

Hope Christian Schools  
8005 Louisiana Blvd., NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87109

## 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Summer Reading

Novel: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain

*These notes and questions are required for all Hope Christian School 9<sup>th</sup> Grade students and are due the first day of the new school year. Failure to turn in these questions will result in a grade of zero which can seriously affect the first quarter grade. A test over the reading will be given the first week of school.*

The following notes will help you to understand the purpose and form of the novel. Please read them before starting the novel or the questions.

Huck Finn is a journey-quest on which Huck learns to tell the real from the unreal. Sailing down the Mississippi, he meets a cross section of the South, and he learns to detect the counterfeit. On the raft with Jim, Huck comes very close to seeing through the great Southern lie that all Negroes are property, not human beings. The narrow religious rules, the worn traditions, and the prejudices of society are examined by Huck, and he sees their flaws. Huck learns to spot hypocrisy and double talk in Tom, in Miss Watson, in the Grangerfords, and even in himself.

As you read, look carefully at the character of Jim. Twain wants you to see more than just a Negro slave who appears to be superstitious, childlike and subservient. Jim is the character that Twain uses to make satirical remarks about people who do not see Negroes as human. Jim is the real hero of the story. Be sure you look for how this is shown by Twain.

At the end of the novel, Huck is on the edge of manhood, more compassionate, and aware that people “can be awful cruel to one another.” He is also a realist who realizes that many of our social rules are of little use and often hide our deep prejudices.

**THIS IS A PICARESQUE NOVEL**, the life of a rogue or rascal of low degree who makes his living more through his wits than by his hard work. The *pizaro* or central figure uses various pranks and faces predicaments by associating with people of different social classes. This gives the author a chance to use satire about the different social classes.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF A PICARESQUE NOVEL:**

1. It tells, usually in first person, part or all of the life of a rogue.
2. A *pizaro* usually does little work.
3. The novel has little plot; it is a series of episodes or experiences.
4. Satire is a prominent element.
5. The *pizaro* usually stops just short of being an actual criminal.

**THIS NOVEL HAS MUCH SATIRE**, a literary manner which blends critical attitude with humor and wit in hopes that problems in society and human relationships may be improved. In other words, its purpose is to make people recognize their own flaws and laugh at them. By laughing at their own faults, people can be made to change their ways.

**THIS NOVEL USES LOCAL COLOR**, a type of writing that shows the speech, dress, mannerisms and habits of thought that are peculiar to a certain region of the country. Twain uses the local color of the Mississippi River Valley in the mid-1800's. The character Jim is used to give us local folklore.

**THIS NOVEL USES IRONY**, the use of words to suggest a meaning that is quite different from the apparent or obvious meaning.

**THIS NOVEL USES DIALECT.** colloquial conversations and writing that is informal in its word use and type of expressions. This is a part of local color in that all the dialogue (conversation) is written just as the people would have spoken. The dialect of Jim and Huck may seem difficult to understand at first; try reading the parts aloud and saying the dialect phonetically as it is written.

**THIS NOVEL USES SUPERSTITION IN THREE WAYS:**

1. To indicate that the characters are plain, simple folks, almost primitive, and uncluttered with a great deal of thinking about the reality of things.
2. To create humor by showing the foolishness of superstition.
3. To support the theme of Fate through the novel.

**THIS NOVEL HAS FIVE MAJOR THEMES:**

1. CONFLICT BETWEEN SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL — such as Huck not wanting to be “sivilized” and Jim and Huck being restricted from having a close relationship.
2. HUCK’S BIRTH AND REBIRTH — Huck constantly escapes society to be “reborn” by assuming different names, arranging his own murder, and changing his values and goals.
3. FEELINGS OF LONELINESS
4. SUPERSTITIONS— both Huck and Jim have many of these.
5. THE PRESENCE OF FATE OR DESTINY

**THIS NOVEL’S SETTING IS IMPORTANT.** Set in the Mississippi River towns in the mid-1800’s, the River is almost a god, a power in itself, with Huck the servant of the river god. Think of the River as the road for the journey-quest, since the adventures begin and end on the river. It is also a symbol of freedom for both Jim and Huck, but from different things.

**THE PLOT IS EPISODIC.** The novel is a series of short adventures, with each episode a self-contained little story.

**THIS NOVEL USES FIRST PERSON POINT OF VIEW.** Huck tells the story quite dramatically. We live through every crisis with him, feel what he feels, see what he sees. Yet because Huck is an inexperienced boy who is often naive, we see and understand more than he does. We see the irony, the themes, the satire, the prejudices, and social wrongs.

**MAJOR CHARACTERS**

Write down these characters on separate paper and identify them as you read about them, telling how they relate to Huck and what type of person each is.

HUCK FINN  
JIM  
TOM SAWYER  
AUNT POLLY  
WIDOW DOUGLAS  
MISS WATSON  
PAP  
JOE HARPER, BEN ROGERS,  
TOMMY BARNES  
JUDGE THATCHER  
MRS. LOFTUS

JAKE PACKARD/BILL & JIM TURNER  
THE GRANGERFORDS  
THE DUKE AND THE KING  
BOGGS  
COLONEL SHERMAN  
BUCK HARKNESS  
PETER WILKS  
WILLIAM AND HARVEY WILKS  
SILAS PHELPS  
AUNT SALLY

**STUDY QUESTIONS BY CHAPTER:** Write your answers for these questions on separate paper to be turned in on the first day of school.

**CHAPTER 1:**

1. This novel was preceded by what earlier adventure of Huck's?
2. What happened to the \$6,000 reward money that Huck and Tom had collected earlier?
3. What does Widow Douglas plan to do to Huck? How does Huck feel about her plan?
4. Why does Huck prefer the "bad" place to the "good" place?

**CHAPTER 2:**

5. What is the oath of Tom Sawyer's gang?
6. Where does the gang meet? What is their plan?
7. How does Huck feel about the trick Tom played on Jim?

**CHAPTER 3:**

8. Why does Huck resign from Tom's gang?

**CHAPTER 4:**

9. Why does Huck visit Judge Thatcher?
10. What is Huck's attitude toward money?

**CHAPTER 5:**

11. Take notes on Huck's father. Where is Huck's mother?
12. How does Huck's father react to Huck's going to school?
13. Why does Huck sell his property to Judge Thatcher?

**CHAPTER 6:**

14. Why does Huck at first enjoy living with his father?
15. How does this father treat him?
16. What two reasons does Huck have for wanting to escape?

**CHAPTER 7:**

17. What is Huck's careful planning suppose to show?
18. Describe Huck's emotions when he first sets out on the river.
19. On what island does Huck land?

**CHAPTER 8:**

20. Whom does Huck discover on the island?
21. Why does this person run away and what is Huck's reaction to this? Why does Huck not report him?

**CHAPTER 9:**

22. What do Huck and Jim find in the two-story house that is floating down the river?

**CHAPTER 10:**

23. Why is Huck responsible for Jim's snake bite?
24. Why does Huck dress like a girl and go into town?
25. Who is Sarah Williams?

**CHAPTER 11:**

26. How does the lady discover that Huck is not a girl?

**CHAPTER 12:**

27. What does Huck find aboard the steamboat wreck?

*NOTE:* The State of Illinois was legally free soil but was separated from slave states only by the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. By state law, any Negro without freedom papers could be arrested and placed in indentured labor. In slave states, “nigger” was not necessarily an abusive word, but merely the ordinary local term for a slave.

**CHAPTER 13:**

28. Huck and Jim escape from the *Walter Scott* on the lifeboat, leaving the murderers trapped on the wreck. How does Huck feel about this?

*NOTE:* Twain is being humorous by naming the steamboat after an English author of romances whose career Twain felt was also wrecked!

**CHAPTER 14:**

*NOTE:* In this chapter Huck feels superior to Jim. Huck with his white man’s education and “civilized” outlook doesn’t understand Jim’s reasoning, even though he realized that Jim has practical sense.

**CHAPTER 15:**

29. Huck tells Jim that the separation in the fog was a dream. Why is Jim so hurt by Huck’s trick?

30. Why does Huck decide never to play another trick on Jim?

*NOTE:* Although it is against everything he has ever learned about relations between White men and Negroes, (remember that Twain is portraying a small boy born and raised in the South during the pre-Civil Wars years), Huck apologizes to Jim.

**CHAPTER 16:**

31. Why is Huck so uneasy about approaching Cairo, Illinois?

32. What is Huck’s reaction when Jim talks of stealing his own children?

33. What important decision does Huck make that shows his values are changing?

34. How are Jim and Huck separated?

**CHAPTER 17:**

*NOTE:* The Grangerfords are an aristocratic Southern family representative of fine families of the Old South in the days before the Civil War.

**CHAPTER 18:**

35. How long have the Grangerfords and Shepherds been feuding? Why are they feuding? Which side started the shooting?

36. When does Huck become disillusioned with the Grangerfords’ life?

37. How are Jim and Huck reunited?

**CHAPTER 19:**

38. Whom do Jim and Huck rescue? Describe them on the character list.

39. Who do these two men pretend to be?

40. Huck knows that they are not real, yet why does he pretend to believe them? Does Jim believe them?

**CHAPTER 20:**

41. How does the king quickly obtain \$87.75?

**CHAPTER 21:**

42. What sort of people live in Bricksville?

43. How do the people react to the murder of Boggs?

**CHAPTER 22:**

44. How does Sherborn stop the lynch mob? Why does he laugh?

45. What alternative method of making money does the duke think up?

**CHAPTER 23:**

46. Describe the “Royal Nonesuch” episode.

**CHAPTER 24:**

47. What is the king’s new plan in this chapter?

*NOTE:* Twain sets up a conflict between a lone reasonable man and the crowd of unthinking, materialistic, sentimental common people.

**CHAPTER 25:**

48. Who in the town does not fall for the imposters?

49. Huck describes the tearful scene at the Wilks’ as the most disgusting thing he has ever seen. What is he referring to besides the king’s performance?

**CHAPTER 27:**

50. Where does Huck hide the \$6,000? Later, whom does he blame for the disappearance of the money?

51. Why did he hide the money in the first place?

**CHAPTER 28:**

52. Why does Huck tell Mary Jane the whole truth?

53. What are the king and the duke doing when the steamboat lands with two men who claim to be Peter Wilks’ brothers?

*NOTE:* The king and the duke could probably have escaped if it had not been for their greed.

**CHAPTER 29:**

54. Why do the men dig up Peter?

55. How does Huck escape?

**CHAPTER 31:**

56. Huck gets back to the raft but finds Jim gone. What has happened to him?

*NOTE:* In this chapter, Huck again decides to turn away from his teaching to follow his heart to save Jim. This is Twain’s way of telling the country that they, too, should turn away from the injustices of slavery. Twain does this by having Huck write a letter about Jim to Miss Watson, but then tear it up. The tearing up of the letter has been described as one of the great moments in American history. A Southern boy breaks free of the social conventions that surround him and risks his soul to free a Negro slave. Huck is just the boy to tear up that letter!

**CHAPTER 32:**

Describe the luck Huck has in this chapter.

### **CHAPTER 33:**

57. How does Tom Sawyer react when he sees Huck?
58. Who does Tom pretend to be?
59. What happens to the king and the duke? How does Huck feel about this?
60. What was the real reason Tom was willing to help rescue Jim?

*NOTE:* Remember that in Chapter 32, Sally remarked it was lucky no people were killed in the steamboat explosion. Even though she is portrayed as a kind-hearted, warm woman, she evidently didn't consider the Negro a person. Silas is a good man, innocent and religious — even though he plans to sell Jim for the Reward money. This is also Twain's attack on the thinking of the Slave States.

### **CHAPTER 34:**

61. Why does Tom reject Huck's rescue Plan?
62. What is the main difference in Huck's plan and Tom's plan?

### **CHAPTER 35:**

63. The contrast between Huck's world and Tom's world is made sharper in the passage dealing with stealing. Why does Tom say it is wrong for Huck to steal a watermelon, yet it's all right for him to steal sheets, shirts and knives?

### **CHAPTER 36:**

64. How does Jim react to Tom's plan which delays his escape?
65. What does Huck think of Tom's "fancy touches?"

### **CHAPTER 38:**

66. Why do Huck and Tom put rats, spiders and snakes in Jim's cabin?
67. Why does Tom refuse to explain the coat of arms to Huck?

### **CHAPTER 39:**

68. Why does Tom insist on writing anonymous letters to the Phelps?

### **CHAPTER 40:**

69. Tell the result of Tom's rescue plan.
70. How is Tom injured and how does he show he is proud of his wound?

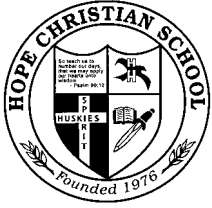
*NOTE:* In this chapter Jim is self-sacrificing by risking his freedom for the wounded Tom. He is also strong enough to overcome Tom's objections. Jim's loyalty is the kind that Huck admires and has tried to live up to in the novel. Jim has become Huck's teacher not only in folklore, but also concerning social justice. Jim becomes a father image for Huck.

### **CHAPTER 42:**

71. Why do the men decide not to hang Jim?
72. Why did Tom want to rescue Jim when he was already free?
73. How was Jim freed?
74. Why does Aunt Polly come?

### **CHAPTER 43:**

75. Why does Tom give Jim \$40? What is Jim's reaction?
76. What do we learn had happened to Pap?
77. What decision does Huck make at the end?



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### Honors English I

In addition to reading *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, all Honors English I students will read a second book chosen from the following list. After reading the book, prepare to give an oral report the first week of class. This report should include a discussion of the setting, characters (if there are any), and a brief overview of the book. You may use powerpoint or other visuals if you wish.

#### Biography:

*The Story of My Life* by Helen Keller  
*It's Not about the Bike: My Journey Back to Life* by Lance Armstrong  
*Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington  
*Through Gates of Splendor* by Elizabeth Eliot

#### Adventure:

*Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson  
*The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas  
*Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe

#### History:

*Night* by Elie Wiesel  
*Death Comes to the Archbishop* by Willa Cather

#### Travel:

*Around the World in Eighty Days* by Jules Verne  
*The Time Machine* by H.G. Wells