

Connecticut Yankee/Huckleberry Finn Lesson Plan
Mark Twain Teachers' Workshop - Mark Twain Museum
July 23-27, 2007 – Hannibal, Missouri

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Novels: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

Grade Level: 11th Grade Language Arts (American Literature)

Time Frame for Lesson: 5 days (dependent upon amount of in-class time used for projects)

Objective: Students will explore the theme of appearance vs. reality in chapters 27-29 in *Connecticut Yankee*. Having just read *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, students will draw comparisons between both works in regard to this theme using Venn diagrams. Finally, students will complete a short project that utilizes the Multiple Intelligences to solidify and express their understanding of appearance vs. reality as it relates to *Conn. Yankee*.

Anticipatory Set: The teacher will present pictures of people that are representative types (businessman, athletes, models, musicians, gang members, police officers, teachers, tattoo artists etc.) in a PowerPoint presentation. Students will be asked to evaluate each person and address the following questions:

- What characteristics would you attribute to this person?
- How would you feel about being around this person?
- Do you think you would welcome this person into your group of friends?
- What do you think this person is like?
- If you could predict their attitude/demeanor, what would it be?

After discussing two or three pictures, the teacher will display a photograph of a clean-cut athlete (baseball player, football player, sprinter, etc.) and ask students to respond to the same questions. After students are finished responding (the answers will probably be favorable), the teacher will inform the class that the athlete had previously been charged and arrested for burglary and drug possession. Students will be asked to re-evaluate how they perceive this person. At this point, the teacher can lead students into a discussion on how looks can be deceiving. There have been many cases where people traditionally thought of as being upstanding (teachers, police officers, etc.) have committed heinous crimes or have been found to lack good character. On the other hand, people appearing to be "rough" or "dangerous" because of stereotypes have been found to be honest, friendly, caring, etc. Eventually, the discussion should lead to a point where students realize that they have wrongly judged others based on

appearance. At this point, the teacher should point out that Twain utilized this theme in his writings.

Divide students into groups of 3-5. Each student will have a copy of *Huck Finn* and will recall instances from the text that relate to the theme of appearance vs. reality. Only one student in each group will be required to make a list of examples. Possible student responses: The Duke and Dauphin attempt to deceive Huck and Jim by claiming a royal heritage; they fool the townspeople by misrepresenting themselves and the products that they sell; Huck dresses up like a girl so that he can find out what's going on in town; Jim is judged by society based on race/skin color; Jim fools those floating down the river by appearing to be a "sick Arab." This activity will serve as a preparation for Chapters 27- 29 in *Conn. Yankee*.

Next, students will read chapters 27-29 in *Conn. Yankee* where Hank Morgan and King Arthur set out to live amongst the peasants. Students should annotate the text as they go (underline, highlight, note taking, etc.) Their annotations will relate to how the king's appearance is changed in order to fit in as a peasant and especially how "smartly clad people" and knights treat the king as a result of his external appearance and demeanor. Upon completion of reading these chapters, students will fill out a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the theme of appearance vs. reality in both novels.

As a culminating activity, students will complete a short project in groups that utilizes Multiple Intelligences. The teacher will assign certain groups of students to particular chapters in *Conn. Yankee* (27,28, or 29). Groups may choose from the following:

1. Compile several song clips that reflect or relate to, the appearance vs. reality theme.
2. Write a song that addresses a particular chapter or scene and elaborates on appearance vs. reality.
3. Create a work of art (painting, drawing, sketch, sculpture, etc.) that depicts a scene from the assigned chapters.
4. Act out a scene or an entire chapter. Students will take on certain roles and will perform a play in front of the class.
5. Write a poem or rap song that speaks of a scene from the assigned chapters and addresses appearance vs. reality.

Depending on time restraints, projects may be presented based on the teacher's discretion. Teachers may use the following scoring guide:

	3 – Meets Expectations	2- Approaches Expectations	1- Expectations not met
Originality/Creativity	Project exhibits a strong sense of originality and creative approach	Project displays some originality, but clearly lacks creative insight	Project displays little or no originality
Addresses theme	Appearance vs. Reality is clearly evident and is expressed thoroughly	Appearance vs. Reality is exhibited to a degree, but lacks thoroughness	Appearance vs. Reality is barely evident or not evident at all
Presentation	Presentation contains a strong sense of organization and is expressed in a clear manner	Presentation exhibits a sense of organization, but is not expressed in a clear, thorough manner	Presentation is ineffective, unorganized and does not engage the audience