Given recent controversies surrounding the language of the novel and questions regarding the value of teaching it, we approach *Huck Finn* with caution and care but also with respect and love. Much like the river they travel, this book is at the center of our nation.

## Procedure

1. Provide Students with the Chapter Study Guide. They may complete this for homework or it may serve as the basis for class discussion.
2. To tackle the following topics, you may divide the class into groups or allow them to work individually. They may work in class or at home. The form of presentation is up to you—paper, power point or other type of media.

### Topics for Consideration

* 1. The language of the novel is harsh—how is it literally and figuratively a way to understand Twain’s presentation of the world that Huck and Jim navigate?
  2. Novels are about the time they are written. How does Twain use the setting of the antebellum South to make his point about onset of Jim Crow?
  3. The novel explores Huck’s growing maturation via his relationship with Jim. How does one see Huck’s growing humanity as he recognizes Jim’s?
  4. The novel is also one of great humor. How does Twain use humor to convey some very serious points?
  5. The novel catalogs the death of Romantic notions, just as the Civil War brings to rest antebellum notions of chivalry, honor and the nobility of war. How is the novel a paean to this realism?
  6. The physical geography of their journey reflects a moral journey as well. Using one of these maps, trace their trip and identify the key stops on this trip: [http://maps.bpl.org/details\_10587/?srch\_query=mississippi+river&srch\_fields=al](http://maps.bpl.org/details_10587/?srch_query=mississippi%2Briver&amp;srch_fields=al) l&srch\_style=exact&srch\_fa=save<http://maps.bpl.org/details_14270/?srch_query>

=mississippi+river&srch\_fields=all&srch\_style=exact&srch\_fa=save

## Time Allocation:

Class Discussion of the Novel: 8 to 10 class periods Presentation of Projects: up to 4-5 class periods

## Materials Needed

Study Guide for *Huck Finn*

Maps of the Mississippi: [http://maps.bpl.org/details\_10587/?srch\_query=mississippi+river&srch\_fields=all&srch\_style=ex](http://maps.bpl.org/details_10587/?srch_query=mississippi%2Briver&amp;srch_fields=all&amp;srch_style=ex) act&srch\_fa=save  [http://maps.bpl.org/details\_14270/?srch\_query=mississippi+river&srch\_fields=all&srch\_style=ex](http://maps.bpl.org/details_14270/?srch_query=mississippi%2Briver&amp;srch_fields=all&amp;srch_style=ex) act&srch\_fa=save

## Assessment Criteria

Did students explore the world that Huck and Jim navigate literally and figuratively?

Did students appreciate the antebellum setting as a commentary on the onset of segregation of the Jim Crow South in post bellum America?

Did students of literature and history will explore the rise of realism in America?

Did students explore the geography of Huck and Jim’s journey along the Mississippi River?

## Enrichment/Alternative Activity

Have Students write/present a well-defended argument of why they should not read *Huck Finn*.

## Common Core Curriculum Standards

English/Language Arts: Anchor Standards: CCRS for Reading Key Ideas and Details

* CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
* CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
* CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

* CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
* CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5 Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
* CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

English/Language Arts: Reading: Literature Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Grades 9-12:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9 Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.9 Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early- twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

**Sample Test For Huck Finn**

SECTION ONE: SHORT ANSWERS (20 POINTS)

Please respond in a well written paragraph

1. Huck frequently creates new identities for himself. Give two examples of Huck's pretending to be someone else and

explain the effect his charade has on him.

2. Twain uses this book as a means to criticize his society. Select two aspects of his society that he is lambasting and

describe the way in which he conveys his disdain. Explain why his approach creates effective social criticism.

3. Huck and Jim are both very superstitious. Describe three superstitions that either or both of them adhere to and explain

what it reveals about their personalities.

SECTION TWO: QUOTATIONS (30 POINTS)

Select three (3) of the following. For each quote: 1. identify the speaker and action of the play; 2. give the literal meaning

of the quote; 3. explain its significance to the scene; 4. explain how it conveys a general theme of the novel.

1."' 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?'"

2. "'Yes-en 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' want no mo'.'"

3. "' Well, a feud is this way. A man has a quarrel with another man, and kills him; then that other man's brother kills *him*;

then the other brothers, on both sides, goes for one another; then the *cousins* chip in -- and by and by everbody's killed off,

and there ain't no more feud. .....Laws, how do *I* know? it was so long ago.'"

4. "But a mob without any *man* at the head of it, is *beneath* pitifulness. Now the thing for you to do, is to droop your tails

and go home and crawl in a hole. If any real lynchings going to be done, it will be done in the dark, Southern fashion.'"

5. "'Oh, she was plumb deef en dumb, Huck, plumb deef en dumb --en I'd ben a'treat'n her so!'"

6. "'What's the good of a plan that ain't no more trouble than that? It's as mild as goose-milk. Why, Huck, it wouldn't make

no more talk than breaking into a soap factory.'"

SECTION THREE: ESSAY (50 POINTS)

Select one of the two.

1. Many things change for Huck along his journey. Pick one of the following and discuss the course it travels on his

adventures on and off the river:

Huck's self-image

Huck's sense of morality

Huck's sense of Jim's humanity

2. Their travels on the river give both Huck and Jim their first real sense of freedom. How does this journey convey both

the blessings and curses of freedom?

# Study Guide for Huck Finn

*Huck Finn* is one of the most enduring novels in American literature. It is also one of the harshest. Its language is offensive, using words that shock our sensibilities. Yet it is a novel of humor, love and in many ways, morality. It tells the story of a journey in both a literal and a figurative sense. We invite you to come on the raft with Huck and the runaway slave Jim, and see what its author, Mark Twain wanted you to see, and learn what he wanted you to learn.

## CHAPTER 1

1. What is Huck's attitude about the truth?
2. What is Huck's situation as the book opens?
3. What is the Widow Douglas' goal for Huck?
4. What irony does Huck see in her priorities?
5. What are his ultimate goals?
6. What are some examples of Huck's superstitious nature?

## CHAPTER 2

1. What was Jim's explanation for the trick Tom and Huck pulled on him? What effect did this trick have on Jim's status?
2. What was the precondition for joining Tom's gang? How did Huck get around this? What is the gang's mission? How did Tom influence its goal?

## CHAPTER 3

1. Why did 'nothing come' of Huck's prayers?
2. Why did the gang disband?
3. How is Huck superstitious of explanatory tales?

## CHAPTER 4

1. How does Huck adapt to 'sivilized' life?
2. What trait do Huck and Jim share?
3. What predictions does Jim make?

## CHAPTER 5

What is bothering Huck's father? What does he want to prove?

## CHAPTER 6

What is the predominant state of Huck's life?

How does his father feel about the government; about slavery?

## CHAPTER 7

How does Huck escape from his father? Why does he think the search for him will be brief?

## CHAPTER 8

1. How does Huck reflect on the power of prayer?
2. What does Jim think when he sees Huck?
3. Why does Jim run away? What was his destination?
4. How would you explain/describe Jim's superstitious nature?
5. What came of Jim's speculating?

## CHAPTER 9

What do Huck and Jim find floating down the river?

## CHAPTER 10

1. Why does Jim avoid the subject of the dead man?
2. What does he predict for the future?
3. Why does Huck 'dress' up?

## CHAPTER 11

1. What does Huck learn about himself from Mrs. Loftus?
2. Why is she suspicious? How does she quiz Huck?
3. Why do Huck and Jim leave the island?
4. What decoy had Huck left?
5. What advice of his father's does Huck follow?
6. How do they justify their 'borrowing' policy?
7. Is Jim a satisfactory travelling partner for Huck?
8. Was it a wise decision to board the wrecked boat?

## CHAPTER 13

1. What compassion does Huck show the men he overhears on the boat?
2. What is the significance of the boat's name, the *Walter Scott*?
3. How does Huck lure the ferryboat captain to the ship? Why does he send him back?

## CHAPTER 14

1. How do Huck and Jim differ in their attitudes with respect to adventure?
2. How does Huck explain royalty to Jim? language differences?
3. Why does Jim question King Solomon's wisdom?

## CHAPTER 15

1. How does Huck keep track of other boats in the fog?
2. What does he mean when he says that he "come up dim out of last week"?
3. How does Jim behave at their reunion? What trick does Huck respond with?
4. How does Jim interpret his 'dream'?
5. Why does Huck regret his behavior?

## CHAPTER 16

1. What is Huck troubled about? Why? How does he triumph over his conscience?
2. What are Jim's aspirations?
3. What is the 'muddy'? Why are they so upset to see it?
4. What is the reference to the rattlesnake? What further impact did it have?

## CHAPTER 17

1. Who is George Jackson?
2. What did Huck appreciate about Buck's house?
3. What loss has his family suffered?

## CHAPTER 18

1. How does Huck get involved in the feud between the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons?
2. What favor does Huck do for Miss Sophia?
3. What has Jim been doing since he and Huck separated?
4. Why does Huck feel he's come home?

## CHAPTER 19

1. What breaks the stillness of their routine?
2. How have the 'duke' and the '*dauphin*' come down in the world?
3. How does Huck fare against real con men?

## CHAPTER 20

1. How does Huck fare against real con men?
2. What does the Duke have in his bag of tricks?
3. How does the king 'work' the prayer meeting?
4. What plan does the duke devise so that they can travel by day?

## CHAPTER 21

1. Describe their rehearsal.
2. Compare the soliloquy with the real one from Hamlet.
3. How is being with the Duke and King similar to being with Tom for Huck?
4. What is Boggs' reputation?
5. How does a mob mentality take over?
6. According to Sherburn, what is a coward? what is courage?
7. What is Huck's impression of the circus? How does it serve as a good prelude to their scam?
8. How do they plan to change their show?

## CHAPTER 23

1. How does the town retaliate to being tricked?
2. What surprises Jim about the King and Duke's behavior? How does Huck try to make sense of it for him?
3. What observation does Huck make about Jim's feelings? What regrets does Jim have?

## CHAPTER 24

Why does the King question the young man in such detail? What is his intention?

## CHAPTER 25

1. How did the King insure his inheritance? How did they use their own money to divert suspicion?
2. Why does the doctor fail to expose their fraud?
3. What is Huck's opinion of their trickery?

## CHAPTER 26

1. How does the 'hare-lip' try to trip up Huck? How does he avert disclosure?
2. How does Huck feel about the King and Duke's plan to cheat Mary Jane?
3. What does Huck overhear?

## CHAPTER 27

1. Where does Huck put the money?
2. How does Huck describe the undertaker?
3. How does the King settle the estate?
4. How does Huck divert attention from himself? Why is he proud of himself?

## CHAPTER 28

1. Why does Huck confess to Mary Jane?
2. How does he keep the other girls from noting her absence?
3. Who appears at the end of the chapter?

## CHAPTER 29

1. How do the Duke and King respond to the new accusations?
2. How did Huck fare under 'cross examination'?
3. Why doesn't Huck tell the truth?
4. How are the King and Duke exposed?
5. Do the new arrivals appear to be telling the truth?
6. How does Huck get away?

## CHAPTER 30

1. Who else escaped?
2. How do the King and Duke think the money got in the coffin?

## CHAPTER 31

1. What are some of the duke and king's attempts to earn money? 2 Huck get a confession out of the duke?

## CHAPTER 32

1. What. What concerns does Huck have about trying to help Jim?

3. How does faith does Huck have in Providence?

1. What mistake does Aunt Sally make?
2. How does luck favor Huck again?
3. What is Tom's reaction upon seeing Huck?
4. What elements of their relationship surface immediately?
5. What trick does Tom play on Aunt Sally and her family?
6. What had happened to the king and duke while Tom and Huck are reuniting?
7. How does Huck react to their treatment at the hands of the angry townspeople?
8. How does Huck reflect upon peoples' consciences?

## CHAPTER 34

1. Why does Huck find it hard to believe that Tom is willing to help him with Jim? How does he try to prevent him from doing something wrong?
2. How does Tom's approach differ from Huck's?
3. How do Tom and Huck exploit the superstitious nature of the slave tending Jim?

## CHAPTER 35

What is Tom's primary concern about their mission? CHAPTER 36

Why does Jim go along with a plan that makes no sense to him?

## CHAPTER 37

What about the plan do they regret?

## CHAPTER 38

1. How do they get their supplies again?
2. What vision does Tom have of a prisoner's existence?

## CHAPTER 39

What happens to their rat trapping plan?

## CHAPTER 40

1. How does their plan seem to have worked too well?
2. What did Aunt Sally think was wrong with Huck?
3. Why was Tom pleased with his wound?
4. What is Jim's justification for finding a doctor for Tom?

## CHAPTER 41

1. What have the Phelps and their neighbors concluded about the story of stealing the runaway slave?
2. What was Tom's plan all along?
3. Why does Huck stay put after Aunt Sally puts him to bed?

## CHAPTER 42

1. Why did some of the people want to hang Jim?
2. How did Jim get caught?
3. What was Jim's reward?
4. Why was it unnecessary to free Jim?
5. Why had Aunt Polly suspected that something was amiss?

## CHAPTER THE LAST

1. What had happened to Huck's father?
2. What mistake does Huck not plan to repeat?