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Reflections: A Student Response Journal



*The Adventures of
Tom Sawyer*
Mark Twain



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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Chapter I

Tom Plays, Fights, and Hides

1. Tom's Aunt Polly, who is raising him, seems caring of Tom and strict with him at the same time. Describe a relationship you have had, or know of, that would fall into this category.
2. Tom tells Sid that he is going to "lick" him. He also picks a fight with a new boy who has come to St. Petersburg. Write a letter to a friend describing Tom and what thoughts you have about why he is in conflict with his aunt, Sid, and even a boy who is a stranger to him.

Chapter II

The Glorious Whitewasher

3. Scheming seems to come naturally to Tom, as can be seen in his manipulating of Ben and other boys to whitewash the fence while he does nothing. Relate a time from your own or another person's life when someone was being manipulated without even realizing it.
4. We read about Tom's thoughts that work is anything one has to do and play is something one is not obligated to do. Write a short paragraph telling what you think of this idea.

Chapter XV

Tom's Stealthy Visit Home

29. Tom does some eavesdropping in this chapter. What he hears as he is mourned by his Aunt Polly touches his conscience. Describe your feelings about eavesdropping in real life.
30. The boys' life in nature on the island seems very pleasant. Relate an incident from your own life when you have enjoyed a time close to nature.

Chapter XVI

First Pipes—"I've Lost My Knife"

31. There is a vivid description of a severe thunder-storm, which began on the island while the boys slept. Write a description of a time when you were younger and in the dark while a thunderstorm was happening. What were your feelings?
32. All three boys seem to be very imaginative about the kind of lives they would actually like to be living. If you were to tell them your thoughts about the best kind of life to have, what would you say? Try to describe something ideal and why you feel this way.

Response Journal

68. Tom convinces Huck to go back in the cave to look for the treasure Tom believes is there. Would you agree that Tom never seems to learn a lesson from his misadventures? Write the angry things Aunt Polly might have said to Tom about this if she found out he had returned to the cave.

Chapter XXXIV

Floods of Gold

69. The treasure of gold coins is revealed to the townspeople in this chapter, and everyone is marveling at the spectacle of it and at Tom and Huck's riches. In our times, people can become millionaires from appearing on television programs or winning a lottery. Write a letter to a friend about what you would do with such a treasure should such a thing happen to you.
70. After Tom and Huck become rich, the newspaper writes biographical sketches of them. Try your hand at writing an account of the life of either Tom or Huck. Concentrate on the time before the book started.

Chapter XXXV

Respectable Huck Joins the Gang

71. Sometimes, circumstances create great changes in people's lives, as they do in this novel with the lives of Tom and Huck. Relate something from real life, or that you have learned about from the media, where a person's life became utterly changed by some circumstance or other. The change can be positive or negative.