

Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum

Mini-Unit Plan for Mark Twain's short stories "How I Edited an Agricultural Paper" (1870), "Buck Fanshaw's Funeral" from *Roughing It* (1872), and "Advice to Youth" (1882)

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Unit Plan for Mark Twain's short stories: "How I Edited an Agricultural Paper" (1870), "Buck Fanshaw's Funeral" from *Roughing It* (1872) "Advice to Youth" (1882)

Note: This lesson was prepared for block scheduling, wherein each class is composed of approximately 85 min. Each lesson could be divided into 2 parts for traditional scheduling. Time allotments per lesson steps are merely suggestions.

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Concept or Topic: vocabulary, content, figurative language, vernacular, maxim, author's message

Suggested Grade Level(s)/Course:
Language Arts 3/4, grades 11-12

Subject: English Language Arts (ELA)

Suggested Time Frame:
(5) 85 min. blocks or (10) 45 mi. periods

Objective(s):

1. Students explain and test the value of humor in reflecting on and writing about everyday life, both in Mark Twain's and their lives.
2. Modeling Mark Twain's humoristic approach to writing, students describe the role of and apply comedy in the analysis and presentation of contemporary issues and experiences.
3. Students will explain and test the value and use of satire in writing and historic inquiry.

Common Core State Standards:

READING LITERATURE GRADES 11-12

Key Ideas and Details:

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

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CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6

Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.9

Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

WRITING LITERATURE GRADES 11-12

Text Types and Purposes:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.B

Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.D

Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.A

Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

Production and Distribution of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9.A

Apply *grades 11-12 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., “Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics”).

Range of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Assessments:

1. Each student will explore Twain’s quotes and choose 5 that they appreciate above the others and write an explanation of the humor and other comedian/comic/humorist of which the student is reminded with at least 80% completion. (formative assessment)
2. Students will illustrate and label with direct quotes a minimum of 3 examples of farce from “How I Edited an Agricultural Paper” with 70% accuracy. (formative assessment)
3. Students will listen to multiple audio recordings of various American dialects and successfully identify and describe 3 required differences from their own dialect with 75% completion. (formative assessment)

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4. Students will compose a paragraph of 7 sentences using at least one piece of textual evidence with 80% completion. (formative assessment)

5. Students will compose an essay that cites at least 3 pieces of textual evidence and addresses Mark Twain's place in American literature of at least 5 paragraphs with 80% completion. (summative assessment)

Vocabulary (Tiers 2 & 3): Vocabulary and concepts necessary for students to achieve mastery of objectives:

- * farce--a comic dramatic work using buffoonery and horseplay and typically including crude characterization and ludicrously improbable situations.
- * vernacular--the language or dialect spoken by the ordinary people in a particular country or region
- * historical context--understood as the events, or the climate of opinion, that surround the issue at hand. They help to understand its urgency, its importance, its shape, or even its timing. What was happening at the time of the event or the decision that sheds some light on it?
- * maxim--words of wisdom, motto, adage
- * figurative language--words or expressions with a meaning that is different from the literal interpretation

Subject Area Integration: History/Social Studies, Psychology/Sociology, Agricultural Education, Theology

Background Information Required for Lesson:

PRIOR to the lesson:

- 1) Students will be introduced to life in the USA in the mid-1800s in the Midwest, especially politics and economics.
- 2) Students will be familiar with and experienced at peer editing.
- 3) Students need to understand the following terms and be able to identify and analyze them in a text: verbal irony and satire. Teachers might wish to review these terms with students using the site literary-devices.com or literarydevices.net.
- 4) Students need to be able to use various language strategies to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words in a text.
- 5) Students should have had practice at analyzing the development of an idea or point through examples or anecdotes in a text.

Tools:

* Review main points from website [The American Economy during the 1800s](http://classroom.synonym.com/american-economy-during-1800s-16359.html)
(<http://classroom.synonym.com/american-economy-during-1800s-16359.html>)
land and resources, government and economy, manufacturing, booms and busts

* explore the importance of funerals to Christians through the BBC's site [Christian Funerals](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/ritesrituals/funerals.shtml)
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/ritesrituals/funerals.shtml>

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* view [Dialect Map of American English http://robertspage.com/dialects.html](http://robertspage.com/dialects.html) to explore dialects that currently exist in the USA and discuss how they may have evolved

Materials: computer with Internet access (one per student), computer for teacher, SmartBoard, pencils, highlighter, 2nd read questions for "Advice to Youth" (attached at bottom of unit plan)

One copy per student:

"How I Edited an Agricultural Paper" (1870)
"Buck Fanshaw's Funeral" from *Roughing It* (1872)
"Advice to Youth" (1882)

Technology: [YouTube www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)
[Twain Quotes http://www.twainquotes.com/quotesatoz.html](http://www.twainquotes.com/quotesatoz.html)
Google Docs <https://docs.google.com/> (for writing and sharing formative evaluation)

Related Twain Quotes/Passages:

Editing Passages:

I hate editors, for they make me abandon a lot of perfectly good English words.

- *Abroad with Mark Twain and Eugene Field*, Fisher

Nobody except he has tried it, knows what it is to be an editor. It is easy to scribble local rubbish, with the facts all before you; it is easy to clip sections from other papers; it is easy to string out a correspondence from any locality; but it is an unspeakable hardship to write editorials. Subjects are the trouble--the dreary lack of them, I mean. Every day it is drag, drag, drag--think, and worry and suffer--all the world is a dull blank, and yet the editorial columns must be filled. Only give the editor a subject, and his work is done--it is no trouble to write it up; but fancy how you would feel if you had to pump your brains dry every day in the week, fifty-two weeks in the year. It makes one low spirited simply to think of it. The matter that each editor of a daily paper in America writes in the course of a year would fill from four to eight bulky volumes like this book! Fancy what a library an editor's work would make, after twenty or thirty years' service. Yet people marvel that Dickens, Scott, Bulwer, Dumas, etc., have been able to produce so many books. If these authors had wrought as voluminously as newspaper editors do, the result would be something to marvel at, indeed. How editors can continue this tremendous labor, this exhausting consumption of brain fiber (for their work is creative, and not a mere mechanical laying-up of facts, like reporting), day after day and year after year, is incomprehensible. Preachers take two months' holiday in midsummer, for they find that to produce two sermons a week is wearing, in the long run. In truth it must be so, and is so; and therefore, how an editor can take from ten to twenty texts and build upon them from ten to twenty painstaking editorials a week and keep it up all the year round, is farther beyond comprehension than ever. Ever since I survived my week as editor, I have found at least one pleasure in any newspaper that comes to my hand; it is in admiring the long columns of editorial, and wondering to myself how in the mischief he did it!

- *Roughing It*

Funerals

When a blood relative sobs, an intimate friend should choke up, a distant acquaintance should sigh, a stranger should merely fumble sympathetically with his handkerchief.

- *Letters from the Earth*

In order to know a community, one must observe the style of its funerals and know what manner of men they bury with most ceremony.

- *Roughing It*

Advice

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Be respectful to your superiors, if you have any.
- Advice to Young People speech, 15 April 1882

Lesson Sequence:

DAY 1 (Approx. 80-85 min.)--Introduction to Mark Twain

Hook/Intro:

(8-10 min.) Bellringer—Students journal and respond to the following prompt: *How would you describe your sense of humor? Your friends? Your family's? Do you have a favorite comedian or writer whom you enjoy above others?*

(5-7 min.) Ask students to volunteer to share responses with a maximum of 1 min. speaking time.

Teaching of the Concept(s):

(10 min.)--KWL--Explain students will complete a KWL (Know/Want to Know or Wonder/Learned) chart based on Mark Twain. Students begin by filling out only the first 2 boxes (K and W) *in complete sentences*. Students who use techie jargon such as "IDK", or incomplete sentences such as "dunno" or "not sure", will not be awarded complete participation points.

(10 min.)--Class discussion: Students share what they already know. The teacher will facilitate discussion and accuracy.

(25-30 min.)--Concept Based Learning: Teacher explains that Mark Twain is famous for his witty quotes and figurative language. Students will research Twain's quotes and record on paper or in a word processor a minimum of 5 that they find especially humorous. Under each quote, students will write an explanation of why the quote is humorous and/or what other comics/comedians/actors share this type of wit. Suggest the website <http://www.twainquotes.com/> to ensure accuracy of quotes, as many are inaccurately attributed to Twain. When students finish, they are to explore the chronology of Twain's life at <http://www.pbs.org/marktwain/learnmore/chronology.html>.

(10 min.)--Think-Pair-Share: Students will turn to a neighbor and share their favorite quotes, explaining the humor and what other humorists, if any, the students are reminded. Finally, they will fill in the Learned section of the KWL and submit for points.

(5-10 min.)--Students will be introduced to Samuel Clemens' life. It's essential students realize that in addition to being a writer, Clemens also worked as a typesetter, then later an editor. YouTube video Mark Twain: Father of American Literature - Fast Facts | History 3:31 <https://youtu.be/cMtBP7hpsA> via the History Channel-highlights of Twain's life.

(5 min.)--Direction instruction: If there's time, parouse chronology of Twain's life <http://www.pbs.org/marktwain/learnmore/chronology.html> as a class.

Review/Closure: We will continue delving into the world of Twain in this mini-unit.

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DAY 2 (Approx. 80-85 min.)--"How I Edited an Agricultural Paper" (1870)

Hook/Intro:

(8-10 min.) Bellringer—Students journal and respond to the following prompt: *Can you think of a time when you had a miscommunication with a friend or family member? Perhaps you meant one thing but the other person took it a different way? This could be directions, a text message, email, verbal commands, or a different situation. What were the causes of miscommunication? How can miscommunication be avoided?*

(5-7 min.) Ask students to volunteer to share responses with a maximum of 1 min. speaking time.

Teaching of the Concept(s):

(10 min.) Think-pair-share: By this point, the students should have practice peer editing. Ask students: *Can you think of a time that you edited or read the work of a peer and had difficulty understanding the content of the work, or if you immediately questioned the **accuracy** of another's claims?* Students will pair with neighbor to recall and discuss.

(10 min.) Class discussion: Ask students if they or their family members have flower beds or gardens at home, or students may live on a farm. Elicit responses. Explain to students they will read a short, humorous story by Mark Twain, who wasn't particularly fond of editors, as they often critiqued his work.

(10-15 min.) Each student is given a copy of "How I Edit an Agricultural Paper" to read silently (first read).

(10-15 min.) Students following along as the story is read aloud--by a student volunteer, teacher, or Audiobook <https://youtu.be/T8SLpuybcLU> (second read).

(10-20 min.) **Learning Activity (formative):** Ask students to explain the foolishness and farce of the story in writing with illustrations. Example: Sending a boy up to shake the turnip tree, as it injures turnips to be pulled. *See image of turnip at end of lesson plan.* Students must illustrate at least 3 inaccurate descriptions as they are described in the story and label them with the exact quote from Twain's story (using quotation marks and paragraph numbers), then explain in writing an accurate description of the plants in 3-5 sentences per description.

Homework: Students may turn in the assignment if it is completed or take it for homework. It will be due at the beginning of the next period.

Review/Closure: We will continue delving into the world of Twain in this mini-unit.

DAY 3 (Approx. 80-85 min.)--"Buck Fanshaw's Funeral" from *Roughing It* (1872)

Hook/Intro:

(8-10 min.) Bellringer—Students journal and respond to the following prompt: *Do you enjoy travel? If you could travel any location, where would you choose and why? If you were to take a job traveling, what type of work would you like to do? By whom would you be employed? What would be the duration?*

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(5-7 min.) Ask students to volunteer to share responses with a maximum of 1 min. speaking time.

Teaching of the Concept(s):

(10 min.)--Direction instruction: Teacher explains that Twain wrote a semi-autobiographical account of his (and others') experiences traveling west in search of wealth and fame. His rough-hewn satire of these accounts can be experienced in the excerpt "Buck Fanshaw's Funeral," which especially deals with miscommunication based on different dialects of the same language (American English). View [Dialect Map of American English](http://robertspage.com/dialects.html) <http://robertspage.com/dialects.html> to explore dialects that currently exist in the USA.

(5 min.)--Think-Pair-Share: Students will turn to a neighbor and discuss how they believe dialects may have evolved. Students may even attempt to impersonate dialects with which they're familiar.

(10-15 min.)--Students read a copy of "Buck Fanshaw's Funeral" from *Roughing It* (1872). As students read, ask them to circle confusing words or phrases to address later. (First read)

(5 min.)--Direct Instruction: Explain to students that "Miner Scotty Briggs' Washoe slang and poker analogies are incomprehensible to the Eastern minister he is trying to convince to officiate at Buck's funeral. The minister, in his attempts to understand Briggs' request are equally confusing to the miner. The minister's "clarifications" are long-winded and employ theological vocabulary well outside of Scotty's experience. " from <https://humorinamerica.wordpress.com/2013/09/23/heteroglossia-and-dialect-humor-buck-fanshaws-funeral/>

(10-15 min.)--Pair practice: Students share impression of story and work together to identify meaning of circled confusing words and phrases. Allow students to use a dictionary as needed.

(10 min.)—Students view Youtube video <https://youtu.be/i8paxBB3hqA> with Audiobook and still frames representing the piece. (Second read)

(15 min.--remainder of class period) – **Formative assignment (and homework):** Students will need an audio device with Internet access. Students will explore the Dictionary of Regional English (DARE) at <http://www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/americanvarieties/DARE/> and listen to at least one of the examples from the collection. Students will list and explain 4 examples of how pronunciation/articulation/dialect differs from their own. Students may need to listen to multiple segments to compile this list.

DAY 4 (Approx. 80-85 min.)--"Advice to Youth" (1882)

Hook/Intro:

(8-10 min.) Bellringer—Students journal to respond to the following quote by Mark Twain: "Be respectful to your superiors, if you have any."- Advice to Young People speech, 15 April 1882

(5-7 min.) Ask students to volunteer to share responses with a maximum of 1 min. speaking time.

Teaching of the Concept(s):

(5-10 min.)--Think-Pair-Share: Students consider a time when they've given or received advice and turn to their neighbor to share whether the advice worked out well or poorly.

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(5 min.)--Direction instruction: Students will participate in a close reading that focuses on the satire to analyze the style and implications.

(15 min.)--1st reading: Teachers should tell the students that this satire by Mark Twain was published in 1882 – well over a century ago. He was one of America's great humorists and social critics. In "Advice to Youth," a talk he delivered to a group of young girls, Twain turns the conventional moral lecture on its head. Tell them that this is NO ordinary piece of text. Students read independently. Each student is given a highlighter and highlight anything in the text that surprises them and anything that they find humorous.

(5-10 min.)-- Class discussion: Students share their initial impressions and reactions.

(15 min.)--2nd reading: Each student is given a list of questions (see end of unit plan) to analyze satire and textual evidence. Read aloud questions, then read aloud "Advice" for second time by student volunteers/teacher/audio. Students underline textual evidence and are given time to jot answers to questions (formative evaluation).

(10 min.)--Review answers to questions as a class. Ask for student volunteers or call on students with both answers and textual evidence.

(15 min.)--3rd reading: On SmartBoard, pose the following questions:
In his satirical essay "Advice to Youth," what is Twain critiquing about society or the behaviors of people in it?

- In what ways does he want society and the people in it to improve their behaviors?
- How does Twain use language to create humor?
- How does Twain use irony and exaggeration to reveal his advice?
- What advice does Twain give to the youth throughout his essay?

During this reading, students will make notes in margins, circle evidence, etc.

Pair practice: Students are divided into groups of 2 to analyze and discuss the guiding questions.

HOMEWORK (formative): Students must answer ONE of the following questions in a paragraph of at least 7 sentences using at least one piece of textual evidence, which is due at the beginning of the next class period. With the criticisms Twain had about society in 1884, are those problems still a problem today? Why or why not?

- Do you agree with the advice that Twain provides throughout his essay?
- Which advice do you agree with? Why?
- Which advice do you disagree with? Why?
- Is Twain's advice valid for today's youth? Why or why not?

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DAY 5 (Approx. 80-85 min.)--Mark Twain and American Humor (Summative evaluation: Bringing it all together)

Hook/Intro:

(8-10 min.) Bellringer—Students journal and respond to the following prompt: *Of all of Twain's works we've read, to which do you most relate? Explain.*

(5-7 min.) Ask students to volunteer to share responses with a maximum of 1 min. speaking time.

Teaching of the Concept(s)/Review and Closure:

(5 min.) Direction instruction: Students will compose an essay which addresses the following question: What place does Mark Twain have in the history of American literary humor?

(75-80 min.) **SUMMATIVE EVALUATION** Problem-based learning: Students may use any and all of the previously read works and supplementary materials to cite as evidence. There is a requirement of a minimum of 3 pieces of textual evidence required. Students will have the remainder of the period to compose the work and should compare their final essay with the grading rubric; access rubric at <http://www.buffaloschools.org/uploads/ELA/evidence-based%20writing%20rubric.pdf>.

If students finish with additional time remaining, they are to read in their library books. Students who do not finish in the allotted time must submit the essay by the beginning of the following course period. For each day late, 10% is removed from the base of their grade. No late papers will be taken after 4 consecutive week days.

Accommodations & Modifications-- In accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act, prepare to teach the students with special needs you may have in your classroom using this advice on accommodating and modifying your lessons to meet the needs of everyone.

Strategies for Exceptional Students: Explain that Mark Twain kept scrapbooks that not only informed some of his writing, but also offered descriptive historic presentations of life in the 19th Century. Divide students into nine groups. Have each group review one chapter of the [Interactive Scrapbook](#). Each entry not only identifies activities specific to Twain's life, but also highlights broader dates and locations ([Hannibal, MO, 1835-1853](#), [Mississippi River, 1857-1860](#), and [Virginia City and the West, 1860-1864](#)) and themes (life on the Mississippi, life as a riverboat pilot, Carnival of Crime in Connecticut, and [marriage](#), relations between the sexes, and domestic life) with relevance in terms of historic inquiry. What 19th Century events and themes can students identify? What does the scrapbook indicate about the life and times during the 19th Century? Do students recognize – and can they describe – the historic value of Twain's scrapbooks?

Suggested Follow-Up Activities:

Ask students to read the first two chapters of *Tom Sawyer*, looking for details that they think Samuel Clemens might have drawn from his boyhood memories in Hannibal. Passages are available in chapter one of the [Interactive Scrapbook](#) online, as well as [Selected Writings](#). Have them make notes and share their findings in a class discussion. Encourage them to read the remainder of the book.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Day 1

Topic: _____		Name: _____	
K What I Know	W What I Wonder	L What I Learned	

Free access at:

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/KWL-Chart-595724>

Day 2

Turnip plant:



For more info on turnips:

<https://extension.illinois.edu/veggies/turnip.cfm>

Mark Twain's satire, "Advice to Youth"

Question Worksheet

Directions: After the second close read, answer these questions. Go back to the satire and use textual evidence when answering.

- 1) Who is the target audience?
- 2) Why is obeying the best policy, in Twain's opinion?
- 3) What superstition (common belief) do parents have according to Twain?
- 4) How does Twain instruct the youth to avoid violence?
- 5) Why is lying bad?
- 6) How is lying a great art?
- 7) What is Twain's advice to youth about lying?
- 8) Twain provides an anecdote about firearms. Is this funny or not? Why or why not?
- 9) Why shouldn't youth handle firearms, according to Twain?
- 10) What is his advice about reading?
- 11) What is the result of building one's character, according to Twain?