

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Teaching Unit

Study Guide Student Copy

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.
5. How does Twain establish Huck Finn as a mischievous rascal?
6. How does Twain incorporate humor through point of view in this chapter?
7. What evidence of Huck's own superstitious nature does Twain show the reader at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 2

1. How does the author create suspense at the start of the chapter?
2. Explain the significance of the expression “sign your name in blood” as it is used in this chapter.
3. How does Twain use sentence structure in the following passage to emphasize the point of view and characterization of Huck Finn?

“Everybody was willing. So Tom got out a sheet of paper that he had wrote the oath on, and read it. It swore every boy to stick to the band, and never tell any of the secrets; and if anybody done anything to any boy in the band, whichever boy was ordered to kill that person and his family must do it, and he mustn't eat and he mustn't sleep till he had killed them and hacked a cross in their breasts, which was the sign of the band. And nobody that didn't belong to the band could use that mark, and if he did he must be sued; and if he done it again he must be killed. And if anybody that belonged to the band told the secrets, he must have his throat cut, and then have his carcass burnt up and the ashes scattered all around, and his name blotted off the list with blood and never mentioned again by the gang, but have a curse put on it and be forgot forever.” (pg. 19)

4. In what ways is Huck different from the other boys in the gang?

Chapter 3

1. Describe how Huck Finn changes his opinion of Tom Sawyer as this chapter develops.
2. Explain the significance of the woods to Huck's life.
3. List and briefly explain the misrepresentation up until this chapter that Tom Sawyer believes to be the truth.

Chapter 4

1. What is Huck's reaction to the footprints, and what could the reader infer about the future plot of the story using his reaction as evidence?
2. Speculate why Huck gives all of his money to Judge Thatcher.
3. How does this chapter depict Jim as Huck's confidante? Why is this relationship successful?
4. Why does Huck trust the magic hairball's advice more than Jim's?
5. What example of foreshadowing does Twain use in this chapter?

Chapter 5

1. How does Twain express his skepticism toward men who claim to be “reformed” and those who push to “reform” others?

Chapter 6

1. How does the foreshadowing in Chapter 4 come to a resolution at the beginning of Chapter 6?
2. What is ironic about Pa’s holding Huck against his will?
3. How does Twain create humor in the tense situation of Pa’s drunken rage in the cabin?
4. How does Twain begin to question the morality of slavery in this chapter?

Chapter 7

1. How is suspense created in this chapter?
2. After the disappointment of their last interaction, explain why Huck says: "I did wish Tom Sawyer was there; I knowed he would take an interest in this kind of business, and throw in the fancy touches. Nobody could spread himself like Tom Sawyer in such a thing as that." (pg. 43)
3. Describe the examples of imagery used at the end of this chapter.

Chapter 8

1. Explain how Twain's experience as a riverboat captain and the writing technique of local color enhance the exposition of this chapter.
2. What satire about religion does Huck offer in this chapter?
3. Explain the meaning of Huck's expression: "There warn't much sand in my craw"? (pg. 49)
4. List and summarize the situations of superstitions mentioned in this chapter.
5. How is Jim portrayed as a stereotypical Southern slave in this chapter?

Chapter 9

1. Explain the significance of the Mississippi Valley's caves and caverns in the story thus far.
2. How does the weather contrast with the mood of Jim and Huck at the start of this chapter?
3. Identify the figurative devices used in the paragraph below.

“We spread the blankets inside for a carpet, and eat our dinner in there. We put all the other things handy at the back of the cavern. Pretty soon it darkened up, and begun to thunder and lighten; so the birds was right about it. Directly it begun to rain, and it rained like all fury, too, and I never see the wind blow so. It was one of these regular summer storms. It would get so dark that it looked all blue-black outside, and lovely; and the rain would thrash along by so thick that the trees off a little ways looked dim and spider-webby; and here would come a blast of wind that would bend the trees down and turn up the pale underside of the leaves; and then a perfect ripper of a gust would follow along and set the branches to tossing their arms as if they was just wild; and next, when it was just about the bluest and blackest—*fst!* It was as bright as glory, and you'd have a little glimpse of tree-tops a-plunging about away off yonder in the storm, hundreds of yards further than you could see before; dark as sin again in a second, and now you'd hear the thunder let go with an awful crash, and then go rumbling, grumbling, tumbling, down the sky towards the under side of the world, like rolling empty barrels down-stairs—where it's long stairs and they bounce a good deal, you know.” (pgs. 57 - 58)

4. Although some critics find fault with what they consider to be Twain's “heavy-handed” use of such figurative and sound devices, what effect does he create with this language?
5. In what way does Jim assume a father-like role to Huck at the end of the chapter temporarily establishing him as a foil to Pap?

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." (pg. 62)

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

Chapter 11

1. Explain the significance of Chapter 11's title, "They're After Us!"
2. Hypothesize why the reward for Pap is only two hundred dollars and the reward for Jim is three hundred dollars given that Pap is suspected as Huck's killer.
3. What theme is Twain building in this chapter when Huck chooses not to turn Jim in for the reward money?

Chapter 12

1. What do the events of this chapter suggest about Huck's personal development?
2. What purpose does this chapter serve?

Chapter 13

1. Identify the hyperbole in the first paragraph of this chapter and explain why it is used here.
2. How does Twain, again, portray Huck Finn as a boy of quick wits?
3. In previous chapters, Huck refers to Tom Sawyer as a role model by asking himself, "What would Tom Sawyer do?" Explain another role model presented in the chapter, as well as the situation and significance around this reference.
4. Explain the pun in the last sentence of this chapter: "By the time I got there the sky was beginning to get a little gray in the East; so we struck for an island, and hid the raft, and sunk in the skiff, and turned in and slept like dead people." (pg. 81)

Chapter 14

1. What is the purpose of this chapter?
2. In what way is Jim's ignorance obvious through the course of the conversation?

Chapter 15

1. Explain the significance of this chapter's title, "Fooling Poor Old Jim."
2. What does Huck do at the end of this chapter that was surprising in the historical and social context of the book? Why is this a turning point for Huck and Jim's friendship?

Chapter 16

1. What is the internal conflict developed in this chapter?
2. How does Huck's moral conflict reach a climax in chapter sixteen?
3. How does this chapter end?

Chapter 17

1. Describe how the character of Buck Grangerford could be a foil to Huck Finn.
2. What is the purpose of the long passages in the chapter describing the Grangerford house?
3. What is the author's purpose in the lengthy passages about Emmeline Grangerford?

Chapter 18

1. Explain why this chapter creates a framework story in the novel.
2. What does the author mean in the description of Colonel Grangerford in the following passage:

“When he turned into a cloud-bank it was awful dark for half a minute, and that was enough; there wouldn’t nothing go wrong again for a week.”
(pg. 110)

3. In describing Buck’s attack on Harney and the Grangerford/Sheperdson feud, what social point is Twain expressing?
4. What is ironic about the Grangerfords’ and Sheperdsons’ attending church?
5. Explain how the first person point of view naturally omits a main character from the majority of this chapter and the previous chapter? How does this affect the reader’s interpretation of the novel?
6. What event makes Huck want to leave the Grangerford property? When does he finally feel safe again?

Chapter 19

1. What effect does Twain achieve with the personification at the beginning of this chapter?
2. Explain the intent of the imagery appealing to all five senses Twain uses as the beginning of this chapter.
3. Contrast Jim's and Huck's reactions to the duke and the king.

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 21

1. Use evidence to explain how Twain characterizes the Arkansas townspeople.
2. What is the author's purpose in portraying the townspeople as he does?
3. Why is Twain using the events involving the king and the duke to blur the lines between the comic and the dramatic?

Chapter 22

1. What is ironic about Huck's not understanding the stunt with the drunken horseman at the circus? Why does Twain include this episode in this chapter?
2. How does the chapter create a mild amount of suspense, leaving the reader with hope for the con artists?

Chapter 23

1. How is the “success” of the duke’s and king’s second advertised play Twain’s final jab at the town?
2. What effect does Twain create through the story of Jim’s deaf daughter?
3. What epiphany does Huck have in this chapter that advances his inner conflict?

Chapter 24

1. How does Huck’s opinion of the king and duke contrast with his previous opinions?
2. What does the king’s conversation on the steamboat foreshadow?

Chapter 25

1. What is the primary source of suspense in this chapter?
2. Why does Twain seem to always portray the con men's victims as either greedy or foolish themselves?

Chapter 26

1. How does the description of the house contribute to the characterization of the three daughters? How are they different from the Grangerfords?
2. What is the literal meaning of Huck's expression, "I see I was up a stump?" (pg. 168)
3. What narrative purpose does Huck's eavesdropping on the conversation between the king and the duke serve?

Chapter 27

1. With what bit of dark humor does Twain begin this chapter?

2. How does Twain continue to question the morality of slavery in this chapter?

Chapter 28

1. How does this chapter illustrate growth on Huck's part?

2. Explain the significance of Huck's statement at the end of this chapter:

"I judged I had done it pretty neat—I reckoned Tom Sawyer couldn't a 'done it no neater himself. Of course he would 'a' throwed more style into it, but I can't do that very handy, not being brung up to it." (pg. 187)

Chapter 29

1. What darkly comic elements does Twain use in this chapter?
2. How does the weather in the graveyard scene contribute to the mood?
3. How do Huck's emotions range during the course of this 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 31

1. What does the king and duke's selling Jim signify?
2. How does this event advance Huck's moral conflict?
3. What is the outcome of this conflict?
4. Part of Twain's artistry is to attack something while not appearing to be attacking it. Explain how he does this in this chapter.

Chapter 32

1. How does the setting contribute to the mood at the beginning of this chapter?
2. What white attitude of the time does Twain attack in Huck's conversation with Aunt Sally? What theme does this reinforce?
3. How does Twain use coincidence to further his development of the character of Huck?

Chapter 33

1. What is ironic about Tom Sawyer's agreeing to help Huck free Jim.
2. Identify Aunt Sally's malapropism in the dialogue that follows and explain how it contributes humor to the scene:

"No—not impudent whelps, Sid. You ought to had your jaws boxed; I hain't been so put out since I don't know when. But I don't care, I don't mind the terms—I'd be willing to stand a thousand such jokes to have you here. Well, to think of that performance! I don't deny it, I was most purified with astonishment when you give me that smack." (pg. 219)

3. Why is the title, "The Pitiful Ending of Royalty," significant to this chapter?

Chapter 34

1. Using evidence from this chapter, contrast Tom's and Huck's ideas of social morality. How does this contribute to the characterization of these two characters?
2. How does Twain add complications to the plot by having the boys accept Tom's plan rather than Huck's?

Chapter 35

1. How does the return of Tom to the story, Chapters 34 through 43 result in a change of tone and mood?
2. Tom's elaborate plans can be seen as merely a child's imagination filled with incidents from books. However, Twain makes a pointed attack in this planning. Where is it directed?

Chapter 36

1. What evidence does this chapter provide that the plan to release Jim is little more than a game to Tom?
2. Analyze the change in Huck's character with the re-entry of Tom Sawyer into the story.

Chapter 37

1. What situations does Twain use to create a light-hearted mood in this chapter?
2. Compare and contrast the character of Nat to Jim.

Chapter 38

1. Analyze the relationship between Tom Sawyer and Jim.
2. What is significant about Tom wanting Jim to have a snake in the cell with him?
3. Explain Jim's willingness to go along with Tom's foolishness.

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 on page 260: "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?

Chapter 41

1. How does Twain create pathos in this chapter?
2. How does Twain continue to develop Huck's character as a thoughtful, caring person?

Chapter 42

1. In this chapter, how does Twain explain Tom's earlier willingness to aid in Jim's escape?
2. How does Tom's revealed knowledge of Miss Watson's will complete the theme of moral ambiguity?
3. How does the title of the chapter immediately appeal to the reader?

Chapter the Last

1. How do the past conversations between Jim and Huck about hairy bodies being good luck foreshadow the result of this chapter?
2. Why did Jim keep the dead man's identity a secret from Huck.
3. Throughout the story, the river represents peace, happiness, and freedom. The towns represent rules, boredom, and sometimes cruelty and treachery. In the last paragraph of the novel, which does Huck say is preferable? What is Twain's purpose for this?
4. What is Twain's purpose in revealing in this last chapter that Jim has been a free man through almost the entire timespan of the novel?