

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

**Grade Level:** 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Time Frame:** 5 days

**Background information:** Students will need to understand who King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table were. Also a review of who Mark Twain was and some of the books that he wrote will be useful. My focus is that he was a native of Missouri.

**Lesson Focus:** Students will understand Mark Twain's fascination with inventions as well as the patents that he took out on or helped to back in his lifetime.

**State Standards:** Goals: 1-1,4,5; 2-7;3-2,7;4-6;  
Social Studies: 4,7; Communication Arts: 4,5,6; Science: 8

**Content Objectives:**

- Students will identify what a patent is and be able to identify at least two individuals who invented a device that improved production of a product.
- Students will describe who Samuel Clemens was as well as identify two books he wrote and one invention he patented.
- Students will describe life during King Arthur's time from the perspective of someone who lived during that time using at least 4 supporting details.
- Students will create a PowerPoint presentation that will identify an item they would take back with them to help production in Samuel Clemens era.

**Materials/ Technology Support:**

- PowerPoint presentation of slides of King Arthur and his Knights, a time machine, a picture of Mark Twain's character, Hank Morgan (not provided here; teacher will have to develop)
- Mark Twain's book: *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* Chapters 1-2, 16 and 26.
- Computers for the students to work on PowerPoint presentation
- Pictures of Twain's Scrapbook and the Paige typesetter in which he invested
- Web resources:
  - Article from New York Times – "Patent files hold Mark Twain story": <http://www.twainquotes.com/19390312.html>
  - Paige Typesetter: <http://www.twainquotes.com/paige.html>
  - Mark Twain Scrapbook: <http://www.pbs.org/marktwain/scrapbook/index.html>
  - Mark Twain and the Patent Office: <http://fayette.k12.in.us/~cbeard/cy/patent.html>

**Related quote from the book:**

*"... the very first official thing I did, in my administration--and it was on the very first day of it, too--was to start a patent office; for I knew that a country without a patent office and good patent laws was just a crab, and couldn't travel any way but sideways or backways"*

**Day 1**

**THE HOOK:**  
Show the teacher-developed PowerPoint presentation on time travel with legendary King Arthur and his knights  
Discuss the following questions in class:  
1. Who was King Arthur?  
2. During what time period did he live?  
3. What role did his knights serve?  
4. How would the people of his time live? Example what they did to make a living; how did they cook their meals? What were their roles within society?  
5. What other characters are related to King Arthur? (Guinevere, Merlin)  
6. If you were to live in King Arthur's time, what role in society would you be? Write a paragraph explaining this role.  
7. Introduce the book by reading the introduction; ask students to read Chapters 1 and 2.

**Day 2**

**Prop Bag**  
Pull out of a bag the following items:

- a hat (one that Hank may have worn)
- a bar of soap
- a newspaper
- a telephone
- a piece of dynamite (a toilet paper roll that is covered by red paper with a white yarn piece hanging down the side.)

Ask the students to discuss how these items could help the people in King Arthur's time.

Summarize Chapter 16 and 26 as Hank's idea to civilize King Arthur and his knights.

Discuss what a patent is and explain that Hank set up a patent office first.

Set up assignment for the PowerPoint presentation on inventions you would present to Samuel Clemens (from that era)

**Day 3**

**Samuel Clemens**

Present information about Samuel Clemens; include the following:

- Where he was born
- Some of the jobs he took on
- The books he wrote
- The inventions he patented
- The time frame in which he lived

**Day 4**

**Merlin vs. Hank**

Read Chapter 7 in which Hank blows up Merlin's tower.

Discuss:

What were the consequences regarding Hank and Merlin?

Was this magic or science?

Are there inventions patented that harm people?

**Day 5**

PowerPoint Presentation

Use guidelines provided for scoring

**King Arthur's Society**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Using complete sentences, write what you know about legendary King Arthur and the society he lived in by choosing a role in his society. Would you be a Knight, Noble, Clergy, or a Peasant? Write from that perspective.

If I were to live in King Arthur's time I would be a:

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The job that I would be responsible for would include:

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I would live in:

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My average day would include:

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Draw or paste a picture of you in King Arthur's society:

### **PowerPoint Project Guidelines:**

Choose an item that you would take back to Samuel Clemens, era:1853-1908.

PowerPoint must be 10 Slides long including the following:

1. Introduction titled: What if I could time travel to meet Samuel Clemens?
2. Describe your time machine how would you go back? (a picture or description)
3. A picture of yourself before you went back into time
4. A time and date of when you would go back to see Clemens  
(Example: July 26, 1861)
5. A picture of yourself in Samuel Clemens' era
6. A map of where Clemens would be living at that time
7. A picture of the item you chose to give Clemens
8. How would this item change Sam's life or society in general?
9. How would you present this to the society in which he lived?
10. What major events were occurring at this time?

Grade will be based upon the following

- Neatness and clarity
- Includes all slides
- Turned in on time
- Thoroughly addresses content

A- 10 slides, all aspects of the product are represented, Topic is taken seriously and treated thoroughly.

B- 10 slides, part of the aspects are represented, Topic is taken seriously.

C- 8 slides, part of the aspects are represented

D- Fewer than 8 slides

F- Not turned in