

## Lesson Plan – *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Concept: Performance and Biography</b> <b><i>Whitewashing the Fence and Mark Twain Biography</i></b></p>
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Developed by Kathi Worden, Hallsville Middle School, Hallsville, Missouri



**Suggested Grade Level:** 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading

**Time Frame:** Two week interdisciplinary unit; daily 75 minute block time

**Objectives:**

- 1) Students will perform the play *Whitewashing the Fence* and complete a MAP-like assessment that identifies the main ideas, conflicts, characterizations, author's purpose, conclusions, order of events, and letter writing format of the play
- 2) Students will produce a PowerPoint presentation on a biography of Mark Twain (with 80% accuracy - see scoring guides)

**Missouri State Standards:**

**Knowledge Standards (Communication Arts)** Goal 2 Students will read and evaluate fiction, poetry and drama; Goal 3 Students will read and evaluate nonfiction works and material; Goal 4 Students will write formally and informally (**Fine Arts**) Goal 1 Students will acquire the knowledge of process and techniques for the production, exhibition or performance of one or more of the visual or performed arts

**Performance Standards** Goal 1.2 Students will conduct research to answer questions and evaluate information and ideas; Goal 1.4 Students will use technological tools and other resources to locate, select, and organize information; Goal 1.5 Students will comprehend and evaluate written, visual and oral presentations and works; Goal 2.5 Students will perform or produce works in the fine and practical arts

**Assessment/Evaluation:**

There is a quiz to assess content knowledge on the play and a scoring guide for the biography PowerPoint (quiz and scoring guide included).

**Language/Vocabulary:**

The expression "hokey" is used in the play and will be addressed in one of the questions. Oral presentation skills will be reviewed for performing and presenting the PowerPoint.

**Integrated Curriculum:** This will be a 6<sup>th</sup> grade team unit over the "Era of the 1800's in Missouri". The science teacher will deal with the aspects of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. The social study teacher will deal with the issue of slavery and the Civil War. The language arts teacher will talk about letter writing and correspondence from the 1800's. The math teacher will compare/contrast economics then and now. The reading teacher will talk about Mark Twain and have the students act out a scene from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. They will also complete a Mark Twain biography PowerPoint presentation.

**Background Information:** Students will be given background information about the story of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and Mark Twain using the CD given to me at a teacher workshop.

**Materials:** Each student will receive the "Whitewashing the Fence" play and questions. Costumes and props from the Drama department will be needed for acting out the play. Computers, internet access, projectors and SMARTboards will be needed.

**Technology Support:**

When completing the PowerPoint, students will use The Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum web site to gain information about Mark Twain: <http://www.marktwainmuseum.org/>

**Related Twain Quotes/Other Readings:**

- "He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it--namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain." <http://www.bookrags.com/notes/ts/QUO.htm>
- "In fact, the more things are forbidden, the more popular they become." <http://www.twainquotes.com/Forbidden.html>

**Lesson Plan Format**

**A. Introduction:** Teacher will read aloud to the students chapter 2 from the book *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. After reading ask the students what they think the expression "boys will be boys" means. Discuss the characters from the play. Talk about how Tom was able to get his friends to paint the fence for him.

**B. Lesson:** Pass out the play "Whitewashing the Fence". Talk about the characters from this scene. Place students into groups of six. Have them read over the play and assign themselves a character. Give them costumes and props and ask them to act out this scene. They will then act out this scene in front of the class. Over the next two weeks, they will have to memorize their parts so they can act it out to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade class. The next day they will be given the MAP-like assessment over this scene from the play to complete for a grade. Over the next week and a half, the students will be working on, in their play groups, the Mark Twain biography PowerPoint and practicing the "whitewash" scene. When they perform their play to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students, they will also show them the biography of Mark Twain PowerPoint.

**C. Closure:** Students will present the scene "Whitewashing the Fence" and their Mark Twain biography powerpoint presentations to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. The four groups of students will be assigned a 4<sup>th</sup> grade class to present their information.

**Scheduled Use of Time**

Time	Teacher Activity/Questions to be asked	Student Activity
Day 1 75 minute (block time)	Teacher will read aloud chapter 2 of <i>The Adventure of Tom Sawyer</i> . The students will be asked what they think the expression "boys will be boys" means. Background information about Tom Sawyer will be given. Plays will be distributed. Students will be assigned groups to act out their scenes.	Listen, respond and perform
Day 2 10 minutes	Review the scene from yesterday. Pass out the assessment and students will spend the rest of the block time to complete.	Listen, respond and complete assessment
Day 3 40 minutes	Teacher will provide background information on Mark Twain. Review PowerPoint etiquette. Pass out PowerPoint guideline and scoring guide. Go to computer lab and start research. Allow students last 10 minutes to practice scene.	Listen, respond, work in groups, and perform
Days 4 – 9 75 minutes	Teacher will act as facilitator as the students continue to work in groups on their Mark Twain biography powerpoint presentations and the "whitewashing" scene.	Work in groups and perform

Day 10 75 minutes	Teacher will introduce the students to the 4 <sup>th</sup> grade class before they perform the “whitewashing” scene and PowerPoint presentations	Perform the “whitewashing” scene and present bio presentations
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**Strategies/accommodations to support students with exceptionalities:**

- When the teacher assigns the students into their “whitewashing” groups, it will be with the intention that students who may struggle with reading and performing in front of students will be grouped with students who enjoy performing and helping others.

**Possible Follow-up Activities:**

- Pictures of the play and slides from the PowerPoint presentations will be placed on the student portion of the teacher’s web page by the students so parents and patrons may view.

**Possible Guest Speakers/Other Resources:**

- Students will take a field trip to the University of Missouri to view the play “Adventures of Tom Sawyer”.
- A guest speaker from the Mark Twain Museum and Boyhood Home will be asked to speak to the students about Mark Twain.

Tom Sawyer is a character in a famous book written many years ago. This play is based on a selection from the book. Read the play then answer the questions.

## **Whitewashing the Fence**

**Sara Spencer**

*Adapted from* The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

*by* **Mark Twain**

*Taken from* Beginnings in Literature

*Scott, Foresman, & Co. Publisher*



### **CHARACTERS**

**TOM SAWYER**

**AUNT POLLY**

**ALFRED TEMPLE**

**JOE HARPER**

**BEN ROGERS**

**JIM HOLLIS**

**TIME** The nineteenth century

**SCENE** A village street. A high board fence. A barrel on one side.

*TOM appears with a bucket of whitewash and a long-handled brush. Surveying the endless reaches of fence, he sighs despairingly, then dips his brush and passes it along*

*the topmost plank once or twice. Comparing the insignificant whitewashed streak with the far-reaching continent of the unwhitewashed fence, he sis down on the barrel, discouraged. AUNT POLLY marches in briskly, takes in the scene.*

AUNT POLLY (*whacking TOM on the seat with her slipper*). Is this the way you paint the fence? (*TOM leaps to his feet and starts whitewashing with vigor.*)

TOM I was just gettin' ready to start.

AUNT POLLY Remember, this is only the first coat.

TOM (*stopping his exertions*). First coat?

AUNT POLLY I want three coats on the fence, Tom.

TOM Aunt Polly, this is a holiday. Can't a boy play on a holiday?

AUNT POLLY When you finish your work.

TOM All the other boys are playin' this morning. We was goin' to have a big battle over on Cardiff Hill, Joe Harper's army and mine.

AUNT POLLY You heard was I said, Tom.

TOM Well, can't I paint the inside today, 'stead of the outside?

AUNT POLLY What difference does that make?

TOM Everybody in tarnation'll see me here on the sidewalk.

AUNT POLLY Well, what of it?

TOM I just told you, none of the other boys have to work on a holiday.

AUNT POLLY (*going*) You wouldn't either, if you'd do your work on other days. Three coats, now. (*She leaves*).

TOM Jeehosophat! And look who's comin'! (*Out of his despair is born an inspiration. He falls to whitewashing with elaborate care, handling the brush with an artist's touch, then standing back to get the full effect of it. ALFRED TEMPLE comes in.*)

ALFRED (*chewing on an apple*) Hee-eee! Lookit Tom Sawyer! Tom has to paint his Aunt Polly's fence on a holiday! Hee-eee! Tom's up a stump, ain't you, Tom? You got to work, haven't you, Tom.

TOM (*turning around to look at him with an air of surprise*) Why, it's you, Alfred. I warn't noticin'.

ALFRED I'm going swimming, I am. Don't you wish you could? But of course you'd rather work, wouldn't you? 'Course you would.

TOM What do you call work?

ALFRED Why, ain't that work?

TOM Maybe it is, and maybe it ain't. All I know is, it suits Tom Sawyer.

ALFRED Oh, come now, you don't mean to let on you like it?

TOM Like it? Well, I don't see why I oughtn't to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?

ALFRED Well, no, I guess he doesn't.

TOM Well, then.

ALFRED Say, Tom, let me whitewash a little.

TOM No-no. I reckon it wouldn't hardly do, Alfred. You see, Aunt Polly's awful partickler about this fence-right here on the street, you know.

ALFRED Oh, come now. Lemme try. Only just a little.

TOM Alfred, I'd like to, honest. But Aunt Polly's so partickler. If you was to tackle this fence, and anything was to happen to it-

ALFRED Oh, shucks, I'll be just as careful. Now lemme try. Say, I'll give you the core of my apple when I finish eating it.

TOM Well-no. No, Alfred. Now don't. I'm afeared-

ALFRED I'll give you all of it, Tom.

TOM (*taking the apple*) Well, all right. I'll let you brush for just a minute. Now be mighty careful.

ALFRED I will.

TOM Go slow around the edged now. I can't have any splatters on my fence.

ALFRED Is that all right?

TOM (*his mouth full of apple*) Better. Be sure to fill in all those cracks. Well, here comes Joe Harper. Hi, Joe! Lookin' for me?

JOE (*entering*) You're a fine commander. Don't even come to your own battle.

TOM That's so. We were goin' to fight today, weren't we?

JOE You don't mean to say you forgot?

TOM Well, I sort of thought of it early this morning, but when Aunt Poly said she wanted me to paint this fence, why, everything else just sort of slipped my mind.

JOE You mean you wanted to paint this fence?

TOM 'Course. It's very partickler work. I'm just lettin' Alfred work on it for a few minutes.

JOE What you givin' him for doin' your work?

TOM You mean what'd he give me for lettin' him? He gave me this apple.

JOE (*impressed, watches ALFRED a moment*) Tell you what. I got a kite I'll give you if you'll let me paint awhile.

TOM Aren't you goin' to have the battle?

JOE We've already had it. Beat your army to pieces.

TOM Well, I tell you, Joe, I wasn't aimin' to let anybody else work on that fence, but now that I let Alfred-your homemade newspaper kite, without any string?

JOE I'll help you make the string.

TOM Well, I guess maybe you can take a few strokes, soon as Alfred gets through. You have to be awful careful, you know, Joe, on account of this is the front fence, right on the sidewalk, and Aunt Polly said---(BEN ROGERS *and* JIM HOLLIS *burst in*)

BEN Hey, Tom, why didn't you come to the battle?

JIM How you expect us to fight without any general?

BEN The boys want to get another general.

JIM Well, by hokey, lookit Alfred Temple. What's he doin', Tom?

TOM He's just paintin' until Joe Harper gets his turn.

BEN No! It's fun?

TOM Fun? It's fun enough for Tom Sawyer to miss a battle on account of.

JIM No-really? Is that why you didn't come to the battle, Tom?

TOM I reckon it is.

BEN Let me have a turn, Tom, after Joe.

JIM Ah, no. Let me. I'm your adjutant general.

BEN Tom, you owe me a good turn. I let you copy my 'rithmetic last week.

TOM Wait a minute. Don't you think I want to paint a little myself?

JIM Well, you might just let us try it, mightn't you?

TOM No-no. I don't think I better. Why, you all might ruin that fence.

JIM Please, Tom.

BEN You let Alfred and Joe paint on it, didn't you?

TOM Well-Alfred give me an apple for his turn.. And Joe give me his kite.

BEN Oh.

JIM (*ransacking his pockets for treasure*) I'll give you a handle off a leather grip.

BEN I'll give you a key, Tom. It won't fit nothin', but it's brass. And I'll throw in a piece of blue bottle glass to look through.

TOM Oh, all right. But see what you boys have let me in for. If anybody else comes along, I won't get a chance to paint myself.





## Quiz

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) Which of these best describes the main conflict in the play?
  - a. a boy's desire to play instead of doing his chores
  - b. the boy's struggle to make new friends
  - c. the author's belief that the boy had doubts about himself
  - d. Aunt Polly's attitude that she is always right
  
- 2) What is the author's purpose for writing this play?
  - a. to inform the readers how to correctly paint a fence
  - b. to persuade readers to become painters
  - c. to entertain readers with a humorous story
  - d. to evaluate the characteristics of Tom Sawyer
  
- 3) Aunt Polly can be described as
  - a. mysterious
  - b. determined
  - c. helpful
  - d. easy-going
  
- 4) Read this sentence from the play:  
**Well, by hokey, lookit Alfred Temple.**  
What does "**by hokey**" mean as used in this sentence.
  - a. my goodness
  - b. cat
  - c. painting
  - d. fence

In addition to the time period stated at the beginning of the play, list two other evidences that his play took place long ago.

- 1.
- 2.

What is the difference between work and fun, judging by this play? Do you agree or disagree with this view. Be sure to support you answer.

Describe the conflict in the play that creates the problem for Tom.

List three things that make plays different from stories.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Based on what you've read in the play, what can be concluded about the relationship between Tom and Aunt Polly.

Conclusion 1:

Reason for conclusion:

Complete the chart by listing four events from the play in the order that they happened.

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Whitewashing the Fence  
Scoring Guide **Answer Key**

Number 1: A (one point)

Number 2: C (one point)

Number 3: B (one point)

Number 4: A (one point)

Number 5: possible answers (two points)  
types of toys or items given as awards  
language (dialect)

Number 6: multiple answers could be accepted (two points)

Number 7: Possible answer could include Aunt Polly wanting Tom to paint the fence and she will not allow him to play until it is finished. (one point)

Number 8: Possible answers could include: plays are shorter than the actual stories; more people can be involved when you put a story in play form; has dialogue only and can be read quickly; etc (three points)

Number 9: Possible answer could include: Conclusion: Aunt Polly was a disciplinarian Reason for Conclusion: Aunt Polly will not allow Tom to play until the fence is painted, etc (two points)

Number 10: Multiple answers could be accepted (four points)

Number 11: Multiple answers could be accepted, but the letter must include:

- If they liked the scene and why
- Connections they made
- Suggestions on how the scene could be different
- Questions to Mark Twain
- Friendly letter format (five points)

MARK TWAIN BIOGRAPHY PROJECT  
POWERPOINT

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Famous Person \_\_\_\_\_

Project Begins:            Project Due:            Presentations Begin:



Slide One: Cover Slide

You will want to include the name of Mark Twain plus a picture of him on this slide.

Slide Two: Childhood Information

Date of Birth:

Place of Birth:

Anything else pertinent to childhood:

Education

Slide Three: Adulthood

Was Mark Twain married and were there any children? What jobs did he have?

Slide Four: Death (if applicable)

When, where, and how did Mark Twain die?

Slide Five: Accomplishments and Interesting Facts

Slide Six: Important Poem (see scoring guide)

Slide Seven: Bibliography (see scoring guide)  
Need 3 sources: book, encyclopedia, Internet

## BIOGRAPHY POWERPOINT SCORING GUIDE

REPORT COMPONENT CRITERIA	SCORE
<b>Cover Slide (5 points)</b> Includes picture and person's name	
<b>Childhood Information (10 points)</b> Has date of birth, place of birth, and other important information	
<b>Adulthood Information (10 points)</b> Has information about marriage, children, and jobs.	
<b>Death (10 points)</b> When, where, and how this person died (if applicable)	
<b>Accomplishments and Interesting Facts (10 points)</b> Interesting facts and information about this person	
<b>Important Poem (10 Points)</b> Wrote a 5 line poem including important events in the person's life	
<b>Bibliography (10 Points)</b> Cites 3 sources: Biography, Encyclopedia, Internet Source	
<b>Grammar (10 Points)</b> Is the PowerPoint information capitalized, punctuated, and spelled correctly	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	