

# Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum

## Lesson Plan for *Huckleberry Finn*

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School: Lamoni High School, Lamoni, Iowa

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Hannibal, Missouri

### “Close Reading of Colonel Sherburn’s Speech”

#### LESSON PLAN for *Huckleberry Finn*

**Concept or Topic:**

How courage is portrayed in the text

**Suggested Grade Level:**

11-12 (can be modified for other levels)

**Subject:**

- Literature
- Social Studies/American History

**Suggested Time Frame:**

Three days

**Objective(s):**

1. Students will **define courage and cowardice** using three pieces of evidence for each from Colonel Sherburn’s speech from *Huckleberry Finn* by writing a speech or creating a comic book.
2. Students will **explain Twain’s message (point and purpose)** in *Huckleberry Finn* with supporting details, referencing Twain’s historical context, through class discussion and completion of a Venn diagram.

**State Standards:****Language Standards 11-12: Knowledge of Language**

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain

**Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 11-12: Key Ideas and Details**

1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole

**Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 11-12: Key Ideas and Details**

2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

**Assessments:**

Students will research and complete a Venn diagram comparing KKK and Colonel Sherburn’s speech with a minimum of 10 entries.

Students will complete one of the following:

- Write a speech that defines what courage/cowardice is. Provide examples from your own life.

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- Create a comic book depicting the events that are discussed in Sherburne's speech. Use at least 10 panels.

### Vocabulary:

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- Lync: to kill by a mob action without legal representation.
- Acquit: to find not guilty of a crime

#### Concept

- Historical context

### Subject Area Integration:

- Language arts
- History/social studies

### Background Information:

- Class will have already read Chapters 1-21 in *Huckleberry Finn*
- Background on Sam Smarr and William Owsley

### Materials:

- *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 125th Anniversary Edition
  - Chapter 22, Colonel Sherburne's speech
  - Explanatory Notes, pg. 436-7 (186.16-18) (*Instructor Only*)
- Computers or tablets with Internet access

### Technology:

- <http://www.history.com/topics/ku-klux-klan>

### Related Twain Quotes/Passages:

"Men in a crowd do not act as they would as individuals. In a crowd they don't think for themselves, but become impregnated by the contagious sentiment uppermost in the minds of all who happen to be en masse." (*Adventures of Huck Finn*, Twain, Explanatory Notes, pg. 437 [189.1-27])

"A little blunder in the administration of justice by Southern mob-law; but nothing to speak of. Only a nigger killed by mistake—that is all. But mistakes will happen, even in the conduct of the best regulated and most high toned mobs, and surely there is no good reason why Southern gentlemen should worry themselves with useless regrets." (*Adventures of Huck Finn*, Twain, Explanatory Notes, pg. 436 [188.13-16])

### Lesson Sequence:

#### Day 1:

#### Hook/Intro: (5-10 min)

- Discuss the fact that this is based on a true event.

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- Read Explanatory Note 186.16-18
- Define courage as a class.
  - What is courage?
  - What makes a person brave?

### **Reading for Literal Meaning:** (10 min)

- Review concepts/vocabulary
- Read Chapter 22 out loud to students (pg 189-195)

### **Suggested Questions:** (5-10 min)

- Who is Sherburn addressing?
- Why is the crowd angry?
- Who is leading the crowd?
- What does the average man not like?
- Why does the crowd leave?

### **Reading for Deeper Meaning:** (10 min)

- Students will reread, looking for examples and non-examples of courage.
- In groups of 2 or 3, start on page 190, when he says, slow and scornful. and read to page 191, tossing his gun up across his left arm and cocking it, when he says this.

### **Reading to Analyze:** (10 min-end of class)

- Students will need access to laptops/Internet. Provide students with <http://www.history.com/topics/ku-klux-klan>. Read and discuss information from the website together as a class.
- Students will research history of KKK, focusing on events during Twain's lifetime.
- Students will create a Venn diagram to compare/contrast KKK and Sherburn's definition of a coward. (Complete outside of class)

### **Day 2:**

#### **Discuss Research:** (10 min)

- Similarities to Twain's writing
- What's going on in the U.S. during that time period

#### **Write About Reading:** (35 min-end of class)

- Write a speech that defines what courage is and provides examples from your own life.
- Create a comic book with dialog depicting the events that are discussed in Sherburn's speech that show cowardice or courage. Use at least 10 panels.

### **Day 3:**

#### **Presentation:** (as needed)

- Present and defend your definition of courage.

#### **Moving on:** (3 min)

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- As students continue to read *Huckleberry Finn*, have them look for other examples of courage and cowardice.

### **Homework:**

**Day 1:** Complete research. Create a Venn diagram with a minimum of 10 entries comparing the KKK and Colonel Sherburne's speech.

**Day 2:** Complete project (speech or comic book) to present the next day in class.

### **Strategies for Exceptional Students:**

- Pre-teach vocabulary/concepts
- Teacher pre-reads the chapter to students before class
- Audiobooks available
- Pre-teach/Review Venn diagram
- Venn diagram provided (needs large center space)
- Record speech instead of presenting during class
- Present to a small group of peers
- Students may use other means to present speech: movies, PowerPoint, PowToons, YouTube video, Prezi, etc.

### **Suggested Follow-Up Activities:**

- Discuss which groups of people are disenfranchised, bullied, or discriminated against today. Create a performance, presentation, etc. titled "What Would Huck Do?"+
- Watch a movie version of *Huckleberry Finn* to compare to the book.

**Courage Essay & Presentation**

Student Name _____					
CATEGORY	4 -Above Standards	3 - Meets Standards	2 . Approaching Standards	1 - Below Standards	Score
Position Statement	The position statement provides a clear, strong statement of the author's position on the topic.	The position statement provides a clear statement of the author's position on the topic.	A position statement is present, but does not make the author's position clear.	There is no position statement.	
Support for Position	Includes 3 or more pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement. The writer anticipates the reader's concerns, biases or arguments and has provided at least 1 counter-argument.	Includes 3 or more pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement.	Includes 2 pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement.	Includes 1 or fewer pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences).	
Evidence and Examples	All of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Most of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	At least one of the pieces of evidence and examples is relevant and has an explanation that shows how that piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Evidence and examples are NOT relevant AND/OR are not explained.	
Grammar & Spelling	Author makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	
Preparedness	Student is completely prepared and has obviously rehearsed.	Student seems pretty prepared but might have needed a couple more rehearsals.	The student is somewhat prepared, but it is clear that rehearsal was lacking.	Student does not seem at all prepared to present.	

Total Points: \_\_\_\_\_/20

**Courage Cartoon & Presentation**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	4 -Above Standards	3 - Meets Standards	2 -Approaching Standards	1 - Below Standards	Score
Content	Includes at least 10 panels.	Includes 8-9 panels.	Includes 6-7 panels.	Includes 5 or fewer.	
Clarity and Neatness	Panels are easy to read and clearly written, labeled, or drawn.	Panels are easy to read and most elements are clearly written, labeled, or drawn	Panels are hard to read with rough drawings and labels.	Panels are hard to read and one cannot tell what goes where.	
Evidence and Examples	All of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Most of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	At least one of the pieces of evidence and examples is relevant and has an explanation that shows how that piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Evidence and examples are NOT relevant AND/OR are not explained.	
Grammar & Spelling	Author makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	
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Total: \_\_\_\_\_/20