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*Adventures of
Huckleberry Finn*
Mark Twain

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Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Chapter One

1. Huck reasons that some people reject certain activity only because “they don’t know nothing about it.” The Widow Douglas “took snuff...of course that was all right, because she done it herself.” What do you think Huck is saying about the way people discriminate between right or wrong behavior? Explain Huck’s point to a class member who does not understand.
2. Huck has many superstitious explanations for otherwise ordinary events. An owl “hoots about somebody that was dead,” and dogs cry “about somebody that was going to die.” Huck even ties locks in his hair to keep witches away. Think of two superstitions that you know about. Do you believe in them? Why or why not? How do you think they began?

Chapter Two

3. Huck shrugs off his religion lessons, he enjoys smoking, and he sneaks out of the house at midnight to meet Tom Sawyer. If this story took place in the present, how would you describe Huck and Tom? Are they juvenile delinquents or are they normal young boys? How do you interpret the act of Tom leaving money for the candles he takes?
4. Tom Sawyer organizes a secret gang of “highwaymen” for the business of “robbery and murder.” Were you ever a member of a secret club or “gang” when you were growing up? What made you join? If you did not stay in the club, what made you leave?

Chapter Four

5. Frightened by his father’s footprints in the snow, Huck runs to Judge Thatcher’s house. Huck tries to give his money to the judge, but he does not explain why. Write a letter to Judge Thatcher and explain Huck’s motives.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Chapter Seven

10. Tom thinks Huck is dead. Write the entry in Tom's diary for that day. See if you can write it the way Tom would have, in dialect. We have begun it for you.

Dear Diary,

My closest pal done gone and got hisself kilt. Now...

11. While staging his own "murder," Huck carefully provides clues that lead people to believe that he is dead. "They won't ever hunt the river for anything but my dead carcass. They'll soon get tired of that, and won't bother no more about me." Why do you suppose Huck does not worry about how people (such as pap or the widow) will feel about his "death"?
12. After Huck escapes, he discovers the beauty of the night sky for the first time. Describe one of your own memories of an experience in nature. If you do not remember, think of a place where you would like to go. What makes it appealing?

Chapter Eight

13. Jim is frightened by Huck's amazing appearance on the island. Jim believes in ghosts. Many people believe in life after death. Do you have a strong belief in something that most people would find strange? Explain what that belief is.
14. In one of Twain's other books, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, he writes, "But the elastic heart of youth cannot be compressed into one constrained shape long at a time." Explain what Twain means by that sentence.

Chapter Twenty-Four

41. When the rascallions get sympathy after pretending to be brothers of the deceased Peter Wilks, Huck says it is “enough to make a body ashamed of the human race.” Think of an event from the news, a movie, or your own life that made you ashamed or embarrassed of the human race. Why do you think the blame falls on everyone rather than just the guilty party?
42. The crooks practice a crime we now call “identity-theft.” Why do people have an advantage when they know someone’s personal information? What can they do with it? Has anyone ever used personal information against you? What did you do about it?

Chapter Twenty-Five

43. What do you feel contributes more to the ease with which the king and duke fasten their hold on the Wilks family: the duke and the king’s skill, or the gullibility of the family? Why?
44. Assume the role of Doctor Robinson. Do you feel that he argued enough, or should he have said more about the con men? Does he remind you of any other character in this novel? If so, which one? Why? Does he remind you of another character you know?

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Chapter Thirty-Three

60. Tom Sawyer's initial shock fades quickly after he and Huck are reunited. Imagine the feelings you would experience if one of your friends staged a murder and told no one. After searching for the body, attending the funeral, and the mourning, how would you feel if you suddenly discovered that the person was alive and well? How would you treat your friend?
61. Tom wanted to know all about Huck's journey "because it was a grand adventure, and mysterious, and so it hit him where he lived." Where does Tom "live?" Explain your answer to someone who can't figure out what Twain meant.
62. Huck informs Tom that he plans to steal Jim out of slavery. Tom exclaims, "What! Why Jim is—." Finish Tom's sentence.
63. After the king and duke get tarred and feathered, Huck thinks about the human conscience. "If I had a yaller dog that didn't know no more than a person's conscience does, I would pison him." Interpret Huck's thought for a student who does not understand what Huck means by it.

Chapter Thirty-Four

64. Huck is quite serious about Jim's escape, but Tom appears to make a game out of it. Write a letter to Tom and explain the seriousness of the situation. Explain why he is wrong in designing such an elaborate escape plan.

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Wrap-up

74. This novel is written in dialect, which means that the text is spelled as it is spoken: “De river wuz arisin’ en dey wuz a good current; so I reck’n’d at by fo’ in de mawnin’ I’d be twenty-five mile down de river...” Do you think this writing style helps or hurts the story? What does it do for the setting? Did you get used to it by the end of the novel?
75. Think of three situations in this novel in which Huck had to make a decision; for example, when Huck encountered the rascallions, he could have turned them away instead of helping them. For each instance, explain whether you would support Huck or do something different.
76. What do you think Huck Finn will do when he reaches adulthood? Match him to a trade or a career that suits him. What makes it an appropriate career for Huck? Repeat the process for Tom Sawyer.
77. Write a speech, as Huck would give it, on the subject of slavery, cheating, education, or friendship.