



## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Unit 4: Huckleberry Finn and Beyond

### Up Front Essential Questions:

- If according to various scholars, America could be summed up into two words: **Huck Finn**, as you read, think about and talk about the novel, what would you say is a **description of America**? I wonder if America saw herself as she was in the Gilded Age.
- Why are humor and satire most effective in making social commentary? What examples of this do you see today?
- What seems important to you about this novel? What is different about it from popular novels you read now? What seems similar?
- Is book banning ever warranted? When? Why?

### Big Questions (student generated from past studies) to deal with before, as, and after we read

(various students will be responsible for gathering information and leading discussions of these or presenting the finding to the class via power point presentation):

1. What makes parents abusive?
2. Is it just to allow people like Pap Finn to roam free? Can society control its misfits?
3. What would American be like today if slavery still existed?
4. What keeps racism alive even today?
5. Is it ever all right to lie? to break the law?
6. Are first impressions usually right? How can we know what is true?
7. Do adults take advantage of children?
8. Can our conscience be our guide? How is our conscience trained?
9. Should we follow our hearts? How do we know what is true?
10. What makes scams work (tent meeting, Shakespeare, Royal Nonsuch, Wilks brothers) then and now?

**Literary details** (teacher generated) to attend to (various students will be responsible for gathering information and leading discussions or making presentations on these:

1. **Themes:** Loneliness, freedom, foolishness and gullibility, hypocrisy, independence, change and maturity
2. "Huck's deformed conscience comes from the shore, but his sound heart is nourished by the river."  
**Keep a chart of what happens** on shore and what happens on the river (**plot**) and compare them.
3. Father figures (Pap, Jim, Duke and King) and what they show us about society. (**character** study)
4. Huck's **alter egos** (with Judith Loftus disguised as a girl, with the watchman as Miss Hooker's family, with the slave catchers, with the Grangerford's as George Jackson, with Duke and King, as Adolphus in the Wilks episode, as Tom Sawyer on Phelps farm, playing dead/being a ghost) What do each of these incidents show us about Huck and about society? Why do you think Mark Twain loves this device so much?

### Materials:

- Items collected by the teacher for **KTW** perusal (newspaper clippings, popular culture uses of Huck Finn, Twain quotes esp. regarding humor, art, info on Gilded Age, slavery, et al.)
- Class set of Novel Conversations: 7 articles from Gainesville Sun relating to *Huck Finn*
- Class set of "Huck Finn at 100" article from 1984 Reader's Digest
- Elliot Engles "The Genius of Mark Twain" audio lecture with **listening guide** handout for taking notes
- Handout: Huckleberry Finn Reading Schedule and Relating in Writing to Huckleberry Finn
- Recipe for Mississippi Mud cake, Glossary of vocab special to the novel by chapters, map of Huck and Jim's travels, sample chapter notes through chap. 14. Summary of Chaps 32-35, Journal/note taking options for reading novels and short stories handout, and others as/if needed

- **CDs** of *Moon River*, *Old Man River*, *Big River*, *The Musical*; **DVD** film clip of Grangerford/Shephardson episode and introduction of Duke and King
- Internet and **e-novel (Loud Lit)** on website and class set of novels
- Various handout and worksheets as/if needed

#### Activities and Outcomes:

- Students peruse collection of art and articles to get a feel for Mark Twain what's ahead. Students have previously read *Tom Sawyer* as 6<sup>th</sup> grade summer reading and participated in class discussions and various activities to get the feel of an episodic novel, the characters, setting, and dialects that will be encountered in *Huck Finn*. Students will be asked to **wonder** how *Huck Finn* might be different from *Tom Sawyer* and how it might be similar.
- Students read the 7 G'ville Sun articles in triads (**jig saw** method) and prepare a bullet list of main points that teacher will compile into a document for everyone to read and internalize. This is to prepare us for the language issues and misunderstandings often associated with the novel.
- Teacher **reads aloud** "Huck Finn at 100" to further get us ready to deal with controversial issues. **Poems relating** to the novel are also presented. (Langston Hughes' "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" Emily Dickinson, "Much madness is divinest sense...")
- Students download and print the reading guide and we **preview** the schedule ahead.
- Students choose and **sign up for items** (Big Questions, Literary Details) for which they will be responsible during the reading of the novel.
- Students **listen** to Engles' taped lecture on The Genius of Mark Twain and **take notes** on provided guide sheet.
- Teacher **reads aloud** first 6 chapters of the novel to be sure we are all "on board" with finding **significant details** and seeing the **humor and satire** of the novel as well as some **characters, the setting** and getting used to the **dialect**, and also to **pace** the reading. Students will continue **reading on their own** (e-book is available on line if students want to listen to various chapters as they read. Discussions will occur on dates added to reading schedule. We will use **the journaling and stems** guide sheet and student input from their areas of expertise as foundation for these discussions. **Teacher's notes** for chaps 1-14 will also serve as a model for discussion points.
- Depending on time, mood, and needs of class we could do **various projects** on sections of the novel: skits, games, newspaper articles, songs or raps, poems, story board illustrations, Kagan activities such as QQT, scavenger hunts for answers, What Would Huck Do Today, Character Categories Collage (handouts and lesson plans are available for each of these as well as teacher notes on facilitating discussions)

#### Continuing ideas from *Huckleberry Finn* (Transforming Our Minds) will be based on the following:

- Wisdom Lit from Proverbs (handout and guidelines class page file)
- Epigrams and Grooks (poetry handouts and guidelines on website 7<sup>th</sup> handouts)
- *A Class Divided*, Frontline documentary on prejudice
- *The Wave*, docudrama on gullibility re Holocaust and high school class
- *Three Sovereigns for Sarah* docudrama on Salem Witch Trials
- Transformation poetry (handouts and guidelines in class page file)
- Group Essay assignment (guidelines in class page file, sample essay in *Making Waves* 2010)

#### Joan's Mississippi Mud Cake..... Yummy! Joan's Mississippi Mud Cake..... Yummy!

<b>Cake</b> 4 eggs 2 cups sugar 1 cup butter, melted 1 ½ cups flour 1/3 cup cocoa 1 teaspoon vanilla 1 jar Marshmallow Crème	<b>Icing</b> ½ cup butter, melted 1/3 cup cocoa 6 Tablespoons milk 1 box 10X confectioners sugar 1 teaspoon vanilla 1 cup chopped pecans	Beat eggs and sugar together and add melted butter. Stir. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Pour into greased and floured 9x13 pan, bake at 350 for 30 min. While warm spread with marshmallow crème and then icing
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