

Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum

Lesson or Unit Plan for Mark Twain

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School: Wellsville

City, State: Wellsville, Missouri

Mark Twain Teachers' Workshop, July 15, 2018

Hannibal, Missouri

Mark Twain and Westward Expansion	
Concept or Topic: Mark Twain's Life and Westward Expansion	Suggested Grade Level(s)/Course: 9th grade History
Subject: America History	Suggested Time Frame: 3, 60 minute sessions
Objective(s): 1. Students in American History will receive at least a 17 out of 20 points on the cooperative learning portion of their assignment rubric. 2. Students will be able to answer discussion questions regarding Twain's life in the context of Westward Expansion with 85% accuracy.	
Common Core State Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.	
Assessments (at least two): <ul style="list-style-type: none">Students will create a collage/timeline that represents Mark Twain's life in the context of Westward Expansion.Class DiscussionsIndex Cards	
Vocabulary (Tiers 2 & 3): <ol style="list-style-type: none">Missouri CompromiseTerritoriesManifest DestinyHomestead Act 1862Roughing ItGadsden PurchaseGreat PlainsOregon TrailSanta Fe TrailMexican American War	

Subject Area Integration:

- Language Arts and American History

Background Information Required for Lesson:

Students will need to recall information from their Famous Missourians and Westward Expansion Unit.

Materials:

- Art supplies
- Butcher Paper
- Internet access
- Index cards
- Websites:
 - http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/a_c/clemens.htm
 - <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/Exhibits/MTP/>
 - <http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/events/>
 - <http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/places/states/index.htm>
 - <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/westward-expansion-through-maps/>
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3_U805fz24&list=PLhULzJwvAYQPMR3rqkQLpwIFnMGvjc_aK
 - http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/lesson_plans/lesson02.htm#jmp3

Technology:

- Internet
- Computer or tablet
- Printer
- Youtube video

Related Twain Quotes/Passages:

It was in the West that Samuel Clemens became Mark Twain, and although the landscape and characters of frontier life play only a small part in his writings, one can always detect a tang of the region where he found his literary voice and identity in his distinctively colloquial style.

Clemens was born in Florida, Missouri, in 1835, and grew up in nearby Hannibal, on the Mississippi River. His father died in 1847, leaving the family with little financial support, and Clemens became a printer's apprentice, eventually working for his brother, Orion, who had set himself up in Hannibal as a newspaper publisher. After a year spent setting type for newspapers on the east coast, Clemens returned in 1854 to rejoin Orion, who by this time had moved on to start a paper in Keokuk, Iowa.

Through all his years in the print shop, Clemens tried his hand at composing humorous pieces, using the heavy-handed techniques of local colorists who were popular at the time. By 1856, he was accomplished enough to receive a commission from the Keokuk *Saturday Post* for a series of comical letters reporting on his planned travels to South America. But on his way down the Mississippi, Clemens temporarily abandoned his literary ambitions to take up a trade he had dreamed about as a boy. He apprenticed himself to become a riverboat pilot, and after 18 months of training, spent the next three years navigating the Mississippi's ever-changing waters.

When the Civil War closed traffic on the river in the spring of 1861, Clemens spent a few inglorious weeks as a volunteer in the Confederate army, then deserted to join

Orion again, whose abolitionist views had won him appointment as territorial secretary in Nevada. By mid-August, the brothers were in Carson City, where Clemens tried his luck with timber, then mining, then finally found a measure of success in 1862 as a feature writer for the [Virginia City Territorial Enterprise](#). It was as this paper's reporter at the Nevada constitutional convention that Clemens began to sign his work "Mark Twain."

The experience of filing daily reports on the picturesque doings in a Nevada mining town helped Clemens sharpen and broaden his abilities as a writer. After two years, he carried those talents to [San Francisco](#), where he wrote for a variety of newspapers and periodicals, among them *The Californian*, edited by Bret Harte. Though they were to quarrel later, at this time Clemens and Harte shared a common ambition, and the more experienced Harte proved a valuable guide as Clemens tried to work the comic artifice out of his humor and develop a more natural, conversational style. With "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," published in [1865](#) by *The Saturday Press* of New York, and reprinted by newspapers across the country, this style made its first appearance, a style readers would soon come to recognize as the voice of Mark Twain.

Clemens left San Francisco in 1866, reporting first on his travels to Hawaii for the *Sacramento Union*, then heading back east with an open assignment for humorous travel writing from the San Francisco *Alta California*. After a brief return to Missouri, he took up the literary life in New York, where he polished his lucrative talent as an entertaining lecturer, then set sail in 1867 on a grand tour of Europe and the Mideast. The reports of this journey which he sent back to San Francisco and New York later became his first best-seller, *Innocents Abroad* (1869).

On his return to the United States, Clemens married Olivia Langdon of Elmira, New York, in 1870 -- after a courtship hundreds of love letters long. The couple settled briefly in Buffalo, New York, then permanently in Hartford, Connecticut, where Clemens finally turned from journalism to produce the books and novels that are the basis of his fame. One of the first in this string was *Roughing It* (1872), an autobiographical account of his years in the West told in the humorous style of his travel writing, which pits a self-confident observer against a setting which he both comically misinterprets and ironically understands only too well. This element of self-conscious irony, rooted here in memory, would become the hallmark of Clemens' best work, especially evident in the novels set in his boyhood world beside the Mississippi River, *Tom Sawyer* (1876) and his masterpiece, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884).

Like his father and brother before him, Clemens was unlucky in business and much of his writing and lecturing was spurred by the need to pay off debts stemming from bad investments. Toward the end of his life, Clemens passed through a period of deep depression, which began in 1896 when he received word on a lecture tour in England that his favorite daughter, Susy, had died of meningitis. His wife's death in 1904, and the loss of a second daughter in 1909, deepened his gloom. Clemens had once humorously predicted that, since his birth had coincided with the appearance of Halley's comet, his own death would come when the comet next returned. This prophecy was fulfilled when he died at his home in Redding, Connecticut, in 1910.

Lesson Sequence:

Day 1: (60 minutes)

Hook/Intro:

- Ask students what they know about Mark Twain and Westward expansion. Ask them to make an educated guess as to what connections Twain has to expansion.

Teaching of the Concept(s):

1. Show Episode 4 of **The West** beginning at 47:30 minutes into the film with the title, "Preachers and Jackass Rabbits." It ends at 60:00. The segment introduces Samuel Clemens as he heads West, and concludes with Mark Twain, the writer.

See:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3_U805fz24&list=PLhULzJwvAYQPMR3rqkQLpwFnMGvic_aK

<http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/program/episodes/four/preachers.htm>

for more information.

Suggested Questions:

- Why did Samuel Clemens head West?
- What is Clemens seeking in the West? Does he find it?
- What does he discover is his calling? How has the West played a role in his discovery about himself? How is this reflected in the name under which he wrote for the Territorial Enterprise?
- How do you think he will portray the West to the rest of America?

Learning Activity:

- Write a journal entry pretending to be Mark Twain and discuss his experiences going West. The entry should be two-three paragraphs.

Review/Closure:

- Exit Slip: Have students discuss what they have learned and suggested questions that they are struggling with.

Day 2/3: (60 minutes)

Hook/Intro:

- Watch crash course video over Westward Expansion.
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=westward+expansion

Teaching of the Concept(s):

1. The class will be divided into groups of three. Each group will be responsible for researching the following:

- Sam Clemens' Life: Assign group members a decade of Clemens' life to research. For each decade choose a minimum of three significant events in Twain's life. Discuss your choices. For each event write a 3x5 index card. List the date and a topic at the top. Write a short paragraph about the event or the book he published. Then make a small drawing to illustrate the event (or download an image from the Web).

- Events in the West: research events in the West that coincided with Clemens' life. Assign group members one decade of Clemens' life to research. For each decade choose a minimum of three significant events. Discuss your choices. For each event write a 3x5 index card. List the date of the event and topic at the top. Write a short paragraph about the event. Then make a small drawing to illustrate the event (or download an image from the Web).
- Territorial Growth in U.S. in maps: prepare a series of maps of the U.S. showing territorial growth from 1830-1910, the time period during which Clemens lived. Ask your teacher for 3 outline maps of the United States.
- Students must keep use a minimum of five sources, and cite in APA format.

2. (Day Two) Students will put together their collages (Index cards and maps will be included on timeline/collage).

3. (Day Three) Students will share their timeline/collages with their class. A class discussion will follow.

Suggested Questions:

1. In what part of the United States did Twain grow up? (Missouri entered the Union in 1820 with the Missouri Compromise.)
2. What role did the Mississippi River play in his life?
3. How old was he when he journeyed out West in the 1860's?
4. Did the West play an important part in Twain's life after his marriage? Where did he principally reside once he had a family?
5. Which of Twain's books draw on his early recollections of his life in the West? In what famous stories or accounts does the West play a principal role?
6. What impact did his books play on America's perceptions of the West?
7. Twain's life spanned close to a century. During that time how would you describe the westward expansion of the United States? How did travel change within that time period? How did the West itself change?

Learning Activity:

- Collage/timeline

Review/Closure:

- Class Discussion

Homework (for the unit):

No homework will be given during this unit.

Strategies for Exceptional Students (for the unit):

- Modifications will be made for exceptional students. Requirements can be shortened or lengthened based on the students/groups.

Suggested Follow-Up Activities (for the unit):

1. Choose another period in American history, such as the Vietnam War era, and study authors who have depicted it for later generations. Interview people who lived through those times and compare their impressions of the times to the portrait of the era painted by writers. Do we continue to mythologize our past?





Name _____

Mark Twain and Westward Expansion Collage Scoring Guide

Requirements	Score
Group Work: The team worked well together to achieve objectives. Each member contributed in a valuable way to the project. All data sources indicated a high level of mutual respect and collaboration.	/20
Coverage of the Topic Details on the timeline capture the important information about the topic and increase the audience's understanding	/60
Aesthetics: The timeline colorful, organized, and captures the viewers' attention.	/10
Sources: All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented in APA Format.	/10
Presentation: The presentation was the appropriate length. It did not seem hurried or too slow. The presenter spoke clearly and distinctly and established eye contact with the audience.	/20
Mechanics: No grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.	/10

Comments:

/130

Note: Failure to cite sources will result in a zero!