

**Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum**  
 Lesson Plan for *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*  
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**Irony in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: “You can’t pray a lie.”**

<b>LESSON PLAN FOR <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i></b>	
<b>Concept or Topic:</b> Irony	<b>Suggested Grade Level:</b> 11-12
<b>Subject:</b> Advanced Placement English (Language and Literature).	<b>Suggested Time Frame:</b> Two-three days (42 minute periods).
<p><b>Objective(s):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will demonstrate an ability to understand and analyze the use of irony in Twain’s <i>Huckleberry Finn</i>, “The War Prayer,” selected short stories, poetry, and song lyrics.</li> <li>• Students will identify different types of irony (verbal, situational, dramatic, and Socratic) and be able to apply them appropriately to the texts.</li> <li>• Students will post five (5) distinct and different examples of irony from the above Twain texts on the classroom “Wall of Irony.”</li> <li>• Students will transfer their understanding of irony on to other cultural genres, such as music, media, poetry, art, and personal experience.</li> <li>• Students will write an original short story, poem(s), and/or song lyrics that employ the literary device of irony.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>State Standards:</b></p> <p><b>2.B.5b</b> Apply knowledge gained from literature as a means of understanding contemporary and historical economic, social and political issues and perspectives.</p> <p><b>2.B.5a</b> Analyze and express an interpretation of a literary work.</p> <p><b>2.A.5a</b> Compare and evaluate oral, written or viewed works from various eras and traditions and analyze complex literary devices (e.g., structures, images, forms, foreshadowing, flashbacks, stream of consciousness).</p> <p><b>1.A.5b</b> Analyze the meaning of abstract concepts and the effects of particular word and phrase choices.</p> <p><b>1.B.5a</b> Relate reading to prior knowledge and experience and make connections to related information.</p> <p><b>1.B.5d</b> Read age-appropriate material with fluency and accuracy.</p>	

## LESSON PLAN FOR *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

**1.C.5a** Use questions and predictions to guide reading across complex materials.

**1.C.5c** Critically evaluate information from multiple sources.

**1.C.5d** Summarize and make generalizations from content and relate them to the purpose of the material

**1.C.5e** Evaluate how authors and illustrators use text and art across materials to express their ideas (e.g., complex dialogue, persuasive techniques).

### **Assessment Options:**

- Pre-assessment: Note card identifies prior knowledge of irony.
- In-class assessment: Jigsaw activity.
- Homework Assignment: "Wall of Irony" submissions (5 per student; check for understanding).
- Post-assessment: Student choice creative writing prompt(s).

### **Vocabulary:**

- Verbal Irony
- Situational Irony
- Dramatic Irony
- Socratic Irony

**Subject Area Integration:** Poetry, art, pop culture, music.

### **Background Information:**

- Prior knowledge assessment: on a note card, students will be asked to define irony and provide a written and/or visual example from their lives, literature, and/or pop culture.
- We expect a full spectrum of responses: some will not be able to deliver anything, and some responses will be quite sophisticated.

### **Materials:**

- passages selected from *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*;
- the poem, "War is Kind" by Stephen Crane;
- the prose poem, "The War Prayer" by Mark Twain;
- short stories: "Edward Mills and George Benton: A Tale" and "My Watch" by Mark Twain;
- The song lyrics, "With God on Our Side" by Bob Dylan and "Ironic" by Alanis Morissette; various visual and print examples from "The Onion" (a satirical newspaper), advertising, "New Yorker" cartoons, and current events.

### **Technology:**

<http://www.newyorker.com/>  
<http://www.theonion.com/>

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**Related Twain Quotes/Passages:** *Huckleberry Finn* (268-271)

### **Lesson Sequence:**

#### **DAY ONE:**

Hook/Intro: (10 minutes)

- Project a pop culture image from the Internet and/or a funny New Yorker cartoon that demonstrates irony. "What is funny about this?" "Why?" Is this an example of irony?"
- Teacher Clarification of Irony: define four types of irony w/ students taking notes.

Guided Practice Using Huck Finn: (25 minutes)

- Distribute passage from Huck Finn and read aloud as a class.
- In pairs, students will discuss what is ironic about the passage and how Twain develops irony with language.
- Pairs will report back to class, employing specific examples and vocabulary.

Homework/Closure: (5 minutes)

- Explain homework (see below for description).

Learning Activities:

- Reading, small group discussion, large class discussion.

#### **DAY TWO:**

- To review the previous lesson, students will post and share their ironic passages on the "Wall of Irony." (10 minutes)
- Jigsaw activity: Small groups are differentiated by reading readiness, materials and interest. The objective of the activity is for each group to analyze the reading(s) and identify the irony in each piece. Groups will be organized by readings as follows: Group One: "Edward Mills and George Benton: A Tale" (Twain); Group Two: "War Prayer" (Twain); Group Three: "War is Kind" (Stephen Crane); Group Four: "My Watch" (Twain); Group Five: "With God on Our Side" (Bob Dylan) and "Ironic" (Alanis Morissette). (20 minutes)

Suggested Questions to Accompany Jigsaw Activity:

- Twain uses irony to poke fun at, satirize, and indict endless institutions, public figures, and icons in American society. In this passage, what/who is he "aiming" at, and how does he convey his attitude(s)?
- List specific instances from the passage where Huck's thoughts, words, and deeds are ironic. Why?
- How do the specific instances add up to a generalized irony in the passage as a whole?
- In your opinion, does Twain make a valid point? Do you agree or disagree with his assertion/position?

Homework/Closure:

- Share findings from groups. (10 minutes)
- Homework: Brainstorm ideas for creative writing assignment on irony.
- Students will come to class prepared to present an initial proposal for their piece.

Learning Activities:

- Reading, small group discussion, large class discussion.

**Strategies for Exceptional Students:**

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- All activities and assignments are differentiated for multiple intelligences, interest, and performance levels.

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

- Students will write a short story or poem that employs the use of an ironic twist.
- Students will write a meta-cognitive reflection that explains how their “twist” is truly ironic.
- The logical next lesson will focus on satire as a genre.