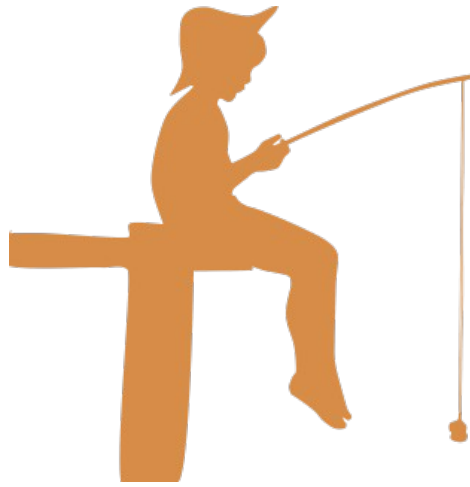


The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn



By

Mark Twain

A Novel Study
by Nat and Joel Reed

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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on three or four chapters of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and is comprised of these different activities:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A **portfolio cover** (page 7) as well as a **Checklist** (page 6) are included so that students may track of their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to the following:

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

Themes and **topics** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include The United States of the mid 18th Century, Mississippi River, slavery, the struggle between civilization and freedom, race, personal growth, friendship, personal growth, loyalty and courage.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *anagrams*
7. Identify *personification*
8. Use of singular/plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create *similes*
14. Identification of a *cliffhanger*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Identify the climax of the novel
4. Five W's Chart

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Protagonists/antagonists
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Comparing two Characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Complete a KWS Chart
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review

Art Activities

1. Design an Information Card
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel

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Synopsis

“The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn” is considered by many to be the greatest of all American novels. This sequel to Twain’s “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer,” is a first person narrative told by its title character. The novel picks up where “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer” leaves off. Huck Finn, who is now wealthy with the discovery of treasure at the end of “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer”, finds himself in great danger from his abusive drunkard father who wishes to cash in on Huck’s fortune. Fearing for his life Huck believes that he must run away from his home with the Widow Douglas and her Sister, Miss Watson. Huck fakes his own death and escapes to Jackson’s Island. There he finds Miss Watson’s escaped slave, Jim. Together they escape down the Mississippi River on a raft. (Publisher)

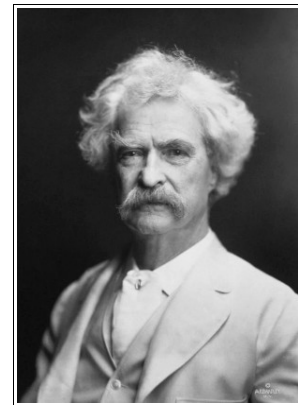
Author Biography

Mark Twain

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (November 30, 1835 – April 21, 1910), better known by his pen name **Mark Twain**, was an American writer, humorist, entrepreneur, publisher, and lecturer. Among his novels are **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer** (1875) and its sequel, **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn** (1885), the latter often called “The Great American Novel”.

Twain was raised in Hannibal, Missouri, which later provided the setting for *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. He served an apprenticeship with a printer and then worked as a typesetter. He referred humorously to his lack of success at mining, eventually turning to journalism for the *Virginia City Territorial*

Enterprise. His wit and satire, in prose and in speech, earned praise from critics and peers. (Courtesy of Wikipedia – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Twain)



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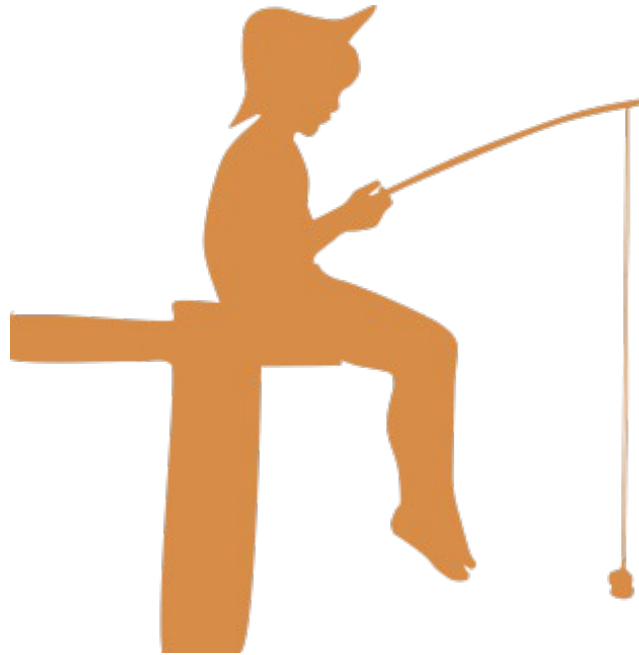


Student Checklist

Student Name _____

Assignment	Grade / Level	Comments

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Name: _____

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Chapters 1-3



Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is (of course) Huckleberry Finn. Huck is one of the most well-known characters in American literature. The novel has been a beloved (and controversial) classic for more than 100 years. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an interesting and memorable **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

tolerable	commenced	victuals	ornery
ransom	bothersome	providence	scour

1. No one enjoyed the _____ being served for dinner.
2. We found the accommodations to be merely _____.
3. “Please _____ the entire area until you find the necklace,” she demanded.
4. The rich man's daughter was held for a _____ of one million dollars.
5. We _____ operations at the orchard five years ago.
6. That old grouch is the most _____ man I have every met.
7. The rash proved to be quite _____ for all of the afflicted ones.
8. We will rely on the blessings of _____ to get out of this mess.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the novel for most of Chapter One?

2. Match each name with the proper description:

1	Miss Watson
2	Tom Sawyer
3	Judge Thatcher
4	Jim
5	The Widow Douglas
6	Huckleberry Finn
7	Ben Rogers

A	Tom called him a numskull.
B	Invested Tom and Huck's money.
C	Tried to refine Tom's wild plans.
D	Loved to read Bible stories.
E	A tolerable slim old maid.
F	Showed leadership qualities.
G	Worked for Miss Watson.

3. Find evidence from the story to prove that both Huck and Jim are very superstitious.

Huck	
Jim	

4. Which of the two ladies (The Widow Douglas or Miss Watson) do you think Huck found most tiresome? Please defend your answer with support from the novel.

5. Despite Tom's enthusiasm for robbers, there is evidence from Chapter Two which indicates that he has an honest heart. What did he do to demonstrate his honesty?

6. Tom's plan was to kill some of the people they robbed and to ransom others – even though he wasn't sure what *ransom* meant. Was does **ransom** mean?

7. Why do you think Huck and the other boys willingly submitted to Tom's leadership?

8. What was the reason Huck gave for determining that the body they found floating in the river was not his Pap?

9. What are three adjectives which would describe the personality of Miss Watson?

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10. **Stereotypes.** Some of the characters in this novel are given to spouting statements which we would consider inaccurate stereotypes. One such example is found in Chapter Three: . . . *I sweat like an Injun* . . . Why is such a statement inappropriate and insulting – not only to indigenous people, but to everyone?

11. Most people find it extremely offensive to hear the “N” word spoken in public or even read about in a book such as this one. Why do you think censors have not removed the “N” word from this novel and replaced it with a more appropriate word or expression?

Language Activities



A. What Do You Know About Genies?

Chapter Three ends with Huck deciding that Tom's story about magic genies is just so much nonsense. But are magic genies really just a figment of someone's overactive imagination, or is there some truth to the existence of these fantastic beings? Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, research three fascinating facts about genies and record this information below.



1	
2	
3	

B. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. In Chapter One the author writes, . . . *and the wind was trying to whisper something to me and I couldn't make out what it was* . . . In this example the wind takes on human characteristics by whispering.



a) Why do you think personification is a literary device used by many authors?

b) Create your own example of personification.

c) Rewrite the above sentence without changing the overall meaning so that the wind is no longer personified.

C. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **PAN** can also form the word **NAP**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters.

Each of the words in the left-hand column are found in this section of our novel.

Word	Anagram	Clue
sweat		Squander.
spider		Levered.
tears		Charges.
devil		Existed.
charm		Walk in a military manner.
ransom		Mansions.

D. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. We find an example of this in Chapter One: “*What, and I (Huck) as high as a tree and as big as a church?*”

In this example what things are being compared?

--	--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your imagination:

a) Blowing a bubble from a piece of chewing gum.

b) your own example

E. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in this section. In each of the six boxes below list the six events that you have chosen, describing what happened and telling why you consider this to be an essential part of the story.

