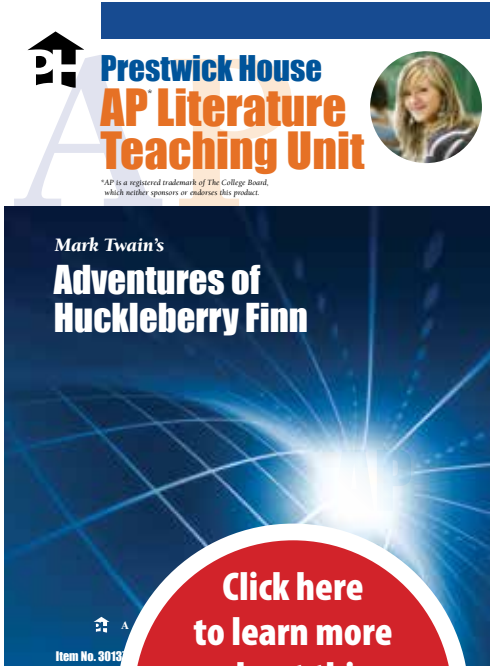




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Teaching Unit

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

by Mark Twain

Written by Jill Geissler



Prestwick House

Item No. 301378

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. analyze the characters of Huck and Jim and their relationship to each other.
2. explain the impact of the first-person protagonist narrator on the story.
3. discuss the techniques Twain uses to create suspense.
4. discuss Twain's use of humor, satire, and occasional pathos.
5. examine, identify, and discuss the use of imagery and figurative language in the novel.
6. analyze the importance of literary elements, such as irony and foreshadowing, on the development of the plot.
7. identify and explain Twain's social themes as expressed in the novel.
8. identify and explain the significance in the characterization of different social classes during the time period of the novel.
9. respond to multiple choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
10. respond to writing prompts similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
11. offer a close reading of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and support all assertions and interpretations with direct evidence from the text, from authoritative critical knowledge of the genre, or from authoritative criticism of the novel.

Lecture Notes

MARK TWAIN, *THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER*, AND *ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN*

Mark Twain:

- Mark Twain was his pen name inspired by a riverboat term, “Mark twain,” signaling depth and the point where the boat could drift on its own current.
- Real name: Samuel Clemens.
- Born November 30, 1835 in Florida, Missouri.
- Parents were from Virginia, moving to Missouri later in life with their children.
- In his late formative years, Twain moved to Hannibal, Missouri. This area’s modern tourism revolves around Twain and the characters of his novels. It is similar to the setting for his most popular novels, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which take place in St. Petersburg, Missouri.
- Twain tried his hand at many jobs prior to writing including: a riverboat pilot, a printer, and a hopeful gold miner.
- He married Olivia Langdon in 1870.
- Writing pieces included: various letters for newspapers, *The Innocents Abroad*, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*, *The Prince and the Pauper*, *Roughing It*, *The Gilded Age*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Life on the Mississippi*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *Pudd’nhead Wilson*.
- Many of Twain’s books contained powerful social themes challenging traditional Southern ways of thinking. In some cases, this led to extreme controversy and the banning of the book. (See section on banned books following.)
- Mark Twain died in 1910 on April 21st. He was 75 years old.

Tom Sawyer:

- Mark Twain’s first official novel. His previous works could be considered short stories, and *The Gilded Age* was co-written with Charles Dudley Warner.
- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was published in 1876.
- The main character of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is loosely based on a childhood friend of Twain’s.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION #2

Read the following passage from Chapter 5 and write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the author's methods of characterization. Do not merely summarize the passage or offer a mere character description.

I had shut the door to. Then I turned around, and there he was. I used to be scared of him all the time, he tanned me so much. I reckoned I was scared now, too; but in a minute I see I was mistaken—that is, after the first jolt, as you may say, when my breath sort of hitched, he being so unexpected; but right away after I see I warn't scared of him worth bothring about.

He was most fifty, and he looked it. His hair was long and tangled and greasy, and hung down, and you could see his eyes shining through like he was behind vines. It was all black, no gray; so was his long, mixed-up whiskers. There warn't no color in his face, where his face showed; it was white; no like another man's white, but a white to make a body sick, a white to make a body's flesh crawl—a tree-toad white, a fish-belly white. As for his clothes—just rags, that was all. He had one ankle resting on t'other knee; the boot on that foot was busted, and two of his toes stuck through, and he worked them now and then. His hat was laying on the floor—and old black slouch with the top caved in, like a lid.

I stood a-looking at him; he set there a-looking at me, with his chair tilted back a little. I set the candle down. I noticed the window was up; so he had clumb in by the shed. He kept a-looking me all over. By and by he says:

“Starchy clothes—very. You think you're a good deal of a big-bug, don't you?”

“Maybe I am, maybe I ain't,” I says.

“Don't you give me none o' your lip,” says he. “You've put on considerable many frills since I been away. I'll take you down a peg before I get done with you. You're educated, too, they say—can read and write. You think you're better'n your father, now, don't you, because he can't? I'll take it out of you. Who told you you might meddle with such hifalut'n foolishness, hey? Who told you you could?”

“The widow. She told me”

“The widow, hey? And who told the widow she could put in her shovel about a thing that ain't none of her business?”

“Nobody never told her.”

“Well, I'll learn her how to meddle. 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.”

I took up a book and begun something about General Washington and the wars. When I'd read about half a minute, he fetched the book a whack with his hand and knocked it across the house. He says:

“It's so. You can do it. I had my doubts when you told me. Now looky here; you stop that putting on frills. I won't have it. I'll lay for you, my smarty; and if I catch you about that school I'll tan you good. First you know you'll get religion, too. I never see such a son.”

He took up a little blue and yaller picture of some cows and a boy, and says:

“What's this?”

“It's something they give me for learning my lessons good.”

He tore it up, and says:

“I'll give you something better—I'll give you a cowhide.”

He set there a-mumblin' and a-growlin' a minute, and then he says:

“Ain't you a sweet-scented dandy, though? A bed; and bedclothes; and a look'n'-glass; and a piece of carpet on the floor—and your own father got to sleep with the hogs in the tanyard. I never see such a son. I bet I'll take some o' these frills out o' you before I'm done with you. Why,

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Chapter 1

1. What can the reader expect in a story told from first-person point of view?

2. Describe the setting as it is established in the first chapter.

3. What evidence is presented to establish Huck as a youth rather than an adult?

4. What exposition is provided by Huck, which he claims is the prequel to this story.

Chapter 10

1. How does Huck's view of superstition evolve over the course of this chapter?

2. What does the following paragraph indicate about the development of Huck's character?

“Jim sucked and sucked at the jug, and now and then he got out of his head and pitched around and yelled; but every time he come to himself he went to sucking at the jug again. His foot swelled up pretty big, and so did his leg; but by and by the drunk begun to come, and so I judged he was all right; but I'd druther been bit with a snake then Pap's whisky.”

3. How does Huck's dressing up as a girl help to establish his independence as a character?

Chapter 20

1. How does Twain again use weather to emphasize the mood and rising action of a conflict?

2. What is Twain suggesting by having the king and the duke pull their first “con” at a religious revival?

3. How does Twain continue the lightened mood of the chapter in the last few lines?

4. What solution to a complication of the plot is temporarily solved in the chapter?

Chapter 30

1. Explain how this chapter is the resolution of the Wilks framework story?

2. The king and the duke make amends and indulge in drinks. What is Twain probably suggesting by having these characters take to drinking?

3. What single incident proves the king and the duke to be nearly as stupid as the townspeople?

Chapter 39

1. How does Twain begin to build the climax of Jim’s escape plan by using the element of suspense?

2. How has the entire episode of attempting to free Jim contributed to Twain’s theme of moral ambiguity?

Chapter 40

1. Explain the verbal irony in Huck’s statement: “We was all glad as we could be, but Tom was the gladdest of all because he had a bullet in the calf of his leg.”

2. What startling revelation does Huck come to regarding Jim?
