

The Trial of Mark Twain (Shared by Dan Zehr, Washington High School, Normal, IL)

Mark Twain has been accused of promoting racism in the novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. This class will try the author and determine his guilt or innocence.

Each person in the class will participate in the trial

Roles:

Defendant: Mark Twain (must take the stand and assist defense team)

Judge: Must research court procedure and preside over the trial

Court Clerk: Must research court procedure. The clerk will run the courtroom on the days of the trial.

Defense Team: Two students

Prosecution Team: Two/Three students

Witnesses: Characters from the novel, authorities on Mark Twain, authorities on racial matters, civil rights activists (i.e. representatives from the civil rights movement, NAACP, etc.) authorities on Twain's era or the era of the novel, etc. teachers, students.

All students not assigned to another role in the trial will serve as the jury.

Witnesses will be for either the defense or the prosecution. To determine which students will portray witnesses, the defense and the prosecution must present a list of needed witnesses by _____. The witnesses will then be assigned from the class. The remaining students will serve as jurors.

This assignment is worth 50 points. Grades will be based on how well the student carries out his/her role in the trial including evidence of preparation and research, knowledge of the novel, strength of presentation and reasoning skills employed.

If witnesses are not given adequate "bench" time to illustrate their preparation, they may write a one to two page description of their preparation and what they were prepared to testify on the stand.

The jury, in addition to serving during the trial, will also write a two-page paper explaining how they reached their verdict.

Schedule:

Present assignments

Assign Twain, defense team and prosecution team, judge and court clerk

Defense and Prosecution teams meet- present list of witnesses due by _____

Witness are assigned.

Research, preparation begins. (Jury may work on essays the assigned Huck Finn Essay Options)

Trial

Prosecution and Defense present opening statements

Prosecution calls and examines witnesses.

Defense cross exam.

Defense calls and examines witnesses.

Prosecution cross-examines.

Closing arguments.

Deliberation of the jury.

Verdict and sentencing

Trial of Mark Twain

Student _____ Role _____

Preparation

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Research

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Knowledge of Novel

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Strength of Presentation

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Reasoning Skills

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

TOTAL _____/50

Trial of Mark Twain

Student _____ Role _____

Preparation

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Research

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Knowledge of Novel

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Strength of Presentation

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Reasoning Skills

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

TOTAL _____/50