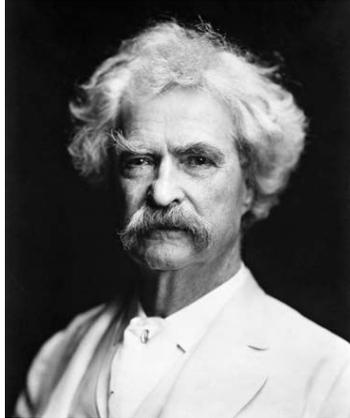


HUCKLEBERRY FINN

by Mark Twain



THE AUTHOR

Mark Twain was the pen name of Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910), who grew up in Hannibal, Missouri. After the death of his father, he left school and was apprenticed to a printer at the local newspaper at the age of twelve. He later worked as a typesetter in various cities, including Philadelphia and New York, worked as a riverboat pilot, served in the Civil War for two weeks before deserting, traveled westward and worked as a prospector and newspaperman (he first adopted his famous pen name, based on a navigational term, in 1863 while working on the newspaper in Virginia City, Nevada), and later traveled extensively abroad. His first book was *Innocents Abroad* (1868), which was a commercial success but not a literary one, but which was followed later by the works for which he is best known, *Roughing It* (1872), published while living in Connecticut with his wife and children, *Tom Sawyer* (1876), *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882), and *Huckleberry Finn* (1885). In his later years he became increasingly cynical, as the last of his prominent novels, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), illustrates.

Huckleberry Finn is considered Twain's greatest novel. He originally began to write it as a sequel to the popular *Tom Sawyer*, but increasingly invested it with serious social criticism, especially of the institution of slavery. Though it gained widespread popular acceptance, contemporary critics objected to the lack of plot, constant use of hard-to-read dialect, and frequent examples of lying and other forms of deception on the part of the protagonist. In recent years, the novel has been criticized (and in some cases banned) largely because of its frequent use of racial slurs despite the powerful anti-slavery message it contains.

PLOT SUMMARY

The story begins shortly after the end of *Tom Sawyer*. Huck and Tom, now possessed of the robbers' gold they had found in the cave, have \$8000 apiece which is being held in trust for them by Judge Thatcher. Huck has been taken in by the kindly Widow Douglas and her strict and overbearing sister Miss Watson, who are trying to civilize him and inculcate him with religion, which he finds singularly unpleasant. One night, Huck hears Tom outside his window and

manages to sneak out. A group of boys then goes to a nearby cave, where they form a club, the purpose of which is to be highwaymen, robbing and killing and capturing people for ransom, though no one in the group knows what "ransom" is. They take a bloodthirsty oath, then return home, tired and dirty, near sunrise.

Soon word begins to spread that Huck's Pap is dead, but since the body floating in the river is unidentifiable, Huck believes otherwise. The gang begins to pursue their adventures, attacking caravans of Spaniards and Arabs that look like them to be little children on a Sunday School picnic (when the other boys complain that they don't see any such people, let alone the camels and elephants Tom said were coming, he explains that, not having read *Don Quixote*, they don't realize that such caravans are disguised by powerful wizards). Tom also tells them about genies, but Huck is disappointed when he spends half the night rubbing an old lamp to no effect.

Huck is sent to school, much to his distaste, but he does learn the rudiments of reading and writing. One day he sees boot tracks in the snow that he recognizes as belonging to his Pap, and he runs to Judge Watson, begging him to take all his money for himself (he doesn't want his father to get his hands on it). When he gets back to widow Douglas' house, he finds his Pap waiting for him. The old man plays the reform game for a while in an attempt to extract money from Huck or anyone else who is susceptible, but he soon falls off the wagon and breaks his arm wandering around in a drunken stupor. He then takes Judge Thatcher to court to gain control of Huck's money, without success. Soon he tires of the game and decides to kidnap his son, taking him up the river a few miles and locking him in an old deserted cabin. Huck actually enjoys the life of leisure, except for the frequent hidings he receives from Pap. Whenever Pap goes away, he locks Huck in the cabin, but Huck soon finds a way to escape using an old saw blade. He cuts his way out of the cabin, steals all the provisions he can get his hands on along with an old canoe, and leaves bloody tracks going in the wrong direction to make everyone think that he has been killed by whoever robbed the cabin.

Huck takes the canoe downstream to a large island, where he sets up camp. Soon he sees a riverboat, which is firing off cannon shots over the river with the intention of making his drowned body rise to the surface; they also set afloat loaves of bread spiked with mercury, believing they will float along the river and stop over the place where the body has sunk. Huck watches from his hiding place on the island with considerable interest. In the process of exploring the island, however, he encounters another campfire, the coals still warm, and knows he is not alone. When he reconnoiters the next morning, he finds that the fire belongs to Jim, Miss Watson's slave. Jim has run away because he heard Miss Watson talking about selling him down the river to New Orleans when she was offered \$800 for him by a slave-trader. Jim clearly is not very bright; not only does he cower in fear, thinking Huck is a ghost, but he then relates to Huck a long series of superstitions and tells him how he lost his "investment" at the hands of another slave who had swindled him of all his money. Soon Huck and Jim discover a cavern in the middle of the island and move most of their goods there for safe keeping - a move that turns out well when a heavy storm floods much of the lowest part of the island. After the storm they are able to recover a log raft that comes floating by, and later an entire house drifts past the island. They explore it and take whatever useful they can find, including some women's clothes, but also discover the dead body of a man who has been shot.

One day Huck finds a snakeskin and shows it to Jim, who tells him that touching a snakeskin brings bad luck. Huck scoffs, but soon thereafter Jim is bitten by a rattlesnake and recovers only by ingesting large amounts of Pap's whisky. When Huck decides to venture ashore

to find out what is going on, Jim convinces him to disguise himself as a girl using the clothes they took from the floating house. The problem, of course, is that while Huck may dress like a girl, he neither speaks nor moves like one. When he goes back to the cabin where he had been confined by his father, he finds a woman named Judith Loftus who has recently come to the area. She has heard the news about the murder of that poor boy Huck Finn, and surprises Huck by telling him that the crime is being blamed on Jim, who ran away the very same night, and that a reward of \$300 has been offered for his capture. She also tells Huck that if he wants to pretend to be a girl, he ought to move like one, especially when he tries to throw lead pipes at rats. He simply invents another lie and gives another false name (a male one this time), and hurries back to warn Jim that they are being pursued.

Huck lights a campfire on the wrong part of the island to distract the searchers, then he and Jim put their belongings on the raft and take the canoe with them down the river. They travel for many miles, finally passing St. Louis, and continue southward, living by hunting, fishing, and stealing whatever they can find. After another big storm, they encounter a steamboat foundering on the rocks. They go aboard to explore and see what useful things they might find, but suddenly hear voices. The voices belong to three villains. Two of them, Bill and Jake Packard, have the third one, Jim Turner, tied up and are threatening to shoot him because he said he would tell on them. These apparently are the men who shot the dead man in the floating house. Bill and Jake continue to discuss what they should do with Turner, and decide to leave him tied up so that he will drown when the boat breaks loose from the rocks and sinks; if the boat doesn't break loose in a couple of hours, then they'll kill him. Huck runs back to Jim and tells him that they should cut the scoundrels' boat loose so they'll all be stuck on the sinking ship, but Jim informs him that their own raft came loose, so that they, too, are trapped on the doomed vessel with a gang of murderers. They quickly search the water around the ship and find the gang's skiff, which they commandeer, then move downriver until they catch up with their raft, to which they transfer the goods taken by the gang from the sinking *Walter Scott*. Huck feels guilty about stranding the men on the ship, even if they are murderers, so he goes ashore at the first opportunity and makes up a wild tale for a ferryman that soon has him sailing upstream toward the wreck. Before long, the ruins of the wreck float downstream, and Huck doubts that any of the gang survived. Part of the loot from the steamboat was several boxes of cigars, which Huck and Jim enjoy while talking about the wisdom of Solomon, which Jim doubts because of his threat to cut a baby in half.

The plan at this point is to continue downriver to Cairo, Illinois, where the Ohio joins the Mississippi, then follow the Ohio north into the free states. Jim is ecstatic at the thought of being free, but Huck is feeling pangs of conscience at being responsible for Miss Watson losing her slave. Ultimately, though, he cannot bear the thought of betraying his friend. One night, the two drift into a thick fog bank. They try to tie the raft to a tree sticking out of the river, but it breaks off and the canoe and raft are soon separated in the fog. Hours later Huck falls asleep in the canoe, and when he wakes sees clear sky overhead. He sets off to find the raft, and eventually overtakes it, only to find Jim asleep as well. He creeps onto the raft, stretches himself so as to nudge Jim gently and wake him up, then insists that the adventures of the last few hours never happened, and that he had been aboard the raft all along. He finally convinces Jim that the fog and the drifting apart had all been a dream, but when Jim sees all the debris that has collected on the sides of the raft, he realizes that Huck has been playing a trick on him and his feelings are hurt. Huck apologizes and promises never to do anything like that again. Jim is convinced that the fog was part of the ongoing consequence of Huck handling a snakeskin, and soon Huck himself

begins to believe it when they realize after a few more days on the river that they must have floated right by Cairo in the fog. Matters only get worse when a huge steamer comes straight at the raft and smashes it into splinters. When Huck scrambles to shore he is immediately set upon by two dogs, but knows enough to keep still.

The dogs belong to the Grangerfords, an elderly couple who, with their five children, barricade and arm their homestead against their neighbors, the Shepherdsons, with whom they are engaged in a decades-long blood feud (though the two families attend the same church, they always do so with firearms at their sides). Once they are convinced he is not a Shepherdson, they take Huck in, food and clothe him, and treat him with great kindness (as usual, he gives them a false name - George Jackson - and spins a tall tale about his background). He befriends their youngest son Buck, who is about his age. Their youngest daughter, Emmeline, had died not long before; she had been a poet and artist obsessed with death and other depressing subjects, but Huck somehow found her poems and pictures fascinating. One day Huck and Buck are out in the countryside, and Buck yells at him to hide. Soon Harney Shepherdson rides by, and Buck takes a shot at him, but succeeds in doing no more than shooting off his hat. When Huck questions him, Buck admits he was trying to kill the man, and explains the blood feud, the origins of which no one remembers, but which costs three or four lives each year. After church one day, Sophia Grangerford finds a cryptic note in her Bible, and soon disappears. When word gets around that she has run off to marry Harney Shepherdson, fighting breaks out again, and all the Grangerford men, including Buck, are killed in the battle. Before the fighting started, one of the Grangerford slaves had led Huck to Jim, and now the two leave the area as quickly and quietly as possible.

Several days later, Huck "borrows" a canoe and goes ashore to try to find some berries. Soon he hears voices, and two men appear, dressed in ragged clothing and apparently pursued by a mob. They beg Huck to rescue them, and he takes them into the canoe and brings them safely back to the river. They are two con men who seem to have no previous acquaintance of one another. The younger man tells Huck and Jim that he is the Duke of Bridgewater, deprived of his rightful inheritance by his greedy uncle and forced to live by his wits. The older man, not to be outdone, claims to be the Dauphin of France, the son and heir of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. They ask Huck and Jim to treat them as their dignity deserves, and they are soon being waited on hand and foot. Huck knows they are frauds and liars, but he has learned from long experience with his own father not to rock the boat with such people. He also decides not to break the news to Jim. The two men concoct a scheme that they think will allow the raft to travel by day. They circulate news of a reward for a runaway slave from New Orleans, and plan to tie Jim up whenever anyone gets close and tell them that they have captured the slave and are returning him to his rightful owner on the south. When they arrive at a town, the Duke goes to the printing press, abandoned like the rest of the town for the annual campmeeting, and prints out publicity for his varying scams. The Dauphin, meanwhile, goes to the campmeeting and speaks to the crowd, claiming to be a former pirate who intends to return and preach to the pirates if only he could gather the money to do so. He collects \$87.75, which is far more than the Duke manages to con out of the locals he encounters.

As they continue downriver, the Duke and the Dauphin spend a lot of time practicing the Shakespeare they intend to present at the next likely town - the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet* (with the Dauphin as Juliet) and the sword fight from *Richard III*. In order to be prepared for any eventuality, the Duke teaches the Dauphin the famous soliloquy from *Hamlet* to use as an encore, though he remembers it badly and intersperses lines from other plays. The Duke then

prepares playbills, advertising them as David Garrick the Younger and Edmund Kean the Elder, straight from a sold-out engagement in London. When they arrive at the next town, they find that a circus is coming and figure this will help them draw a crowd. That morning before the circus, an old drunk named Boggs rides into town and insults Colonel Sherburn, one of its leading citizens, and threatens to kill him (apparently this is a monthly performance, with no harm being done to any of the intended victims and a good time had by all). Sherburn does not find the business funny, however, and tells Boggs to cease and desist by one o'clock. Boggs, too drunk to know any better, continues his harangue, and Sherburn shoots him dead. A mob quickly gathers to lynch Sherburn, but he confronts them with a shotgun in his hand and the crowd quickly disperses. Huck then sneaks into the circus and has a wonderful time.

That night, the Duke and Dauphin stage their show, but hardly anyone comes. They decide that they need a better attraction, so they advertise shows for the next three nights to which women and children will not be permitted. The first night a good crowd comes, but the show only consists of the Dauphin on the stage, buck naked and covered with stripes of paint, cavorting around. The people feel cheated, but the judge advises them not to let others know that they have been fooled. Instead, they should tell all their friends how great the show was so others can share in their gullibility. On the second night the place is full and the reaction the same. The third and final performance again brings a packed house, but Huck notices that everyone seems to be carrying or concealing on his person rotten eggs or overripe fruit. The Duke quickly grabs Huck and they slip out the back door after collecting the ticket money; when they return to the raft, which has been conveniently moored some distance downstream, they find the Dauphin waiting for them and the three cast off as quickly as possible, richer by \$465. When Jim questions Huck about the fact that their Dauphin is a rapsallion, Huck responds that all kings are like that; in fact, most are a lot worse. He then gives a hilariously fractured history lesson, supposedly about Henry VIII but incorporating tidbits including the Domesday Book, the young Plantagenet princes murdered in the Tower of London by order of Richard III, and the Boston Tea Party. Jim, meanwhile, sorely misses his wife and children and wonders if he will ever see them again.

Continuing downriver, the Duke and the Dauphin spend their time dreaming up scams to pull on the waiting populace. Jim is getting very tired of being tied up all day, but the Duke solves the problem by painting his face blue and making a sign warning people away from the "sick Arab," so he can remain free to move around the barge without fearing that someone will come aboard. They decide to catch a short ride on a steamboat into the next town, hoping to pass themselves off as people from the big city of St. Louis (or Cincinnati, if necessary). While waiting, they meet a man who tells them about a certain Peter Wilks who has just died, leaving behind him three beautiful daughters and a large fortune. His brothers planned to come from England to see him before he died, but were unable to make it in time. The Dauphin gets all the information he can from the man, then he and the Duke prepare to impersonate the long-lost brothers, complete with (totally inept) English accents. They arrive at the town on the steamboat and introduce themselves as the anticipated brothers. They know enough about the deceased and his family and friends to convince the townspeople of their identity, and are received warmly. They find that Wilks has left \$6000 to be divided evenly between his daughters and his brothers. The Duke and the Dauphin insist that the daughters should have it all and settle down for the wake. When the dead man's doctor arrives, he immediately identifies the two as frauds, but the crowd protests that they knew too much to be tricksters, and that, besides, they had given all the money that they might have taken to the dead man's daughters. The doctor insists that the

scoundrels be run out of town, but the daughters spring to their defense and insist that they should take all of the money and invest it as they see fit.

Huck's conscience won't let him tolerate such thievery, especially since the girls are treating him so well. He eavesdrops and determines that the Duke and the Dauphin have hidden the gold in the mattress in the room in which they are sleeping. One night he sneaks in and steals it, but while he is trying to find a good place to hide it, Mary Jane, the eldest daughter, comes downstairs, forcing Huck to hide the gold in the nearest available place - Peter Wilks' coffin. The scoundrels move quickly to sell the estate, starting with the slaves, who are sold downriver regardless of family relationships. When they discover that the gold is missing, Huck convinces them that the slaves stole it, knowing that the Duke and the Dauphin are bound to be caught soon, after which the slaves will be brought back. Huck, in the process of comforting Mary Jane for the loss of her father and the cruel disbursement of the slaves, reveals the truth to her and starts a plan in motion to expose the frauds. Meanwhile, the Duke and the Dauphin are planning an auction to sell off the plantation. As the auction ends, however, two more men arrive claiming to be the brothers of the deceased - and they have English accents. Most of the townspeople side with the Duke and the Dauphin, who continue to brazen it out. The newcomers say they can call on a witness who saw the interlopers talking to an old man upriver a few days ago - the man who gave them the information about Peter Wilks and his family. The leading citizens now have the job of sorting out the rival claimants. They start by trying handwriting, since the local lawyer has letters from the brothers. Neither sets of handwriting match, however, since the real brother who wrote the letters has recently broken his right arm. Next the doctor asks them about any distinctive markings on the deceased's body. The frauds claim he had a blue arrow tattooed on his chest, while the real brothers say he bore his initials. Obviously, the only solution is to dig up the corpse. When they do, they find no marks whatsoever, so they still can't sort out the true from the false, and begin to wonder whether both sets of claimants might be frauds. They do, however, find the gold. In the confusion, Huck, the Duke, and the Dauphin escape. Huck heads for the river and he and Jim head south on the raft, but soon find that the scoundrels are following them.

As they continue down the river, the Duke and the Dauphin try a variety of new scams, none of which seems to work very well, so they decide to try the "Royal Nonesuch" again (their theatrical scheme). After they go into town, Huck runs back to the raft with the intention of escaping from unwanted company with Jim. He finds, however, that Jim is missing. When he questions a local boy, he finds out that a runaway slave has been captured (actually he was sold by the Duke and the Dauphin, who are short of funds) and taken to the Phelps plantation a couple of miles outside of town. Huck first considers writing to Miss Watson and telling her where Jim is - after all, slave stealing is a crime - but his conscience gets the better of him and he decides he would rather go to hell for slave stealing than betray his friend Jim. When Huck arrives at the Phelps plantation he is welcomed with open arms. They smother him with love and affection and call him Tom. Before long, he figures out that they have mistaken him for his good friend Tom Sawyer, and that Mrs. Phelps is Tom's Aunt Polly's sister. He slips easily into the part, since he is able to tell them plenty about Tom's family. Meanwhile, angry townsfolk from upriver have arrived in town and seized the Duke and the Dauphin, who are summarily tarred and feathered and ridden out of town on a rail.

Soon Tom himself arrives, but Huck is able to intercept him before he gets to the plantation and tell him everything that has been going on. Tom is at first astounded because he believes

Huck to be dead, but he recovers his wits quickly and decides that they should pass him off as Sid Sawyer, Tom's younger brother. The ruse succeeds, and the two friends plan how they might help Jim escape. Huck is at first skeptical, not wanting to involve a boy like Tom in his illegal actions, but Tom will hear none of his doubts. The two quickly discover where Jim is being held prisoner, and find that they could get him out easily simply by pulling off the board that covers the only window in the shed. Tom insists, however, that heroes in books would never stoop to such a simple escape. Instead, they ought to dig a tunnel under the wall of the shed - a task that took Edmund Dantes thirty-six years (Tom's memory is a little off, and they can easily steal the key), saw off the leg of the bed to which Jim is chained (all they have to do is lift the leg and the chain will slide off it), and perhaps even saw off Jim's foot to get the chain off (Huck finally persuades Tom to give up on this one). Tom also insists that they must sneak a rope ladder in to Jim hidden in a pie, despite the lack of need for any such thing. As the machinations continue, Tom decides that Jim must deal with dungeon creatures, so he smuggles in rats, spiders, and snakes (but not before the rats and snakes get loose in the Phelps house and drive Mrs. Phelps to distraction). Things keep disappearing from the house, but Tom confuses his aunt so much that she gives up counting her possessions. Finally, after many more complicated maneuvers, Tom writes anonymous letters to his aunt and uncle warning them that someone is going to try to free the runaway slave (after all, what heroic escape is not undermined by a betrayer?). Mr. and Mrs. Phelps believe the letter, and gather a large group of men with guns to prevent the escape, but Tom and Huck manage to get Jim away despite their preparations. In the process, Tom gets a piece of buckshot in the leg, which makes him very proud indeed. Huck fetches the doctor to take care of Tom and returns to the Phelps place, where all the talk is of the crazy runaway who did so many strange things to the shed where he was imprisoned. The general opinion is that at least a dozen slaves must have been involved in the escape, but since that didn't explain why the dogs couldn't catch scent, they decided that spirits must have done it. That night Huck is unable to leave the house, and is considerably worried about Tom, as are his aunt and uncle.

The next day Tom appears, carried on a mattress and accompanied by the doctor, and Jim in chains. Tom is delirious, and Jim is immediately taken and returned to the shed under close confinement. The doctor speaks up in Jim's behalf, telling how he voluntarily came out of hiding to help him care for Tom, but they keep him in chains under guard. The next day Tom is considerably better, and Huck goes up to see him. Aunt Sally is in the room, and Tom, not yet fully aware of his surroundings, blurts out the whole account of their escapade, much to the surprise of his aunt. When Tom asks about Jim and hears that he has been imprisoned again, he insists that he be released immediately because he is no longer a slave, having been granted his freedom by Miss Watson shortly before she died two months earlier. When Sally asks Tom why he went to all that trouble to free a slave who was already a free man, he says he did it for the pure adventure and fun of it. Next Aunt Polly herself appears at the door, confirming all Tom has said, and generates considerably more confusion by identifying "Sid" as Tom Sawyer and "Tom" as Huckleberry Finn. All soon discover that Aunt Polly's letters, which said that Sid was nowhere near the Phelps residence, had been intercepted by Tom at the post office and never received by Sally. Jim is liberated forthwith, and made a great fuss of by all concerned. Tom gives him forty dollars for his role in their adventure, and Jim is pleased as can be that the prophecy that he would one day be rich had come true. Jim tells Huck that his father is dead (he was the dead man in the floating house), and Silas and Sally Phelps decide to adopt Huck and civilize him. Huck, of course, has no interest in any such thing, and he and Tom and Jim speak fondly of future adventures in the Indian Territory.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Huckleberry Finn - The protagonist is a motherless boy whose father is drunk and irresponsible. He is taken in by the kindly Widow Douglas and her sister, but can't tolerate the regimentation and decides to run away.
- Widow Douglas - A kindly woman who takes Huck in and tries to "civilize" him, with little result.
- Miss Watson - Widow Douglas' sister, she owns a slave named Jim who runs away when he finds she is planning to sell him down the river to New Orleans. She is strict and is always trying to shove religion down Huck's throat.
- Jim - Miss Watson's slave, he runs away and quickly encounters Huck, who has done the same. Their adventures constitute the central story of the novel.
- Tom Sawyer - Huck's best friend, and the protagonist of the novel for which this is the sequel. He appears late in the story when Huck is impersonating him on the plantation of his aunt and uncle.
- Judge Watson - The trustee of the money set aside for Huck and Tom as a result of their capture of the thieves at the end of the previous novel.
- "Pap" Finn - Huck's father, he is a drunken ne'er-do-well who beats Huck and tries to gain control of his money.
- Mr. and Mrs. Grangerford - An elderly couple who take Huck in for a time, they are kind and generous, but are engaged in a blood feud with their neighbors, the Shepherdsons.
- Buck Grangerford - A boy about Huck's age who befriends him; he is killed in a pitched battle against the Shepherdsons over the elopement of his sister Sophia with Harney Shepherdson.
- The Duke - A young con man who is rescued from a pursuing mob by Huck and who travels with him and Jim for a brief period; he claims to be the Duke of Bridgewater, though his companion refers to him as the "Duke of Bilgewater."
- The Dauphin - A con man in his seventies who, not to be outdone by the Duke, tells Huck and Jim that he is the Dauphin of France, the son of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette and thus the rightful heir to the French throne.
- Mary Jane Wilks - The eldest daughter of a man who has just died; the Duke and the Dauphin pretend to be his long-lost brothers in an attempt to steal the girls' inheritance, but Huck foils their efforts by hiding the gold in the dead man's coffin.

- Silas and Sally Phelps - Sally is the sister of Tom Sawyer's Aunt Polly. Jim is sold by the Duke and the Dauphin and is taken to the Phelps plantation and locked up. When Huck comes to set him free, he is mistaken for Tom Sawyer; later Tom himself arrives, and the two conspire to liberate Jim.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot.” (Notice by the Author)

“Then she told me all about the bad place, and I said I wished I was there. She got mad then, but I didn't mean no harm. All I wanted was to go somewheres; all I wanted was a change, I weren't particular. She said it was wicked to say what I said; said she wouldn't say it for the whole world; *she* was going to live so as to go to the good place. Well, I couldn't see no advantage in going where she was going, so I made up my mind I wouldn't try for it. But I never said so, because it would only make trouble, and wouldn't do no good.” (Huck, ch.1, p.3)

“I's rich now, come to look at it. I owns myself, en I's wuth eight hund'd dollars. I wisht I had de money, I wouldn't want no mo'.” (Jim, ch.8, p.60)

“Pap always said it weren't no harm to borrow things if you was meaning to pay them back some time; but the widow said it weren't anything but a soft name for stealing, and no decent body would do it. Jim said he reckoned the widow was partly right and pap was partly right; so the best way would be for us to pick out two or three things from the list and say we wouldn't borrow them any more - then he reckoned it wouldn't be no harm to borrow the others.” (Huck, ch.12, p.83)

“I was feeling ruther comfortable on accounts of taking all this trouble for that gang, for not many would 'a' done it. I wished the widow knowed about it. I judged she would be proud of me for helping these rascallions, because rascallions and deadbeats is the kind the widow and good people takes the most interest in.” (Huck, ch.13, p.94)

“All you wuz thinkin' 'bout wuz how you could make a fool uv ole Jim wid a lie. Dat truck dah is *trash*; en trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er dey fren's en makes 'em ashamed.” (Jim, ch.15, p.108)

“What's the use you learning to do right when it's troublesome to do right and ain't no trouble to do wrong, and the wages is just the same? I was stuck. I couldn't answer that. So I reckoned I wouldn't bother no more about it, but after this always do whichever come handiest at the time.” (Huck, ch.16, p.116)

“There was trouble 'bout something, and then a lawsuit to settle it; and the suit went agin one of the men, and so he up and shot the man that won the suit - which he would naturally do, of course. Anybody would.” (Buck, ch.18, p.136)

“We said there warden’t no home like a raft, after all. Other places do seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don’t. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on an raft.” (Huck, ch.18, p.145)

“If I never learnt nothing else out of pap, I learnt that the best way to get along with his kind of people is to let them have their own way.” (Huck, ch.19, p.155)

“What was the use to tell Jim these warden’t real kings and dukes? It wouldn’t ’a’ done no good; and, besides, it was just as I said: you couldn’t tell them from the real kind.” (Huck, ch.23, p.191)

“First they done a lecture on temperance; but they didn’t make enough for them both to get drunk on.” (Huck, ch.31, p.256)

“I went right along, not fixing up any particular plan, but just trusting to Providence to put the right words in my mouth when the time come; for I’d noticed that Providence always did put the right words in my mouth if I left it alone.” (Huck, ch.32, p.268)

“That ain’t got nothing to do with it. The thing for us to do is just to do our *duty*, and not worry about whether anybody *sees* us do it or not. Hain’t you got no principle at all?” (Tom, ch.39, p.327)

“I knowed he was white inside, and I reckoned he’d say what he did say - so it was all right now.” (Huck, ch.40, p.336)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. In Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*, consider the extent to which Tom Sawyer is intended to be a foil for Huck. Be sure to discuss the boys’ personalities, motives, and actions in your analysis.
2. In a foreword to Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*, the author writes, “Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot.” Some critics have found this disclaimer justified. Do you agree? Is the story without motive, moral, or plot? Why or why not?
3. Despite the author’s claims to the contrary, Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn* does contain some powerful moral lessons. If you were to choose what you consider to be “the moral of the story,” what would it be? Support your choice with specifics from the novel.

4. In recent years, Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* has been sharply criticized and even banned from school reading lists and libraries because of its pervasive use of a particularly obnoxious racial slur. Evaluate this decision. Does the use of such language disqualify the book from being read in today's environment, or should the anti-slavery message of the story override language that was common in the author's day but is considered unacceptable now?
5. Discuss the portrayal of Christianity found in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. Does the author attack Christianity, or merely hypocrisy among professing Christians? Support your conclusion with specifics from the novel.
6. Compare and contrast the portrayal of Christianity in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* with that found in Moliere's play *Tartuffe*. Both have been criticized as anti-Christian, while others have argued that they target hypocrisy rather than true religion. Would you place the two works in the same category in their attitudes toward religion, or are they different in significant ways? Support your conclusion with specific references to both pieces of literature.
7. Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* contains many examples of the ways in which superstition holds a strong grip on some of the characters. Evaluate the role played by superstition in the story. What does the author intend to communicate by his portrayal of the superstitions accepted without question by Huck, Jim, and others?
8. Evaluate the character of Jim in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. While he is ignorant, superstitious, and gullible, he is also faithful and selfless. In chapter 40 of the novel, Huck goes so far as to say, "I knowed he was white inside." Does the author's portrayal of the runaway slave do more to perpetuate racial stereotypes or to argue for the essential humanity of people of all races? Support your argument with specifics from the novel.
9. Nineteenth-century critics of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* often pointed to the almost casual immorality of the protagonist, who perpetually lies and steals and has few qualms of conscience about his behavior. How would you assess these aspects of Huck's character? Do they make him a bad example to which children and young people ought not to be exposed? Support your conclusions with specifics from the story.
10. While modern critics of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* castigate the racial slurs that pepper the dialogue of the novel, critics in Twain's day were aghast at the lying and stealing that permeate the plot. Which problem do you consider more serious, and why? What do the features to which the critics object tell you about the differences between the prevailing culture at the end of the nineteenth century and that at the beginning of the twenty-first?

11. In Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, many characters lie, but the novel leads the reader to distinguish between "good" and "bad" lies, as Huck himself does in struggling with the issue. What does the author believe to be the difference between acceptable and unacceptable falsehood? Use examples from the book to illustrate your analysis, and evaluate his answers from Scripture.
12. Consider the treatment of literature in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, especially as seen in the antics of Tom Sawyer as he sets down a series of complicated rules for the liberation of Jim. What is Twain trying to say? What role ought literature to have in shaping character and behavior, especially in children?
13. In chapter 23 of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, Huck says, "What was the use to tell Jim these warden't real kings and dukes? It wouldn't 'a' done no good; and, besides, it was just as I said: you couldn't tell them from the real kind." His fractured account of history in the chapter makes a serious point about monarchy in particular and political power in general. To what extent is his criticism accurate? Do you agree with Twain's cynical treatment of those in positions of political authority? Why or why not?
14. In Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, the protagonist is the prototypical outsider, alienated from society by his upbringing or lack thereof. He thus becomes a perfect instrument for examining society's values. He has been exposed to minimal education and religious training, and every situation he encounters causes him to test and question those values. Discuss the extent to which the author uses Huck's "otherness" as a tool to criticize the society of which he is never quite a part.
15. Discuss the symbolism of the raft and the river in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. When Huck says, "We said there warden't no home like a raft, after all. Other places do seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don't. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on an raft," what does the author intend for us to understand about the nature of freedom and society? Are the raft and the river *always* symbols of freedom, or does the author use them in more complex ways?
16. Discuss the growth and change experienced by the protagonist in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. In what ways does Huck gain maturity and wisdom as a result of his wanderings? What does he learn about himself, human nature, and the society from which he is an outcast?
17. In addition to slavery and racism, what are the principal aspects of American society that Mark Twain holds up for ridicule in *Huckleberry Finn*? Cite specific incidents in the novel to illustrate three important targets of the author's satire and discuss how those incidents portray significant flaws in nineteenth-century American society.

18. Evaluate Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* as a critique of Romanticism. While the most obvious example of this is Tom Sawyer's repeated references to nineteenth-century novels, other instances occur in the story as well. What about Romanticism does Twain despise, and why does he despise it? Are his criticisms legitimate? Why or why not?
19. Mark Twain considered his *Huckleberry Finn* to be a light-hearted corrective to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which he thought too heavy-handed and melodramatic. Compare and contrast the two as critiques of slavery. Which is the more effective? Why do you think so? Be sure to use specific quotations and incidents from the two novels in developing your answer.
20. Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* is narrated by the protagonist, and thus is written entirely in the first person. How does the narrative voice of the novel contribute to its impact? Give specific examples to show how Twain's choice of narrator influences how effectively he communicates the major themes of the novel.
21. Both Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* and George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* are in their own ways criticisms of "middle-class morality." Giving special attention to the characters of Huck and Alfred P. Doolittle, compare and contrast the effectiveness of the two in pointing out the hypocrisies of the very different societies the two authors seek to skewer.
22. Near the beginning of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, Tom Sawyer refers to Cervantes' *Don Quixote* to justify his claim that a Sunday School picnic is really a caravan of Arab traders who have been enchanted. In reality, the two novels are quite similar in that both ridicule the romantic literature to which major characters (Tom and Don Quixote) are attached. Which do you consider more effective in mocking the conventions of the very different works of romantic literature popular when the two books were written (about 250 years apart)? Why? Support your conclusion with specifics from the two novels.
23. Evaluate the maturity of the protagonist in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. In many ways, Huck is clearly a child, yet he also is in some ways mature beyond his years. Furthermore, he develops greater maturity as the novel progresses. In what ways do both his childishness and his maturity contribute to the major themes of the novel? Support your arguments with specifics from the story.
24. Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* is a coming-of-age novel in which the protagonist grows and matures as the story progresses. What would you consider the turning point or climax of the story, the event that signals the maturation of young Huck? How does this particular event contribute to the central themes of the story? Support your conclusion with specifics from the novel.

25. As Huck and Jim travel southward on the Mississippi River in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, the shoreline becomes increasingly ominous because of the entrenched racism of the Deep South. Compare and contrast the symbolism of the river in this novel with that of the Congo River in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, written less than twenty years later. Though one focuses on American slavery while the other gives attention to European imperialism, the two have in common a concern with racism and its consequences for the racist as well as for those who are enslaved. Compare and contrast the ways in which the two books develop this central theme and the symbolism of the river in doing so.
26. Who is the most admirable character in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*? Defend your choice against other possible contenders by using specific quotations and incidents from the novel. How do you think Twain uses the admirable qualities of the person you choose to advance the themes of the novel?
27. Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* creates a confused and ambiguous moral universe, as Huck constantly must confront the immorality of the morality inculcated in him by the surrounding society. What does the author believe to be the final source of moral authority, or does one exist? Support your conclusion with specific incidents and quotations from the novel.
28. Ernest Hemingway once said, "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*." Do you believe the novel merits such an accolade? Why or why not? Be sure to discuss its major features and relate them to your knowledge of modern literature in the process of making your assessment.
29. Discuss the concept of family as it appears in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. Many families and surrogate families play roles in the novel and are encountered by the protagonist. What does the author consider the essence of a family? Use both positive and negative examples from the book to answer the question.
30. Some critics of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* have argued that the long third section of the novel in which Tom and Huck put into motion Tom's elaborate schemes to rescue Jim is an irrelevant distraction that actually detracts from the central thrust of the story by forcing Huck and Jim to the sidelines and focusing on Tom Sawyer. Would you agree that this protracted ending is a mistake on the author's part, or does it in some important way contribute to the thematic development toward which Twain was moving the entire novel? Support your conclusion with details from the closing section of the novel.
31. Critic Andrew Lang, writing in *The Illustrated London News* in 1891, compared Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* to Homer's *Odyssey*, noting that, not only do both stories center on long and varied journeys, but also the protagonists of both demonstrate their cleverness and resourcefulness by inventing false identities for themselves in times of crisis. To what extent is Lang's comparison valid? Do you find any similarities beyond the ones mentioned? Consider thematic and moral issues in your answer.

32. In an article in the British humor magazine *Punch* in 1896, the author refers to Jim, the runaway slave in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, as "one of the finest and purest gentlemen in all of literature." Do you agree with this assessment? Support your conclusion with incidents and quotations from the novel.

33. Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* contains scoundrels aplenty, but the moral force of the narrative is contained in the fact that racist attitudes are not restricted to the "bad" characters; good and kindly people like the Widow Douglas, Miss Watson (despite her flaws), and Silas and Sally Phelps are blind to the racism that they live out every day. How does this characteristic of the book make its message more powerful? Discuss the consequences of Twain's choices in portraying the racial attitudes of his characters. Be sure to support your argument with specific details and quotations from the novel.