telling her that. He tries to study, but he cannot. And in a spelling bee, he cannot spell even the simplest words and so has to give up the pewter medal for being a spelling champion — a medal that he has proudly worn for months.

By the way, Mark Twain was a champion speller when he was a boy, and he wore such a medal. The young Sam Clemens once deliberately misspelled a word so that a young girlfriend of his could be spelling champion.

**• How competent is Tom Sawyer's teacher as shown by his actions in chapter 6?**

Tom's teacher is clearly incompetent. Not much learning seems to take place in his classroom, and he rules through discipline — physically beating the boys, especially the smaller boys, as he sees fit.

When Tom marches into the classroom tardy in chapter 6, the schoolmaster is drowsing. The students are studying, so there is a kind of hum in the background, and that, plus the warmth of the day, makes the schoolmaster fall asleep.

We should note that this is a one-room village schoolhouse, and that air conditioning has not been invented yet.

When the schoolmaster discovers that Tom has been talking with Huckleberry Finn, he savagely beats Tom. That is, he breaks several switches on Tom's body. This is enough to cause pain, but it does not inflict much damage.

At the end of chapter 6, the schoolmaster discovers Tom and Becky talking together, so he grabs Tom by the ear and takes him over to Joe Harper's table and dumps him there.



## CHAPTER 7: TICK-RUNNING AND A HEARTBREAK

### • **How competent is Tom Sawyer's teacher as shown by his actions in chapter 7?**

Both Tom and Joe are bored by school, so they play a game with the tick that Tom traded his tooth for from Huckleberry Finn. They draw a line with chalk down the middle of a slate (used for writing their lessons), and each boy uses pins to keep the tick on his side of the slate so that he can play with it. (The boys have an agreement that they will play with the tick only when it is on their side of the slate.) The schoolmaster sneaks up on them, watches for a while, then beats the boys.

By the way, when Tom's hand goes his pocket and he remembers that he has the tick, "his face lit up with a glow of gratitude that was prayer, though he did not know it" (57). To Twain, that kind of gratefulness is prayer, not the kind of thing that is said in church.

### • **What is your opinion of the way that Tom courts Becky?**

One thing that Tom does right is that he is not afraid to chase girls. He is not the kind of boy to sit back and hope that the girl notices him.

One thing that Tom does wrong is in his conversation at lunchtime with Becky. He asks Becky, "Do you love rats?" (59). (This is a poor pick-up line, so please don't try it in real life. By the way, another pick-up line is this: Did you just fart? Because you blew me away.) She doesn't, of course, so Tom tries to recover by saying that he meant dead rats — the kind you can swing on a string. Unfortunately for Tom, Becky doesn't like any rats, but fortunately for Tom she changes the subject to chewing gum, which is something that both children like.

One thing that Tom does wrong is that he is concerned about what the other boys will think if he has a girlfriend. He doesn't mind walking with Becky — when no one is looking (61).

• **What is Tom's idea of being engaged?**

Tom does have an idea of what it means to be engaged. For one thing, to be engaged, the boy and the girl both have to say "I love you" to each other and then have to kiss.

Being engaged also means other things:

- Not loving (romantically) anyone else.
- Not marrying anyone else.
- Walking with each other — when no one is looking.
- Choosing each other at parties.

All of this is reasonable enough — except for the part about not walking together if anyone is looking.

• **Describe Tom's romantic troubles in chapter 7.**

In chapter 7, Tom gets engaged to Becky, but he makes a mistake and lets her know that he was previously engaged to Amy Lawrence.

Of course, Tom has not reached puberty yet, so there is no hint of impropriety in whatever Tom does in this novel. Twain does not write about sex, as Tom and Huck are both too young to understand it.

We see again the kind of things that Tom values. In an attempt to make up with Becky, he tries to give her his chief treasure, a brass knob from the top of an andiron (which is used to keep logs in the fireplace and not allow them to spill out onto the floor of a house).

Tom is in many ways conventional. He does like to be the center of attention, but at heart he is a member of the village. Eventually, he wants to get married and settle down, although he dreams of becoming a pirate, a clown, a robber, or a soldier, as we will see in the next chapter. Tom also pays attention to traditional conventions. When he and Becky get engaged, they kiss. Becky asks Tom why they have to kiss, and Tom replies, “Why, that, you know, is to — well, they always do that” (60).

• **Are Tom and Becky’s romantic troubles to be taken seriously?**

Tom’s main romantic trouble in chapter 7 is that after Becky learns that he was previously engaged to Amy Lawrence, she rejects him. He tries to make up with her by giving her “his chiefest jewel, a brass knob from the top of an andiron” (62), but Becky rejects both it and him. The two are estranged, and neither is happy. Of course, later Amy Lawrence will also be upset. In fact, she was upset in chapter 4, pp. 34-35, when Tom did not look at her when he won the Bible.

The problems may seem like trifles to adults, but to children they are matters of great concern.

Beth Joiner, a children’s dance teacher, once had a problem with a young student who talked continually about her boyfriend. Finally, Miss Beth explained that the constant talk about the boyfriend was getting silly and interfering with the dance class. Aghast, the student replied, “Miss Beth, in the third grade boyfriends may be silly, but in the fourth grade they are serious business.” (Source: Beth Joiner, *Gotta Dance!*, p. 8.)

## CHAPTER 8: A PIRATE BOLD TO BE

### • Why does Tom want to “die temporarily” (64)? When else has Tom thought about dying?

Tom is disappointed in love, and therefore he thinks about dying. Jimmy Hodges — apparently just a boy — has died recently, and Tom thinks that death must be peaceful. The trouble with death, of course, is that it is permanent, and so Tom thinks that he would like to die, but only temporarily.

On pp. 22-24, in chapter 3, Tom also thought about dying. In that chapter, he was feeling sorry for himself because he had been punished for breaking the sugar-bowl, which actually Sid had broken. Aunt Polly did not apologize to him after hitting him because “this would be construed into a confession that she had been in the wrong, and discipline forbade that” (22). Therefore, Tom feels sorry for himself.

One of the great glories of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, of course, is that Tom *is* able to die temporarily, as we shall see.

### • What is Tom Sawyer’s attitude toward superstition?

Tom believes whole-heartedly in superstition, even when it doesn’t work. For example, in chapter 8, he attempts to use a charm to find all the marbles he has ever lost. He has built a little treasure-house containing a marble and has hidden it in a hole he has dug under one end of a rotten log. By saying the incantation, “What hasn’t come here, *come!* What’s here, *stay* here!” (65), he expects to open the treasure-house and find all the marbles he has ever lost. He is astonished when he doesn’t find the marbles.

Tom does attempt to use rational thinking to explain why his lost marbles did not come to him. He finds the hole of a doodle-bug and says, “Doodle-bug, doodle-bug, tell me what I want to know! Doodle-bug, doodle-bug, tell me what

I want to know!” (66). Of course, the doodle-bug doesn’t answer because doodle-bugs can’t talk, and therefore Tom “knows” that witches stopped the spell from working.

Tom has the right idea about rational thought — there is a reason for the things that happen, or don’t happen — but his method of trying to find those reasons leaves a lot to be desired.

These superstitions, by the way, are things Twain heard and believed when he was a boy in Hannibal, Missouri.

**• What is Tom Sawyer’s attitude toward adventure books (such as those about Robin Hood)?**

Tom regards the heroes of adventure books as real heroes and role models. Robin Hood is a thief and a hero, so Tom would like to be a thief. Our idea of robbers is likely to be quite different from Tom’s idea of robbers. Tom sees them as glorious heroes, whereas we are likely to be happy when a robber is locked up in prison. When Tom thinks of the people he would like to emulate, he thinks of clowns (unless he is feeling bitter), soldiers, Indians, and pirates. In chapter 8, he decides to become a pirate because he is bitter at the way that Becky has treated him.

For Tom, adventure books are authorities. Things have to be done the way that the adventure books say that they must be done. Therefore, Robin Hood must kill Guy of Guisborne, and not vice versa, because the book says so, although in real life, Robin Hood (played by Tom Sawyer) is getting the worst of the fight. Guy (played by Joe Harper) is beating Robin Hood.

We do see a respect of literature here. The books are the authorities, and Tom wants to do exactly as the books say. However, Tom should be more questioning about the books. Romantic books give a false view of reality.

• **What kind of language does Robin Hood talk? What kind of language does Tom talk (when he is being Tom and not Robin Hood)?**

Tom reads a lot of Romantic (as in Romanticism) literature, and the language spoken by Romantic characters such as Robin Hood is elevated. The language spoken by realistic characters such as Tom Sawyer is everyday language. Tom speaks in the vernacular (language as it is ordinarily spoken, as opposed to the fancy language of Romantic literature).

Here we see the elevated language of Romantic literature:

“Hold! Who comes here into Sherwood Forest without my pass?”

“Guy of Guisborne wants no man’s pass. Who art thou that — that — ”

— “Dares to hold such language,” said Tom, prompting — for they talked “by the book,” from memory.

“Who art thou that dares to hold such language?”

“I, indeed! I am Robin Hood, as thy caitiff carcase soon shall know.” (66-67)

Here we see the everyday language of Realism:

“Why, that ain’t anything. *I* can’t fall; that ain’t the way it is in the book. The book says, ‘Then with one back-handed stroke he slew poor Guy of Guisborne.’ You’re to turn around and let me hit you in the back.”

There was no getting around the authorities, so Joe turned, received the whack, and fell.

“Now,” said Joe, getting up, “you got to let me kill *you*. That’s fair.”

“Why, I can’t do that. It ain’t in the book.”

“Well, it’s blamed mean, — that’s all.” (67-68)

• **Does Tom understand everything that he reads?**

In chapter 8, we see that Tom doesn’t always understand what he reads. For example, he reads that Robin Hood slew Guy of Guisborne with “one back-handed stroke” (67), so he insists that Joe Harper must turn around so that Robin Hood can hit him in the back. Of course, this means that Robin Hood is a back-stabber, but Tom misses the irony.

• **How does reality intrude on Tom’s Romantic notions?**

Frequently, we will see reality intrude on Tom’s Romantic notions. For example, the boys reenact the death of Robin Hood. Tom, who of course plays the role of the dying Robin Hood, says, “Where this arrow falls, there bury poor Robin Hood under the greenwood tree” (68). Unfortunately for Romanticism, this occurs: “Then he shot the arrow and fell back and would have died, but he lit on a nettle and sprang up too gaily for a corpse” (68).

Similarly, in chapter 3, when Tom is lying underneath Becky’s window and feeling sorry for himself and is thinking about dying, a servant pours water from a window, drenching Tom, and he jumps up and throws a brick through a window (25).

• **How is Twain subversive in how Tom and Joe regard robbers and outlaws?**

Both Tom and Joe see robbers as heroes, and they say that “they would rather be outlaws a year in Sherwood Forest than President of the United States forever” (69).

Very often, we see that the boys’ perception of things is different from that of the adults of St. Petersburg. The boys regard trash as treasure, and they regard being an outlaw, an

occupation that involves robbing people, as a more desirable occupation than being President of the United States, an occupation that supposedly involves serving the public although many public servants seem to have many servants whose salaries are paid by the public. We will see also that the boys would like to be pirates.



## CHAPTER 9: TRAGEDY IN THE GRAVEYARD

• *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is mostly a light-hearted novel, but hints of the dark side of life appear in it. Which hints appear in chapter 9?

Obviously, we see the dark side of life in the crimes that are committed in chapter 9. We have grave-robbing, a murder, and Injun Joe framing the murder on another man.

We also see the dark side of life in Twain's description of the graveyard:

It was a graveyard of the old-fashioned western kind. It was on a hill, about a mile and a half from the village. It had a crazy board fence around it, which leaned inward in places, and outward the rest of the time, but stood upright nowhere. Grass and weeds grew rank over the whole cemetery. All the old graves were sunken in, there was not a tombstone on the place; round-topped, worm-eaten boards staggered over the graves, leaning for support and finding none. "Sacred to the memory of" So-and-So had been painted on them once, but it could no longer have been read, on the most of them, now, even if there had been light. (71-72)

The description of the graveyard is bleak, and nothing about it has been prettied up for use in a children's novel.

In addition, Tom and Huck are convinced that Hoss Williams is going to Hell, although we are not informed about any particular sins that Hoss Williams has committed. They expect for devils to show up to take him to Hell, and they intend to use that fact to cure their warts.

**• Why would young Dr. Robinson be interested in grave robbing?**

We don't like to think about such things, but human corpses are very useful in advancing the science of medicine. In medical school, students dissect human cadavers to gain knowledge about anatomy. In addition, certain experiments must be performed using human cadavers.

Actually, donating your body to science is a wonderful way to advance science and medicine. I have donated my body to the Ohio University School of Osteopathic Medicine. After I die, my body will go to the school. After two or three years, when the school is done with my corpse, what is left of it will be cremated.

Dr. Robinson is a grave robber in chapter 9, but he apparently has a good, humane reason for wanting to rob the grave. He apparently intends to dissect the corpse.

**• Write a character analysis of Injun Joe based on what you learn about him in chapter 9.**

Injun Joe is a half-breed with a bad reputation, as we find out when Huck refers to him as “that murderin’ half-breed” (74). These days, being a Native American has a positive status, but for a long time, only a negative status was attached to being a Native American. Twain himself had some bad things to say about Indians in his travel books about the West such as *Roughing It*.

We find out that Injun Joe is a person who is a grave-robber, a revengeful person, a murderer, a body robber, a liar, and a hypocrite.

Even Injun Joe himself thinks that his Indian blood makes him desire revenge. He says, “The Injun blood ain’t in me for nothing” (75).

• **Why does Injun Joe want revenge on Dr. Robinson?**

When we first see Injun Joe, he and Muff Potter, in company with Dr. Robinson, have gone to the graveyard to get the corpse of old Hoss Williams.

He wants revenge against Dr. Robinson because he (Injun Joe) was begging for food five years ago, and Dr. Robinson drove him away from his father's kitchen. Dr. Robinson thought that Injun Joe was up to no good, so he drove him away, and when Injun Joe said that he would get revenge, Dr. Robinson's father had him jailed as a vagrant. In chapter 9, Injun Joe kills Dr. Robinson for a minor incident that occurred five years ago.

Injun Joe is also a murderer. He stabs Dr. Robinson (using Muff Potter's knife) and kills him. He does this just after Muff Potter has been knocked out.

After Dr. Robinson is dead, Injun Joe robs his body.

• **How does Injun Joe treat Muff Potter?**

When Muff Potter awakes, Injun Joe is able to convince Muff that he (not Injun Joe) murdered Dr. Robinson. He does this by lying.

Injun Joe thinks fast on his feet. He could not have known exactly how the murder would work out — if the murder was planned in advance — but he takes advantage of the opportunity to pin the murder on Muff Potter.

Injun Joe is also a hypocrite. Muff Potter begs Injun Joe not to tell on him, and Injun Joe replies:

“No, you've always been fair and square with me, Muff Potter, and I won't go back on you. — There, now, that's as fair as a man can say.” (77)

Muff Potter may have been fair and square with him, but Injun Joe has a hell of a way to pay him back.

Injun Joe has a bad reputation. We have already seen that Huck has a bad reputation among the mothers of the village. If he refers to Injun Joe as a “murderin’ half-breed” (74), Injun Joe must be hated by everyone.

**• Write a character analysis of Muff Potter based on what you learn about him in chapter 9.**

Muff Potter definitely has some bad characteristics. He is a grave robber, and he goes back on his word. And, of course, he is a drunkard.

Muff and Injun Joe agreed to rob the grave for Dr. Robinson, and after accepting money in advance for robbing the grave, they want more money after they dig up the corpse. Muff tells the doctor to come up with another “five” — apparently, \$5 — or they will leave the corpse there.

Muff Potter is loyal to Injun Joe, but Injun Joe is a hell of a person to be loyal to. When Dr. Robinson strikes Injun Joe, Muff says, “Here, now, don’t you hit my pard!” (75), then he begins to fight with the doctor. Muff drops the knife he had been using to cut a rope used to tie the corpse to a handbarrow (the online Free Dictionary defines “handbarrow” as “A flat rectangular tray or cart with carrying poles at each end, used in transporting loads”), and when Dr. Robinson knocks out Muff, Injun Joe stabs the doctor with Muff’s knife, then when Muff wakes up, Injun Joe convinces him that he murdered the doctor.

To sum up:

- Muff Potter is an alcoholic and a low life.
- Muff Potter is naive. He trusts Injun Joe, although he should not.

- Muff Potter doesn't wash much. (Later, some of the evidence against Muff Potter is that he was seen washing himself in a creek — washing is not a habit with Muff Potter.)

Later, we will see that Muff Potter does have some good qualities.

## CHAPTER 10: DIRE PROPHECY OF THE HOWLING DOG

**• What do Tom and Huck do after witnessing Dr. Robinson's murder? Why do they act this way?**

In chapter 9, after witnessing Injun Joe murder Dr. Robinson, Tom and Huck run away under cover of darkness (some clouds hide the moon). In chapter 10, with hearts beating, they make their way to an abandoned tannery, where, as it happens, Muff Potter comes to sleep.

For what they consider a very good reason, Tom and Huck decide that they can never tell that they saw Injun Joe murder Dr. Robinson: If Injun Joe escapes hanging, he will surely come after them and murder them. The two boys know that they have to swear never to tell anybody.

**• Are Tom and Huck doing the right thing by keeping mum? Are they acting selfishly?**

No, they are not doing the right thing. Muff Potter does not know that Injun Joe murdered Dr. Robinson — he was unconscious at the time. This means that there is a good chance of Injun Joe going free. In fact, as we will discover later, there is a good chance that Muff Potter will be executed for Injun Joe's murder.

So are Tom and Huck acting selfishly? The answer is yes. They are acting in a way that they think will ensure their own safety. We will see that this situation eats away at Tom Sawyer a great deal in the coming chapters.

**• Does the illiterate Huck respect writing?**

Tom suggests holding hands and swearing not to tell anyone about the murder, but Huck thinks that this is a very serious situation — too serious for that — and suggests that what

they do has to involve writing. (This shows that the illiterate Huck does have a respect for writing.) Huck says,

“O, no, that wouldn’t do for this. That’s good enough for little rubbishy common things — specially with gals, ’cuz *they* go back on you anyway, and blab if they get in a huff — but there orter be writing ’bout a big thing like this. And blood.” (79)

Tom, of course, makes up an oath — something that he applauds with his whole being. Then he and Huck sign their initials in blood. Because Huck is illiterate — he doesn’t go to school — Tom has to show him how to sign his initials.

**• What do we learn from Tom’s oath? How well written is it?**

From Tom’s oath, we learn that he likes this kind of stuff — blood and oaths and threats. This is like something out of the Romantic adventure books that he likes to read.

This is the oath: “Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer swears they will keep mum about this and they wish they may drop down dead in their tracks if they ever tell and rot.” (80)

Tom makes an error in the oath: He does not keep related words together. According to the oath, if Huck and he ever tell and rot, then they wish they may drop down dead. A better-written oath would say this: “Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer swear they will keep mum about this and they wish they may drop down dead in their tracks and rot if they ever tell.”

**• At first, Tom and Huck think that the howling of a stray dog means that they will die soon. How do they react?**

Because of their superstitions, Tom and Huck think that the howling of the stray dog means that they will die soon. They

react by being afraid that will go to Hell and by repenting their sins:

“O, Tom, I reckon we’re goners. I reckon there ain’t no mistake ’bout where *I’ll* go to. I been so wicked.”

“Dad fetch it! This comes of playing hookey and doing everything a feller’s told *not* to do. I might a been good, like Sid, if I’d a tried — but no, I wouldn’t, of course. But if ever I get off this time, I lay I’ll just *waller* in Sunday-schools!” And Tom began to snuffle a little.

“*You* bad!” and Huckleberry began to snuffle, too. “Consound it, Tom Sawyer, you’re just old pie, ’longside o’ what *I* am. Oh, *lordy*, lordy, lordy, I wisht I only had half your chance.” (81-82)

We note that Huck has low esteem. He is certain that he is going to Hell and that Tom has a much better chance of getting to Heaven than he does. Tom, however, also thinks that he is going to Hell.

**• How do Tom and Huck react when they see that the dog’s back is towards them?**

They are immensely relieved because according to their superstitions, that means that they won’t die soon; instead, the howling stray dog is prophesying the death of someone else.

We note that immediately all talk of reforming ceases. In addition, they become curious about whose death the howling stray dog is prophesying, and they discover that the dog is very close to Muff Potter, who has crept into the old tannery to sleep. Of course, the dog’s prophecy that Muff will die puts pressure on Tom later, when it appears that Muff will be found guilty of and executed for a murder that he did not commit.



• **Of course, the children learn some of their superstitions from each other, as when Tom and Huck discuss cures for warts in chapter 6. What is another source for learning superstitions?**

We find out that the slaves are another source of information about superstition:

“Say, Tom — they say a stray dog come howling around Johnny Miller’s house, ’bout midnight, as much as two weeks ago; and a whippoorwill come in and lit on the banisters and sung, the very same evening; and there ain’t anybody dead there yet.”

“Well I know that. And suppose there ain’t. Didn’t Gracie Miller fall in the kitchen fire and burn herself terrible the very next Saturday?”

“Yes, but she ain’t *dead*. And what’s more, she’s getting better, too.”

“All right, you wait and see. She’s a goner, just as dead sure as Muff Potter’s a goner. That’s what the niggers say, and they know all about these kind of things, Huck.” (82-83)

Of course, this tells us something about education. Children and slaves believed in the superstitions. At the time the novel is set, slaves were uneducated; in fact, teaching a slave how to read and write was illegal. Children spent time around slaves, and no doubt children and slaves influenced each other. One kind of influence is a mutual belief in superstition. Society would have been better off if the slaves had been educated. Children, including white children, would be less likely to believe in superstition. I think that most people would agree that it is better to believe in science than to believe in superstition. By not allowing slaves to be

educated, white society hurt itself in addition to hurting the slaves.

• **What do we learn about Sid in chapter 10?**

Nothing new. Sid behaves like a little sneak in chapter 10, but he has behaved like that in other chapters.

Tom returns home near daybreak. Sid appears to be asleep, but actually he has been awake for an hour and is faking a snore. When Tom falls asleep, Sid gets up and lets Aunt Polly know that Tom has been out all night. This gets Tom in trouble, as Sid knew it would.

By the way, although Sid likes to get Tom in trouble, he himself does not like to be punished. He stays away from Tom, running through the back gate to get away from him, although Tom is too downhearted to seek revenge.

• **How does Aunt Polly punish Tom in chapter 10?**

Tom is immune or nearly immune to certain kinds of punishment. At school, he is often whipped with switches and at home, he is often hit on the head with a thimble. However, these things do not greatly hurt him. In addition, he is sometimes punished with work, such as whitewashing a fence on Saturday, but he is intelligent enough to often get out of such punishments by convincing the other boys to do his work for him.

However, Tom is not immune to this punishment: words, tears, and disappointment. When Aunt Polly hits his head with a thimble, it doesn't hurt, but the following does hurt:

After breakfast his aunt took him aside, and Tom almost brightened in the hope that he was going to be flogged; but it was not so. His aunt wept over him and asked him how he could go and break her old heart so; and finally told him to go on, and ruin

himself and bring her gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, for it was no use for her to try any more. This was worse than a thousand whippings, and Tom's heart was sorer now than his body. He cried, he pleaded for forgiveness, promised reform over and over again, and then received his dismissal feeling that he had won but an imperfect forgiveness and established but a feeble confidence. (84)

As the narrator says, Tom would prefer to be whipped: "This was worse than a thousand whippings" (84).

**• In chapter 10, what happens concerning Tom's relationship with Becky?**

Tom gets a further heartbreak at the end of chapter 10. Becky has returned to him a brass knob from the top of an andiron that he had tried to give her when she found out that he had been engaged to Amy Lawrence.

**• Which cliché ends chapter 10?**

When Tom realizes that Becky has given him back his andiron knob, the narrator states, "This final feather broke the camel's back" (85).

Of course, good writers avoid clichés. Perhaps Twain had an off moment, or perhaps this wasn't a cliché in his day.

## CHAPTER 11: CONSCIENCE RACKS TOM

### • Why does the schoolmaster let the children out of school when the murder is discovered?

When the murder is discovered, the schoolmaster lets the children out of school. We learn this:

CLOSE upon the hour of noon the whole village was suddenly electrified with the ghastly news. No need of the as yet undreamed-of telegraph; the tale flew from man to man, from group to group, from house to house, with little less than telegraphic speed. Of course the schoolmaster gave holiday for that afternoon; the town would have thought strangely of him if he had not. (86)

Many of the children — including Tom and Huck (who does not attend school) go to the cemetery to see the scene of the murder. This interest in sensationalism is a characteristic of human beings, but it is not one of our better characteristics. Today, when people pass the scene of a bad car accident, they usually twist their necks so that they can see what is going on. This often means taking an interest in blood and in dead bodies. We have not changed in that regard since the time-setting of this novel, although we do have better forensics and crime-scene investigations and would not let children (or non-specialist adults) at the crime scene.

### • Why is the entire town so quick to condemn Muff Potter?

Partly, the public condemns Muff Potter because of circumstantial evidence. Partly, it condemns Muff Potter because crowds are always quick to jump to conclusions. On p. 86, Twain writes that “the public are not slow in the matter of sifting evidence and arriving at a verdict” (86)

There is circumstantial evidence against Muff Potter. His knife has been found to be the murder weapon. In addition, a citizen saw Muff Potter washing in a stream and Muff slunk away. Both of these actions are suspicious — especially the washing, since this is not an activity that Muff normally participates in.

In addition, Muff shows up at the murder site and acts in a confused manner.

Finally, Muff practically confesses to the crime. He tells Injun Joe to tell the story of what happened, and Injun Joe tells everyone that Muff Potter committed the murder.

**• When Tom and Huck hear Injun Joe say that Muff Potter committed the murder, they are surprised that God does not strike Injun Joe down with lightning bolts. What reason do they come up with to explain why that does not happen?**

Tom and Huck decide that Injun Joe must have sold his soul to Satan and that is why lightning bolts do not strike him down. They resolve to spy on Injun Joe at night in hopes to see Satan. Of course, this belief gives them a reason not to tell what they saw at the cemetery:

Then Huckleberry and Tom stood dumb and staring, and heard the stony-hearted liar reel off his serene statement, they expecting every moment that the clear sky would deliver God's lightnings upon his head, and wondering to see how long the stroke was delayed. And when he had finished and still stood alive and whole, their wavering impulse to break their oath and save the poor betrayed prisoner's life faded and vanished away, for plainly this miscreant had sold himself to Satan and it would be fatal to meddle with the property of such a power as that.  
(89)

• **In this chapter, Tom’s conscience bothers him. What does he do in response?**

Tom tries to ease his conscience — which is telling him that he ought to speak up about what he witnessed at the graveyard, thus freeing the innocent-of-murder Muff Potter — by giving Muff small gifts:

Every day or two, during this time of sorrow, Tom watched his opportunity and went to the little grated jail-window and smuggled such small comforts through to the “murderer” as he could get hold of. The jail was a trifling little brick den that stood in a marsh at the edge of the village, and no guards were afforded for it; indeed it was seldom occupied. These offerings greatly helped to ease Tom’s conscience. (90)

Of course, even though Tom’s conscience is eased, he is not doing all he can do — and all he should do — for Muff. However, the fact that his conscience is bothering him may be a sign of growing maturity.

• **Why isn’t Injun Joe put on trial for grave robbing?**

Injun Joe isn’t put on trial for body snatching because of two reasons:

- 1) He has a formidable reputation as an evil person.
- 2) When he told the story about the murder, he left out the part about the grave robbing, choosing to start instead with the fight.

Because the citizens are afraid of Injun Joe, they decide not to put him on trial.

• **Why did True Williams create the illustration on p. 91?**

The illustration on p. 91 shows a bird and a snake fighting. Both animals are formidable fighters, and this is a fight to the death.

Obviously, the illustration shows a significant conflict. What are the conflicts that we find at the end of this chapter?

A major conflict is the one that Tom is waging in his mind. He knows that Muff Potter is innocent, and he knows that he could testify to what he saw in the graveyard and get Muff released from the jail. However, he is afraid that if he does that, then Injun Joe will murder him. So in Tom's mind is a conflict between the right thing to do (testify about the truth) and the wrong thing to do (let Muff hang in order for Tom to save his skin).

A related conflict is between good and evil in general. Injun Joe is evil, and the villagers — flawed as they are — want to see justice done. They want to find the murderer and punish the murderer justly. The villagers are not entirely flawed here. They rush to judgment and believe that Muff Potter is guilty of the murder, but Muff will be given a trial and a lawyer to argue his case.

The title of the illustration is “In the Coils,” so apparently the snake — a symbol of evil — is winning at this time. Tom Sawyer is too afraid of Injun Joe to tell anyone what really happened in the graveyard, and it appears that Injun Joe will get away with murder.

## CHAPTER 12: THE CAT AND THE PAIN-KILLER

• **Becky is ill. How serious were illnesses in the days before the Civil War (1861-1865)? What was the state of medicine then? When was aspirin invented? What was penicillin discovered?**

Illnesses were very serious before the days of modern medicine. At the time that this novel is set in, modern medicine has not yet been created, and many children died. Families were large back then for two reasons:

- 1) Many families lived on farms, and children performed farm chores.
- 2) Families had lots of children because they knew that most likely one or more of their children would die before reaching adulthood.

Aspirin was invented after the Civil War:

**1897**

Chemist, Felix Hoffmann, at Bayer in Germany, chemically synthesizes a stable form of ASA powder that relieves his father's rheumatism. The compound later becomes the active ingredient in aspirin named — “a” from acetyl, “spir” from the spirea plant (which yields salicin) and “in,” a common suffix for medications.

Source:

<[http://www.bayeraspirin.com/pain/asp\\_history.htm](http://www.bayeraspirin.com/pain/asp_history.htm)>.

Penicillin began to be used in the 1940s:

In 1928, Sir Alexander Fleming observed that colonies of the bacterium *Staphylococcus aureus* could be destroyed by the mold *Penicillium notatum*,



proving that there was an antibacterial agent there in principle. This principle later lead [sic] to medicines that could kill certain types of disease-causing bacteria inside the body.

At the time, however, the importance of Alexander Fleming's discovery was not known.

Use of penicillin did not begin until the 1940s when Howard Florey and Ernst Chain isolated the active ingredient and developed a powdery form of the medicine.

Source:

<<http://inventors.about.com/od/pstartinventions/a/Penicillin.htm>>.

**• What do you think about Aunt Polly's attempt to find out information about medicine? Does this kind of thing — articles appearing this month contradicting the articles that appeared last month, and quack remedies — still exist today?**

Aunt Polly is interested in home doctoring and quack remedies. She reads various periodicals. Twain writes that “she never observed that her health-journals of the current month customarily upset everything they had recommended the month before” (93).

This kind of thing still occurs today. Women's magazines sometimes contain contradictory advice. For example, you can think about all the advice about diets that you can read. The main advice is that if you want to lose weight, you should eat less and exercise more, but women's magazines contain all kinds of advice about how to lose weight while eating chocolate or how to lose weight while eating fast food.

We should note that Aunt Polly is healthy and therefore she never tries out the remedies on herself, but on other people, such as Tom, who is now melancholy after having witnessed a murder. These remedies can sometimes seem to be a form of child abuse, as when Aunt Polly uses the water treatment on him:

The water treatment was new, now, and Tom's low condition was a windfall to her. She had him out at daylight every morning, stood him up in the woodshed and drowned him with a deluge of cold water; then she scrubbed him down with a towel like a file, and so brought him to; then she rolled him up in a wet sheet and put him away under blankets till she sweated his soul clean and "the yellow stains of it came through his pores" — as Tom said. (93)

We can't question Aunt Polly's motives, which are benevolent, but we can question her methods.

**• Why is Tom so down-hearted in chapter 12? What cheers him up?**

Tom is downhearted for three reasons:

1. Tom is down-hearted because of guilt over witnessing the murder and not coming forward to identify the true murderer. Muff Potter is in jail, but of course the true murderer is Injun Joe. Unless Tom or Huck comes forward, Muff Potter is likely to be found guilty of the murder and executed.
2. Tom is downhearted because he is worried that Injun Joe will find out that he is a witness to the murder and so Injun Joe might murder him.
3. Tom is downhearted because Becky is ill and may die.

The thing that cheers Tom up is giving Pain-Killer to Peter, the cat. Peter sees Tom with the Pain-Killer, and Tom is convinced — or convinces himself — that Peter wants some Pain-Killer, which is fire in liquid form. Therefore, Tom pours some Pain-Killer down Peter's throat, and this happens:

Peter sprang a couple of yards into the air, and then delivered a war-whoop and set off round and round the room, banging against furniture, upsetting flower pots, and making general havoc. Next he rose on his hind feet and pranced around, in a frenzy of enjoyment, with his head over his shoulder and his voice proclaiming his unappeasable happiness. Then he went tearing around the house again spreading chaos and destruction in his path. Aunt Polly entered in time to see him throw a few double summersets, deliver a final mighty hurrah, and sail through the open window, carrying the rest of the flower-pots with him. The old lady stood petrified with astonishment, peering over her glasses; Tom lay on the floor expiring with laughter. (94-95)

Tom seems to be returning to his old self; at least, he is getting into trouble again.

By the way, I am not all that sure that the terms “frenzy of enjoyment” (95) and “unappeasable happiness” (95) really apply to Peter.

Note that the illustration on p. 95 is incorrect. Peter the cat sails through a closed window, breaking the glass, instead of sailing through an open window. Apparently, the illustrator, True Williams, thought that Peter sailing through a closed window was funnier than Peter sailing through an open window. In addition, Peter is not carrying the remaining flower-pots with him as he sails through the window.

• **How is Tom's romance with Becky proceeding?**

Very poorly, as it happens. Becky has been ill. Illness at this time is very serious. Physicians haven't discovered antibiotics yet, and so ill children sometimes died.

When Becky recovers and returns to school, Tom is happy for a while. (He has been waiting for her to recover and return to school, but day after day she has missed school.) He starts showing off, and ends up almost knocking her over. Becky says,

“Mf! some people think they're mighty smart — always showing off!”

Tom's cheeks burned. He gathered himself up and sneaked off, crushed and crestfallen. (97)

Of course, Becky has just recovered from an illness, so she is probably not in a good mood — certainly not in a mood to hear a lot of noise and shouting. Also, of course, Tom's romantic problems set in motion his next adventure — running away to Jackson's Island.

## CHAPTER 13: THE PIRATE CREW SET SAIL

### • In what state of mind of mind are Tom Sawyer and Joe Harper at the beginning of this chapter?

Both are feeling sorry for themselves. Tom has been rejected by Becky Thatcher, who accuses him — rightly — of showing off. Joe’s mother has whipped him after accusing him of drinking some cream, a deed that he denies having committed.

Because of this, they are ready to turn their backs on civilization and become pirates. (Joe had originally thought of becoming a hermit, but the life of a pirate is much more exciting.)

Neither Tom nor Joe takes any responsibility for their decision to turn pirate. Both of them feel that society has forced them to run away and become outlaws.

While feeling sorry for himself, Tom thinks, “Yes, they had forced him to it at last: he would lead a life of crime. There was no choice” (98). And while feeling sorry for himself, Joe thinks that “he hoped she [his unjust mother] would be happy, and never regret having driven her poor boy out into the unfeeling world to suffer and die” (99). (Of course, quickly Joe decides to become a pirate, which promises some excitement before the suffering and the dying.)

### • Which items does Huck bring to start their adventure? Why doesn’t Huck bring food?

Tom brings a boiled ham, while Joe brings a side of bacon. Huck has stolen a skillet, and he brings tobacco and some corncobs to make pipes out of.

Huck doesn’t bring food because he doesn’t have the access to food that the other boys have. Both Tom and Joe have families that feed them, so they normally don’t steal food

other than small stuff such as jam, candy, doughnuts, and apples. Huck doesn't have an income, so he lives mainly on handouts and what he can steal. (He does know how to fish and hunt in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.) In his part of town, meat may not be accessible to him. I imagine that many families would be on the lookout when Huck is around in case he tried to steal something.

Of course, Tom and Joe found it easy to steal meat because they stole it from their own homes. Huck would find it more difficult to steal such important items of food. Huck would be watched more closely than Tom and Joe are.

**• Why does Huck join Tom and Joe on their adventure?**

Huck goes along with Tom Sawyer and Joe Harper because he has nothing better to do. Twain writes, "Then they hunted up Huckleberry Finn, and he joined them promptly, for all careers were one to him; he was indifferent" (99).

Huck has a surplus of time. He doesn't go to school, and he doesn't go to church. Therefore, with all that time on his hands, he is ready to go along with anything Tom and Joe want him to do.

In chapter 25, when Tom hunts up Huckleberry to go digging for buried treasure, we read:

Huck was willing. Huck was always willing to take a hand in any enterprise that offered entertainment and required no capital, for he had a troublesome superabundance of that sort of time which is *not* money. (175)

**• Where do the names of the boy pirates come from: Tom Sawyer, the Black Avenger of the Spanish Main; Huck**

## **Finn the Red-Handed; and Joe Harper, the Terror of the Seas?**

The names come from Tom Sawyer's "favorite literature" (100). Tom is a reader, although we never see him reading in this novel. He is also an imperfect reader, as when he understood "back-handed stroke" to mean striking someone on the back (67-68). Here Tom makes a mistake in Huck Finn's pirate name. A note on p. 266 says that the name may have come from a phrase in Ned Buntline's *The Last Days of Callao*: "Rovers of the Bloody Hand." "Red-handed" is usually found in the phrase "caught him red-handed," as in catching a murderer with blood still on his hands.

### **• What is Huck's reaction to their adventure on Jackson's Island?**

We find out that Huck is pretty happy — at least at first — on Jackson's Island. He actually likes it there. Huck says on p. 103:

“... I'm suited. I don't want nothing better'n this. I don't ever get enough to eat, gen'ally — and here they can't come and pick at a feller and bullyrag him so.”

As the notes at the end of the book say, “bullyrag” means to badger or to harass (266). Huck basically lives like this almost always although he usually doesn't get enough to eat. For Huck, shelter is often an empty hogshead. (A hogshead is a very large barrel.) His food is often a stew of odds and ends where the juices end up mixed together (as we find out from *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*). Huck likes being on Jackson's Island because he has lots of food to eat and because he has freedom from other people. As a small child, Huckleberry can be the target of bullying older boys and girls and of adult men and women, too, although we never see this happening in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

**• How is the boys' adventure different to Huck from what it is to Tom (and Joe)?**

Huck and Tom, of course, are very different. For Tom, this is an adventure. For Huck, it is everyday life, except that he gets more to eat. In addition, Tom regards books as authorities. If a book says to do something, then you have to do it. Huck relies on his experience. If Tom wants to be a hermit, then he will do what the books say that hermits do. Huck, on the other hand, will usually do what he wants to do. If doing something doesn't make sense to him, then he usually won't do it. Both Tom and Joe have good imaginations, and they play at such things as being pirates. Both Tom and Joe have families and are civilized, and to them this is an adventure.

**• Why are Tom and Joe plagued by guilt at the end of the chapter? What do they do about it?**

Tom and Joe are plagued by guilt because

- 1) they have run away from home, and
- 2) they have stolen important items of food: a whole boiled ham and a side of bacon.

Some of their guilt comes from their upbringing. They wonder if they have made a mistake by running away from home. In part, they may be worried about leaving their families behind. In addition, they recognize that ham and bacon are not the same kind of things as sweetmeats (sweet delicacies such as candy) and apples. Tom and Joe salve their consciences by deciding that in their future careers as pirates, they will not steal. Of course, pirates make their living by stealing from other people, so Tom and Joe are inconsistent pirates; however, they are merely playing at being pirates.



**• Why isn't Huckleberry Finn plagued by guilt at the end of this chapter?**

Huck does not feel guilty because he has no parents around to make a home for him. We never hear of his mother (except that she and Pap used to argue a lot), and his Pap is no longer around. Therefore, Huck has not run away from home, although he has run away from the empty hogsheads in which he slept. In addition, Huck has to steal to live. He has no income. And not having the moral education of Tom and Joe, he doesn't feel the guilt that they feel.

## CHAPTER 14: HAPPY CAMP OF THE FREEBOOTERS

• **What do you think is the author’s — and Tom’s — attitude toward nature?**

In a long paragraph on pp. 106-107, Twain writes about nature. At the beginning of the chapter, Tom wakes up and he watches Nature wake up with him. Among the things he sees are these:

- 1) an inchworm that crawls across his body (because of superstition, Tom thinks that he will get a new suit of clothing — this thought makes him happy)
- 2) a procession of ants, including one struggling with a dead spider five times its size
- 3) a lady-bug that Tom convinces to fly home to check on its children
- 4) a tumble-bug, rolling its ball (Tom touches the tumble-bug so he can watch it play dead)
- 5) lots of birds, including a cat-bird that imitates the cries of other birds
- 6) two squirrels that chatter at the boys
- 7) a few butterflies

Tom, in addition to Twain, has an appreciation of Nature. However, we are seeing Nature in its benevolent aspect. In chapter 16, we will see a more terrifying aspect of Nature.

• **What does “theme” mean?**

Here is a definition of “theme”:

**theme** (them): a common thread or repeated idea that is incorporated throughout a literary work. A

theme is a thought or idea the author presents to the reader that may be deep, difficult to understand, or even moralistic. Generally, a theme has to be extracted as the reader explores the passages of a work. The author utilizes the characters, plot, and other literary devices to assist the reader in this endeavor. [...] In truly great works of literature, the author intertwines the theme throughout the work and the full impact is slowly realized as the reader processes the text. The ability to recognize a theme is important because it allows the reader to understand part of the author's purpose in writing the book. See *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry and Drama*, *NTC's Dictionary of Literary Terms*, and *Literary Terms: A Dictionary*. — Susan Severson, Student, University of North Carolina at Pembroke

**• We should keep in mind that one theme of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is the pull of Nature versus the pull of Civilization. What questions should we be asking ourselves as we read this book?**

We need to ask these questions:

- 1) Is one more valuable than the other?
- 2) Do both have a role to play in human life?

**• What is life like for the boys on Jackson's Island?**

Life is pretty idyllic for the most part — with two major exceptions.

The boys have a good time on the island. They swim and play and have a good time. Food is plentiful — there is good fishing.

Over the long run, of course, life would not be good there. A few days in the summertime are fine, but life in winter — and during large thunderstorms — would not be so good. In addition, the boys' diet consists mainly of protein (ham, bacon, fish, and later turtle's eggs). They also have some corn pone (corn bread made from the corn meal they brought). Without greens, eventually the boys would die of dysentery (many mountain men, some of whom ate only meat, died that way).

Dysentery: “an inflammatory disorder of the lower intestinal tract, resulting in severe diarrhea often with blood and mucus.” (*The American Heritage Dictionary*)

The two drawbacks are major ones:

1) Homesickness. Even Huck becomes homesick for his empty hogsheads and his doorsteps. When Joe mentions going home, however, Tom and Huck wither him with derision. Things won't always be that way, though.

2) The Storm in Chapter 16. During the storm, the boys are in danger of being struck by lightning. In addition, their tent blows away and they are soaked. However, they are lucky in one way. When the tent blows away, they take shelter under a large tree and so they aren't present when lightning strikes the tree that their tent was under.

• **Do the boys' families and the town miss them?**

Huck's Pap doesn't, because his Pap isn't around.

However, Tom's and Joe's families miss them. The boys are presumed drowned, so the steam ferry-boat sets out to try to recover their bodies. The people on the boat do a few things to find the bodies:

- 1) Of course, the people on the boat keep a sharp lookout.
- 2) They shoot cannons off on the boat. As we find out on p. 266, the theory was that the noise of the cannons would burst the corpse's gall bladder and the corpse would then float.
- 3) They hollow out a loaf of bread, fill it with mercury (quicksilver), and let it float on the river. The theory is that the bread will float where a corpse is and stay there.
- 4) Skiffs (small boats) are around the steam ferry-boat looking for the bodies and apparently paying close attention to the floating loaves of bread.

Skiff: "A small, flat-bottomed open boat." (*The American Heritage Dictionary*)

**• Which boy is the quickest at figuring out who is "drowned"?**

Tom is the boy who figures out that the villagers think that the runaway boys have drowned.

**• Why do the boys say "drownded" instead of "drowned"?**

Mark Twain is very good at writing dialect. No doubt, when he grew up, he said "drownded." In fact, when I (the writer of the discussion guide you are reading now) grew up, I said "drownded," as well as "warsh" (as in "George Warshington"), and said "swimming pull." Sometimes, I still say "swimming pull."

At the beginning of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain writes this announcement:

## EXPLANATORY

IN this book a number of dialects are used, to wit: the Missouri negro dialect; the extremest form of the backwoods South-Western dialect; the ordinary “Pike County” dialect; and four modified varieties of this last. The shadings have not been done in a haphazard fashion, or by guess-work; but pains-takingly, and with the trustworthy guidance and support of personal familiarity with these several forms of speech.

I make this explanation for the reason that without it many readers would suppose that all these characters were trying to talk alike and not succeeding.

THE AUTHOR.

**• Tom, Joe, and Huck are all happy that they are missed. We read that “the pictures they drew of the public distress on their account were gratifying to look upon — from their point of view” (111). What other point of view is there?**

The other point of view is that of their families and of the townspeople. Losing a child to death is a horrible thing, and Aunt Polly and Mrs. Harper are mourning mightily. No one seems to be mourning for Huck, however — certainly not his father, who does not know that Huck is thought to be dead.

Sometimes, death occurs when it ought not to occur. At Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, four Korean students were killed in a car accident. Ohio U arranged a memorial service for the students, which the students’ parents attended. One of the fathers of the students thanked the mourners attending the service, then said, “This is not the way it is supposed to be. When a parent dies, you bury them in the ground, but when a child dies, you bury them in your heart.” (Source: Ohio

University Emeriti Association, compilers, *Ohio University Recollections for the Bicentennial Anniversary: 1804-2004*, p. 72.)

**• When Tom makes his stealthy visit home, he leaves a message for Joe and Huck, using a piece of sycamore bark as paper. Why does he leave the message in Joe's hat and not in Huck's hat?**

Huck is illiterate, as we know from the time that Tom helped Huck to sign his initials using blood for ink, and so Huck would not be able to read the message.

## CHAPTER 15: TOM'S STEALTHY VISIT HOME

### • How do Joe and Tom's families react to their absence?

Both Tom and Joe are greatly missed, as Tom finds out when he visits home without letting anyone know he is there. Joe's mother is visiting Aunt Polly, so Tom can find out how she feels, too.

Joe's mother is upset because she had whipped him for drinking some cream, but later she remembered that the cream had gone sour and so she had thrown it out herself.

Aunt Polly's opinion of Tom is that he is a "harum-scarum" (116) boy but not evil. She grieves especially because "the last words I ever heard him say was to reproach —" (116). Of course, she is referring to Tom's adventure with Peter and the Pain-Killer. Tom had given Pain-Killer to the cat, and Aunt Polly thought that Tom was tormenting the cat, but Tom pointed out that he was doing to the cat only what she had been doing to him.

Mary grieves truly for Tom.

Sid says, "I hope Tom's better off where he is, [...] but if he'd been better in some ways —" (116).

Leave it to Sid to speak ill of the dead.

By the way, an ancient Chinese blessing is this:

Grandfather die

Father die

Son die

This may not seem like a blessing, but it is. Everyone dies when they are supposed to die. The grandfather dies before the father, and the father dies before the son. Death is not optional, and the best that we can hope for is a long, happy,



healthy life followed by a quick decline and death. It is a great misfortune for a son to die before a father, or for a father to die before a grandfather.

This would be a curse:

Son die.

Father die.

Grandfather die.

**• What do the villagers think happened to “the boys” (117)?**

The villagers think that the boys took a raft and floated down to the next village. They think this because 1) the boys had told other children that “the village should ‘hear something’ soon” (117) and 2) the small raft had turned up missing.

However, the raft has been found washed up on the shore a few miles below the village, and the boys have not returned home. Therefore, the villagers think it likely that the boys drowned in mid-river because they were good swimmers.

By the way, “the boys” may refer to Tom and Joe only. It is possible that no one thinks that Huck drowned. He may not even be missed.

**• Who, if anyone, misses Huck?**

No one seems to have noticed that Huck is missing. Chances are, he disappears into the woods for days or weeks at a time, and of course he does not have parents to keep track of his whereabouts.

**• Tom visits his home, but he doesn't let Aunt Polly know that he is not dead. Is that action commendable? Why or why not?**

That night, Tom decides to visit St. Petersburg. Without telling Huck and Joe, he swims across the river and visits his home. He discovers that he and Joe are sorely missed. Joe's mother greatly misses Joe, and Aunt Polly and Mary greatly miss him. Sid seems to miss Tom a little, but he can't help wishing that Tom had been better in some ways so as to ensure passage to Heaven instead of to Hell.

Tom almost leaves a note for Aunt Polly — a note written on sycamore bark — but a thought occurs to him, and he doesn't leave it. Instead, he kisses Aunt Polly on the lips, then he leaves.

This is incredibly thoughtless of Tom. His family and Joe's family think that Tom and Joe (and possibly Huck) are dead, and Tom doesn't do anything to relieve their grief. He is entirely willing for them to undergo great suffering so that he can make a grand entrance later, in chapter 17.

By not letting these parents know that their children are still alive, Tom commits a grave sin.

## CHAPTER 16: FIRST PIPES — “I’VE LOST MY KNIFE”

### • **What are the boys eating?**

Mainly, they are eating protein. In this chapter, they find and eat turtles’ eggs. They still are eating fish, ham, and bacon. This is not a balanced diet.

### • **What is Joe’s attitude toward swimming when no one is around to tell him not to go swimming?**

Joe is homesick, and he wants to go home. Tom tries to tempt him into staying by talking about the good swimming at Jackson’s Island, but Joe says, “Swimming’s no good. I don’t seem to care for it, somehow, when there ain’t anybody to say I shan’t go in. I mean to go home” (121).

Sometimes, forbidden fruit is the sweetest. This may be true when it comes to things such as alcohol. Americans under the age of 21 cannot legally purchase alcohol, and so lots of high school and college students want to buy and drink alcohol.

Groucho Marx was astonished by how people drank during Prohibition. Before Prohibition, people drank rationally. After Prohibition, many people seemed to think that they had to drink way too much and get drunk as a way of rebellion.

Of course, we need a balance. Things that are truly dangerous should be forbidden; things that are beneficial when used wisely should not be forbidden. And still we have to keep in mind that adults should have lots of personal freedom, including the freedom to make mistakes.

### • **How does Tom keep the homesick Joe and Huck from returning to St. Petersburg?**

Tom ends up telling them a plan that will find its fruition in chapter 17. Tom tells them at the very last minute because

he is afraid that even his plan may not keep them from returning home very quickly. However, the plan does work. The boys think that it is a brilliant idea, and they join him in carrying it out in chapter 17.

• **Tom’s talk of treasure hunting early in this chapter is an example of foreshadowing. What is foreshadowing?**

Tom and Huck will go treasure hunting later in the novel. Tom’s talk of treasure hunting now prepares the readers for the treasure hunting later. This is known as foreshadowing:

Foreshadowing is the use of hints or clues to suggest what will happen later in literature.

Source:

[http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/lit\\_terms/foreshadowing.html](http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/lit_terms/foreshadowing.html)

Definition: A literary device used to hint at events that will follow later in the story, sometimes generating feelings of anxiety or suspense. Anton Chekhov once said that “if there is a gun hanging on the wall in the first act, it must fire in the last.” That remark captures the essence of foreshadowing.

Source:

<http://contemporarylit.about.com/library/bldef-foreshadowing>

Of course, later in the novel Tom and Huck go hunting for treasure.

• **What is the attitude of the boys toward smoking?**

Huck takes smoking as a matter of course. He has a number of what many mothers would call vices, even though he is only around 11 or 12 years old. He smokes, he cusses, and he lives a free life. He doesn’t go to church, and he doesn’t go to school. No wonder the children of the village envy him.

Tom and Joe envy Huck because he smokes. Therefore, they are willing to try to smoke also. Huck makes them corncob pipes, and they start taking puffs and brag about how easy it is to smoke. Tom also forms a plan with Joe about smoking in front of the other children:

“Say, — boys, don’t say anything about it, and some time when they’re around, I’ll come up to you and say, ‘Joe, got a pipe? I want a smoke.’ And you’ll say, kind of careless like, as if it warn’t anything, you’ll say, ‘Yes, I got my old pipe, and another one, but my tobacker ain’t very good.’ And I’ll say, ‘Oh, that’s all right, if it’s *strong* enough.’ And then you’ll out with the pipes, and we’ll light up just as ca’m, and then just see ’em look!” (123)

They do this later in chapter 18 (138) — a minor performance.

• **What is the experience of the boys when they smoke?**

Huck is an experienced smoker, and to him it is pure enjoyment; however, before long Tom and Joe get sick, and they crawl off in different directions to look for Joe’s “lost” knife. After an hour, Huck comes looking for them and “something informed him that if they had had any trouble they had got rid of it” (124).

I think the “something” must be two piles of vomit.

Later, Tom and Joe don’t want to smoke because “something they ate at dinner had disagreed with them” (125); however, a little later than that, they play at being Indians, and to make peace among the three hostile tribes they have to smoke a peace pipe. Tom and Joe discover that they can smoke a little without getting sick, so they resolve to keep on smoking.

By the way, Mark Twain once said, “Giving up smoking is the easiest thing in the world. I know because I’ve done it thousands of times.”

• **What happens during the storm?**

At the beginning of chapter 14, we saw a peaceful aspect of nature. Now we see a terrifying aspect of nature.

The boys endure a terrific thunderstorm, one that tears their camp apart. It blows their shelter — an old sail — away (126), and they take refuge under a great oak. Twain writes, “It was a wild night for homeless young heads to be out in” (126).

Which is better: nature or civilization? Both have their good and their bad points. Nature can be peaceful, and it can be terrifying. Civilization can be boring (as we see when Tom attends Sunday-school, church services, and school), but it can provide shelter and protection for young boys. Of course, civilization can teach Tom how to read his favorite adventure books.

Mark Twain will continue to ask which is better: nature or civilization? In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, another thunderstorm occurs, but Huck enjoys it even when it washes him off the raft, and in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* civilization, such as it is, is severely criticized by Twain.

The boys recover after the storm. Everything, including themselves, is soaked, and Twain writes, “They were eloquent in their distress [...]” Chances are, the boys are cussing. However, they get the fire started again, they feast, and they feel better as they adorn their adventure with embellishments.

**• What do you think of the freedom of these boys? How does it compare to your experiences of growing up?**

Obviously, Huck has a lot of freedom. These days, he would end up in a foster home and be subjected to a lot of social workers.

In addition, Tom and Joe have a lot of freedom. They play hooky sometimes, run away from home, and carry knives. These days, if a student were to carry a knife into a school, the student would be expelled from school for carrying around a dangerous weapon. Your grandfathers and great-grandfathers probably carried knives around when they were boys.

Children 150 years ago seem to have had a lot more freedom than now, but there were attendant dangers. These days, we have better food and better medical care than were available back then. People today are likely to die with most of their own teeth still in their mouths.

In addition, children today have better educations and are protected by child labor laws. Back then a child could be apprenticed at a very young age.

**• *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* has an omniscient narrator. How do we see that at the end of chapter 16?**

At the end of chapter 16, Twain writes about his characters, “We will leave them to smoke and chatter and brag, since we have no further use for them at present” (128). As an omniscient narrator, Twain is able to leave Tom, Joe, and Huck on Jackson’s Island, and he is able to return to St. Petersburg and let the readers know what the characters there are doing.

## CHAPTER 17: PIRATES AT THEIR OWN FUNERAL

**• What is the mood of the townspeople at the beginning of chapter 17?**

All of the townspeople, including the children, are mourning. We read:

BUT there was no hilarity in the little town that same tranquil Saturday afternoon. The Harpers, and Aunt Polly's family, were being put into mourning, with great grief and many tears. An unusual quiet possessed the village, although it was ordinarily quiet enough, in all conscience. The villagers conducted their concerns with an absent air, and talked little; but they sighed often. The Saturday holiday seemed a burden to the children. They had no heart in their sports, and gradually gave them up. (129)

Of course, Tom's family and Joe's family are especially mourning for them; in addition, Becky is especially mourning for Tom. However, all of the children are mourning.

**• Mark Twain, of course, is a satirist — a social critic who uses comedy. How does he satirize human beings' longing to be the center of attention?**

Even though the children are mourning the "deaths" of Tom and Joe, they still want to be the center of attention, so they provide evidence that they were the last to see the boys alive. We read:

Then there was a dispute about who saw the dead boys last in life, and many claimed that dismal distinction, and offered evidences, more or less tampered with by the witness; and when it was



ultimately decided who *did* see the departed last, and exchanged the last words with them, the lucky parties took upon themselves a sort of sacred importance, and were gaped at and envied by all the rest. (130)

One boy makes a claim for attention by saying, “Well, Tom Sawyer he licked me once” (130). Unfortunately for him, Tom Sawyer has licked most of the boys in the village, and so this claim for attention falls flat.

**• Tom Sawyer loves being the center of attention. How successful is his performance in chapter 17? Was it worth the pain he caused his family members?**

Tom succeeds in being the center of attention in chapter 17, but it comes at considerable cost to his family. (Ditto for Joe’s family.) Really, the entire village, including the boys and girls, mourned for the boys who they thought had drowned. For the boys’ families (except for Pap, of course), the thought of their death was agony. However, Tom (and Joe) was willing to put them through the agony simply in order to be the center of attention.

This performance, like Tom’s performance in winning a Bible at Sunday-school, must be judged a failure. He does succeed at being the center of attention, but in doing so he reveals his immaturity. He would have done much better to let Aunt Polly know that he and the other boys were still alive and playing at being pirates.

**• Earlier in the novel, Tom had thought that he wanted to die. In which chapters and passages did he think about this?**

In chapter 3, on p. 23, Tom had wanted to drown — painlessly:

A log raft in the river invited him, and he seated himself on its outer edge and contemplated the dreary

vastness of the stream, wishing, the while, that he could only be drowned, all at once and unconsciously, without undergoing the uncomfortable routine devised by nature.

In chapter 8, on p. 64, Tom had said that he wanted to die temporarily:

It seemed to him that life was but a trouble, at best, and he more than half envied Jimmy Hodges, so lately released; it must be very peaceful, he thought, to lie and slumber and dream forever and ever, with the wind whispering through the trees and caressing the grass and the flowers over the grave, and nothing to bother and grieve about, ever any more. If he only had a clean Sunday-school record he could be willing to go, and be done with it all. Now as to this girl [Becky Thatcher]. What had he done? Nothing. He had meant the best in the world, and been treated like a dog — like a very dog. She would be sorry some day — maybe when it was too late. Ah, if he could only die *temporarily!*

Now he has.

• **Compare and contrast Tom and Huck in chapter 17.**

1) We get to see a major difference between Tom and Huck in chapter 17. Tom enjoys being the center of attention, and he enjoys attending his own funeral and hearing the funeral oration. Huck may enjoy hearing the funeral oration as long as no one knows he is present, but he does not enjoy being the center of attention.

2) Here we see another major difference. Tom may be an orphan, but he still has a family that cares about him. Huck has a father, but his father does not care about him. Tom has family members mourning for him at the funeral; Huck does not.

• **How does Tom try to take care of Huck at the funeral?**

We read on p. 131:

Aunt Polly, Mary, and the Harpers threw themselves upon their restored ones, smothered them with kisses and poured out thanksgivings, while poor Huck stood abashed and uncomfortable, not knowing exactly what to do or where to hide from so many unwelcoming eyes. He wavered, and started to slink away, but Tom seized him and said:

“Aunt Polly, it ain’t fair. Somebody’s got to be glad to see Huck.”

“And so they shall. *I*’m glad to see him, poor motherless thing!” And the loving attentions Aunt Polly lavished upon him were the one thing capable of making him more uncomfortable than he was before.

Certainly, Tom shows some kindness here. He realizes that Huck does not have anyone to welcome him and to be glad that he is alive, so he makes everyone aware of Huck, and kind-hearted Aunt Polly lavishes attention upon Huck. Of course, Tom’s kindness backfires — Huck becomes even more uncomfortable than he was before.

• **Mark Twain can be very critical of religion and the church. Is he critical of them in this chapter?**

In chapter 17, I think that Mark Twain shows some respect for religion and the church. One thing that religion and the church can do is to help people deal with death. Of course, in doing that, the minister will remember the good things about the deceased. (Twain does engage in some humor here; what are remembered as some of the good things the boys did were regarded as “rank rascalities” (131) when the boys did them.)

We also read about the doxology — the “Old Hundred” — being sung with great emotion, and enjoyed by all: “As the ‘sold’ congregation trooped out they said they would almost be willing to be made ridiculous again to hear Old Hundred sung like that once more” (131-132).

Mark Twain can be severely critical of civilization, but at times civilization plays an important role in life (and in mourning the dead). All too often, church is a place of boredom. On this day, it is a place of life.

By the way, all of us know that church and school should be lively and never boring. All of know also know that often church and school are places of boredom. I am a teacher, and I try to teach well, but all too often my students prefer to do a crossword puzzle or a Sudoko puzzle in class rather than listen to me or participate in classroom discussions.

## CHAPTER 18: TOM REVEALS HIS DREAM SECRET

### • Is Tom mature or immature in chapter 18 (the dream secret)?

In many ways, Tom is deeply immature. We see him playing a mean trick on his Aunt Polly. He tells about what he calls a dream he had, but of course, he is describing what happened the night that he visited home, intending to let Aunt Polly know that he, Joe, and Huck were still alive (as we find out in the next chapter). Aunt Polly believes that there is something in dreams, and she intends to tell Joe Harper's mother about Tom's dream, which is of course remarkably accurate. We read:

“Well for the land's sake! I never heard the beat of that in all my days! Don't tell *me* there ain't anything in dreams, any more. Sereny Harper shall know of this before I'm an hour older. I'd like to see her get around *this* with her rubbage 'bout superstition. Go on, Tom!” (135)

Of course, Tom is playing a practical joke on Aunt Polly by making her think that he is describing a real dream. She will tell Sereny Harper about it, and Sereny will make her feel embarrassed in the next chapter.

### • Does Tom show any evidence of becoming mature in chapter 18?

Telling Aunt Polly about his “dream” turns out to be a transition performance. Tom later feels bad about what he has done, so he is growing up. In fact, he begins to feel bad in this chapter. He fools Aunt Polly by remembering his “dream,” and when he tells her that he kissed her — which happens to be the truth — she forgives him and hugs him, and Tom shows a sign of maturity by feeling bad about

tricking her: “And she seized the boy in a crushing embrace that made him feel like the guiltiest of villains” (136).

**• Is Tom mature or immature in chapter 18 when he and Joe smoke pipes at school?**

Tom and Joe also exhibit some immaturity at school. They become stuck-up, and they smoke pipes in front of the other children. We read:

At school the children made so much of him and of Joe, and delivered such eloquent admiration from their eyes, that the two heroes were not long in becoming insufferably “stuck-up.” They began to tell their adventures to hungry listeners — but they only began; it was not a thing likely to have an end, with imaginations like theirs to furnish material. And finally, when they got out their pipes and went serenely puffing around, the very summit of glory was reached. (137-138)

Showing off by smoking is immature, as is becoming “insufferably ‘stuck-up.’”

In addition, of course, Tom and Becky’s romantic troubles show further evidence of immaturity.

**• How does Tom behave immaturely around Becky in chapter 18?**

Both Tom and Becky behave immaturely in chapter 18. Now, Becky is acting the way that Tom acted at the end of chapter 12. She is showing off in an attempt to get Tom’s attention, but Tom is ignoring her. He has become “stuck-up” and feels that living for glory and without Becky is sufficient. Tom also makes Becky jealous by spending time with his old girlfriend, Amy Lawrence.

**• How does Becky behave immaturely around Tom in chapter 18?**

Becky first shows off in an attempt to get Tom's attention. Later, she talks about her picnic in an attempt to get Tom's attention. After Tom makes her jealous because he is paying attention to Amy Lawrence, Becky retaliates by spending time with Alfred Temple, the new boy whom Tom welcomed into town by beating him up in chapter 1.

**• How does Alfred Temple behave immaturely in chapter 18?**

When Becky leaves Alfred and he realizes that she was using him in an attempt to punish Tom, he pours ink on Tom's spelling book so that he will be punished for damaging the book.

Becky witnesses this act of sabotage, but she decides not to tell Tom so that the schoolmaster will unjustly whip him.

**• In chapter 18, many characters behave badly. We may want to call it the “vicious vanity” (138) chapter. How do the characters behave badly?**

Tom, Joe, Becky, and Alfred all behave immaturely:

- 1) Tom fools Aunt Polly by recounting his “dream.”
- 2) Tom and Joe become stuck up and smoke pipes in front of the other children.
- 3) Tom is stuck up and ignores Becky, thus making her suffer.
- 4) Tom uses Amy Lawrence to make Becky jealous.
- 5) Becky becomes angry at Tom and uses Alfred Temple, the new boy whom Tom beat up in chapter 1 to make Tom jealous.

6) Alfred Temple discovers that Becky has been using him to make Tom jealous, and he retaliates by pouring ink on a page of Tom's spelling book.

7) Becky sees Alfred Temple pouring ink on a page of Tom's spelling book. At first, she is going to tell Tom, but then she decides not to because she hopes that he will be whipped as punishment. She also decides to "hate him forever" (143).

We readers probably laugh at Tom and Becky's love troubles, but to the children these are very serious matters.



## CHAPTER 19: THE CRUELTY OF “I DIDN’T THINK”

### • What kind of a relationship do Tom and Aunt Polly have?

Chapter 19 is only three pages long, and we see the result of Tom’s practical joke in chapter 17 — when he told Aunt Polly about his “dream.” As she had said she would do, she went to Sereny and told her about the dream, expecting that Sereny would have to say that there was something in dreams and that it wasn’t all rubbish, but Sereny told her the truth: Tom had not dreamed about what happened that night, but he had instead visited home that night and had witnessed everything he had reported to Aunt Polly.

This shows that Tom can sometimes be cruel to Aunt Polly. The cruelty is not sadistic, but instead it is a matter of not thinking ahead and seeing how hurt Aunt Polly would be when Sereny Harper told her the truth. The same thing is true when Tom attended his own funeral. He got what he had wanted — the attention of the entire town — but at the cost of creating a lot of misery for the citizens of the town and for especially the members of his family.

Nevertheless, there is a love relationship between Aunt Polly and Tom.

- 1) Tom did kiss her faded lips when he returned at night while playing pirate, and
- 2) Aunt Polly is extremely glad when she finally looks into Tom’s coat pocket and sees the sycamore bark with Tom’s message written on it.

**• Does Tom learn from the practical joke he played on Aunt Polly?**

I regard this as a transition performance — the transition is between selfish and unselfish actions by Tom. When Tom wins the Bible in Sunday-school and when Tom attends his own funeral, he is putting himself before everyone else and acting selfishly because he wants to be the center of attention. In this performance, he acts selfishly, then he regrets his action. In later performances, Tom will act unselfishly.

I think that Tom matures here. Before, he has not felt sorrow at any of his performances, although he may have been disappointed that the Sunday-school performance was a failure. Here, although he was happy at first to play a trick on Aunt Polly, he feels sorry when he realizes how much the trick hurt her.

**• Tom is criticized for not thinking about the consequences of his actions. Why is it important to think about the consequences of our actions?**

Not thinking about the consequences of our actions can get us in a heap of trouble. For example, what would you happen if you got drunk every night and never studied? You would probably flunk out of school and end up with severe health problems. What would happen if you studied six days a week and relaxed on the seventh day? Chances are, you would do well in school and have a social life, too.

Not thinking about the consequences of one's actions is a sign of immaturity. Tom Sawyer is still acting immaturely.

However, we should point out that Tom did think about his family. The purpose of his stealthy visit home was to leave a message for Aunt Polly telling her that the boys weren't dead — they were just being pirates. Unfortunately, he got the idea of attending his own funeral and he let Aunt Polly

and the villagers suffer so that he could be the center of attention by attending his own funeral.

• **Which ethical theory states that we can determine whether an act is good or bad by looking at its consequences?**

The ethical theory known as Utilitarianism states that we can determine whether an act is good or bad by looking at its consequences. Two philosophers espousing this view were Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. Utilitarianism gets its name from the Principle of Utility:

The principle of utility states that actions or behaviors are right in so far as they promote *happiness* or *pleasure*, wrong as they tend to produce *unhappiness* or *pain*.

Source:

<http://inside.msj.edu/academics/faculty/whiter/UTILITY.htm>

• **How does chapter 19 end?**

Aunt Polly thinks that Tom lied to her about leaving a message that the boys weren't dead — they were just being pirates. She ends up checking the pocket of his jacket and finds the piece of sycamore bark that Tom used to write the message on, then she forgives Tom for what he had put her through:

She put the jacket away, and stood by musing a minute. Twice she put out her hand to take the garment again, and twice she refrained. Once more she ventured, and this time she fortified herself with the thought: "It's a good lie — it's a good lie — I won't let it grieve me." So she sought the jacket pocket. A moment later she was reading Tom's piece of bark through flowing tears and saying: "I could

forgive the boy, now, if he'd committed a million sins!" (146)

## CHAPTER 20: TOM TAKES BECKY'S PUNISHMENT

- **The schoolmaster's name is Mr. Dobbins. What does "dobbin" mean?**

Let's talk about Mr. Dobbins' name. A dobbin is "A horse, esp. a working farm horse," according to *The American Heritage Dictionary*. Mr. Dobbins' life is unexciting. He is not like a race horse; rather, he is similar to a farm horse, doing plodding, unexciting work. Some of this may be his own fault. Some teachers become excited by their work.

Many authors, including Mark Twain, choose the names of their characters carefully.

- **Why is Mr. Dobbins' life so blighted?**

In the shabby little village of St. Petersburg, we see some blighted lives. Mr. Dobbins wanted to be a physician, but instead, poverty doomed him to become a village schoolmaster. He does not like his work or his life, and he takes his unhappiness out on his pupils by beating them when they do something wrong.

We also find out later that he drinks — and that he wears a toupee.

Mr. Dobbins is unsuccessful. As a schoolteacher, he is a bully, not a helper. On p. 150 we read that he sits nodding in his chair. As the students study, Mr. Dobbins falls asleep. (With no air conditioning, this may be easy to do on a warm day.)

- **What are some other blighted lives in the village of St. Petersburg and its surroundings?**

We think of Huck's Pap, Muff Potter, and Injun Joe. They lead lives of alcoholism and of crime. In addition, Pap is a child neglecter.

The blighted lives in the village are another example of the dark side of life.

• **What is Mr. Dobbins' method of finding out who tore the page in his book?**

Mr. Dobbins' method of inquiry is to ask students individually if they had torn the page. Becky is terrified of being whipped in school, and so her face and manner are about to give her away when Tom volunteers the inaccurate information that he had torn the page in the book.

• **How are Tom and Becky reconciled?**

Tom and Becky are reconciled when Tom takes Becky's punishment for her. Becky had taken a look at a book that Mr. Dobbins keeps under lock and key. The book is about human anatomy. Mr. Dobbins had wanted to be a physician, so he reads this book daily at times when he is not busy teaching.

Unfortunately, as Becky was looking at the book, Tom entered the schoolroom. Becky snatched at the book to close it and tore a page halfway down. For that reason, Mr. Dobbins will punish her if he finds out that she tore the book.

Mr. Dobbins is on the verge of finding out that Becky tore the page when Tom jumps up and says, "*I done it*" (152).

Tom takes Becky's punishment, and the two are reconciled. Becky even tells Tom that Alfred Temple had deliberately spilled the ink on Tom's spelling book.

• **Is Tom becoming more sensitive?**

Previously, Tom showed great insensitivity to his family by pretending to be dead so he could show up at his own funeral. Here, he shows great sensitivity to Becky by taking her punishment for her.

Note that this is the second time in one day that Tom has been unjustly punished. (Once for supposedly spilling ink in his textbook; once for supposedly tearing the page in Mr. Dobbins' anatomy book.)

Here Tom behaves well with good motives. We can say that he does a good deed by taking Becky's whipping for her.

• **Why does Tom take Becky's punishment for her?**

Becky calls Tom's good deed noble. Tom takes her punishment because:

- 1) He still loves Becky despite their differences.
- 2) He knows that Becky is terrified of being whipped at school. She has never been whipped before, whereas Tom has been whipped many times and is used to it.
- 3) Tom takes pity on Becky. We can take this as a sign of deepening maturity. On p. 150, we read:

Mr. Dobbins fingered his book absently for a while, then took it out and settled himself in his chair to read! Tom shot a glance at Becky. He had seen a hunted and helpless rabbit look as she did, with a gun leveled at its head. Instantly he forgot his quarrel with her. Quick — something must be done! — done in a flash, too! But the very imminence of the emergency paralyzed his invention.

• **What is Becky's opinion of Tom's good deed?**

Becky, of course, is very grateful to Tom. She reconciles with him, she tells him what Alfred Temple did to Tom's spelling book, and she tells him, "Tom, how *could* you be so noble!" (152).

## CHAPTER 21: ELOQUENCE — AND THE MASTER’S GILDED DOME

**• What foreshadowing do we see at the beginning of chapter 21?**

We learn that the schoolmaster is completely bald and wears a wig. Of course, this prepares for the young boys’ revenge on the schoolmaster at the end of the chapter.

**• How well does Tom Sawyer’s recitation go on Examination Day at the school?**

Not well at all, although you would think that it might because Tom loves to be the center of attention.

However, Tom, although he is filled with “conceited self-confidence” (155), gets stage-fright and forgets his speech.

**• Tom Sawyer enjoys being the center of attention. Why does his recitation of the “Give me liberty or give me death” fail?**

Tom Sawyer’s recitation starts well, but he soon fails in reciting the speech. We read that he starts the speech with “conceited confidence” (155). We can guess what has happened. Tom probably spent more time fantasizing about making a big success with the speech than he did memorizing the speech. We have already seen that he is not good at memorizing Scripture (chapter 4); apparently, he is not good at memorizing speeches. However, he is good at memorizing pages of dialogue from his adventure books about Robin Hood.

In addition, Twain does not want this minor performance to overshadow the later major performance of Tom’s testimony at Muff Potter’s trial.



**• If you need to memorize a speech or a poem for recitation, what is a good way to do it?**

A good way to memorize a speech or a poem is to memorize the last few lines first, then to keep memorizing a few more earlier lines until you get to the beginning of the speech or poem. That way, when you recite the speech or poem, you will be going from weakness to strength. You will become more and more confident as you reach the end because that is the part that you have memorized most well.

By the way, a good way to keep your memory strong is to memorize a short poem or passage each day.

**• How well written are the essays and poems written by the young ladies?**

They aren't well written at all. Twain is satirizing the type of "literature" produced by students at Midwestern schools. One thing is for sure — Examination Evening shows that the schoolmaster cannot teach his students how to write.

**• Where did Mark Twain get the essays and poems written by the young ladies?**

Twain himself didn't write the "literature" in chapter 21. He used a book that he owned, as he explains in a note at the end of the chapter and as we learn in a note at the end of the book. The book is Mary Ann Harris Gay's *The Pastor's Story and Other Pieces; or, Prose and Poetry* (1871). Twain himself called the book "Prose and Poetry by a Western Lady."

**• Mark Twain was a literary critic. How does he criticize the "literature" — the original compositions — read during the evening?**

So what is wrong with the "literature" — the original compositions — read during the evening?

1) The essays and poetry have a “nursed and petted melancholy” (156).

2) The diction is exalted for no good reason. One poem uses the word *tête* although few in the school knew what the word means. (A *tête-a-tête* is a private conversation between only two people.)

3) Favorite words are dragged into compositions over and over again until they were worn out. A favorite word of the evening is “beauteous.”

4) Clichés such as “life’s page” were trotted out.

5) Unoriginal themes. The writers wrote on the same themes that their parents and grandparents had written on:

- \* Friendship
- \* Memories of Other Days
- \* Religion in History
- \* Dream Land
- \* The Advantages of Culture
- \* Forms of Political Government Compared and Contrasted
- \* Melancholy
- \* Filial Love
- \* Heart Longings

6) Every composition had a moral of some kind attached to the end of it. The composition that was awarded first prize won because it contained a sermon that was destructive of hope to all non-Presbyterians.

I get the idea that Mark Twain kept a collection of bad books and that he had great fun taking down a volume of bad prose or poetry — or both — once in a while and having fun laughing at it. (Educator Gilbert Highet did this. So does Jim Phillips, a reporter for *The Athens News* in Athens, Ohio.)

**• If you want to write well, what are a few things you can do?**

1) Don't be afraid to write humor (when relevant). Mark Twain wrote humor, and we still read him a hundred years after his death.

2) Don't send the reader to a dictionary to find the meaning of a word you use. Use words that the reader will understand.

3) Don't drag a favorite word into your writing just because it is your favorite word. Unless it is suitable for what you are writing, leave it out.

4) Avoid clichés.

5) Write something original. Trust me. Newspaper editors hate to get letters about abortion. Of course, they will print those letters, as that is one of the duties of a newspaper. Editors would prefer that you write a light humorous essay about your public speaking course giving an impromptu speech about the *youth in Asia*, and then discovering that you were supposed to speak about *euthanasia*.

6) Avoid attaching a moral to what you write. If you are writing about behaving abominably because you are in a bad mood, don't put the moral "I learned to be kind to other people" at the end of the essay. Write clearly enough that the reader will figure out the moral for him- or herself.

7) Break any of the above rules if it will make your writing better.

**• What is Strunk and White’s advice about choosing words?**

Strunk and White’s *Elements of Style* gives this advice: “Avoid fancy words: Avoid the elaborate, the pretentious, the coy, and the cute. Do not be tempted by a twenty-dollar word when there is a ten-center handy, ready and able.” (Source: Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*, 4th edition, pp. 76-77.)

**• How do the young boys of the school get revenge against the schoolmaster?**

The young boys of the school have a notable way to get revenge. The young boys know that the schoolmaster drinks before Examination Evening, so they plot their revenge for that day. When the schoolmaster gets drunk, the signpainter’s boy, with whose family the schoolmaster boards, takes off the schoolmaster’s wig and gilds his head with gold paint. While the schoolmaster is at the chalkboard drawing a map of the United States, a boy lowers a cat — with its jaws tied with a rag so it can’t meow — down from the garret with a string. The cat’s claws grab the schoolmaster’s wig and the cat is whisked away, revealing the schoolmaster’s gilded dome to all.

**• Why doesn’t Tom Sawyer play a role in the revenge the young boys of the school take against the schoolmaster?**

Another notable feature about the schoolboys’ plot is that Tom plays no part in it. Normally, he would have been the ringleader, but he is so worried about the upcoming trial of Muff Potter — and he feels so guilty — that he does not play a part in the plot.

## CHAPTER 22: HUCK FINN QUOTES SCRIPTURE

### • What does “temperance” mean?

Here are some definitions of “temperance”:

1. moderation or self-restraint in action, statement, etc.; self-control.
2. habitual moderation in the indulgence of a natural appetite or passion, especially in the use of alcoholic liquors.
3. total abstinence from alcoholic liquors.

Source: Dictionary.com

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/temperance>

### • Why does Tom want to be a member of the Cadets of Temperance?

Tom likes the uniform (regalia), and he wants to march in a parade. One parade would be the Fourth of July parade, but he has another chance earlier than that. A Judge is dying, and if the Judge dies, Tom will be able to march in uniform at the Judge’s funeral and get some of the attention that he so desperately craves.

For a while it looks like the Judge will die, and Tom hopes that he will so that he can wear his uniform at the funeral. But alas, the Judge appears to be recovering, so Tom resigns from the Cadets of Temperance. As soon as Tom resigns, the Judge dies, and Tom is forced to watch — with envy — the other Cadets of Temperance — who didn’t resign — wear their uniforms and get attention.

Tom doesn’t have any interest in temperance — he just likes the uniform and the attention that it promises to get him.

By the way, Percy Hammond, the drama critic, grew up in Cadiz, Ohio, in the late 19th century. One of his favorite memories was marching in a temperance parade as a small child and carrying a banner inscribed with this slogan: “Tremble, King Alcohol, for I shall grow up.” (Source: Franklin P. Adams, et. al., *Percy Hammond: A Symposium in Tribute*, p. viii.)

**• When are smoking, tobacco chewing, and cursing attractive to Tom? When aren’t they attractive to Tom?**

Smoking, tobacco chewing, and cursing are attractive to Tom when he has promised not to do them. Forbidden fruit is the most desirable fruit of all. When Tom resigns from the Cadets of Temperance, he doesn’t feel like doing these things any more, but when he had promised not to do them, he was mightily tempted to do them.

Prohibition (the years 1920–1933, when it was illegal to make or buy alcohol in the United States), which came about after Mark Twain had died, may be a similar situation. Groucho Marx, who lived through it, says that before Prohibition, people drank sensibly, in moderation. After Prohibition started, people started to drink heavily and get drunk as an act of defiance. Groucho says that it was as if people felt it was their duty to get as drunk as they could.

Earlier, Joe Harper discovered what Tom is learning now. In chapter 16, Joe was homesick, and he wanted to go home. Tom tried to tempt him into staying by reminding him about the good swimming at Jackson’s Island, but Joe said, “Swimming’s no good. I don’t seem to care for it, somehow, when there ain’t anybody to say I shan’t go in. I mean to go home” (121).

**• How sincere is the boys’ repentance following the religious revival?**

It is sincere for as long as it lasts, but it doesn’t last very long.

After two weeks, Tom gets up from his sickbed — he had the measles — and discovers that the boys have found religion. (Even Huck is quoting scripture.) He relapses, goes to bed again for three weeks, and he finds that the boys have all relapsed — Huck Finn and Joe Harper are in an alley eating a watermelon that they have stolen.

• **What kind of a God does Tom believe in?**

Tom believes in a vengeful God. In chapter 22, Tom is ill with measles and misses a revival meeting, so he misses getting religion, unlike the other boys who start studying the Bible and memorizing Scripture. When a storm comes, Tom is sure that God is going to blast him with lightning as punishment for his sins. He vows to reform if he lives, but when the storm passes and he is still alive, he doesn't reform — because there may not be any more storms.

On pp. 164-165, we read:

And that night there came on a terrific storm, with driving rain, awful claps of thunder and blinding sheets of lightning. He covered his head with the bedclothes and waited in a horror of suspense for his doom; for he had not the shadow of a doubt that all this hubbub was about him. He believed he had taxed the forbearance of the powers above to the extremity of endurance and that this was the result. It might have seemed to him a waste of pomp and ammunition to kill a bug with a battery of artillery, but there seemed nothing incongruous about the getting up such an expensive thunderstorm as this to knock the turf from under an insect like himself.

By and by the tempest spent itself and died without accomplishing its object. The boy's first impulse was to be grateful, and reform. His second was to wait — for there might not be any more storms.

• **In chapter 5, what kind of a God did Tom believe in?**

Earlier, in chapter 5, we also learned that Tom's God was a vengeful God. In church, Tom wanted to catch a fly during the minister's prayer. As the prayer ended, his hands crept toward the fly, but he didn't capture the fly until the minister said "Amen." Why? On p. 40, we read that

as sorely as Tom's hands itched to grab for it they did not dare — he believed his soul would be instantly destroyed if he did such a thing while the prayer was going on. But with the closing sentence his hand began to curve and steal forward; and the instant the "Amen" was out the fly was a prisoner of war. His aunt detected the act and made him let it go.



## CHAPTER 23: THE SALVATION OF MUFF POTTER

- **Write a character analysis of Muff Potter based on the information in chapter 23.**

We discover many good things about Muff Potter in chapter 23. Before, we knew that Muff was an alcoholic, a grave robber, and a physically dirty person who was not fond of washing. Huck says about him:

He ain't no account; but then he hain't ever done anything to hurt anybody. Just fishes a little, to get money to get drunk on — and loaf's around considerable; but lord, we all do that — leastways most of us, — preachers and such like. But he's kind of good — he give me half a fish, once, when there warn't enough for two; and lots of times he's kind of stood by me when I was out of luck. (167)

We certainly learn something good about Muff here. He helped feed Huck when he didn't have enough food to feed two people.

We also find out from Tom that Muff was friendly around boys. He used to fix their kites and sometimes tied a hook on their fishing lines. In addition, we find out from Muff that he used to tell the boys where some good fishing holes were (168).

Clearly, Muff is not all bad. In addition, we know that Muff did not commit the murder of Dr. Robinson — Injun Joe did.

Tom and Huck are feeling guilty right now. Unless they do something, Muff will be convicted of murder and he will be sentenced to be hanged. Although the boys try to salve their conscience by being nice to Muff and bringing him tobacco and matches, they still feel guilty.

**• How is the lawyer’s language different from the language of other characters in this novel?**

The lawyer’s language is more educated than the other characters in the novel. The lawyer uses correct grammar and uses words such as “diffident” correctly. Other characters in this novel speak with poor grammar. On pp. 170-172, we read:

“Thomas Sawyer, where were you on the seventeenth of June, about the hour of midnight?”

Tom glanced at Injun Joe’s iron face and his tongue failed him. The audience listened breathless, but the words refused to come. After a few moments, however, the boy got a little of his strength back, and managed to put enough of it into his voice to make part of the house hear:

“In the graveyard!”

“A little bit louder, please. Don’t be afraid. You were — ”

“In the graveyard.”

A contemptuous smile flitted across Injun Joe’s face.

“Were you anywhere near Horse Williams’ grave?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Speak up — just a trifle louder. How near were you?”

“Near as I am to you.”

“Were you hidden, or not?”

“I was hid.”

“Where?”

“Behind the elms that’s on the edge of the grave.”

Injun Joe gave a barely perceptible start.

“Any one with you?”

“Yes, sir. I went there with — ”

“Wait — wait a moment. Never mind mentioning your companion’s name. We will produce him at the proper time. Did you carry anything there with you?”

Tom hesitated and looked confused.

“Speak out, my boy — don’t be diffident. The truth is always respectable. What did you take there?”

Diffident: lacking self-confidence; timid (*The New American Heritage Dictionary*).

**• How mature was Tom during his previous two major performances? (#1: Winning the Bible at Sunday-school)**

When Tom won the Bible at Bible-school, he got everyone’s attention. Unfortunately, he didn’t deserve to win the Bible because he had acquired the tickets needed to win it not through study but through trading with the other boys and girls. When he was asked who were Jesus’ first two disciples, he answered, “David and Goliath.”

Tom was not mature when he “won” the Bible. All he wanted was the glory of winning the Bible; he did not care for anything else. In addition, he did not deserve to win the Bible. He had not memorized the verses; he had traded for the tickets.

**• How mature was Tom during his previous two major performances? (#2: Showing Up at His Own Funeral)**

Tom appears at his own funeral with Joe Harper and Huck Finn. This was effective in getting everyone’s attention, but

it came at the cost of much misery for his family, the family of Joe Harper, and the citizens of the town.

Again, Tom wanted to be the center of attention, but a mature person would find some other way of being the center of attention — some way that would not cause his or her family such misery.

**• How effective is Tom’s third great performance? (Testifying at Muff Potter’s Trial)**

This performance is very effective. Finally, Tom shows some maturity. This time, he gets everyone’s attention, and he does a good deed.

If Tom had not gone to the lawyer with what he knew, Muff Potter would have been found guilty and hung. Tom was an eyewitness to what had really happened, and he testified and got Muff Potter found innocent of the charge of murder.

Earlier, Tom was suffering from a “troubled conscience” (166). Having a conscience is a sign of maturity. Fortunately, here Tom does the right thing.

**• What is the downside of Tom’s testifying at Muff Potter’s trial?**

Unfortunately for Tom, his testifying at Muff Potter’s trial has a downside.

Injun Joe escapes, and now Tom is afraid that Injun Joe will get revenge by murdering him. From what we know of Injun Joe, that is a very strong possibility indeed.

**• Did Tom show courage when he testifying at Muff Potter’s trial?**

In this performance, Tom shows a great deal of courage. He knew that Injun Joe would want him dead if he testified. On the witness stand, he was “badly scared” (170). It took him

a while to get the courage to speak up. Why was he badly scared? Because he knew that Injun Joe is dangerous. Injun Joe has already murdered at least one man, and Tom and Huck are sure that Injun Joe would have no trouble murdering them as well.

Doing the right thing despite being badly scared required courage. Tom acts very courageously at the trial.

**• What should we think about Huck, who did not testify at the trial?**

Huck is not the boy who went to the lawyer, and he did not testify at the trial, although he would have eventually been called to testify had Injun Joe not escaped.

This is a black mark against Huck. Apparently, he would have kept mum although it would have meant the unjust hanging of Muff Potter. However, later Huck will redeem himself in this novel. And as all who read *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* know, Huck is a good kid.

**• What hints of the dark side of life do we see in this chapter?**

We see that the trial system can possibly reach the wrong decision. If Tom had not come forward, Muff Potter would have been hanged.

At the bottom of p. 167, we read about lynching. Tom tells Huck, “I’ve heard ’em say that if he was to get free they’d lynch him.” Huck responds, “And they’d do it, too.”

**• What hints of the good side of life do we see in this chapter?**

Justice triumphs. Tom comes forward, and Muff Potter’s life is saved.

We see that Muff Potter has a good side, although he is also an alcoholic and a grave-robber. He does small things to help the boys of the village, including sharing a fish with Huck when the fish wasn't big enough for two people. In addition, Muff Potter takes responsibility for his actions — or what he thinks are his actions. He believes that he murdered Dr. Robinson, and he expects to be executed for murder.

## CHAPTER 24: SPLENDID DAYS AND FEARSOME NIGHTS

### • What is the difference between Tom's days and Tom's nights?

On p. 173, we read:

Tom's days were days of splendor and exultation to him, but his nights were seasons of horror. Injun Joe infested all his dreams, and always with doom in his eye. Hardly any temptation could persuade the boy to stir abroad after nightfall.

During daytime, Tom is a hero to all. We know that he enjoys the attention he receives. At night, he is afraid that Injun Joe will find and murder him, so the nights are a terror to Tom.

Since Huck's name was not mentioned at the trial, he doesn't have the same kind of fear that Tom does, although he is afraid that his name might "leak out" (173) yet. After all, Tom swore a solemn oath that was written down, and he even signed his initials in blood on the document. If Tom can go back on that kind of an oath, why may not the lawyer let slip Huck's name and his part in the graveyard adventure?

However, as time passes, Tom feels less apprehensive. Soon, he will be willing to sneak out at night.

### • How fickle are the townspeople's reactions to Tom and to Muff Potter?

On p. 173, we read:

As usual, the fickle, unreasoning world took Muff Potter to its bosom and fondled him as lavishly as it had abused him before. But that sort of conduct is to the world's credit; therefore it is not well to find fault with it.

The townspeople are fickle indeed. Before, the townspeople regarded Muff Potter as a murderer and said that they would lynch him if he escaped from the jail. Now, they like Muff Potter.

Before, the townspeople thought that Tom Sawyer would grow up to be hanged. They still think that it is a possibility, but now they think that it is also a possibility that he might grow up to be President:

TOM was a glittering hero once more — the pet of the old, the envy of the young. His name even went into immortal print, for the village paper magnified him. There were some that believed he would be President, yet, if he escaped hanging. (173)

• **Write a character analysis of the detective.**

The detective comes from the city of St. Louis, but he isn't effective. He noses around, says that he has found a "clew," but since "you can't hang a 'clew' for murder" (174), he soon goes back to St. Louis.

Twain is satirizing in the character of the detective the kind of people who pretend to be more effective and more competent than they really are. The detective has found nothing important, but he lets other people think that he has found something important.



## CHAPTER 25: SEEKING THE BURIED TREASURE

### • **When you were a kid, did you go hunting for treasure?**

If you were a boy growing up in the country, you probably did. I did. Twain writes, “THERE comes a time in every rightly-constructed boy’s life when he has a raging desire to go somewhere and dig for hidden treasure” (175).

Like Tom Sawyer, my friends and I pretended that we were digging for buried treasure; however, an older boy in the neighborhood saw what we were doing, and he planted a treasure for us to find: plastic Easter eggs filled with candy, and he gave us a treasure map so we could find the treasure.

Unfortunately, today we live in a much more urban and much more fearful time, and probably fewer boys go digging for buried treasure.

### • **Where does Tom get his ideas about hunting for treasure? How realistic are those ideas?**

Tom’s ideas about hunting for treasure come from the adventure books that he loves to read. (We never actually see Tom reading in this novel, but we know that he reads lots of adventure books because of the games he plays.)

Tom’s ideas about treasure are unrealistic.

1) He has the idea that hidden treasure is rather common, when of course it is very rare. (If it were rather common, more people would go hunting for treasure.)

2) Tom thinks that much treasure is hidden in haunted houses and under dead-limb trees — in particular, under the spot where the dead limb casts a shadow (from the light of the Moon) at midnight.

As it happens, a gang of robbers hid a treasure in the haunted house— but *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is a novel, and Tom has all sorts of amazing adventures that we would love to have.

• **What are Huck’s views on marriage?**

When Tom and Huck go hunting for treasure, they talk about what they will spend the money on if they find it. Tom says that one of the things he would spend the money on is getting married. This astonishes Huck. On p. 179, Huck says:

“Well, that’s the foolishhest thing you could do. Look at pap and my mother. Fight! Why, they used to fight all the time. I remember, mighty well.”

Huck’s views of marriage come from his experience of the marriage of his father and mother. Their marriage was very poor, and Huck figures that all marriages are like that. For one thing, he thinks that all girls are like his mother, and she was very willing to fight with his father.

Note that Huck is a sexist. He thinks that all girls are alike, and that if a man gets married, he will of course fight with his wife.

• **What is Huck’s family life like?**

Of course, Huck’s family life is non-existent. We never hear about what happened to his mother, but apparently she is dead. Huck’s Pap isn’t around either, and Huck doesn’t expect him to come around again. On p. 82 in chapter 10, Huck says:

Pap used to sleep there, sometimes, ’long with the hogs, but laws bless you, he just lifts things when he snores. Besides, I reckon he ain’t ever coming back to this town any more.

We aren't told why Pap isn't coming back; however, Pap — an alcoholic — does come back in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* after hearing that his son is rich. Pap comes back because he wants the money.

Huck lives on his own, scrounging up food where he can find it, and sleeping in empty hogsheads. There are no social workers to take care of him, and no safety net for the poorest members of society. Remember, at this time there are no Social Security, no Medicare, and no Medicaid. There is also no Welfare.

• **What are Tom's views on marriage?**

Tom does not have a living mother and a father. His parents are dead, but apparently their marriage was much better than the marriage of Huck's parents because he wants to spend money on getting married. Tom lives with his aunt and with his half-brother, Sid. Apparently, Mary is Aunt Polly's daughter. Aunt Polly, apparently, is a widow because her husband is never mentioned. Death at a young age in the mid-1800s was common.

• **What is Tom's family life like?**

We know for a fact that Tom's family life is much better than Huck's. Apparently, Huck has no other relatives than his Pap because no one takes him in. The government is not involved with caring for children like Huck; whatever charity exists in the village comes from individuals.

Tom has had more experience with girls and women than Huck has. The mothers of the village don't want their children to play with Huck, so he doesn't know his friends' mothers. Huck doesn't go to school and Sunday-school, so he doesn't see girls there. Tom has already had two little girlfriends: Amy Lawrence and Becky Thatcher. Apparently, Huck hasn't had any.

**• What would Tom spend his money on if he found buried treasure? Why would he spend his money in that way?**

As mentioned before, Tom would get married. In addition, he would spend his money on these items:

- 1) a new drum
- 2) a real sword
- 3) a red neck-tie
- 4) a bull-pup (a bulldog puppy)

Apparently, he would also save some of it, because he asks Huck if he would save any of it.

Tom would like new clothes; a red neck-tie would make him stand out from the other boys.

**• What would Huck spend his money on if he found buried treasure? Why would he spend his money in that way?**

Huck, on the other hand, would have a gay time with his money and eat lots of pie and drink lots of soda and go to every circus he could. He would NOT save it.

Notice that Huck would spend much of his money on food and drink. We already know that he generally doesn't get enough to eat, so that is logical.

Huck would also attend every circus that comes to town.

Huck has a very good reason for wanting to blow his money quickly and not save any of it. On p. 178, Huck tells Tom why he would blow his money:

“Oh, that ain't any use. Pap would come back to thish-er town some day and get his claws on it if I

didn't hurry up, and I tell you he'd clean it out pretty quick."

That is pretty much what Pap wants to do with Huck's money in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Tom knows that he will have to grow up some day. Because he is in many ways conventional, he wants to save his money so he can be married someday.

**• How does the boys' conversation about kings show that Huck is very literal minded?**

The boys' conversation about kings includes this passage from p. 177:

"Well, I don't know no kings, Tom."

"I reckon you don't. But if you was to go to Europe you'd see a raft of 'em hopping around."

"Do they hop?"

"Hop? — your granny! No!"

"Well, what did you say they did, for?"

"Shucks, I only meant you'd *see* 'em — not hopping, of course — what do they want to hop for? — but I mean you'd just see 'em — scattered around, you know, in a kind of a general way. Like that old humpbacked Richard."

Huck hears the word "hop," and he thinks that the kings are literally hopping.

**• In what way is the illustration of the haunted house on p. 182 inaccurate?**

The illustration shows a fence, but the text says,

There in the middle of the moonlit valley below them stood the “ha’nted” house, utterly isolated, its fences gone long ago, rank weeds smothering the very doorsteps, the chimney crumbled to ruin, the window-sashes vacant, a corner of the roof caved in. (182-183)

## CHAPTER 26: REAL ROBBERS SEIZE THE BOX OF GOLD

### • Why don't Tom and Huck go to the haunted house on Friday?

Friday is an unlucky day (a superstition arising from Good Friday), so the boys avoid the haunted house. In addition, Huck dreamt about rats. Because the rats weren't fighting, according to superstition the dream means that trouble is around but that it can be avoided.

### • Are Tom's ideas about Robin Hood realistic?

As always, Tom's ideas about his Romantic heroes are exaggerated. No one can fight as well as Tom thinks that Robin Hood can fight, and no one can do what Tom thinks that Robin Hood can do with a bow and arrow:

“Well, he must 'a' ben a brick.”

“I bet you he was, Huck. Oh, he was the noblest man that ever was. They ain't any such men now, I can tell you. He could lick any man in England, with one hand tied behind him; and he could take his yew bow and plug a ten-cent piece every time, a mile and a half.”

“What's a *yew* bow?”

“I don't know. It's some kind of a bow, of course. And if he hit that dime only on the edge he would set down and cry — and curse. But we'll play Robin Hood — it's noble fun. I'll learn you.” (185)

### • Write a short character analysis of the deaf-and-dumb Spaniard. (What does “dumb” mean in this context?)

The deaf-and-dumb Spaniard turns out to be Injun Joe, who is in disguise because he is still on the lam from the law. His

disguise is well chosen. He wears “green goggles” (187), or glasses, to hide his eyes. Because he is “dumb” — that is, unable to speak — no one will be able to recognize him by his voice (which is how Tom and Huck recognize him in the haunted house).

• **Write a short character analysis of the other robber — the one who is not the deaf-and-dumb Spaniard.**

We don’t find out a lot about the other robber. On p. 187, we read, “‘T’other’ was a ragged, unkempt creature, with nothing very pleasant in his face” (187).

We do find out that the other robber is not as bold as the deaf-and-dumb Spaniard, who is of course Injun Joe. The other robber complains about the “dangerous” job that Injun Joe wants to do, and Injun Joe insists that the other robber help him do the job. That tells us that Injun Joe is the real leader of the two men; Injun Joe is the alpha male.

We also find out that after the “dangerous” job is committed, the two robbers plan to head for Texas, which is where desperadoes hid out at the time.

The other robber also apparently lives up the river. On p. 188, Injun Joe says:

Look here, lad — you go back up the river where you belong.

Finally, we find out that the other robber has a family. On p. 190, Injun Joe says:

Go home to your Nance and your kids, and stand by till you hear from me.



• **Where did the treasure come from?**

A gang of robbers — Murrel’s gang — used to be in the area, and the stranger and Injun Joe think that they must have buried the treasure in the house (190).

• **What do Injun Joe and the other man do with the treasure?**

Unfortunately for Tom and Huck, Injun Joe noticed fresh dirt on the pick and shovel that the boys left downstairs, and he started up the stairs to see if anyone was there. Fortunately for Tom and Huck, the stairs broke. However, Injun Joe and the stranger don’t want someone to see that they have been digging in the haunted house, so they take the treasure with them to “Number Two — under the cross” (191). Where “Number Two — under the cross” is becomes a problem for Tom and Huck to solve.

• **Compare and contrast Tom and Huck in their reaction when Injun Joe attempts to climb up the stairs.**

Tom and Huck are two very different boys. Tom is Romantic, while Huck is Realist and practical. In many ways, Huck is more cautious than Tom and probably more mature. When Tom and Huck are trapped upstairs in the haunted house while Injun Joe and the Stranger are sleeping below, Tom wants to risk walking down the stairs and past the two criminals and leaving, but Huck is too scared to leave. Tom gets up, but the floor makes such a loud creak that he lies down again. In this case, Huck is the more mature of the two. He didn’t want to take such a big risk, and so he stayed put.

• **Why don’t Tom and Huck tell anyone about Injun Joe’s disguise?**

Tom and Huck are hopeful that they will be able to spy on the deaf-and-dumb Spaniard (Injun Joe) and get the treasure

for themselves: “They resolved to keep a lookout for that Spaniard when he should come to town spying out for chances to do his revengeful job, and follow him to ‘Number Two,’ wherever that might be” (192).

**• Injun Joe’s dangerous job is concerned about revenge. Who do Tom and Huck think may be the object of the revenge?**

Tom and Huck think that Injun Joe may be talking about getting revenge on them, then they realize that since Huck’s name never came out at the trial that Injun Joe may be talking about Tom only.

We will see later whether they are correct.

## CHAPTER 27: TREMBLING ON THE TRAIL

### • What is Tom's idea of treasure?

When Tom wakes up the next morning, he wonders if he dreamed about the buried treasure. One argument for its being a dream is that the treasure consisted of an awful lot of money. We read:

He had never seen as much as fifty dollars in one mass before, and he was like all boys of his age and station in life, in that he imagined that all references to “hundreds” and “thousands” were mere fanciful forms of speech, and that no such sums really existed in the world. He never had supposed for a moment that so large a sum as a hundred dollars was to be found in actual money in any one's possession. If his notions of hidden treasure had been analyzed, they would have been found to consist of a handful of real dimes and a bushel of vague, splendid, ungraspable dollars. (193)

### • How does Tom know that he wasn't dreaming about the treasure?

Tom knows that he wasn't dreaming about the treasure because when he visits Huck, he doesn't say anything about the treasure, yet Huck says, “Tom, if we'd 'a' left the blame tools at the dead tree, we'd 'a' got the money. O, ain't it awful!” (194)

### • Are Tom and Huck good problem-solvers?

Yes, they are. They have the problem of figuring out what Injun Joe meant when he said on p. 191:

“We'll take it to my den.”

“Why, of course! Might have thought of that before. You mean Number One?”

“No — Number Two — under the cross. The other place is bad — too common.”

They first wonder whether Number Two might be the number of a house, but they reject that idea because St. Petersburg is too small a village to have house numbers. They then get the idea that Number Two might be the number of a room in a tavern. The village has two taverns, and Tom checks out both taverns. Neither has the Number Two that they are looking for. Still, it is a good guess and as it happens they do find Injun Joe in Room Number 2 of the Temperance Tavern.

**• Why doesn't Tom want to be seen with Huck in public? Is Tom ashamed to be seen in public with Huck?**

On p. 195, we read:

“You stay here, Huck, till I come.”

Tom was off at once. He did not care to have Huck's company in public places.

Here we find out that Tom may be a bit of a hypocrite. He doesn't mind playing with Huck when they are alone, but he doesn't want to play with Huck where other people can see them together.

However, Tom may really like Huck. On p. 179, we read:

[Huck:] “All right — that'll do. Only if you get married I'll be more lonesomer than ever.”

[Tom:] “No you won't. You'll come and live with me. Now stir out of this and we'll go to digging.”

If Tom means what he says, he must really like Huck.

Compare Tom's relationship with Becky. He likes her, but when they were engaged, he said that they would spend time

together when other people weren't around. (But he seems to get over that.)

**• Why doesn't Tom want to be seen with Huck in public? Is Tom afraid of being punished if he is seen in public with Huck?**

However, Tom may have other reasons for not wanting to be seen in public with Huck. Tom may not want to be punished by Aunt Polly and the schoolmaster.

Tom is in many ways a conventional boy. He wants to get married, and he wants the attention of the townspeople. Huck, of course, is unconventional. He doesn't want the attention of the townspeople. He lives his life in a way that many townspeople disapprove of.

The townspeople disapprove of Huck, and if Tom is seen playing with him, he may get in trouble. Tom wants to stay out of trouble. Tom does seem to care what the townspeople think about him.

**• Why doesn't Tom want to be seen with Huck in public? Is Tom protecting Huck?**

If Tom gets into trouble, he might get grounded and not be able to help track Injun Joe. Also, because Tom is investigating Injun Joe, he may not be willing to draw attention to himself by being seen with Huck.

Tom may want to protect Huck. Injun Joe knows that two people — probably both people were boys — witnessed the murder in the graveyard, and he could very easily figure out that the other boy who was in the graveyard the night of the murder is Huck if Tom and Huck are often seen together in public. Of course, when Tom and Huck were playing Robin Hood together by the haunted house, they did not know that Injun Joe was watching them.

- **Why does the tavern-keeper's son think that the room labeled number 2 is haunted?**

For no good reason. A light is seen there once in a while, and the tavern-keeper's son amuses himself by thinking that the room is haunted.

- **What plan do Tom and Huck form?**

They are going to go to the Temperance Tavern one night and see if they can get away with the treasure. It will be a dark night when they do. In addition, Huck is going to keep a lookout for Injun Joe.

## CHAPTER 28: IN THE LAIR OF INJUN JOE

### • Why is it Tom and not Huck who goes in the haunted room at the Temperance Tavern?

Tom is braver — or perhaps more foolhardy — than Huck. Huck tends to be more cautious and fearful than Tom. At the end of chapter 27, Huck was fearful of following Injun Joe if he should come around St. Petersburg (while in disguise as the deaf-and-dumb Spaniard).

### • What is Temperance Tavern?

Answer:

There were many temperance societies in that time, when people pledged not to drink hard liquor. A temperance tavern would have been a place where only beer and wine was served.

Source:

<http://kerbenglish.weebly.com/2/post/2013/06/chapter-27-temperance-tavern.html>

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### • Tom is in a dangerous situation when he almost steps on Injun Joe's hand. Why does he stop to pick up his Aunt Polly's towel that he had dropped?

St. Petersburg is a poverty-stricken village, and a towel is not an item you want to lose there. Tom says that Aunt Polly would make him “mighty sick” (199) if he lost the towel.

### • How does Twain use the weather in this chapter?

We already know that Tom and Huck had planned to go to the Temperance Tavern and search for the treasure on a dark night. Twain makes the night dark because of a storm. As Tom and Huck make their way to the Temperance Tavern, they hear thunder (197). As they run into “the shed of a

deserted slaughter-house at the lower end of the village” (198-199) after running away from the Temperance Tavern in fear for their lives, “the storm burst and the rain poured down” (199). As in movies, so in this novel the storm bursts at an exciting time.

• **Why didn’t Tom go back and search for the treasure? After all, Injun Joe was drunk.**

Injun Joe was drunk, but not drunk enough for Tom. One bottle was lying by Injun Joe, and that was not enough. Tom says that if three bottles had been by Injun Joe, he would have searched for the treasure.

• **How does Twain point out hypocrisy in chapter 28?**

It turns out that Number 2 in the Temperance Tavern is a place where bottles of whiskey are stored and sold and where men can get drunk. This is an example of hypocrisy because hard liquor is not supposed to be found in a Temperance Tavern. On p. 200, Tom says:

“Huck, I didn’t wait to look around. I didn’t see the box, I didn’t see the cross. I didn’t see anything but a bottle and a tin cup on the floor by Injun Joe; yes, I saw two barrels and lots more bottles in the room. Don’t you see, now, what’s the matter with that haunt’d room?”

“How?”

“Why, it’s haunt’d with whiskey! Maybe *all* the Temperance Taverns have got a ha’nted room, hey Huck?”

• **What relationship does Huck have with Uncle Jake?**

Uncle Jake is a slave who is owned by Ben Rogers’ father. Huck sometimes does errands for him, and he doesn’t act uppity around Uncle Jake. We learn that Uncle Jake is a kind



man who sometimes feeds Huck. He can't always spare some food, but when he can, he does. Sometimes, Huck sits down and eats with Uncle Jake, but Huck is ashamed of that.

• **Is Huck prejudiced?**

We find out that Huck sometimes sits down and eats with Uncle Jake. On pp. 200-201, we read (Tom asks a question, and Huck answers it):

“That’s all right. Now, where you going to sleep?”

“In Ben Rogers’s hayloft. He lets me, and so does his pap’s nigger man, Uncle Jake. I tote water for Uncle Jake whenever he wants me to, and any time I ask him he gives me a little something to eat if he can spare it. That’s a mighty good nigger, Tom. He likes me, becuz I don’t ever act as if I was above him. Sometime I’ve set right down and eat *with* him. But you needn’t tell that. A body’s got to do things when he’s awful hungry he wouldn’t want to do as a steady thing.”

In this passage, we find out that Huck is prejudiced. He would prefer not to sit down and eat with Uncle Jake, but he does when he’s awful hungry.

## CHAPTER 29: HUCK SAVES THE WIDOW

### • What are the plans for Becky's long-anticipated picnic?

The picnic is scheduled for the following day. At the picnic will be games, food, and exploration of McDougal's Cave. This is an all-day picnic, and everyone will get back late.

### • Who will be in charge of the picnic?

No real adults will be in charge. We read:

It was not the custom for elderly people to mar the pic-nics with their presence. The children were considered safe enough under the wings of a few young ladies of eighteen and a few young gentlemen of twenty-three or thereabouts. (203)

### • Where do Becky and Tom plan to stay the night?

Becky's mother knows that the children will come back late from the picnic, so she wants Becky to stay the night with someone who lives near the ferry landing. Becky says that she will stay with Susy Harper. Note that Becky's mother doesn't ask Mrs. Harper about this. Apparently, in this little village children know that they will find hospitality at the homes of many of the people who live there. In some neighborhoods this is probably still true today — it used to be true in earlier days. Kids will play together and eat lunch at whoever's house they are playing near.

However, Tom suggests to Becky that they stay with the Widow Douglas because the widow will have ice cream. They decide to do this, and they don't tell anyone. This, of course, sets up a later plot development.

• **Who knows the cave well?**

We find out that the cave is quite large, and no one knows all of the cave; however, Tom Sawyer knows as much of the cave as anyone else.

• **Tom has formed an opinion of robbers from adventure books. In chapter 29, Huck sees real robbers. Compare and contrast the robbers in Tom's adventure books with the real robbers in chapter 29.**

Tom's ideas of robbers are based on the adventure books he reads. His ideas are romantic. A robber is someone like Robin Hood, who steals from the rich to give to the poor. However, the real robbers in chapter 29 are quite different from Robin Hood.

Injun Joe is willing to mutilate a defenseless widow in order to get revenge on her late husband.

• **Why does Injun Joe want revenge?**

Injun Joe wants to get revenge. The Widow Douglas' husband had him horsewhipped in public a few years ago. Her husband was the justice of the peace, and Injun Joe claims that her husband had him horsewhipped as a vagrant. Because of that, Injun Joe wants revenge. The Widow Douglas' husband is dead, so he intends to get revenge against her.

On p. 207-208, Injun Joe says,

“I tell you again, as I've told you before, I<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> don't care for her swag — you may have it. But her husband was rough on me — many times he was rough on me — and mainly he was the justice of the peace that jugged me for a vagrant. And that ain't all. It ain't a millionth part of it! He had me *horsewhipped!* — horsewhipped in front of the jail,

like a nigger! — with all the town looking on! HORSEWHIPPED! — do you understand? He took advantage of me and died. But I'll take it out of *her*."

• **What kind of revenge does Injun Joe intend to wreak?**

Injun Joe won't intentionally murder the Widow Douglas, but he will mutilate her so that she won't be pretty. On p. 208, he says:

"Kill? Who said anything about killing? I would kill him if he was here; but not her. When you want to get revenge on a woman you don't kill her — bosh! you go for her looks. You slit her nostrils — you notch her ears like a sow!"

The other robber doesn't want to mutilate the widow, but Injun Joe is the alpha male in this relationship, so he makes the other robber agree to help him. On p. 208, the other robber says:

"Well, if it's got to be done, let's get at it. The quicker the better — I'm all in a shiver."

Injun Joe may in fact end up murdering the widow. He says, "I'll tie her to the bed. If she bleeds to death, is that my fault? I'll not cry, if she does" (208).

• **If Injun Joe is willing to mutilate and possibly kill the widow because of what her husband did to him years ago, what would he do to Tom Sawyer if he caught him?**

Nothing good. Injun Joe would have no qualms killing either Tom Sawyer or Huckleberry Finn or both of them. We have already seen that he had no qualms murdering Dr. Robinson and framing Muff Potter.

• **How do people normally treat Huck?**

We find out how Huck is normally treated when he goes to the Welshman's house to get help for the Widow Douglas. When Huck knocks at the door and identifies himself, the Welshman says, "Huckleberry Finn, indeed! It ain't a name to open many doors, I judge! But let him in, lads, and let's see what's the trouble" (209).

Huck's name won't open many doors. That means that if Huck were to go to many houses and say who he was, the residents would shut the door in his face and not let him in. Quite simply, Huck is not liked. Not even the mothers of the village like him. We learned earlier that the mothers of the village didn't want their children to play with him:

Tom was like the rest of the respectable boys, in that he envied Huckleberry his gaudy outcast condition, and was under strict orders not to play with him. So he played with him every time he got a chance. (48)

• **Why isn't Huck at the picnic?**

Why didn't Huck go with the other children on the picnic? We aren't told why, but we can guess. He wasn't invited. The Thatcher family is middle-class. Jeff and Becky Thatcher are forbidden to play with Huckleberry Finn.

In fact, Huck doesn't even know that there is a picnic. He hears the boat bringing back the picnickers, and he wonders what boat it is (205).

• **How good is Huck at thinking and acting on his own?**

Very good. We see that in two places in this chapter:

1) Huck thinks well on his own when he decides to follow the two robbers. They are carrying a box, and he doesn't want to risk losing the entire treasure by leaving them to get Tom.

2) When he discovers that the Widow Douglas is in danger, he immediately goes to the Welshman's house for help. The Welshman has a couple of "stalwart" (208) sons, and they rescue the Widow Douglas. ("Stalwart" means "strong and sturdy.") Without Tom around, Huck can handle himself quite well.

**• Write a character analysis of Injun Joe based on what you learn in chapter 29.**

Injun Joe is evil. Twain may have been racist about the Native Americans, and he made a half-breed the bad guy in this novel. Injun Joe gets revenge when he has a grievance against someone. Earlier, he had a grievance against Dr. Robinson, so he murdered him. Not only that, but he framed a friend for the murder. (At least, Muff Potter thought that Injun Joe was a friend.)

In chapter 29, he has a grievance against the Widow Douglas' late husband. Since her husband is dead, he can't get revenge against him directly, so he wants to use the husband's widow to get revenge. His kind of revenge is gruesome. The Widow Douglas is a woman, so he won't intentionally murder her. Instead, he will mutilate her so that she won't be pretty. He will notch her ears (cut chunks out of her ears), and he will slit her nostrils. Then he will tie her to the bed and leave her. If she happens to bleed to death, it's no big deal to Injun Joe.

These days, being a Native American has a certain status, but in Mark Twain's day, it did not. There was a lot of poverty and alcoholism (on many reservations, there still is), and so Native Americans had a bad reputation.

**• Why is the Welshman referred to the Welshman? What does this tell you about the society of the time?**

Of course, the Welshman is referred to the Welshman because he is from Wales. This shows that there was immigration at the time, and that it took some time for the immigrants to be completely assimilated into American society. The Welshman is a little different from other members of the society, but we see no evidence of racism and xenophobia in how people treat him and his family.

• **Note that this chapter ends on a cliffhanger.**

Chapter 29 ends with Huckleberry Finn hearing gunshots, then taking off running. We don't know who, if anyone, has been shot. Like many good writers, Mark Twain is a master at getting the reader to turn the page and keep on reading.

## CHAPTER 30: TOM AND BECKY IN THE CAVE

### • How does the Welshman treat Huckleberry Finn in chapter 30?

Huck is now a hero, but no one except the Welshman and his family knows it. Huck saved the Widow Douglas by telling the Welshman about the two robbers — Injun Joe and the other robber — and now the Welshman has a lot of respect for Huck.

The previous night, after Huck had told the Welshman about the two robbers, he had run away after hearing gunfire. However, early in the morning he returns to find out what had happened. On p. 211, this conversation occurs between Huck and the Welshman:

“Who’s there!”

Huck’s scared voice answered in a low tone:

“Please let me in! It’s only Huck Finn!”

“It’s a name that can open this door night or day, lad! — and welcome!”

These were strange words to the vagabond boy’s ears, and the pleasantest he had ever heard. He could not recollect that the closing word had ever been applied in his case before. The door was quickly unlocked, and he entered. Huck was given a seat and the old man and his brace of tall sons speedily dressed themselves.

Brace: “A pair of like things.” — *The American Heritage College Dictionary*.

The Welshman does treat Huck well. He feeds Huck a hot breakfast, and he gives Huck a bed after breakfast because Huck looks tired.



• **What kind of self-esteem does Huckleberry Finn have?**

The way that people treat Huck is important because it affects the way that Huck sees himself. On p. 213, we read:

“Well, you see, I’m a kind of a hard lot, — least everybody says so, and I don’t see nothing agin it — and sometimes I can’t sleep much, on accounts of thinking about it and sort of trying to strike out a new way of doing.

Of course, anyone who has read *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* or *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* knows that Huck is not a hard lot at all; instead, he is a good kid. However, he is affected by the way that people regard him. How they treat him affects the way that he thinks of himself. These days, we would say that Huck has low self-esteem because people treat him badly.

• **How good a liar is Huck in chapter 30?**

Huck is only a fair liar. When the Welshman asks him who the two robbers are, Huck is at first able to tell a good story. He saw the men come by the Temperance Tavern carrying something. Huck was suspicious of them and followed them. So far, so good.

However, Huck lets slip something that he didn’t want to say. He says that the deaf-and-dumb Spaniard said something. Of course, a deaf-and-dumb person can’t speak. Because of this error, Huck tells the Welshman that the deaf-and-dumb Spaniard is actually Injun Joe.

Later, Huck gets himself out of a tight spot. The Welshman says that they captured a bulky bundle, and Huck is so worried that they found the money that he blurts out, “Of WHAT!” (215).

The Welshman tells him that it was a bulky bundle of burglars' tools, then — curious — he asks Huck what he thought it might have been. We read:

Huck was in a close place — the inquiring eye was upon him — he would have given anything for material for a plausible answer — nothing suggested itself — the inquiring eye was boring deeper and deeper — a senseless reply offered — there was no time to weigh it, so at a venture he uttered it — feebly:

“Sunday-school books, maybe.”

Poor Huck was too distressed to smile, but the old man laughed loud and joyously, shook up the details of his anatomy from head to foot, and ended by saying that such a laugh was money in a man's pocket, because it cut down the doctor's bills like everything. (215-216)

Humor can be a good way of turning someone's attention away from something.

**• What prejudice against Native Americans do we see in chapter 30?**

On p. 214, after Huck tells the Welshman that the deaf-and-dumb Spaniard is actually Injun Joe, the Welshman replies:

“It's all plain enough, now. When you talked about notching ears and slitting noses I judged that that was your own embellishment, because white men don't take that sort of revenge. But an Injun! That's a different matter altogether.”

• **How do the villagers discover that Tom and Becky are missing?**

The young ladies and young gentlemen do a poor job of taking care of the children at the picnic. No one does a head count, and Tom and Becky are not missed until the next day at Sunday-school. Mrs. Thatcher discovers that Becky did not stay at Mrs. Harper's, and Aunt Polly discovers that Tom did not stay at a friend's house.

Note that Tom has a lot of freedom. Aunt Polly was not especially worried when Tom did not show up at home after the picnic. She simply figured that he had stayed at a friend's house. Children in the 1840s had much more freedom than American children have today.

• **How does the Widow Douglas treat Huck?**

At the top of p. 219, we find out that Huck is ill, so the Widow Douglas takes care of him. She treats him well. Although Twain can be hard on religion, he does respect good, religious people:

The old Welshman came home toward daylight, spattered with candle grease, smeared with clay, and almost worn out. He found Huck still in the bed that had been provided for him, and delirious with fever. The physicians were all at the cave, so the widow Douglas came and took charge of the patient. She said she would do her best by him, because, whether he was good, bad, or indifferent, he was the Lord's, and nothing that was the Lord's was a thing to be neglected. The Welshman said Huck had good spots in him, and the widow said —

“You can depend on it. That's the Lord's mark. He don't leave it off. He never does. Puts it somewhere on every creature that comes from His hands.” (218-219)

By the way, the Widow Douglas does not know that Huck helped save her life. He does not want anyone to know that it was he who told the Welshman about the two men who were going to mutilate the widow because he is afraid of Injun Joe and what he might do.

**• Huck did not tell anyone about what happened in the graveyard when Dr. Robinson was murdered. Has he redeemed himself here?**

I would say that Huck has redeemed himself. Tom saved Muff Potter's life by testifying about the truth in court, and Huck saves the widow's looks and possibly her life by telling the Welshman about the men who were going to hurt the widow. Huck is a good kid, although he can be very afraid of evil men. No doubt, he has been around evil men much of his life and he knows the things that they can do.

**• Which good deeds occur in chapter 30?**

Of course, Huck did a good deed in the previous chapter by telling the Welshman about the two robbers intending to harm the Widow Douglas. In chapter 30, we find out more about what the Welshman and his two sons did. They got guns and tried to capture the robbers, but the Welshman sneezed and the robbers got away. After the robbers fled, the Welshman had three slaves guard the widow Douglas, who had not awakened. That is one good deed.

The Welshman treats Huck well. That's another good deed.

During the morning, the Sheriff intends to get a posse and search for the two robbers. We might say that the Sheriff is just doing his job, but posses are usually volunteers, so they are doing a good deed.

When Tom and Becky are lost in the cave, volunteers immediately begin to search for them. This is a very important good deed.

At the top of p. 219, we find out that Huck is ill, so the Widow Douglas takes care of him. She treats him well.

Certainly, there is a lot wrong with St. Petersburg, but its citizens come together in a crisis.

**• Note that once again Mark Twain ends a chapter with a cliffhanger.**

In this chapter, we learn that Tom and Becky are lost in the cave, and we learn that people are beginning to give up hope that they will be found.

After Huck, who is feverish, goes to sleep, the widow says, “Pity but somebody could find Tom Sawyer! Ah, there ain’t many left, now, that’s got hope enough, or strength enough, either, to go on searching” (221).

Near the end of the novel, many exciting things are happening, and Twain motivates the reader to keep turning pages and reading.

**• In what way is the illustration on p. 220 inaccurate?**

We read that Tom and Becky wrote their names using smoke from their candles, but in the illustration the names drawn in smoke are too high for Tom and Becky to have made them — Tom and Becky would have had to carry a stepladder into the cave for them to have written their names so high.

## CHAPTER 31: FOUND AND LOST AGAIN

### • Why do Tom and Becky get lost in the cave?

Tom and Becky get lost in the cave for a number of reasons:

1) There is inadequate adult supervision. On p. 203, we read:

It was not the custom for elderly people to mar the picnics with their presence. The children were considered safe enough under the wings of a few young ladies of eighteen and a few young gentlemen of twenty-three or thereabouts.

No one takes a head count on the ferryboat, so no one knows that Tom and Becky are still in the cave.

2) Tom's love of adventure makes him want to explore. He finds an opening behind a waterfall made of rock, and he wants to explore it, so he and Becky go exploring.

3) The children run into some bats and hurry away from them so they don't blow out the candles. On p. 223, we read:

Under the roof vast knots of bats had packed themselves together, thousands in a bunch; the lights disturbed the creatures and they came flocking down by hundreds, squeaking and darting furiously at the candles. Tom knew their ways and the danger of this sort of conduct. He seized Becky's hand and hurried her into the first corridor that offered; and none too soon, for a bat struck Becky's light out with its wing while she was passing out of the cavern. The bats chased the children a good distance; but the fugitives plunged into every new passage that offered, and at last got rid of the perilous things.

4. Obviously the children are young. Tom makes a few marks with his candle as indications of how to return, but he doesn't make enough. On p. 225, we read:

Tom turned upon the back track at once, and hurried his steps. It was but a little while before a certain indecision in his manner revealed another fearful fact to Becky — he could not find his way back!

“O, Tom, you didn’t make any marks!”

“Becky, I was such a fool! Such a fool! I never thought we might want to come back! No — I can’t find the way. It’s all mixed up.”

• **How does Tom learn that Injun Joe is in the cave?**

While lost in the cave, Tom and Becky explore passageways in the dark using a kite-line so that they can find their way back to the water. Once, Tom sees a light and he shouts, then he discovers that the person with the light is Injun Joe. Luckily for Tom, Injun Joe doesn’t recognize his voice and murder him because the echoes in the cave disguise Tom’s voice.

• **Tom engages in another of his performances, this time for an audience of one — Becky. Evaluate that performance.**

Tom and Becky are children, of course, and through their carelessness they get lost in the cave; however, after they discover that they are lost, Tom puts on what is probably his most impressive performance of the novel.

Tom’s performance is impressive in part because it is for an audience of one. Becky is understandably upset at being lost in the cave, so Tom has to be brave for her. His performance is remarkable indeed.

Tom does the right things in all circumstances after the children discover that they are lost:

1) Tom shouts for help. The echo is eerie, but shouting is something that might work.

2) Tom economizes on candles. At one point, he blows out Becky's candle so that they use only one.

3) Tom shares the food with Becky. He has a piece of cake — what he and Becky call their wedding cake — in his pocket. He divides it, and Becky eats hers and Tom nibbles his. Later, he divides what is left of his portion of the cake and they eat it.

4) When the last candle is burning out, Tom finds water so that he and Becky can at least have water as they sit in the darkness.

5) Tom tells Becky that things will be all right, although he is far from positive that that is true.

6) Tom doesn't tell Becky that Injun Joe is in the cave. She didn't see Injun Joe or his lit candle, and Tom tells her that he shouted only "for luck" (231).

7) Tom never entirely gives up hope, but explores passageways in the dark using a kite-line so that he can find his way back to Becky again. (Becky is asleep, at least sometimes.) He does this even though he is afraid of Injun Joe, who is in the cave. On p. 232, we read:

Tom kissed her, with a choking sensation in his throat, and **made a show of being confident of finding the searchers or an escape from the cave**; then he took the kite-line in his hand and went groping down one of the passages on his hands and knees, distressed with hunger and sick with bodings of coming doom. [Emphasis added]

8) As we find out in the next chapter, Tom succeeds in rescuing Becky — and himself. He finds a way out of the cave.



- **Note that once again Mark Twain ends a chapter with a cliffhanger.**

Tom and Becky are still lost in the cave. Even though Tom is doing what he can to find a way out of the cave, he is “distressed with hunger and sick with bodings of coming doom” (232).

## CHAPTER 32: “TURN OUT! THEY’RE FOUND!”

- **Mark Twain is often critical of religion. Does he regard some believers as being sincere?**

Twain is aware of hypocritical “believers.” We have already read Twain’s satire of Sunday-school and of church. Little of true worship seems to go on in these places. However, when Tom and Becky are lost in the cave, many villagers pray — sincerely — for the children. No doubt, they pray that the children will be found alive:

The village of St. Petersburg still mourned. The lost children had not been found. Public prayers had been offered up for them, and many and many a private prayer that had the petitioner’s whole heart in it; but still no good news came from the cave. (233)

- **How does Twain describe how Tom tells his story? What is unusual about the telling?**

On pp. 234-235, we read:

Tom lay upon a sofa with an eager auditory about him and told the history of the wonderful adventure, putting in many striking additions to adorn it withal; and closed with a description of how he left Becky and went on an exploring expedition; how he followed two avenues as far as his kite-line would reach; how he followed a third to the fullest stretch of the kite-line, and was about to turn back when he glimpsed a far-off speck that looked like daylight; dropped the line and groped toward it, pushed his head and shoulders through a small hole, and saw the broad Mississippi rolling by! And if it had only happened to be night he would not have seen that speck of daylight and would not have explored that passage any more! He told how he went back for Becky and broke the good news and she told him not

to fret her with such stuff, for she was tired, and knew she was going to die, and wanted to. He described how he labored with her and convinced her; and how she almost died for joy when she had groped to where she actually saw the blue speck of daylight; how he pushed his way out at the hole and then helped her out; how they sat there and cried for gladness; how some men came along in a skiff and Tom hailed them and told them their situation and their famished condition; how the men didn't believe the wild tale at first, "because," said they, "you are five miles down the river below the valley the cave is in" — then took them aboard, rowed to a house, gave them supper, made them rest till two or three hours after dark and then brought them home.

The drawn-out sentences with many clauses beginning with "how" gives the effect of a story eagerly and breathlessly told by a child. The writing gives the effect of a child who is telling his story so breathlessly that he seldom has time for a full stop (a period), and has time for only very short pauses (commas).

Of course, Tom has quite a story to tell. He and Becky got lost in the cave on Saturday afternoon, and they return to St. Petersburg Tuesday night. Of course, they got out of the cave during the day, but their rescuers wanted them to rest before returning them to home. Without modern communications such as the telephone, the rescuers were apparently unable to contact their guardians.

Also, of course, Tom and Becky are very tired after their ordeal. Both of them take some time to recover.

• **What happened to the other robber — the “ragged” man (236) who was Injun Joe’s accomplice?**

The “ragged” man (236) drowned. We read, “the ‘ragged man’s’ body had eventually been found in the river near the ferry landing; he had been drowned while trying to escape, perhaps” (236).

The word “perhaps” is important. We get the idea that Injun Joe may have killed his accomplice. This is something that he is entirely capable of. After all, he had earlier threatened to kill both him and the Widow Douglas:

“Keep your opinion to yourself! It will be safest for you. I’ll tie her to the bed. If she bleeds to death, is that my fault? I’ll not cry, if she does. My friend, you’ll help me in this thing — for *my* sake — that’s why you’re here — I mightn’t be able alone. If you flinch, I’ll kill you. Do you understand that? And if I have to kill you, I’ll kill her — and then I reckon nobody’ll ever know much about who done this business.” (208)

• **What is Tom’s reaction when he learns that Judge Thatcher has sealed the cave? Why does he react that way?**

On pp. 236-237, we read:

The Judge and some friends set Tom to talking, and some one asked him ironically if he wouldn’t like to go to the cave again. Tom said he thought he wouldn’t mind it. The Judge said:

“Well, there are others just like you, Tom, I’ve not the least doubt. But we have taken care of that. Nobody will get lost in that cave any more.”

“Why?”

“Because I had its big door sheathed with boiler iron two weeks ago, and triple-locked — and I’ve got the keys.”

Tom turned as white as a sheet.

“What’s the matter, boy! Here, run, somebody! Fetch a glass of water!”

The water was brought and thrown into Tom's face.

“Ah, now you’re all right. What was the matter with you, Tom?”

“Oh, Judge, Injun Joe’s in the cave!”

This definitely shows something good about Tom Sawyer. Injun Joe would not have hesitated to kill him, but Tom knows what it is like to be trapped in a cave, and so he feels empathy for Injun Joe, who of course seems to be incapable of feeling empathy for anyone.

The judge seems to have been overly thorough in sealing the cave. It already had a door. All that needed to be done was to keep the door locked; however, the judge sheathed the door with boiler iron and triple-locked it.

**• Note that once again Mark Twain ends a chapter with a cliffhanger.**

The reader is reminded that Injun Joe is in the cave, and of course, the reader will turn the page to learn what happened to Injun Joe.

### CHAPTER 33: THE FATE OF INJUN JOE

- **What is Tom's reaction to the death of Injun Joe?**

On p. 238, we read:

Tom was touched [by Injun Joe's death], for he knew by his own experience how this wretch had suffered. His pity was moved, but nevertheless he felt an abounding sense of relief and security, now, which revealed to him in a degree which he had not fully appreciated before how vast a weight of dread had been lying upon him since the day he lifted his voice against this bloody-minded outcast.

Tom's reaction is pity for the way that Injun Joe died, but he also feels relief because he no longer has to worry about Injun Joe's taking revenge against him.

- **How do people behave at Injun Joe's funeral?**

Basically, the funeral is entertainment: party time. People come from miles around to attend the funeral. They bring their children, and they bring provisions (food). Basically, they attend the funeral, then they have a picnic.

On p. 240, we read:

Injun Joe was buried near the mouth of the cave; and people flocked there in boats and wagons from the towns and from all the farms and hamlets for seven miles around; they brought their children, and all sorts of provisions, and confessed that they had had almost as satisfactory a time at the funeral as they could have had at the hanging.

The people in the novel are entertained by some ugly things. When Dr. Robinson is murdered, school is cancelled, and everyone goes to the graveyard to see the site of the murder. After the robbers' plot to mutilate the Widow Douglas is

foiled, people go to the widow's to look at the stile by which the robbers had stood. Later, in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, when people think that Huck has been murdered, they go to look at the cabin where he had staying.

This obsession with the uglier things of life continues today.

Of course, when everyone goes to the cave after hearing Injun Joe is there, they may just be wanting to see a dead person — or a person who will soon be dead. After all, even if he is rescued, he will still die. He will be put on trial, found guilty, and executed.

**• What is Twain's opinion of people who sign petitions for the release of dangerous criminals?**

Twain's opinion is low of these people. On pp. 240-241, we read:

This funeral stopped the further growth of one thing — the petition to the Governor for Injun Joe's pardon. The petition had been largely signed; many tearful and eloquent meetings had been held, and a committee of sappy women been appointed to go in deep mourning and wail around the governor, and implore him to be a merciful ass and trample his duty under foot. Injun Joe was believed to have killed five citizens of the village, but what of that? If he had been Satan himself there would have been plenty of weaklings ready to scribble their names to a pardon-petition, and drip a tear on it from their permanently impaired and leaky water-works.

Injun Joe is guilty of murder, and he deserves to be executed. If Injun Joe had not died in the cave, Twain would have liked for him to be punished — probably hung.

From this passage, we can conclude that Twain is in favor of justice.

• **Does Huck want credit for rescuing the Widow Douglas?**

Huck does not want credit for rescuing the Widow Douglas. He is still fearful. In this case, he is fearful that Injun Joe has friends who are still living and who would take revenge on Huck. After all, if Huck had not gone to the Welshman's house to get help, Injun Joe would have had his revenge and have escaped to Texas (241). Huck does tell Tom what he had done, however.

• **What is Tom's plan for the cave?**

Tom wants to use the cave as a hideout for Tom Sawyer's Gang — a gang of robbers that he wants to start. Of course, Tom is pretending, but Huck takes the gang seriously.

• **Does Tom understand what he reads?**

Tom understands what a ransom is in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, although he has forgotten what a ransom is in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. However, he does not understand what "orgies" (247) are. Still, he has read about orgies in his adventure books, and since robbers have orgies, then Tom Sawyer's Gang has to have orgies, too:

"No, Huck — leave them [items that belonged to Injun Joe] there. They're just the tricks to have when we go to robbing. We'll keep them there all the time, and we'll hold our orgies there, too. It's an awful snug place for orgies."

"What's orgies?"

"I dono. But robbers always have orgies, and of course we've got to have them, too." (247)



**• How does Tom figure out where the gold is hidden in the cave?**

Tom is intelligent. When Huck is afraid that Injun Joe's ghost will haunt this part of the cave because the money is here, Tom tells Huck that a ghost will not hang around a place where a cross is.

In addition, Tom figures out that the money really is under the cross — the cross that Injun Joe made with candle smoke on a rock. He notices that footsteps and candle grease can be seen on one side of the rock, but not on the other side, so he digs into some clay with his knife and discovers a hidden passageway that leads to Injun Joe's hideout.

**• Does Twain made an error when he writes about “tarnished coins” (246)?**

In my opinion, he does. The treasure consists of gold coins, and gold does not tarnish. Injun Joe and the other robber did have silver coins, which would tarnish, but when Tom pours out the bags of coins at the Welshman's house in chapter 34 the flood of coins is yellow (252).

**• Why do the Widow Douglas and the Welshman each buy Huck a suit of clothes?**

Of course, we learn that the Widow Douglas is going to adopt Huck. Huck has no clothing but rags, and the Widow Douglas and the Welshman each buy Huck a suit of clothing. We can wonder why they each do that. Why doesn't the Widow Douglas simply buy both suits of clothing? One reason may be that clothing is expensive in this poverty-stricken town. The Widow Douglas may be the aristocracy of the town, but she may not have a lot of money. Another possible reason is that the kind-hearted Welshman wants to do something good for Huck.

## CHAPTER 34: FLOODS OF GOLD

### • Write a character analysis of the Widow Douglas.

1) The Widow Douglas is, of course, a widow. Her husband was the justice of the peace in St. Petersburg, so she is well off.

2) She lives in the best home in St. Petersburg, and she is a good hostess. Remember that Tom and Becky plan to go to her home for ice cream.

3) Huck has said that she has helped him a few times, thus putting her morally above many of the mothers in the village.

4) Of course, she learns that Huck saved her by telling the Welshman about the two robbers, and she decides to take Huck into her home and give him a good upbringing.

5) In addition, she buys him a suit of new clothing, and the Welshman buys him another suit of new clothing. (Apparently, two suits of clothing are all that a boy needs in St. Petersburg. Tom himself has only two suits of clothing — his Sunday clothes and his other clothes.)

### • Write a character analysis of Sid.

Sid is mean. The Welshman wants to tell the widow Douglas and the citizens of St. Petersburg about Huck's telling him about the two robbers, but Sid tells everyone first and ruins the surprise. On pp. 250-251, we read:

“Why old Mr. Jones is going to try to spring something on the people here to-night, but I overheard him tell auntie to-day about it, as a secret, but I reckon it's not much of a secret *now*. Everybody knows — the widow, too, for all she tries to let on she don't. Mr. Jones was bound Huck should be here — couldn't get along with his grand secret without Huck, you know!”

“Secret about what, Sid?”

“About Huck tracking the robbers to the widow’s. I reckon Mr. Jones was going to make a grand time over his surprise, but I bet you it will drop pretty flat.”

Sid chuckled in a very contented and satisfied way.

“Sid, was it you that told?”

“Oh, never mind who it was. *Somebody* told — that’s enough.”

“Sid, there’s only one person in this town mean enough to do that, and that’s you. If you had been in Huck’s place you’d ’a’ sneaked down the hill and never told anybody on the robbers. You can’t do any but mean things, and you can’t bear to see anybody praised for doing good ones. There — no thanks, as the widow says” — and Tom cuffed Sid’s ears and helped him to the door with several kicks. “Now go and tell auntie if you dare — and to-morrow you’ll catch it!”

**• Tom Sawyer figured out that the treasure must be hidden in the cave. He told Huck Finn, and the two boys went to the cave and found the treasure and shared it. Could Tom have gotten away with keeping the treasure all for himself and not sharing with Huck?**

Yes, he could have. Huck has no power in the town. Tom does the right thing when he shares the treasure with Huck.

**• Write an analysis of Tom’s performance when he proves that Huck is rich. Does he show maturity in it?**

In what is perhaps Tom’s final performance, he displays the treasure that he and Huck have found have found. Here, he is the center of attention.

Tom shows some maturity here.

1) This is a vast amount of money, and the best thing to do is to get it into the hands of adults. As it turns out, Judge Thatcher takes the money and invests it for Tom and Huck, giving them part or all of the interest. At \$6,000 of principal each (actually, it's a little more than that each), invested at 6 percent interest, Tom and Huck would each earn \$360 in interest a year. (They each now will have a dollar a day in interest — this is a lot of money to many adults in St. Petersburg.)

2) Tom also gives credit and respect to Huck, a person who is not normally respected in St. Petersburg. (Tom also shared the treasure with Huck, although he could have gone to the cave alone and claimed the treasure for himself.) Tom makes Huck an important part of his story, although he could have magnified himself at the expense of Huck.

## CHAPTER 35: RESPECTABLE HUCK JOINS THE GANG

**• Now that Tom and Huck are rich, how do the townspeople treat them?**

When a person has money, they are treated very well. Now that Tom and Huck have money, everyone treats them very well indeed. Suddenly, their opinions are listened to and treated with respect. Suddenly, what seemed to be rascalities in the past are regarded as hinting of future greatness.

On p. 254, we read:

Wherever Tom and Huck appeared they were courted, admired, stared at. The boys were not able to remember that their remarks had possessed weight before; but now their sayings were treasured and repeated; everything they did seemed somehow to be regarded as remarkable; they had evidently lost the power of doing and saying commonplace things; moreover, their past history was raked up and discovered to bear marks of conspicuous originality. The village paper published biographical sketches of the boys.

The money amounts to a little over \$12,000. Split between Tom and Huck, each boy gets a little more than \$6,000. In St. Petersburg, this is a great amount of money.

**• Are wealthy people over-respected in the United States today? Are wealthy people over-respected in all times at all places?**

We see the same thing that happened to Tom and Huck in the United States today, I think. If you have a large amount of money, you are given a large amount of respect. The same seems to be true throughout history.

For example: A man was in a building that houses the office of the immensely wealthy Baron Rothschild. This was in the days before modern toilets, and the man saw a servant bearing the chamber pot of Baron Rothschild away from the Baron's office. The man took off his hat to show respect to the Rothschild waste.

• **What is Huck's opinion of civilized life?**

Very poor. Huck values his freedom, and civilized life encroaches on his freedom.

- 1) Huck likes to smoke and cuss, and the Widow Douglas won't let him do those things.
- 2) Huck likes to sleep in an empty barrel (hogshead), not on a soft bed.
- 3) Huck likes to scratch where it itches, and sometimes you can't do that in polite society.
- 4) Huck likes to yawn (gape) and stretch, and the widow Douglas doesn't want him to do those things except maybe when he's alone.
- 5) Huck doesn't care for praying, and the widow prays all the time.
- 6) Huck doesn't want to go to school, and the widow wants him to go to school when it opens again. (It is now closed for summer vacation.)
- 7) Huck thinks that the widow is way too regular in her habits. She goes to bed by the bell, gets up by the bell, and eats by the bell.
- 8) There is lots of food at the widow's but Huck says he values things when they are harder to get.

On pp. 257-258, Huck says:

“It’s awful to be tied up so. And grub comes too easy — I don’t take no interest in vittles, that way. I got to ask to go a-fishing; I got to ask to go in a-swimming — dern’d if I hain’t got to ask to do everything. Well, I’d got to talk so nice it wasn’t no comfort — I’d got to go up in the attic and rip out awhile, every day, to git a taste in my mouth, or I’d a died, Tom. The widder wouldn’t let me smoke; she wouldn’t let me yell, she wouldn’t let me gape, nor stretch, nor scratch, before folks — ” [Then with a spasm of special irritation and injury] — “And dad fetch it, she prayed all the time! I never see such a woman! I had to shove, Tom — I just had to. And besides, that school’s going to open, and I’d a had to go to it — well, I wouldn’t stand that, Tom. Looky-here, Tom, being rich ain’t what it’s cracked up to be. It’s just worry and worry, and sweat and sweat, and a-wishing you was dead all the time.”

• **Does Huck know something here that he forgets at the beginning of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*?**

In this chapter, Huck knows what prayer is. At the beginning of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, he is surprised when the Widow Douglas tucks her head down and grumbles about the food before they are allowed to eat it. He thinks that the food is good and the widow ought not to complain about it.

• **How does Tom convince Huck to go back and live at the Widow Douglas’ house?**

Tom made the point that Huck would grow to like his new way of life. This is a true point, but it takes something else to convince Huck to go back and live at the Widow Douglas’ house.

Basically, Tom bribes Huck to go back to the Widow Douglas. (By the way, Tom showed good thinking in finding

Huck after he disappears. Tom searches the empty hogsheads by an abandoned slaughter-house.) If Huck wants to join Tom's robber gang, he has to be respectable because robbers are respectable — more respectable than pirates, for example. Of course, this shows Tom's Romantic view of robbers. He has seen real robbers in Injun Joe and the other robber, but he still seems to believe in his romantic view of robbers.

Tom shows some maturity here. Earlier in the novel, Tom may have chosen to run off with Huck on a new adventure. Here, however, he convinces Huck to rejoin civilization and go back to live with the widow Douglas.

Tom is looking out for Huck. He is giving Huck the chance to grow up in a normal household like a normal boy.

• **Is Tom a good rhetorician?**

Rhetoric is the use of language to persuade and/or please.

Tom is a good rhetorician here. He knows what to say to persuade Huck to go back and live with the widow Douglas. Huck wants to be in Tom Sawyer's Gang of Robbers, and Tom tells Huck that robbers are more high-toned than pirates, and so Huck has got to be respectable if he wants to be a robber.

• **Is Tom putting on a performance in this scene?**

Maybe this is a performance. Does Tom know the difference between reality and fantasy?

We know that Tom likes to pretend. He may be pretending to form a gang of robbers in order to help Huck.

One thing that gives credence to this being a performance put on by Tom to help Huck is this: "Tom saw his opportunity" (258). It seems very likely that Tom is talking



about the gang of robbers in order to convince Huck to go back to the Widow Douglas.

Of course, Huck takes the gang of robbers seriously. Tom, on the other hand, is pretending that they will start a real gang of robbers. In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Tom Sawyer's Gang consists of a bunch of kids pretending to be robbers — Huck is the only one who takes it seriously.

**• At the end of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, is Tom fully mature?**

No, although he has made significant progress toward becoming more mature.

Clearly, Tom Sawyer is still a kid. After all, he wants to start a pretend gang of robbers.

**• Create a table (or a list) in which you list Tom and Huck's similarities and differences based on what you have learned in this novel.**

### **Similarities**

Tom is poor; Huck is very poor.

Both Tom and Huck have bad ideas about religion.

Both Tom and Huck are young boys.

Both Tom and Huck live in St. Petersburg,

Tom is an orphan; Huck is practically an orphan.

Tom is a hero (he saves Muff Potter); Huck is a hero (he saves the Widow Douglas).

### **Differences**

Tom is a romantic; Huck is a realist.

Tom is impractical; Huck is practical.

Tom has a family life; Huck has no family life.

Tom is literate; Huck is illiterate.

Tom is social; Huck is a social outcast/loner.

Tom attends church; Huck does not attend church.

Tom goes to school; Huck does not go to school.

Tom craves being the center of attention; Huck does not crave being the center of attention.

Tom is conventional; Huck is unconventional.

Tom's authorities are books; Huck's authority is experience.

Tom believes in rules; Huck believes in pragmatism (whatever works).

Tom favors marriage; Huck does not favor marriage.

Tom is respectable; Huck is not respectable.

Tom is a leader; Huck is a follower.

Tom is a Romantic; Huck is a Realist.

Tom is civilized; Huck is uncivilized.

Tom wants credit; Huck does not want credit.

Tom likes a crowd; Huck does not like a crowd.

Tom is conventional in many ways. Huck is unconventional and rejects civilization.

Tom may look like a rebel, but he has the heart of a conformist.

## CONCLUSION

- **What does Twain say in the conclusion?**

Twain mainly says two things:

- 1) Since the novel is the story of a boy, now is a good time to stop; otherwise, it would turn into the story of a man.
- 2) Twain may pick up the story of its characters again sometime in the future.

Of course, we know that Twain went on to write *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In that novel, Tom and Huck are still boys, not adult men.

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**WWW Sources on Twain:**

<http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/>

Go to this WWW site and if necessary click on the photograph of Mark Twain.

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/railton/index2.html>

Lots of info on Twain at this site.

<http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/tomsawye/tomhomp.html>

About *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

<http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/huckfinn/huchompg.html>

About *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

<http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/vankee/cyhomp.html>

About *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*

<http://www.boondocksnet.com/twainwww/>

Much information about Mark Twain.

## Appendix B: Topics for Papers

- Describe the “performances” of Tom Sawyer. Does he mature in the course of these performances? (His major performances include turning in tickets for a Bible, showing up at his own funeral, testifying at the trial of Muff Potter, and acting bravely in front of Becky in the cave. His final performances are proving that Huck Finn and himself are rich and convincing Huck to go back and live with the widow Douglas.) A transition performance (from immaturity to maturity) is fooling Aunt Polly in chapter 18.
- Write a character analysis of Huckleberry Finn as he appears in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.
- Compare and contrast the characters of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn as they appear in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.
- Write a character analysis of Tom Sawyer. Does he mature in the novel?
- Tom Sawyer can be regarded as a child-hero. What aspects of heroism does he display in the novel?
- To what extent is Tom Sawyer a conformist? To what extent is he a rebel?
- Write an analysis of the female characters in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.
- What are the differences between Realism and Romanticism, and what role do they play in this novel?
- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is mostly a light-hearted novel, but throughout it there are hints of the dark side of life. What are some of those hints?
- Explain how Mark Twain satirizes religion in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

- Define satire, and write about the satire that is found in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Based on Twain's satire, what are some improvements that you think that Mark Twain would like us to make in our lives and society?

### **Appendix C: Short Reaction Memos**

The questions in this short guide can be used in discussions; however, they can also be used for short reaction memos. For example, I do this at Ohio University. See below for the assignment and sample short reaction memos.

#### *How Do I Complete the Reaction Memo Assignments?*

During the quarter, you will have to write a series of short memos in which you write about the readings you have been assigned.

Each memo should be at least 250 words, not counting long quotations from the work of literature. Include a word count for each memo, although that is not normally part of the memo format.

Following the memo heading (To, From, Re, Date, Words), write the question you are answering and the part of the book that the question applies to.

You may answer one question or more than one question. I will supply you with a list of questions that you may answer

Note that a Works Cited list is needed if you use quotations.

For examples from my Great Books courses at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, see the following pages.



**To: David Bruce**

**From: Jane Student**

**Re: *Odyssey*, Book 12 Reaction Memo**

**Date: Put Today's Date Here**

**Words: 323**

***Odyssey*, Book 12: Is Odysseus a bad leader?**

This is an important question in the *Odyssey*. After all, Odysseus leads 12 ships and many men to Troy, but the ships are all destroyed and all of his men die and he returns home to Ithaca alone. Who is responsible for the deaths of Odysseus' men? Is Odysseus responsible for their deaths, or do the men bear some responsibility for their own deaths? Many readers prefer Odysseus, the great individualist, to Aeneas, the man who founds the Roman people, but then they realize that all of Odysseus' men died, while Aeneas succeeded in bringing many Trojans to Italy. When readers think of that, they begin to have a greater respect for Aeneas.

From the beginning of the *Odyssey*, this has been an issue. The bard says that the men perished because of the "recklessness of their own ways" (1.8). However, we notice that Odysseus is asleep at odd times. In Book 10, Aeolus gives Odysseus a bag in which the contrary winds have been tied up. This allows Odysseus to sail to Ithaca safely. However, they reach the island and see smoke rising from the fires, Odysseus goes to sleep and his men open the bag, letting the contrary winds escape, and the ship is blown back to King Aeolus' island. Similarly, in Book 12, on the island of the Sun-god, Odysseus is asleep when his men sacrifice the Sun-god's cattle.

It does seem that Odysseus does not bear the blame for his men's death. In many cases, they do perish through their own

stupidity. In other cases, of course, they die during war or during adventures, but in those times, Odysseus was with them, and he could have died, too.

One other thing to think about is that Odysseus is telling his own story. Could he be lying? After all, some of the adventures he relates are pretty incredible. (Probably not. The gods vouch for some of what he says.)

### **Works Cited**

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**To: David Bruce**

**From: Jane Student**

**Re: *Inferno*, Canto 1 Reaction Memo**

**Date: Put Today's Date Here**

**Words: 263**

***Inferno*, Canto 1**

**• What do you need to be a member of the Afterlife in Dante's *Inferno*?**

To be a member of the afterlife in Hell, you must meet a number of criteria:

- 1) You must be dead.
- 2) You must be an unrepentant sinner.
- 3) You must be a dead, unrepentant sinner by 1300.

Of course, only dead people — with a few exceptions such as Dante the Pilgrim — can be found in the *Inferno*.

Only unrepentant sinners can be found in the *Inferno*. Everyone has sinned, but sinners who repented their sins are found in Purgatory or Paradise, not in the *Inferno*.

Dante set his *Divine Comedy* in 1300, so the characters who appear in it are dead in 1300.

***Inferno*, Canto 1**

**• What does it mean to repent?**

A sinner who repents regrets having committed the sin. The repentant sinner vows not to commit the sin again, and he or she does his or her best not to commit the sin again.

***Inferno, Canto 1*****• What is the geography of Hell? In *The Divine Comedy*, where is Hell located?**

Hell is located straight down. We will find out later that when Lucifer was thrown out of Paradise, he fell to the Earth, ending up at the center of the Earth. The center of the Earth is the lowest part of Hell. Lucifer created the Mountain of Purgatory when he hit the Earth.

**To: David Bruce**

**From: Jane Student**

**Re: *Candide*, Ch. 26-30**

**Date: Today's Date**

**Words: 368**

**Ch. 30: Write a brief character analysis of the old man and his family.**

When Candide and his friends meet the old man, the old man is “sitting in front of his door beneath an arbor of orange trees, enjoying the fresh air” (119). The old man basically ignores politics that he cannot influence. Some people have recently been killed in Constantinople, and the old man does not even know their names. However, the old man does enjoy some material things, including good food, and he enjoys hospitality.

The old man invites Candide and his friends to enjoy some refreshments inside his house. They are served with “several kinds of fruit-flavored drinks” and “boiled cream with pieces of candied citron in it, oranges, lemons, limes, pineapples, pistachio nuts, and mocha coffee” (119). The old man and his family have an abundance of food, but although Candide wonders if the old man has an enormous farm, the old man tells him, “I have only twenty acres of land, which my children and I cultivate. Our work keeps us free of three great evils: boredom, vice, and poverty” (119).

From this brief encounter, we learn several things:

- The old man and his family are content — even happy.
- The old man and his family ignore the wars and murders and crimes that happen elsewhere.

- The old man and his family have enough. They work hard on their little farm, and they have plenty of food and good things to eat.
- The old man and his family have only 20 acres, but 20 acres are enough.

Candide and his friends decide to emulate the old man and his family. Each of them begins to work hard on their little farm. Cunegonde learns to make pastry, Paquette begins to embroider, and the old woman does the laundry and repairs the linen. Brother Giroflée becomes a carpenter, and Candide and the others grow “abundant crops” (120). At the end of the short novel, the group of friends seem to have come the closest they can to happiness in a world filled with evil, but it does take an effort on their part. As Candide says in the short novel’s last words, “... we must cultivate our garden” (120).

#### Works Cited

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**To: David Bruce**

**From: Jane Student**

**Re: *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, Ch. 1-4 Reaction Memo**

**Date: Put Today's Date Here**

**Words: 286**

### **CH. 3: "KNIGHTS OF THE TABLE ROUND"**

**• What hints do we have of the relationship between Queen Guenever and Sir Launcelot?**

Some hanky-panky is going on between Sir Launcelot and King Arthur's wife, Queen Guenever. Some six or eight prisoners address her, and they tell her that they have been captured by Sir Kay the Seneschal. Immediately, surprise and astonishment are felt by everybody present. The queen looks disappointed because she had hoped that the prisoners were captured by Sir Launcelot.

As it turns out, they were. Sir Launcelot first rescued Sir Kay from some attackers, then he took Sir Kay's armor and horse and captured more knights. All of these prisoners were actually captured by Sir Launcelot, not by Sir Kay at all.

Two passages let us know that something is going on between Sir Launcelot and Queen Guenever:

1. The first is subtle; she looks disappointed when Sir Kay says that he captured the knights: "Surprise and astonishment flashed from face to face all over the house; the queen's gratified smile faded out at the name of Sir Kay, and she looked disappointed ..." (503).
2. The other is much more overt and occurs after Guenever learns that the knight who really captured the prisoners was Sir Launcelot: "Well, it was touching to see the queen blush

and smile, and look embarrassed and happy, and fling furtive glances at Sir Launcelot that would have got him shot in Arkansas, to a dead certainty” (503).

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## Appendix D: Mark Twain: His Life

### What was Mark Twain's real name?

Mark Twain's real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens.

### What is one story of how Mark Twain got his pseudonym?

Of course, a pseudonym is a fictional name. Many writers publish works of literature using a fictional name or pseudonym.

When Sam Clemens was a steamboat pilot on the Mississippi River, he liked the words that rivermen called when they measured 12 feet of water. This much water had a depth of two fathoms, so the rivermen called out, "Mark twain." The phrase meant, "Note that (or mark) there are two (or twain) fathoms of water." Since two fathoms of water was deep enough to be safe for the steamboat, the pilot could heave a sigh of relief.

Mr. Twain once took his family for a trip on a steamboat, and he stood on the deck listening to the cries of "Mark twain" coming from the rivermen. His daughter Clara came up to him and said, "I have hunted all over the boat for you. Don't you know they are calling for you?"

Twain scholar Stephen Railton points out that the phrase "Mark twain" can be either good news or bad news. River steamboats needed a certain level of water in order to stay afloat — between 9 ½ and 10 ½ feet. If the water was getting shallower when the person measuring the level of water shouted "Mark twain," that was bad news. If the water was getting deeper when the person measuring the level of water shouted "Mark twain," that was good news.

Similarly, in much of Twain's writing is an ambiguity. His writing can be very funny, but it is also sharply satiric. He

uses satire to criticize the bad parts of being human beings. Satire is humorous criticism. The humor makes you laugh, but the criticism can make you cry.

### **What is the other, less known story of how Mark Twain got his pseudonym?**

When Sam Clemens was a newspaper reporter working in the Nevada Territory, he used a variety of pseudonyms, including Mark Twain.

The second story of how he got his pseudonym was that he drank a lot, and he enjoyed drinking a lot although he didn't have much money. Sam Clemens always ordered two drinks when he walked into the saloon either because he was powerful thirsty, or because he wanted to treat a friend.

Therefore, he opened up a tab in the saloon. When he walked into the saloon, he would call out, "Mark twain." This meant, "Mark (or write down) two more drinks on my tab."

In time, he adopted the pseudonym "Mark Twain."

Mark Twain and Bill Nye journeyed to Nevada, where the frontiersmen tried to drink them under the table. However, after a night of hard drinking, the only people still conscious were Mr. Twain and Mr. Nye. Finally, Mark Twain told his friend, "Well, Bill, what do you say we get out of here and go somewhere for a drink?"

### **What does the phrase "mark twain" mean?**

The phrase means "note the two." Of course, many two's appear in Mark Twain's writings. The major two that appears in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, and of course another notable two appears in *The Prince and the Pauper*. In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, another notable two, besides Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, is the King and the Duke.

**Which is the best biography of Mark Twain?**

The best biography of Mark Twain is probably Justin Kaplan's *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain*, which won the Pulitzer Prize. Mr. Kaplan focuses mainly on Mark Twain and his life in 1865 and after. Of course, 1865 is the year the Civil War (1861-1865) ended.

**What happened to Sam Clemens from 1835-1955 (His Birth and Youth)?**

On November 30, 1835, Samuel Langhorne Clemens was born in a very small village named Florida in Missouri. He was the sixth child among seven children, but only three of his siblings survived to become adults. In those days, death during childhood was common because antibiotics and other modern medicines had not been discovered. His older siblings were his brother Orion and his sister, Pamela. He also had a younger brother named Henry. Sam was born when Halley's Comet was very visible from the Earth.

When Sam was four years old, his family moved to Hannibal, Missouri. This is the village that Mark Twain writes about as St. Petersburg in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. This is where Sam grew up among other children and had many experiences such as exploring a cave that appear in his novels.

As a young schoolboy, Sam got into trouble with his teacher, and she sent him outside to find a switch that she could use to hit him. Young Sam returned with a wood shaving that would definitely not hurt if it were used as a switch.

When Sam was 11, his father, John Marshall Clemens, died of pneumonia acquired while riding in the rain as he sought to be elected to public office to support his family. John was a big dreamer, but his dreams never came to fruition. His businesses tended to fail, and his family was impoverished.

In his book *Roughing It*, Mark Twain wrote:

He left us a sumptuous legacy of pride in his fine Virginia stock and his national distinction, but I presently found I could not live on that alone without occasional bread to wash it down with.

His family needed money, so Sam went to work as a typesetter in printing offices. This, of course, involved working with words, although other people wrote the words.

One important fact of Sam's early life is that Missouri was a slave state. This meant that slaves surrounded Sam when he was growing up, and it meant that people who supported slavery surrounded him when he was growing up. As a result, he accepted slavery when he was young. He once wrote, "In church we were told, 'God approved it. Slavery was a holy thing.'"

However, Sam did see slaves being mistreated — even killed — when he was growing up. He also saw slaves waiting to be taken down the Mississippi River to be sold to plantation owners.

But at the same time he played with young slave children when he was growing up. In addition, he listened to stories told by elderly slaves. In particular, he listened to stories told by an elderly slave named Dan'l, who told him the story about "The Golden Arm," a story that Mark Twain told often during lectures and a story that actor Hal Holbrook tells in his one-man show *Mark Twain Tonight*.

When Sam was 17 or 18 years old, he ran away from Hannibal, Missouri, and he went to New York to see the World's Fair there. He never lived in Hannibal again.

**What happened to Sam Clemens from 1855-1865 (Mark Twain is born)?**

Sam did return to the Mississippi River, however, becoming a riverboat pilot after being apprenticed under pilot Horace Bixby. He wrote about his time of his life in his fictionalized autobiography titled *Life on the Mississippi*.

As a cub steamboat pilot on the Mississippi River, Mark Twain was taught a valuable, but embarrassing, lesson by an experienced pilot, Mr. Bixby. Mr. Bixby asked Mark if he knew enough to take the steamboat across the next crossing. Aware that there was plenty of water in the channel and no chance of running aground, Mark replied that of course he could, since “I couldn’t get bottom there with a church steeple.” Mr. Bixby replied, “You think so, do you?” Something in Mr. Bixby’s voice shook Mark’s confidence, which Mr. Bixby’s leaving Mark alone in the pilothouse did nothing to restore. The crossing did not go smoothly. Mark imagined shallow water and reefs everywhere, and eventually had to be rescued by Mr. Bixby, although there was absolutely no danger of grounding the steamboat. After the ordeal, Mr. Bixby told his protégé, “You shouldn’t have allowed me or anybody else to shake your confidence .... Try to remember that. And another thing: when you get into a dangerous place, don’t turn coward. That isn’t going to help matters any.”

Mark Twain told this story in *Life on the Mississippi*: A riverboat pilot named Stephen was out of money and in New Orleans. Aware of Stephen’s plight, a steamboat captain offered him the job of piloting a steamboat up the Mississippi — but at a salary of \$125 instead of Stephen’s usual salary of \$250. Having no choice, Stephen accepted the offer, but he piloted the boat up the middle of the river so that it had to fight the current instead of seeking the stiller water nearer the shore. Much slower boats sped past the steamboat Stephen was piloting. When the captain remonstrated with Stephen, he replied, “I know as much as any man can afford to know for \$125.” On hearing this, the

captain raised Stephen's salary to \$250, and Stephen began to make that steamboat fly upstream.

In 1859, Sam received his riverboat license. He served as a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River until 1861, when the Civil War broke out.

Sam could have served either the North or the South as a riverboat pilot, but he briefly served as a Confederate irregular on horseback before going west. He wrote about this part of his life in "The Private History of a Campaign that Failed." Of course, after the Civil War both the North and the South could have been angry at him. The North could have been angry at him because he fought briefly for the South, and the South could have been angry at him because he served only briefly and went West quickly. However, neither side became angry at him. Humor is an excellent way of deflecting anger, and both the North and the South laughed at his explanation of why he went West: He got tired of constantly retreating.

Sam's older brother, Orion, had been appointed Secretary of the Nevada Territory, and Sam went West with Orion. Many prospectors were searching for and finding silver, which they mined, and Sam was hopeful — or even certain — that he would become rich as a prospector.

Sam never did find silver — or gold — metal. However, he did find lots of humor. The miners amused themselves by telling tall tales, and Sam listened to those stories, and later he retold them in his books. His first important story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," is one he heard out West. In Sam's hands, these stories became silver and gold of a different sort.

Because Sam had no luck as a prospector, he decided to make a living with words. He had been making money by

publishing articles — in the form of letters — in newspapers, and he got a job as a reporter at the *Virginia City Enterprise*.

Because Sam had no money, he walked 120 miles to get to his new job.

In her book *Mark Twain in Nevada*, Effie Mona Mack wrote about the cheapness of life in the frontier. In 1863, a man who was shot and died in Virginia City, Nevada, remained under a billiards table from 4 a.m. until noon while frontiersmen continued to shoot billiards above him. The coroner was too busy to come and take away the corpse.

Still, humor existed out West, and Sam provided some of it. Early in 1863, he started using the pseudonym “Mark Twain,” and this is the pseudonym that stuck. Many of his articles were humorous, and the name “Mark Twain” became associated with humor, especially in 1865, when he published “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County,” the story that made him nationally famous after it was published in the east and in newspapers across the country. The Civil War was over, people were tired of suffering, and they were eager to laugh at Mark Twain’s story.

### **What happened to Mark Twain from 1865 to 1875 (Sam comes east)?**

Mark Twain went East, and in 1867, he took a trip to Europe and the Holy Land. His expenses were paid by a California newspaper for which he worked.

Mark had earlier published a book titled *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County and Other Stories*, but the book was badly proofread and did not sell many copies, so he regarded his first real book as *Innocents Abroad*, which was written about his trip to Europe and the Holy Land. This book was his best-selling book during his life — his best-selling novel during his life was *Adventures of Huckleberry*

*Finn. Innocents Abroad* is well worth reading today; in it, Mark Twain criticizes both Europe and the Holy Land. The United States comes off well by comparison.

One other important thing happened to Mark Twain during his trip abroad. He saw an ivory miniature portrait of Olivia Langdon, the sister of fellow traveler Charles Langdon, and he fell in love. Eventually, he married her, but it took some persuasion.

Olivia's family was wealthy, in contrast to Mark Twain's family. She was 10 years younger than he was, and Mark Twain's manners were much rougher than those of Olivia and her family. One of the things that Mark Twain did was to ask her to help him reform. He called her "Livy."

When Mark Twain wanted to marry Olivia Langdon, the daughter of a wealthy family in Connecticut, her father asked him to provide character references. Mr. Twain gave him the names of some prominent men, including ministers, whom he had known in the West. Unfortunately, the men reported that Mr. Twain was "born to be hung" and would end up in a "drunkard's grave." Nevertheless, Mr. Langdon allowed Mr. Twain to marry his daughter, saying, "Take the girl. I know you better than they do."

As you may expect, Mark Twain was a hard man to reform, and his reformation was a work in progress:

- Mark Twain liked to visit neighbors informally — without wearing a collar or tie. This upset his wife, Livy, so Mr. Twain wrapped up a package which he sent to his neighbors along with a note that read: "A little while ago, I visited you for about half an hour minus my collar and tie. The missing articles are enclosed. Will you kindly gaze at them for 30 minutes and then return them to me?"



- Mark Twain enjoyed reading and writing in bed. One day, a reporter was coming over to interview him, so his wife, Livy, said, “Don’t you think it would be a bit embarrassing for the reporter — your being in bed?” Mr. Twain replied, “Why, Livy, if you think so, we might have the other bed made up for him.”

- Mark Twain believed that vigorous cussing was one of the greatest joys of life; unfortunately, his wife, Livy, disagreed. One morning, Mr. Twain cut himself while shaving, so he vigorously shouted a long stream of cuss words. Livy, in an attempt to shock him, calmly repeated each word he had said. Mr. Twain smiled at his wife, then said, “You know the words, dear Livy, but you don’t know the tune.”

Mark Twain and Livy got married in 1870, and immediately Mark became a member of the upper class as a result of marrying well. Livy’s father even gave them a house in Buffalo, New York. It was a surprise. Mark Twain was expecting to have to stay in a hotel, but instead his father-in-law presented him and Livy with a house. Mark Twain joked that his father-in-law could stay there anytime he wanted to — and he wouldn’t have to pay anything, either.

Eventually, Mark Twain and Livy moved to Hartford, Connecticut, where he had built a house. The house was lavish, and it required seven servants to run. Mark Twain had to work very hard to pay the bills. In fact, sometimes he and his family lived in Europe to cut down on living expenses.

Mark Twain was a true original. He lived for years in Hartford, Connecticut, whose most learned citizen was J. Hammond Trumbull. Mr. Twain was very impressed by him — because he knew how to use profanity in 27 languages. While Mr. Twain was living in Hartford, he attended a baseball game at which a boy stole his umbrella. Mr. Twain

offered two rewards: \$5 for the umbrella, and \$200 for the boy's corpse.

### **What happened to Mark Twain from 1875 to 1885 (productivity and happiness)?**

From 1875 to 1885, Mark Twain was at his happiest and his most productive. This is when he published the novels he is most remembered for.

Twain published *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in 1876.

He published *The Prince and the Pauper* in 1881.

He published *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in 1885.

During this time, a son named Langdon was born, but the child died when he was two years old. Mark Twain felt guilty because he had taken his son out for a ride in a carriage and had not noticed that the furs keeping his son warm had fallen from around his legs. The son died of diphtheria in 1872.

Mark Twain also had three daughters, all of whom he loved deeply. In 1872, Susy was born. As a young girl, she wrote a book, the first sentence of which stated, "We are a very happy family." Daughter Clara was born in 1874, and daughter Jean was born in 1880.

However, Mark Twain needed money. His elaborate house required \$100,000 annually to maintain, and he once wrote in a letter to one of his friends, "My household expenses are something ghastly."

In part because of this, Mark Twain was always in search of ways to make money — lots of money. He invested in many inventions that he hoped would make his fortune, but unfortunately these inventions seldom worked out and ended up costing him money instead of making him money.

### **What happened to Mark Twain from 1885 to 1895 (bankruptcy)?**

Mark Twain wrote two important novels during this time: He published *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* in 1889, and he published *Pudd'nhead Wilson* in 1894.

Unfortunately, much of the money he made was going into keeping his speculative ventures afloat. He invested a fortune into perfecting the Paige typesetting machine, but the machine was never perfected. This machine was supposed to do mechanically what Sam had done as a teenager: set type so it could be printed. (The Duke sets type in one of his scams in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.) Unfortunately, this machine and its failure bankrupted Mark Twain.

In 1894, he found that he was bankrupt, and that he owed \$100,000 — a lot of money now, and a great fortune at the time.

### **What happened to Mark Twain from 1895 to 1910 (the last 15 years of his life)?**

Mark Twain did not stiff his creditors. He got financial advice from Henry Rogers, a Standard Oil executive, and he set out on an around-the-world lecture tour to earn money to pay off all his debts. He did pay off his debts, and in his old age he actually had lots of money.

Mark Twain was a lecturer for a long time. He did not always enjoy it, but the audience did. He was able to draw humor from his life of lecturing:

- Mark Twain understood small print and advertising. One of his advertisements for a lecture tour consisted of the huge words “MAGNIFICENT FIREWORKS” followed by the small print “were in contemplation for this occasion, but the idea has been

abandoned.” Another of his advertisements read, “The doors open at 7; the trouble begins at 8.”

- While on a lecture tour, Mark Twain got a shave in a local barber shop. The barber knew that he was shaving a stranger, but he didn't recognize Mr. Twain, so he said, “You've come into town at the right time. Mark Twain is lecturing tonight.” When Mr. Twain said that he was planning to attend the lecture, the barber asked if he had bought his ticket yet. Hearing that he had not, the barber said that he would have to stand, as most of the tickets were already sold. Mr. Twain sighed, then said, “That's my luck. Whenever that fellow gives a lecture, I always have to stand.”

- When Mark Twain was scheduled to speak at a small town, he would often enter a store and ask if people knew about his lecture being scheduled that night. Once he entered a grocery store and asked if there were anything special going on that evening. The grocer replied, “I think there's a lecture tonight — I've been selling eggs all day.”

Of course, Mark Twain was widely loved, and his books were widely loved. He also earned a large amount of respect because he had paid all his debts.

However, Mark Twain suffered in his old age because of deaths in the family.

First Susy died in 1896 of spinal meningitis, an infection. This hit Mark Twain hard. He loved his daughter, and he did not get to see her before she died. The last time he saw her was when he set off on his around-the-world lecture tour. She died at the end of the tour, but before Mark Twain made it home again.

His wife, Livy, died in 1904. For much of the time Mark Twain was not allowed to see her, as the doctors thought that seeing him might excite Livy and that would be bad for her. They often exchanged affectionate notes, however.

His daughter Jean died on December 24, 1909. She had an epileptic seizure when taking a bath and drowned to death.

Mark Twain was often depressed and unhappy at the end of his life. He wrote dark stories such as *The Mysterious Stranger*. Much of his writing remained unfinished and unpublished.

He also worked on his *Autobiography*, which remained unfinished at the time of his death.

Still, Mark Twain retained his humor:

- When Mark Twain was very old, he sometimes would reach for a doorknob but miss it. He then would turn to his secretary and say, “Just practicing.”
- When his wife, Livy, worried that his spending lots of time in bed reading and writing might sap his strength, she had their daughter Clara read him a biographical passage about the poet William Cullen Bryant, who at age 80 was still taking vigorous and invigorating early-morning walks. Mr. Twain said, “Mr. Bryant was wonderful to do those early risings, and all that at eighty. If ever I get to be eighty, I mean to do them, too.”
- When he was even older, and a widower, he built and lived in a house he called Stormfield. Quickly, burglars stole the silverware from the house. Also quickly, Mr. Twain posted this note on the front door of the house: “To the next burglar. There is nothing but plated ware in this house, now and henceforth. You will find it in that brass thing in the dining-room

over in the corner by the basket of kittens. If you want the basket, put the kittens in the brass thing.”

- Before he died, he felt ill. Of course, he was widely loved by the reading public, and many fans sent him home remedies in hopes that they would make him feel better. He replied using this letter: “Dear Sir (or Madam). I try every remedy sent to me. I am now on no. 67. Yours is 2,653. I am looking forward to its beneficial results.” In his old age, Mr. Twain was also still capable of savage satire: He advocated the passing of a law that would forbid white people from lynching black people on Christmas.

Mark Twain died on April 21, 1910, of a heart attack. A nation mourned him. Halley’s Comet was visible from the earth that year.

## Appendix E: Some Mark Twain Anecdotes

### Spelling

When Samuel Langhorne Clemens was a schoolboy, he was very good at spelling and usually won the Friday afternoon spelling bee in his class. However, one Friday he deliberately misspelled a word so a young girl he liked would win. As an adult writer, Mr. Clemens used the pseudonym “Mark Twain.”

### Name

Mark Twain’s real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens. When he was a steamboat pilot on the Mississippi River, he liked the words that rivermen called when they measured 12 feet of water. This much water had a depth of two fathoms, so the rivermen called out, “Mark twain.” The phrase meant, “Note that (or mark) there are two (or twain) fathoms of water.” Since two fathoms of water was deep enough to be safe for the steamboat, the pilot could heave a sigh of relief. Mr. Twain once took his family for a trip on a steamboat, and he stood on the deck listening to the cries of “Mark twain” coming from the rivermen. His daughter Clara came up to him and said, “I have hunted all over the boat for you. Don’t you know they are calling for you?”

### Steamboat Pilot

As a cub steamboat pilot on the Mississippi River, Mark Twain was taught a valuable, but embarrassing, lesson by an experienced pilot, Mr. Bixby. Mr. Bixby asked Mark if he knew enough to take the steamboat across the next crossing. Aware that there was plenty of water in the channel and no chance of running aground, Mark replied that of course he could, since “I couldn’t get bottom there with a church steeple.” Mr. Bixby replied, “You think so, do you?” Something in Mr. Bixby’s voice shook Mark’s confidence, which Mr. Bixby’s leaving Mark alone in the pilothouse did

nothing to restore. The crossing did not go smoothly. Mark imagined shallow water and reefs everywhere, and eventually had to be rescued by Mr. Bixby, although there was absolutely no danger of grounding the steamboat. After the ordeal, Mr. Bixby told his protégé, “You shouldn’t have allowed me or anybody else to shake your confidence .... Try to remember that. And another thing: when you get into a dangerous place, don’t turn coward. That isn’t going to help matters any.”

### **Shoddy Contractors**

While anchored before Constantinople (an adventure he described in *Innocents Abroad*), Mark Twain read up on the history of the Hellespont, a narrow channel of water over which the Persian king Xerxes ordered a bridge of ships to be built that his armies could cross on their way to attack Greece. The first bridge was destroyed, Mr. Twain writes, so Xerxes ordered the contractors to be rebuked — in other words, he had them beheaded. The second bridge was much more sturdy. According to Mr. Twain, “If our Government would rebuke some of our shoddy contractors occasionally, it might work much good.”

### ***Innocents Abroad***

While Mark Twain was traveling in Europe (an adventure he wrote about in *Innocents Abroad*), a number of tour guides made his life miserable, so with the help of a few friends, he decided to make the tour guides’ lives miserable. For the duration of the trip, Mark Twain and his friends refused to be impressed by anything a tour guide showed them. Once, a tour guide showed them a letter handwritten by Christopher Columbus. One of Mark Twain’s friends looked at the letter and complained about the sloppy penmanship, “Why, I have seen boys in America only fourteen years old that could write better than that.”



### **Irritating Tour Guides**

While traveling, Mark Twain and his friends tortured irritating tour guides by constantly asking if someone was dead. Thus, when a tour guide showed them a bust of Christopher Columbus, they would ask, “Is he dead?” Once, Mr. Twain and friends visited the Capuchin Cemetery, where the bones of dead monks were used to make arches and other ornaments. One of the exhibitions of the cemetery was the corpse of a monk who had been dead for 150 years. Mr. Twain decided to cut the tour short because he could tell that his friends were tempted to ask, “Is he dead?”

### **Climbing Stairs**

While visiting the cathedral at Milan, Italy, Mark Twain and a friend wished to go aloft. A sacristan told the party “to go up one hundred and eighty-two steps and stop till he came.” According to Mr. Twain, “It was not necessary to say stop — we should have done that anyhow. We were tired by the time we got there.”

### **David and Goliath**

In *The Innocents Abroad*, Mark Twain wrote about visiting the Mosque of Omar and other interesting sites in the Holy Land. He writes, “Just outside the mosque is a miniature temple, which marks the spot where David and Goliath used to sit and judge the people.” In a footnote, Mr. Twain explains, “A pilgrim informs me that it was not David and Goliath, but David and Saul. I stick to my own statement — the guide told me, and he ought to know.”

### **Adam’s Grave**

While on a trip to the Holy Land, Mark Twain visited the reputed grave of Adam. In *Innocents Abroad*, Mr. Twain writes, “There is no question that he is actually buried in the grave which is pointed out as his — there can be none —

because it has never yet been proven that that grave is not the grave in which he is buried.”

### **Hotels**

Mark Twain once stayed in a hotel where the person before him had signed the register, “Countess X — and suite.” Mr. Twain therefore signed the register, “Mark Twain — and valise.”

### ***Zwei Glas***

While traveling abroad, Mark Twain heard of an American student who had struggled to learn German for three whole months, but who had learned to say only “*zwei glas*,” which means “two glasses” (of beer). Still, the student reflected, he had learned those words very thoroughly.

### **Class Attendance**

In his book *A Tramp Abroad*, Mark Twain wrote about the lecture system at Heidelberg, where attendance was not mandatory. Often, only a few students showed up for especially arcane lectures. Mr. Twain told of a lecturer who spoke day after day to an audience consisting of three students. One day, two of the students were away, and only one student showed up for the lecture. The lecturer began his remarks as usual by saying, “Gentlemen,” corrected himself and said, “Sir,” then went on with his lecture.

### **Learning French**

While in San Francisco, Mark Twain undertook to learn French. One day, a Frenchman who knew no English started asking questions of a group Mr. Twain was in. Because Mr. Twain was the only person in the group who had studied French, he listened to the Frenchman. However, before Mr. Twain had said a half-dozen words of French in reply, the Frenchman fainted, possibly from hunger. Mr. Twain said

later, “I’ll learn French if it kills every Frenchman in the country.”

### **Learning German**

When Mark Twain decided to take his family to Germany, his family started to study German. He even instructed Rosa, his German maid, to speak only German to his children. His daughter Susy tried to learn the language, but she said to her mother, “I wish Rosa was made in English.”

### **Language**

Mark Twain wrote in *Innocents Abroad* that when he was in Paris, he fell into the trap of thinking that no one around him could speak English. He told a friend, “Dan, just look at this girl — how beautiful she is!” The “girl” turned to him and said, “I thank you more for the evident sincerity of the compliment, sir, than for the extraordinary publicity you have given to it!”

### **Travel**

“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things can not be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one’s lifetime.” — Mark Twain.

### **Profanity**

Mark Twain believed that vigorous cussing was one of the greatest joys of life; unfortunately, his wife, Livy, disagreed. One morning, Mr. Twain cut himself while shaving, so he vigorously shouted a long stream of cuss words. Livy, in an attempt to shock him, calmly repeated each word he had said. Mr. Twain smiled at his wife, then said, “You know the words, dear Livy, but you don’t know the tune.”

## **More Profanity**

“When angry, count to four; when very angry, swear.” — Mark Twain.

## **Yet More Profanity**

The Reverend Joseph Twichell taught Mark Twain how to ride a bicycle. When they were taking a bicycle ride one day — Mr. Twain somewhat unsteadily — they came to a large stone in the middle of the road. Mr. Twain headed right toward the rock and didn’t know what to do to avoid hitting it and crashing. Reverend Twichell offered advice, but Mr. Twain replied, “Shut up, Joe. You ride ahead. I’m going to swear like hell in a minute.”

## **Work**

In *Roughing It*, Mark Twain wrote about working as a common laborer in a quartz mill, where he refined silver ore into silver bricks. After a week of backbreaking labor, he went to his employer and said that although he had come to love the work, he felt that he could not continue working without a raise. The employer countered by saying that he was paying Mr. Twain \$10 a week, which he felt was a fair sum, and just how much of a raise did Mr. Twain want? Mark Twain replied that \$400,000 a month, and board, was all he could reasonably ask, considering the hard times. Of course, Mr. Twain was then ordered off the premises of the quartz mill.

## **Advertising**

As the editor of a Western newspaper, Mark Twain once received a letter from one of its readers: “Dear Sir: When I opened my newspaper this morning, there was a spider inside; does this mean good luck or bad for me?” Mr. Twain replied, “Finding a spider in your paper did not mean either good luck or bad luck for you. He was merely looking to see

which merchants advertised, so that he could go to the store of one who did not do so, build his web over the door, and remain peaceful and undisturbed for the rest of his days.”

### ***Mark Twain in Nevada***

In her book *Mark Twain in Nevada*, Effie Mona Mack wrote about the cheapness of life in the frontier. In 1863, a man who was shot and died in Virginia City, Nevada, remained under a billiards table from 4 a.m. until noon while frontiersmen continued to shoot billiards above him. The coroner was too busy to come and take away the corpse.

### **Alcohol**

Mark Twain and Bill Nye journeyed to Nevada, where the frontiersmen tried to drink them under the table. However, after a night of hard drinking, the only people still conscious were Mr. Twain and Mr. Nye. Finally, Mark Twain told his friend, “Well, Bill, what do you say we get out of here and go somewhere for a drink?”

### **Rare Women**

Women were a rare sight in the western frontier. Mark Twain relates in *Roughing It* that “once in Star City, in the Humboldt Mountains, I took my place in a sort of long, post-office single file of miners, to patiently await my chance to peep through a crack in the cabin and a sight of the splendid new sensation — a genuine, live Woman! And at the end of half of an hour my turn came, and I put my eye to the crack, and there she was, with one arm akimbo, and tossing flapjacks in a frying pan with the other. And she was one hundred and sixty-five years old, and hadn’t a tooth in her head.” (In a footnote, Mr. Twain says that since he is now in a calmer mood, he would knock 100 years off her age.)

### **No Place for a Presbyterian**

Mark Twain, during his travels as a young man, went to Virginia City, Nevada, where a mining boom had brought in saloons, gambling places, and brightly painted women. Mr. Twain said, “It was no place for a Presbyterian, and I did not long remain one.”

### **Begging**

Mark Twain was once down on his luck in San Francisco and almost resorted to begging. Here’s how he tells it: “I remember a certain day in San Francisco, when, if I hadn’t picked up a dime that I found lying in the street, I should have asked someone for a quarter. Only a matter of a few hours and I’d have been a beggar. That dime saved me, and I have never begged — never.”

### **Snoring**

Mark Twain was in a sleeper on a train, snoring loudly, when a porter awoke him to say that his snoring was keeping the other passengers awake. Mr. Twain said that he never snored, but the porter insisted that he had heard him. Mr. Twain replied, “You shouldn’t believe all you hear.”

### **Traveling by Train**

Mark Twain was riding on a train from Hartford, Connecticut, to New York City when a woman asked him if the train would stop at Grand Central Station. Mr. Twain replied, “I hope it will, madam, for if it does not there will be the devil of a smash.”

### **An Eccentric Friend**

Mark Twain was at the races outside London, where he met a friend who had lost all his pocket money gambling and who asked if Mr. Twain would buy him a ticket back to London. “I’m nearly broke myself but I’ll tell you what I’ll

do,” Mr. Twain replied. “You can ride under my seat and I’ll hide you with my legs.” The friend agreed, but unknown to the friend, Mr. Twain bought two train tickets. When the train inspector came by to collect the tickets, Mr. Twain handed him the two tickets, then said, “My friend is a little eccentric and likes to ride under the seat.”

### **Noisy Clocks**

Humorist Mark Twain, author of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, once stayed at the home of political cartoonist Thomas Nast, who first used the images of an elephant and a donkey to represent the Republican and the Democratic parties. During the night, Mr. Twain was bothered by the sounds of the Nast family’s clocks, so he got up and stopped all of them. The next morning, everyone overslept. Mr. Twain explained what had happened and stated that the clocks had been working too hard, so they should benefit from a good night’s rest.

### **Practical Jokes**

Mark Twain was addicted to practical jokes — especially when they were jokes he played on other people. One day, when he was looking out the window of an editor’s office on the third floor of a building, he noticed a friend of his standing immediately below. Unfortunately for his friend, Mr. Twain had just been made the recipient of the gift of a watermelon by the editor. You can guess what happened to the friend and the watermelon. Still, Mr. Twain reflected, the friend came out ahead because the practical joke spoiled the watermelon, making it unsuitable for eating.

### **Beds**

Mark Twain enjoyed reading and writing in bed. One day, a reporter was coming over to interview him, so his wife, Livy, said, “Don’t you think it would be a bit embarrassing for the reporter — your being in bed?” Mr. Twain replied, “Why,

Livy, if you think so, we might have the other bed made up for him.”

### **An Interview**

Edgar White, a reporter, was once asked to interview Mark Twain on a certain subject. He went to Mr. Twain’s hotel close to midnight, and was shown to Mr. Twain’s room. Mr. Twain was in bed, reading and smoking. Unfortunately, Mr. Twain announced that he couldn’t talk about the reporter’s proposed topic, as a contract he had signed forbade it. Mr. White was understandably disappointed and said in that case he had nothing to write about. “I’ve been in that fix many and many a time,” Mr. Twain said. “Now if I were the reporter and you were the man in bed I’d tell how, over the vigorous remonstrances of the clerk I’d come up here in the dead hour of the night and aroused you from a sound sleep to ....” Mr. White interrupted to point out that that was not the truth — the clerk had politely shown him to the room and Mr. Twain had not been asleep. Mr. Twain sighed, then said, “If you’re going to let a little thing like that stand in the way, I’m afraid I can’t help you. Good night.” Mr. White decided to write an article stating the absolute truth, just as it is related here. The newspaper ran his article under a big headline.

### **Photograph**

A man was repeatedly told that he looked just like Mark Twain, so he finally sent Mr. Twain a photograph and asked if it were a good resemblance. Mr. Twain wrote back, saying that the photograph was such a good resemblance that he was using it instead of a mirror to shave by.

### **Lecture Tour**

While on a lecture tour, Mark Twain got a shave in a local barbershop. The barber knew that he was shaving a stranger, but he didn’t recognize Mr. Twain, so he said, “You’ve come



into town at the right time. Mark Twain is lecturing tonight.” When Mr. Twain said that he was planning to attend the lecture, the barber asked if he had bought his ticket yet. Hearing that he had not, the barber said that he would have to stand, as most of the tickets were already sold. Mr. Twain sighed, then said, “That’s my luck. Whenever that fellow gives a lecture, I always have to stand.”

### **No Visit**

Mark Twain wrote a letter to a friend, asking him to visit. The friend wrote back, “God be with you, for I cannot.” Mark Twain wrote this note at the bottom of his friend’s letter, then sent it back: “He didn’t come. Next time please send someone we can depend upon.”

### **Birthday Letter**

Some friends of Mark Twain wrote him a humorous letter for his birthday, but then discovered that they did not have his address, because he was so often globetrotting. So the friends addressed the letter: “MARK TWAIN. LORD KNOWS WHERE.” A few months later, one of the friends in the group received a note from Mr. Twain: “HE DID.”

### **Letters**

Sometimes Mark Twain was slow in answering letters. Once a friend wanted a quick reply from Mr. Twain, so he enclosed in his letter some paper and a stamp. Very quickly, a postcard arrived from Mr. Twain: “Thanks for the sheet of writing paper and the stamp. Please send an envelope.”

### **A Thank-You Letter**

In December 1908 Mark Twain received a gift of tobacco and whiskey from some family friends. In his thank-you letter, he wrote, “I had just reformed, but it is not too late to rearrange that.”

## Angry Letters

When Mark Twain got angry, he used to write a letter denouncing the person who had made him angry, but he wouldn't mail the letter right away. He waited three days, and if he was still angry at the end of that time, he mailed the letter. But if he had stopped being angry, he would burn the letter.

### An Angry Letter

Mark Twain once wrote this letter to the gas company: "Some day you will move me almost to the verge of irritation by your chuckle-headed Goddamned fashion of shutting your Goddamned gas off without giving any notice to your Goddamned parishioners. Several times you have come within an ace of smothering half of this household in their beds and blowing up the other half by this idiotic, not to say criminal, custom of yours. And it has happened again today. Haven't you a telephone?"

## Jokes

Many people who tell stories have the bad habit of stopping repeatedly to ask the listener if he or she has heard the story before. Henry Irving was one such person. In telling a story to Mark Twain, he stopped three different times to ask if Mr. Twain had heard the story before. Finally, Mr. Twain could stand it no longer and said, "I can lie once, I can lie twice for the sake of politeness, but there I draw the line. I not only heard the story — I invented it."

## Sholom Aleichem

Sholom Aleichem (1859-1916) was a Yiddish humorist. Among the characters he created in his stories were those that became the basis of *Fiddler on the Roof*. In 1906, he came to the United States, where he met Mark Twain, to whom he was introduced as the "Jewish Mark Twain." Mr.

Twain then said that he would like to be introduced in Yiddish to Mr. Aleichem as the “American Sholom Aleichem.”

### **Introductions**

A boy named Pat, comic writer H. Allen Smith’s nephew, had a unique way of introducing his uncle to his friends. One of Mr. Smith’s many books was on the coffee table, and whenever one of Pat’s friends came by, Pat would pick up the book, read one of the blurbs on the cover, then use the blurb as an introduction; for example, “Meet my uncle. He’s a screwball” or “Meet my uncle. He’s another Mark Twain.”

### **Insults**

While in the company of Mark Twain, the French author Paul Bourget insulted all Americans by saying, “When an American has nothing else to do, he can always spend a few years trying to discover who his grandfather was.” Mr. Twain replied, “And when all other interests fail for a Frenchman, he can always try to figure out who his father was.”

### **Tobacco**

Mark Twain constantly smoked cigars. Sometimes, he visited his friend and fellow novelist William Dean Howells, who declared that after Mr. Twain had stayed with him for a few days, he had to air out his entire house because Mr. Twain smoked from the time he got up to the time he went to bed — and sometimes later. Often, Mr. Howells would go to Mr. Twain’s bedroom at night and find him in bed asleep with a lit cigar in his mouth. (According to Mr. Twain, moderate cigar smoking consists of smoking “only one cigar at a time.” He also said that the first cigar he had smoked was probably not a good one — “or the previous smoker would not have thrown it away so soon.”)

## **Smoking Cigars**

“More than one cigar at a time is excessive smoking.” — Mark Twain.

## **Invitations**

Enrico Caruso was multi-talented — in addition to being the best tenor of his time, he was a skilled caricaturist. When Mark Twain invited a number of cartoonists to a dinner, but did not invite him, Mr. Caruso was disappointed and said, “Perhaps he knows me only as a tenor.”

## **Life on the Mississippi**

Mark Twain told this story in *Life on the Mississippi*: A riverboat pilot named Stephen was out of money and in New Orleans. Aware of Stephen’s plight, a steamboat captain offered him the job of piloting a steamboat up the Mississippi — but at a salary of \$125 instead of Stephen’s usual salary of \$250. Having no choice, Stephen accepted the offer, but he piloted the boat up the middle of the river so that it had to fight the current instead of seeking the stiller water nearer the shore. Much slower boats sped past the steamboat Stephen was piloting. When the captain remonstrated with Stephen, he replied, “I know as much as any man can afford to know for \$125.” On hearing this, the captain raised Stephen’s salary to \$250, and Stephen began to make that steamboat fly upstream.

## **Money**

People thought that Mark Twain received a dollar a word for his writing. Someone once sent him a dollar and requested, “Please send me a word.” Mr. Twain wrote back, “Thanks.”

## **“Take the Girl”**

When Mark Twain wanted to marry Olivia Langdon, the daughter of a wealthy family in Connecticut, her father asked

him to provide character references. Mr. Twain gave him the names of some prominent men, including ministers, whom he had known in the West. Unfortunately, the men reported that Mr. Twain was “born to be hung” and would end up in a “drunkard’s grave.” Nevertheless, Mr. Langdon allowed Mr. Twain to marry his daughter, saying, “Take the girl. I know you better than they do.”

### **Gifts**

Mark Twain married a woman from a wealthy family. Arriving in Buffalo, New York, Mr. and Mrs. Twain were driven to a house, where his new wife told Mr. Twain that house mansion was a gift to them from her father. Mr. Twain shook hands with his father-in-law, then said, “If you ever come to Buffalo, bring your grip [suitcase] and stay all night — it won’t cost you a cent.”

### **Clothing**

Mark Twain liked to visit neighbors informally — without wearing a collar or tie. This upset his wife, Livy, so Mr. Twain wrapped up a package which he sent to his neighbors along with a note that read: “A little while ago, I visited you for about half an hour minus my collar and tie. The missing articles are enclosed. Will you kindly gaze at them for 30 minutes and then return them to me?”

### **Help Yourself**

In his book *Roughing It*, Mark Twain tells a story that was old in 1872. A traveler sat down at a table on which was nothing but mackerel and mustard. The traveler asked, “Is that all there is?” The landlord replied, “*All!* Why, thunder and lightning, I should think there was mackerel enough there for six people.” The traveler said, “But I don’t like mackerel.” The landlord paused a moment, then said, “Oh — then help yourself to the mustard.”

## **Golf**

Mark Twain once golfed with a very bad player who constantly missed the golf ball, striking the ground instead and throwing dust into the air where it settled on Mr. Twain's hair and clothes, and in his mouth. When the very bad player asked Mr. Twain for his opinion of the golf course, he replied, "The best I've ever tasted."

## **Hot Soup**

Mark Twain once put a spoonful of very hot soup in his mouth, then turned his head and spit it out. He then remarked to his friends, "Some darn fools would have swallowed that."

## **Fishing**

A man once asked Mark Twain if he had caught any fish lately. Mr. Twain said that he had caught 12 trout the day before. Hearing this, the man said, "Obviously, you don't know who I am. I am a game warden, and the season for catching trout is over." Mr. Twain replied, "Obviously, you don't know who I am. I am the biggest liar in the world."

## **Cloves**

At one time, people chewed cloves to make their breath smell good. Once, a melancholy man who was depressed by statistics regarding death told Mark Twain, "Do you realize that every time I breathe an immortal soul passes into eternity?" Mr. Twain replied, "Have you ever tried cloves?"

## **Friends**

Mark Twain attended a large dinner where the topic of conversation was Heaven and Hell. Mr. Twain remained quiet — something very uncharacteristic of him. When a woman asked him, "Why don't you say something? I would like to hear your opinion," he replied, "Madam, you must

excuse me. I am silent of necessity — I have friends in both places!”

### **Pun**

Because of his white hair and large moustache, Mark Twain resembled Melville Fuller, the Chief Justice of the United States. While Mr. Twain was visiting Washington, D.C., a little girl saw him, mistook him for Mr. Fuller, and asked, “Mr. Chief Justice Fuller, won’t you write something for me in my autograph book?” Mr. Twain agreed, wrote “It’s glorious to be full but it’s heavenly to be Fuller,” and then signed his own name.

### **Autographs**

A nine-year-old boy knocked on Mark Twain’s hotel door to get an autograph, not knowing that Mr. Twain was very ill. The boy was about to be sent away when Mr. Twain called from his sickbed and asked that the boy be sent in to see him. He then wrote in the boy’s autograph book, “So live, that when you come to die, even the undertaker will be sorry.”

### **Mark Twain and a Preacher**

Humorist Mark Twain once attended a sermon that he listened to very intently. After church was over, he told the preacher, “I have a book at home that has every word of your sermon in it.” The preacher was astonished because he thought that he had written his sermon without plagiarism. The preacher was also worried because he thought that he had perhaps read a sermon at seminary, then unconsciously plagiarized it while writing his sermon. Therefore, the preacher asked Mr. Twain to send him the book to look at. Mr. Twain did send him the book — it was a dictionary.

## Dictionaries

While speaking at a graduation class at a grammar school, Mark Twain awarded one of the students a dictionary. As he gave it to the boy, Mr. Twain said, “This is a very interesting and useful book, my son. I have studied it often but I never could discover the plot.”

## Printers

Mark Twain was once upset with the way that the printers of one of his books had changed his punctuation, so he said, “In the beginning God Almighty made men, and then He made damn fools, and when He got His hand in He must have made printers.”

## Punctuation

Books should be properly edited and punctuated. When sending a book to his publishers, Mark Twain added this note: “Gentlemen: „?!”“ — \*”,,: Please scatter these throughout according to your taste.”

## Book Shelves

Mark Twain once showed a visitor his library. The visitor commented on the large numbers of books piled everywhere — on the floor, in chairs, everywhere handy. Mr. Twain explained, “It’s next to impossible to borrow shelves.”

## Dedication

Mark Twain dedicated his first book — *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, and Other Sketches* — to “John Smith” because he had heard that people always buy a copy of any book that is dedicated to them. Mr. Twain wrote, “It is said that the man to whom a volume is dedicated, always buys a copy. If this prove true in the present instance, a princely affluence is about to burst upon the author.”



## **Publisher**

A man had the opportunity to publish Mark Twain's first book, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, and Other Sketches*, but declined it. Years later, the man chanced to meet Mr. Twain, and told him, "I refused a book of yours and for this I stand without competitor as the prize ass of the nineteenth century."

## **Lawyers**

After Mark Twain had finished a humorous after-dinner speech, a lawyer stood up, put his hands in his pockets, then said, "Doesn't it strike this company as a little unusual that a professional humorist should be so funny?" Mr. Twain replied, "Doesn't it strike this company as a little unusual that a lawyer should have his hands in his own pockets?"

## **Introduction**

Before giving a speech, Mark Twain once introduced himself in this way: "I know of only two important facts about the man I am introducing. First, he has never been in a state prison, and second, I can't imagine why."

## **Punishment**

As a young schoolboy, Samuel Langhorne Clemens got into trouble with his teacher, and she sent him outside to find a switch that she could use to hit him. Young Samuel returned with a wood shaving that would definitely not hurt if it were used as a switch. Later in life, Samuel became better known to the world as the celebrated humorist Mark Twain.

## **High Praise**

The writer J.I.C. Clarke once introduced Mark Twain and very highly praised the stories Mr. Twain had set in Yuba Dam, saying that they were the best things Mr. Twain had ever written. Mr. Twain then stood up and enthusiastically

praised a German girl for 10 minutes — to no point, it seemed. Finally, Mr. Twain said, “Gentlemen, I suppose you are wondering what my story of that German girl has to do with Mr. Clarke’s speech and his reference to Yuba Dam. Well, nothing at all, and that’s just it. I never wrote about Yuba Dam. Mr. Clarke is thinking of Bret Harte.” Everyone, including an embarrassed Mr. Clarke, laughed, then Mr. Twain and Mr. Clarke shook hands.

### **Advertising**

Mark Twain understood small print and advertising. One of his advertisements for a lecture tour consisted of the huge words “MAGNIFICENT FIREWORKS” followed by the small print “were in contemplation for this occasion, but the idea has been abandoned.” Another of his advertisements read, “The doors open at 7; the trouble begins at 8.”

### **Public Speaking**

When Mark Twain was scheduled to speak at a small town, he would often enter a store and ask if people knew about his lecture being scheduled that night. Once he entered a grocery store and asked if there were anything special going on that evening. The grocer replied, “I think there’s a lecture tonight — I’ve been selling eggs all day.”

### **More Public Speaking**

On a voyage, Mark Twain and Chauncey Depew were asked to speak after dinner. Mr. Twain spoke for 20 minutes and was a huge hit with the audience. Mr. Depew then arose and said, “Mr. Toastmaster and Ladies and Gentlemen, before this dinner Mark Twain and I made an agreement to trade speeches. He has just delivered my speech, and I thank you for the pleasant manner in which you received it. I regret to say that I have lost the notes of his speech and cannot remember anything he has to say.” Mr. Depew then sat down to much laughter. The next day a passenger on the ship said

to Mr. Twain, “I consider you were much imposed upon last night. I have always heard that Mr. Depew is a clever man, but really, that speech of his you made last night struck me as being the most infernal rot.”

### **Speech**

Mark Twain once attended a dinner with the understanding that he would not make a speech. Near the end of the dinner, Mr. Twain arose and everyone applauded. Mr. Twain then said, “Waiter, please pass the bread.”

### **Speakers Should Be Brief**

Mark Twain once told a story that illustrated why speakers should be brief: Mr. Twain said he attended a church when a missionary began to speak. At first Mr. Twain was fired up with enthusiasm for the missionary’s work and wanted to donate the \$400 he had and borrow all he could to give to the missionary. However, the missionary kept talking, and the longer the missionary talked, the less enthusiastic Mr. Twain became — when the offering plate was finally passed around, Mr. Twain stole ten cents from it.

### **“To Hell With! To Hell With!”**

In his sketch “‘Party Cries’ in Ireland,” Mark Twain tells of the conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. Commonly, according to Mr. Twain, Irishmen would cry out either “To hell with the Pope” or “To hell with the Protestants,” depending on the religion of the crier. This became so common that a law was passed attempting to stop the custom by imposing a fine and court costs on anyone found guilty of giving a party cry. Once, a drunk was found lying in an alley, shouting, “To hell with! To hell with!” A police officer found the drunk and asked him, “To hell with what?” But the drunk replied, “Ah, bedad ye can finish it yourself — it’s too expinsive for me!”

### **Family Prayers**

Mark Twain once stayed over at the house of a friend. The next morning, he was seen standing at the top of the staircase. His friend said, "What's the matter? Why not come on down?" Mr. Twain asked, "Family prayers over yet?" Hearing that they were over, Mr. Twain said, "All right then, I'll come down."

### **Attending Church**

Mark Twain attended the church of his friend, the Reverend Joseph Twichell, and he became very interested in the sermon. After the church service was over, Mr. Twain told Reverend Twichell, "Joe, this mustn't happen again. When I go to church, I go for a good rest and quiet nap. Today I haven't been able to get a single wink. I tell you it won't do; and it must not happen again."

### **Request for a Donation**

Andrew Carnegie was a very wealthy man who had a reputation for donating money to charitable causes. Mark Twain wrote him to say that he wanted to buy a \$2 hymn-book, pointing out that "I will bless you, God will bless you and it will do a great deal of good." Mr. Twain then added a postscript: "Don't send me the hymn-book — send me the two dollars."

### **Politics**

George Haven Putnam was Executive of the Copyright League from 1886-1891 and worked for the passage of bills to protect the copyrights of authors. Often he testified before Congress, sometimes taking along an author to buttress his arguments about the importance of a bill to provide copyright protection. Once he took along Mark Twain, but as soon as the members of Congress saw Mr. Twain, they immediately cried out for a story. For the next hour, Mr.

Twain told anecdotes. Finally, the members of Congress had to leave, although no testifying had been done about the bill before Congress. After that experience, Mr. Putnam was careful not to take Mr. Twain along when he went to Congress.

### **More Politics**

President Woodrow Wilson liked to tell a story of his incognito visit to Hannibal, Missouri, famous for its association with Mark Twain, who grew up there. President Wilson fell into conversation with a native and asked, “Have you ever heard of Tom Sawyer?” The native had not, so President Wilson asked, “Have you ever heard of Huckleberry Finn?” Again, the native had not, so President Wilson asked, “Do you know of Pudd’nhead Wilson?” This time, the native recognized the name and said, “Sure do — voted for him twice.”

### **The Damned Human Race**

In his personal copy of Charles Darwin’s *Journal of Researches* (1890), Mark Twain wrote, “Can any plausible excuse be furnished for the crime of creating the human race?”

### **Ulysses S. Grant**

When Ulysses S. Grant was dying of cancer of the throat, he knew he needed money to provide for his family after he died. Mark Twain came to the rescue. He had recently become a publisher, and he agreed to pay Mr. Grant the huge royalty of 20 percent for his memoirs, much more than authors usually received. In July 1885, only three days after he had completed the second volume of his memoirs, Mr. Grant died. His family received more than enough money to take care of their needs, collecting over \$400,000 from the sale of his book.

## **Mark Twain in Old Age**

When Mark Twain was very old, he sometimes would reach for a doorknob but miss it. He then would turn to his secretary and say, “Just practicing.”

## **A Funeral**

A few days before Christmas, a man named Smith at the Players Club asked Mark Twain to lend him his long-tailed black coat, as he needed something suitable to go to a funeral and he hadn't a long-tailed black coat himself. Mr. Twain agreed, but told Smith to take good care of the contents in the pockets. Smith found an assortment of junk in the pockets, which he wrapped up and gave to the clerk at Mr. Twain's hotel. When Mr. Twain was given the wrapped-up package later, he remarked that he must be getting an early Christmas present. After unwrapping the “present” and realizing where the junk had come from, he remarked, “I hope that damned Smith's funeral will be a failure.”

## **Reports of Mark Twain's Death**

While travelling abroad, Mark Twain read newspapers reports that he had died, so he sent this telegram to the Associated Press: “The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated.”

## **Joan of Arc**

When he was a young boy, Samuel Langhorne Clemens saw a piece of paper flying down the street. He chased after it, caught it, and discovered that the page came from a biography of Joan of Arc. He asked his brother who she was, discovered that she was a French heroine who had died by being burned at the stake, and started reading as much as he could about her. As an adult, he wrote a book titled *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, using his world-famous pseudonym, Mark Twain.

### **More Joan of Arc**

Among Mark Twain's favorites of the books he had written was *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, about a French heroine for whom Mr. Twain had enormous respect. Mr. Twain met the Archbishop of Orléans, who told him that St. Joan (aka the Maid of Orléans) would no doubt see to it that anyone who wrote so beautifully about her would get into Heaven. Mr. Twain replied that he would be "perfectly satisfied" in the next life if he were near Joan of Arc and as far away as possible from her enemies.

### **Cremation**

Mark Twain once remarked that when his time came, he wanted to be cremated. His pastor replied, "I wouldn't worry about that, if I had your chances."

### **Deep Pleasure**

When Mark Twain was dying, a relative wrote him to say that she had asked some nuns to pray for him. Mr. Twain wrote back, "I am grateful for the prayers of those good nuns and for yours; they have already answered themselves in giving me a deep pleasure."

### Appendix F: Some Mark Twain Quotations

It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt.

Go to Heaven for the climate, Hell for the company.

Suppose you were an idiot, and suppose you were a member of Congress; but I repeat myself.

Get your facts first, then you can distort them as you please.

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.

Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect.

A man who carries a cat by the tail learns something he can learn in no other way.

A person who won't read has no advantage over one who can't read.

Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear.

Truth is stranger than Fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn't.

In the first place, God made idiots. That was for practice. Then he made school boards.

Giving up smoking is the easiest thing in the world. I know because I've done it thousands of times.

A man is never more truthful than when he acknowledges himself a liar.



To succeed in life, you need two things: ignorance and confidence.

The lack of money is the root of all evil.

The only way to keep your health is to eat what you don't want, drink what you don't like, and do what you'd rather not.

It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so.

Do the right thing. It will gratify some people and astonish the rest.

Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society.

The secret of getting ahead is getting started.

It could probably be shown by facts and figures that there is no distinctly native criminal class except Congress.

Don't let schooling interfere with your education.

Patriot: the person who can holler the loudest without knowing what he is hollering about.

If the world comes to an end, I want to be in Cincinnati. Everything comes there ten years later.

It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand.

There are lies, damned lies, and statistics.

Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand.

It's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog.

When your friends begin to flatter you on how young you look, it's a sure sign you're getting old.

Honesty is the best policy — when there is money in it.

Never put off till tomorrow what you can do the day after tomorrow.

I can live for two months on a good compliment.

Cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education.

It is curious that physical courage should be so common in the world and moral courage so rare.

Man was made at the end of the week's work when God was tired.

It is better to deserve honors and not have them than to have them and not deserve them.

If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. And if it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the biggest one first.

The first of April is the day we remember what we are the other 364 days of the year.

Under certain circumstances, profanity provides a relief denied even to prayer.

By trying we can easily endure adversity. Another man's, I mean.

Everything has its limit — iron ore cannot be educated into gold.

Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising.

I was gratified to be able to answer promptly, and I did. I said I didn't know.

Man is the only animal that blushes — or needs to.

There are times when one would like to hang the whole human race, and finish the farce.

The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug.

There is no sadder sight than a young pessimist, except an old optimist.

Never pick a fight with people who buy ink by the barrel.

Familiarity breeds contempt — and children.

Good breeding consists in concealing how much we think of ourselves and how little we think of the other person.

Part of the secret of a success in life is to eat what you like and let the food fight it out inside.

Truth is the most valuable thing we have. Let us economize it.

Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.

No sinner is ever saved after the first twenty minutes of a sermon.

I was seldom able to see an opportunity until it had ceased to be one.

Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits.

It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.

I have never taken any exercise except sleeping and resting.

Truth is mighty and will prevail. There is nothing wrong with this, except that it ain't so.

Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do. Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do.

Thousands of geniuses live and die undiscovered — either by themselves or by others.

Let us not be too particular; it is better to have old secondhand diamonds than none at all.

I have made it a rule never to smoke more than one cigar at a time.

George Washington, as a boy, was ignorant of the commonest accomplishments of youth. He could not even lie.

I make it a rule never to smoke while I'm sleeping.

To be good is noble; but to show others how to be good is nobler and no trouble.

Humor must not professedly teach and it must not professedly preach, but it must do both if it would live forever.

There are basically two types of people: people who accomplish things, and people who claim to have accomplished things. The first group is less crowded.

Go to heaven for the climate and hell for the company.

A lie can travel half way around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes.

Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint.

Never tell the truth to people who are not worthy of it.

Classic — a book which people praise and don't read.

The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.

Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.

In a good bookroom you feel in some mysterious way that you are absorbing the wisdom contained in all the books through your skin, without even opening them.

Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first.

But who prays for Satan? Who, in eighteen centuries, has had the common humanity to pray for the one sinner that needed it most?

God created war so that Americans would learn geography.

Heaven goes by favor. If it went by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in.

I would rather have my ignorance than another man's knowledge, because I have so much more of it.

It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have those three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practice either.

We ought never to do wrong when people are looking.

Be good and you will be lonesome.

Books are the liberated spirits of men.

A full belly is little worth where the mind is starved.

Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits.

I was born modest, but it didn't last.

All good things arrive unto them that wait and don't die in the meantime.

Never tell the truth to people who are not worthy of it.

## Appendix G: About the Author

It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly a cry rang out, and on a hot summer night in 1954, Josephine, wife of Carl Bruce, gave birth to a boy — me. Unfortunately, this young married couple allowed Reuben Saturday, Josephine’s brother, to name their first-born. Reuben, aka “The Joker,” decided that Bruce was a nice name, so he decided to name me Bruce Bruce. I have gone by my middle name — David — ever since.

Being named Bruce David Bruce hasn’t been all bad. Bank tellers remember me very quickly, so I don’t often have to show an ID. It can be fun in charades, also. When I was a counselor as a teenager at Camp Echoing Hills in Warsaw, Ohio, a fellow counselor gave the signs for “sounds like” and “two words,” then she pointed to a bruise on her leg twice. Bruise Bruise? Oh yeah, Bruce Bruce is the answer!

Uncle Reuben, by the way, gave me a haircut when I was in kindergarten. He cut my hair short and shaved a small bald spot on the back of my head. My mother wouldn’t let me go to school until the bald spot grew out again.

Of all my brothers and sisters (six in all), I am the only transplant to Athens, Ohio. I was born in Newark, Ohio, and have lived all around Southeastern Ohio. However, I moved to Athens to go to Ohio University and have never left.

At Ohio U, I never could make up my mind whether to major in English or Philosophy, so I got a bachelor’s degree with a double major in both areas, then I added a Master of Arts degree in English and a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy. Yes, I have my MAMA degree.

Currently, and for a long time to come (I eat fruits and veggies), I am spending my retirement writing books such as *Nadia Comaneci: Perfect 10*, *The Funniest People in Dance*, *Homer’s Iliad: A Retelling in Prose*, and *William Shakespeare’s Othello: A Retelling in Prose*.

By the way, my sister Brenda Kennedy writes romances such as *A New Beginning* and *Shattered Dreams*.

## Appendix H: Some Books by David Bruce

### DISCUSSION GUIDE SERIES

*Dante's Inferno: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/342391>

*Dante's Paradise: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/345337>

*Dante's Purgatory: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/344723>

Dante's Inferno Haiku

<https://cosplayvideos.files.wordpress.com/2018/09/dante-inferno-haiku.pdf>

Dante's Purgatory Haiku

<https://cosplayvideos.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/dante-purgatory-haiku-pdf.pdf>

Dante's Paradise Haiku

<https://cosplayvideos.files.wordpress.com/2018/09/dante-paradise-haiku.pdf>

*Forrest Carter's The Education of Little Tree: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/340944>

*Homer's Iliad: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/364356>

*Homer's Odyssey: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/360552>

*Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/352848>

*Jerry Spinelli's Maniac Magee: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/339978>



*Jerry Spinelli's Stargirl: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/340610>

*Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal": A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/352048>

*Lloyd Alexander's The Black Cauldron: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/339002>

*Lloyd Alexander's The Book of Three: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/339120>

*Lloyd Alexander's The Castle of Llyr: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/338589>

*Lois Lowry's Number the Stars: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/339720>

*Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/350434>

*Mark Twain's The Adventures of Tom Sawyer: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/348104>

*Mark Twain's A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/351719>

*Mark Twain's The Prince and the Pauper: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/349030>

*Nancy Garden's Annie on My Mind: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/339564>

*Nicholas Sparks' A Walk to Remember: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/356224>

*Virgil, “The Fall of Troy”: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/356868>

*Virgil’s Aeneid: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/358529>

*Voltaire’s Candide: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/346971>

*William Shakespeare’s 1 Henry IV: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/355953>

*William Shakespeare’s Macbeth: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/354870>

*William Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/355465>

*William Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/354231>

*William Sleator’s Oddballs: A Discussion Guide*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/353345>

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## RETELLINGS OF A CLASSIC WORK OF LITERATURE

*Ben Jonson’s The Alchemist: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/731768>

*Ben Jonson’s Bartholomew Fair: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/759774>

*Ben Jonson’s The Case is Altered: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1112743>

*Ben Jonson's Catiline's Conspiracy: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1098400>

*Ben Jonson's The Devil is an Ass: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/953165>

*Ben Jonson's Epicene: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1073045>

*Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humor: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1104946>

*Ben Jonson's Every Man Out of His Humor: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1121591>

*Ben Jonson's The Fountain of Self-Love, or Cynthia's Revels: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1129496>

*Ben Jonson's The New Inn: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1081049>

*Ben Jonson's The Staple of News: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1088627>

*Ben Jonson's Volpone, or the Fox: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/745087>

*Christopher Marlowe's Complete Plays: Retellings*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/911460>

*Christopher Marlowe's Dido, Queen of Carthage: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/871108>

*Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: Retellings of the 1604 A-Text and of the 1616 B-Text*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/824058>

*Christopher Marlowe's Edward II: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/904128>

*Christopher Marlowe's The Massacre at Paris: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/880308>

*Christopher Marlowe's The Rich Jew of Malta: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/909794>

*Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Parts 1 and 2: Retellings*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/890081>

*Dante's Divine Comedy: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/238180>

<https://cosplayvideos.wordpress.com/2022/02/12/david-bruce-dantes-divine-comedy-a-retelling-free-pdf/>

*Dante's Inferno: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/89244>

*Dante's Purgatory: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/210951>

*Dante's Paradise: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/238110>

*The Famous Victories of Henry V: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/781086>

*From the Iliad to the Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose of Quintus of Smyrna's Posthomerica*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/287203>

*George Peele's The Arraignment of Paris: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/942964>

*George Peele's The Battle of Alcazar: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1006013>

*George's Peele's David and Bathsheba, and the Tragedy of Absalom: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/993326>

*George's Peele's Edward I: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1061540>

*George Peele's The Old Wives' Tale: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/918341>

*George-A-Greene, The Pinner of Wakefield: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1108197>

*The History of King Leir: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/800724>

*Homer's Iliad: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/264676>

*Homer's Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/87553>

*Jason and the Argonauts: A Retelling in Prose of Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/337653>

*The Jests of George Peele: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1064210>

*John Ford: Eight Plays Translated into Modern English*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/989979>

*John Ford's The Broken Heart: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/792090>

*John Ford's The Fancies, Chaste and Noble: A Retelling*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/989291>

***John Ford's The Lady's Trial: A Retelling***

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/985699>

***John Ford's The Lover's Melancholy: A Retelling***

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/946285>

***John Ford's Love's Sacrifice: A Retelling***

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/925020>

***John Ford's Perkin Warbeck: A Retelling***

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/937190>

***John Ford's The Queen: A Retelling***

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/930049>

***John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore: A Retelling***

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/771031>

***John Webster's The White Devil: A Retelling***

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1000808>

***King Edward III: A Retelling***

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/814530>

***The Merry Devil of Edmonton: A Retelling***

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/957047>

***Robert Greene's Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay: A Retelling***

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/915455>

***The Taming of a Shrew: A Retelling***

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1052341>

***Tarlton's Jests: A Retelling***

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/772884>

***The Trojan War and Its Aftermath: Four Ancient Epic Poems***

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/486330>

*Virgil's Aeneid: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/277646>

*William Shakespeare's 5 Late Romances: Retellings in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/724666>

*William Shakespeare's 10 Histories: Retellings in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/776868>

*William Shakespeare's 11 Tragedies: Retellings in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/776890>

*William Shakespeare's 12 Comedies: Retellings in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/715562>

*William Shakespeare's 38 Plays: Retellings in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/777062>

*William Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 1: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/396839>

*William Shakespeare's 2 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 2: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/502075>

*William Shakespeare's 1 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 1: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/675826>

*William Shakespeare's 2 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 2: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/687115>

*William Shakespeare's 3 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 3: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/694202>

*William Shakespeare's All's Well that Ends Well: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/660279>

*William Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/561440>

*William Shakespeare's As You Like It: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/411180>

*William Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/474177>

*William Shakespeare's Coriolanus: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/651995>

*William Shakespeare's Cymbeline: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/607757>

*William Shakespeare's Hamlet: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/521558>

*William Shakespeare's Henry V: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/494583>

*William Shakespeare's Henry VIII: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/702433>

*William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/417297>

*William Shakespeare's King John: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/667943>

*William Shakespeare's King Lear: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/549148>

*William Shakespeare's Love's Labor's Lost: A Retelling in Prose*



<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/640495>

*William Shakespeare's Macbeth: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/371976>

*William Shakespeare's Measure for Measure: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/530136>

*William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/485384>

*William Shakespeare's The Merry Wives of Windsor: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/510046>

*William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/389517>

*William Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/432053>

*William Shakespeare's Othello: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/469501>

*William Shakespeare's Pericles, Prince of Tyre: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/588726>

*William Shakespeare's Richard II: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/633694>

*William Shakespeare's Richard III: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/598141>

*William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/385811>

*William Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/424622>

*William Shakespeare's The Tempest: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/437521>

*William Shakespeare's Timon of Athens: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/626171>

*William Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/569421>

*William Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/617533>

*William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/404123>

*William Shakespeare's The Two Gentlemen of Verona: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/575743>

*William Shakespeare's The Two Noble Kinsmen: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/712849>

*William Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale: A Retelling in Prose*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/539561>

#### OTHER FICTION

*Candide's Two Girlfriends (Adult)*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/247531>

*The Erotic Adventures of Candide (Adult)*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/249299>

*Honey Badger Goes to Hell — and Heaven*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/306009>

*I Want to Die — Or Fight Back*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/83479>

“School Legend: A Short Story”

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1123252>

“Why I Support Same-Sex Civil Marriage”

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/34568>

## CHILDREN’S BIOGRAPHY

*Nadia Comaneci: Perfect Ten*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/96982>

## PERSONAL FINANCE

*How to Manage Your Money: A Guide for the Non-Rich*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/469305>

## ANECDOTE COLLECTIONS

*250 Anecdotes About Opera*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/310277>

*250 Anecdotes About Religion*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/106782>

*250 Anecdotes About Religion: Volume 2*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/106861>

*250 Music Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/427367>

*Be a Work of Art: 250 Anecdotes and Stories*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/105419>

*Boredom is Anti-Life: 250 Anecdotes and Stories*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/156495>

*The Coolest People in Art: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/97814>

*The Coolest People in the Arts: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/159914>

*The Coolest People in Books: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/98030>

*The Coolest People in Comedy: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/98364>

*Create, Then Take a Break: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/254240>

*Don't Fear the Reaper: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/98212>

*The Funniest People in Art: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/99002>

*The Funniest People in Books: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/99313>

*The Funniest People in Books, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/105652>

*The Funniest People in Books, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/105939>

*The Funniest People in Comedy: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/99159>

*The Funniest People in Dance: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/98588>

*The Funniest People in Families: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/108542>

*The Funniest People in Families, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/108809>

*The Funniest People in Families, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/108821>

*The Funniest People in Families, Volume 4: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/108830>

*The Funniest People in Families, Volume 5: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/108841>

*The Funniest People in Families, Volume 6: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/108857>

*The Funniest People in Movies: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/34647>

*The Funniest People in Music: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/100442>

*The Funniest People in Music, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/100473>

*The Funniest People in Music, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/100544>

*The Funniest People in Neighborhoods: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/106442>

*The Funniest People in Relationships: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/108060>

*The Funniest People in Sports: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/107239>

*The Funniest People in Sports, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/107576>

*The Funniest People in Television and Radio: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/106234>

*The Funniest People in Theater: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/104257>

*The Funniest People Who Live Life: 250 Anecdotes*

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/107847>

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