

**Lesson Plan: *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* ~ Artifacts**  
**Mark Twain Teachers Workshop – Mark Twain Museum**  
**July 23-27, 2007 – Hannibal, Missouri**

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**Grade Level:** 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade; easily adapted for older or younger students

**Time Frame for Lesson:** The class must read the novel before beginning the project. You will need to use two actual class periods, one to introduce the project and discuss with students, and one for the students to present their projects. In addition, the students will need a few days between the lesson introduction and their presentations in order to prepare.



**Background Information:** In order to generate interest in the project and build a bridge to prior knowledge, begin by asking students if they have been to any museums and what kind of exhibits are in museums. Discuss what an artifact is and how it can give us information about another time and place.

**Literary/Language Arts Focus:** theme, comprehension, symbolism, illustration, creative writing, author's purpose

**State Standards:** Illinois Learning Standards

- 1.B.3b Identify text structure and create a visual representation to use while reading.
- 1.B.3c Continuously check and clarify for understanding.
- 1.B.3d Read age-appropriate material with fluency and accuracy.
- 1.C.3a Use information to form, explain and support questions and predictions.
- 1.C.3b Interpret and analyze entire narrative text using story elements, point of view and theme.
- 1.C.3d Summarize and make generalizations from content and relate them to the purpose of the material.
- 1.C.3e Compare how authors and illustrators use text and art across materials to express their ideas.
- 2.A.3b Describe how the development of theme, character, plot and setting contribute to the overall impact of a piece of literature.
- 2.B.3a Respond to literary material from personal, creative and critical points of view.
- 2.B.3b Compare and contrast common literary themes across various societies and eras.
- 2.B.3c Analyze how characters in literature deal with conflict, solve problems and relate to real-life situations.

- 3.A.3 Write compositions that contain complete sentences and effective paragraphs using English conventions.
- 3.B.3a Produce documents that convey a clear understanding and interpretation of ideas and information and display focus, organization, elaboration and coherence.
- 3.B.3b Edit and revise for word choice, organization, consistent point of view and transitions among paragraphs using contemporary technology and formats suitable for submission and/or publication.
- 3.C.3a Compose narrative, informative, and persuasive writings.
- 3.C.3b Using available technology, produce compositions and multimedia works for specified audiences.
- 4.B.3a Deliver planned oral presentations, using language and vocabulary appropriate to the purpose, message and audience; provide details and supporting information that clarify main ideas; and use visual aids and contemporary technology as support.
- 4.B.3c Develop strategies to manage or overcome communication anxiety and apprehension.
- 4.B.3d Use verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to maintain communications and to resolve conflict.
- 5.C.3b Prepare and orally present original work supported by research.
- 5.C.3c Take notes, conduct interviews, organize and report information in oral, visual and electronic formats.

**Curriculum Connections:** social studies (history, artifacts, museums), science (preservation of artifacts), art, communications, oral presentation

**Vocabulary:** Be sure the students understand the list of potential themes on #1 of the Artifact Bag Project Guidelines handout.

**Materials:**

- Paper, markers, colored pencils, etc., to create proclamations
- Items for the bags will be the students' responsibilities to bring from outside the classroom.

**Technology Support:** Students may wish to have computer access to create their proclamations and/or to produce pictures or representations of their artifacts, but the entire project may be completed with no technology support of any kind.

**Content Objectives:**

- Students will identify and analyze a relevant theme that Twain presents in the novel.
- Students will find or create six or more objects that effectively connect with their chosen theme.
- Students will produce a written "proclamation" with complete sentence descriptions of how the objects connect with their chosen theme.
- Students will present their chosen theme and items to their class.

**Related Twain Quotes/Stories:** Any of Twain's works could be used as subjects for an Artifact Bag project. *Life on the Mississippi* and *Autobiography* would be especially helpful to help the students put themselves into Samuel Clemens's life and time.

Some of Twain's quotes could be discussed in connection with the idea of artifacts and preserving history or using items to preserve memories. Rich discussions about how we remember and what we remember from our childhood could be ignited by some of Twain's own words. Examples of quotes that would pertain are as follows:

- A historian who would convey the truth must lie. Often he must enlarge the truth by diameters, otherwise his reader would not be able to see it.  
- *Mark Twain, a Biography*
- Herodotus says, "Very few things happen at the right time, and the rest do not happen at all: The conscientious historian will correct these defects."  
- Acknowledgments for *A Horse's Tale*
- ...history can carry on no successful competition with news, in the matter of sharp interest.  
- *Mark Twain's Autobiography*
- It is not worthwhile to try to keep history from repeating itself, for man's character will always make the preventing of the repetitions impossible.  
- *Mark Twain in Eruption*
- During my three days' stay in the town, I woke up every morning with the impression that I was a boy--for in my dreams the faces were all young again, and looked as they had looked in the old times--but I went to bed a hundred years old, every night--for meantime I had been seeing those faces as they are now.  
- passages from *Life on the Mississippi*
- For the majority of us, the past is a regret, the future an experiment  
- *Mark Twain and I*, Opie Read
- I said there was but one solitary thing about the past worth remembering and that was the fact that it is past--can't be restored.  
- Letter to Mr. Burrough, 11/1/1876
- ...little threads that hold life's patches of meaning together.  
- *Morals and Memory* speech
- When I was younger, I could remember anything, whether it had happened or not; but my faculties are decaying now and soon I shall be so I cannot remember any but the things that never happened.  
- *Mark Twain's Autobiography*

## The Lesson:

### DAY 1 (Introduction Day):

- Ask the class if they have ever been to a museum of any kind. What kind of items are found in museums? What purpose does each item serve? Introduce the work “artifact” and describe how an artifact can tie people to another place and time to reveal information. (5 minutes)
- Model an Artifact Bag presentation. Present your own Artifact Bag from one of Twain’s short stories or novels. The class may be familiar with the story or not; it does not matter. For example, in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the theme of friendship could be explored in an Artifact Bag. One item inside could be a small square of wood to represent the raft that Huck and Jim used to float down the river. It would tie into friendship because they talked for hours on that raft and learned to appreciate each other on that raft. Be sure to include an example of a postcard for students to see. Show several artifacts, describing each item’s place in the novel and connection to the theme. Answer any questions the students may have about the presentation. Also have your own “Proclamation” of artifacts as an example for the students to see. (15 minutes)
- Hand out the *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* Artifact Bag Project Guidelines sheet. Read through the instructions with the students. Take time to discuss the themes listed on #1 and allow time to discuss any other themes the students may think of. (15-20 minutes)
- Hand out the project rubric and discuss the evaluation process. (5 minutes)
- For the remainder of this class period, allow students to plan their projects.
- Schedule the day for presentations. Most students will be ready in two or three days. Stress that they need to find or create their items at home.
- Students may need class time to work on their Proclamation Lists, or you may assign this to be done at home. Use your judgment on how much time is needed. Other class work may continue during the days between introduction and presenting.



### DAY 2 (Presentation Day):

- All students may not be able to present in one class period. It may take two or three periods to present.
- As students present their projects to the class, fill out the sections of the rubric for Artifact Bag contents and Presentation. The Proclamation section and the last section may be completed after class.
- Stress the value of being a good audience to class members.

- After each presentation, allow students to ask the presenter questions about theme or artifacts.

**Assessment/Evaluation (Options for Mastery):** Students will be evaluated with a rubric formulated to assess the students' Artifact Bag contents, presentation techniques, proclamation writing, and overall knowledge and effort for the project.

**Strategies used in lesson to support learners with special needs (e.g., English language learners, gifted, learning disabled, etc.):**

- Students are allowed to select the theme to explore, so the subjects will vary according to ability.
- Teacher modeling of the presentation will enable struggling learners to visualize expectations.
- Allowing students to include as many items as desired allows for challenging levels for gifted students.
- English language students will benefit from having self-selected objects to discuss, which should reduce anxiety while speaking to the class.
- Using a different format, with several student presenters, will stimulate interest in all learners and present thematic structure from many approaches, thus reaching a broader spectrum of learners.

**Possible Follow-up Activities:**

- Students may create Artifact Bags for any other novel they have read.
- Students may create Artifact Bags for their own lives.
- The class may travel to a museum to view artifacts from science and/or history.



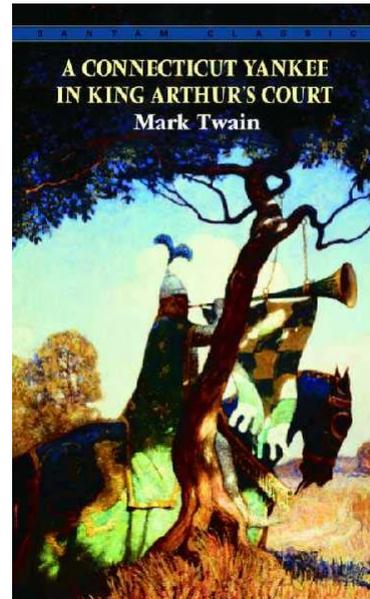
**Possible Guest Speakers/Other Resources:**

- Virtual tours of museums online
- Local senior citizens to discuss their memories
- Museum curators to present the process of collecting, preserving, and displaying artifacts
- A wide variety of memoirs for students to review

(Student Handout)  
**A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court**  
**Artifact Bag Project Guidelines**

1. First choose a theme or subject matter you would like to explore as the topic for your artifacts. Possible themes may include, but are certainly not limited to:

- a. poverty
- b. wealth
- c. King Arthur/Camelot
- d. slavery
- e. magic
- f. inventions of 19<sup>th</sup> Century
- g. politics/government
- h. power
- i. time travel
- j. influence of the church
- k. patriotism
- l. war
- m. the influence of newspapers
- n. royalty
- o. character
- p. literacy
- q. hygiene



2. Next plan the items you will include in your bag. You are required to have at least **6 items** in your bag. One **required** item is to create a postcard that depicts your selected theme or topic. On one side create a picture of some sort that illustrates your theme or topic. You may draw, cut out a picture and affix it, create it on a computer, or however you want to represent the novel. On the other side, write a note as if a character in the book were sending it to a friend or relative, including the recipient's address and the writer's return address. For added flair, you may even create a postage stamp.
3. Now find or create the other five or more items. You may have the actual item, a toy or miniature version of the item, a drawing or re-created item, or a picture of the item. Try to vary the types of representations you bring. Be prepared to tell how each item is important to the book's plot.
4. Create a formal listing, or a "proclamation", of your items, writing a complete sentence to tell how each item connects with the theme or topic of the book. Use present tense verbs as you write, and at the top of the page put your name, the book's name and the author's name. You may produce the list on a computer or entirely by hand. Make the list attractive by adding some sort of artwork, illustration, or a creative border, or else use an unusual type of paper or other material for the list. Let your

imagination flow. For a challenge, could you create some initial character illustrations (big fancy first letters for each sentence in your list) to imitate Beard's technique? Roll your proclamation into scroll form just as in the days of the knights.

5. Choose a bag or some sort of container to use for your collection of items. You may use a paper or plastic bag, a sport bag, a burlap bag, a backpack, a suitcase, or whatever will adequately hold your items. The container may even serve as one of your items if it connects.
6. On the day of your presentation, bring your proclamation of the items as well as the bag with items in it. Be prepared to discuss each item with the class. Remember to include the postcard as well as at least five other items.

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#### EXAMPLES TO HELP YOU GET STARTED:

\*Examples of an item to include in your bag:

For King Arthur, you could include a toy action figure of a king, a hand-drawn picture of Arthur or a picture from the Internet, a book of King Arthur's legends, or any other source to show a man that could be King Arthur. However, you could also "think outside the box" and bring simply a crown or perhaps a cut out heart to represent Arthur's compassion for the sick and dying people in the hut.

Examples of how an item might appear on your proclamation:

***K**ing Arthur at first represents nobility, corruption, and all that Hank hates about the land, but eventually represents honor and true chivalry as a noble man, even in disguise.*

***K**ing Arthur rides with Hank and gets thrown into slavery with him.*

\*Try to be creative, but most of all, have fun with this project!



Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Artifact Bag Presentation Rubric

#### ARTIFACT BAG CONTENTS:

*Does the student have at least 6 items in the bag?*

Your score \_\_\_\_\_

0 items=0

1-2 items=1

2-3 items=2

4-5 items=3

6 or more items=4

*Does the postcard meet requirements?*

Your score \_\_\_\_\_

No postcard included=0

Postcard with only a picture or only a note=1

Postcard with messy or unreadable picture and note=2

Postcard with clear picture and readable note=3

Postcard with picture and note that display extra effort=4

*Do the items connect with the book?*

Your score \_\_\_\_\_

No connection at all=0

Little connection=1

Most items connect, but weakly=2

Most items connect in logical ways=3

All items connect in clear, logical ways=4

#### PRESENTATION:

*Does the student use good voice quality?*

Your score \_\_\_\_\_

Inaudible voice=0

Barely audible voice=1

Audible voice with excessive pauses or fillers=2

Audible voice with few pauses or fillers=3

Expressive, clear voice without pauses or fillers=4

*Does the student clearly present items in bag?*

Your score \_\_\_\_\_

No items shown=0

Items shown to only part of the audience=2

Items shown with little or no eye contact=3

Items shown clearly with consistent eye contact=4

PROCLAMATION OF ARTIFACTS:

Does the student list at least 6 items?

Your score \_\_\_\_\_

- 0 items=0
- 1-2 items=1
- 3-4 items=2
- 5 items=3
- 6 or more items=4

Does the student write a complete sentence for each item?

Your score \_\_\_\_\_

- Nothing about each item=0
- Short, sketchy phrases for each item=1
- Descriptive phrases for each item=2
- Sentences using some or all past tense verbs=3
- Complete sentences with present tense verbs for all items=4

Does the Proclamation have a good overall appearance?

Your score \_\_\_\_\_

- Messy, unreadable Proclamation=0
- Messy, but mostly readable Proclamation=1
- Readable Proclamation=2
- Neat but plain Proclamation=3
- Creative, artistic Proclamation=4

OVERALL KNOWLEDGE AND EFFORT FOR PROJECT:

Does the student show knowledge of the novel?

Your score \_\_\_\_\_

- No knowledge shown=0
- Little knowledge shown=1
- Basic knowledge shown in a limited area=2
- Adequate knowledge shown=3
- In-depth knowledge shown in broad areas=4

Does the student show good effort in the entire project?

Your score \_\_\_\_\_

- Little or no effort=0
- Some effort=1
- Adequate effort in at least one area=2
- Adequate effort in all areas=3
- Extra effort in most areas=4

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Possible points for project: 40

Your total points \_\_\_\_\_

- |        |       |                                |
|--------|-------|--------------------------------|
| 40=102 | 35=87 | 30=75                          |
| 39=100 | 34=85 | 29=72                          |
| 38=97  | 33=82 | 28=70                          |
| 37=93  | 32=80 | 27 or lower=teacher's judgment |
| 36=90  | 31=77 |                                |

