

# Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum

Unit Plan for *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

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City, State: Los Angeles, CA

Mark Twain Teachers' Workshop, July 13, 2018

Hannibal, Missouri

## "Pre-reading: Contextualizing Huck"

<b>UNIT PLAN for <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i></b>	
<b>Concept or Topic:</b> Background information: History, Author, and Language in Context	<b>Suggested Grade Level(s)/Course:</b> 8th Grade English
<b>Subject:</b> Literature/Writing/Social Studies/American History	<b>Suggested Time Frame:</b> 3 days of 45 min. sessions
<b>Objective(s):</b> 1. 8th Grade English Students will identify novel setting on maps and relevant events in US history with 80% accuracy. 2. 8th Grade English Students will evaluate and analyze the complexity of Twain's use of the racial slurs with mentor texts with a persuasive essay completing 85% of a rubric/checklist. 3. 8th Grade English Students will identify and explain the four (4) time periods and significant biographical influences during Twain's biographical context with 80% accuracy.	
<b>Common Core State Standards:</b>	
<b>Key Ideas and Details:</b> CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.3 Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).	
<b>Craft and Structure:</b> CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.5 Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.	
<b>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:</b> 2. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.7	

## **UNIT PLAN for *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn***

Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.

### **3. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.8**

Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

### **Assessments:**

Rubric for the persuasive/argument essay on Twain's use of the n-word.  
2 Quizzes, one on historical and another on biographical/era information

### **Vocabulary (Tiers 2 & 3):**

Compromise  
Emancipation  
Proclamation  
Relevant  
Fugitive  
Cultural Competency  
Gilded Age

### **Subject Area Integration:**

Language Arts  
American History  
Geography  
Social-Emotional Learning/Identity (check in with school psychologist about lesson #2)  
Physical Education

### **Background Information Required for Lesson:**

1. US Geography, Basic US History
2. The Writing Process, US History
3. The Writing Process, US History

## UNIT PLAN for *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

### **Materials:**

Day 1:

Giant map of US (on playground)  
Anchor Charts and magic markers  
Huck-centric Mississippi River map (hand-out)  
Colored pencils  
Historical Events PowerPoint  
Mississippi River Facts (homework handout)  
Elmo

Day 2:

iPads or chrome books  
(headphones-optional)  
SEL Koosh Ball Handout  
videos on N-Word  
Persuasive Essay Handout  
Persuasive Essay Rubric

Day 3:

Biography/Eras PowerPoint  
wall Anchor Charts and magic markers  
various old fashioned games and a timer (clock) with second-hand

### **Technology:**

Smartboard and access to digital videos.

### **Related Twain Quotes/Passages:**

1. "The very ink with which all history is written is merely fluid prejudice." - *Pudd'nhead Wilson*
2. "I have no race prejudices, and I think I have no color prejudices or caste prejudices nor creed prejudices. Indeed I know it. I can stand any society. All that I care to know is that a man is a human being--that is enough for me; he can't be any worse." - "Concerning the Jews"
3. "The darling mispronunciations of childhood!--dear me, there's no music that can touch it; and how one grieves when it wastes away and dissolves into correctness, knowing it will never visit his bereaved ear again." - *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*

## **Lesson Sequence:**

### **Day 1: Maps and American History**

#### **Hook/Intro:**

Let the students know we'll be looking at Issues of Setting in Huck Finn, time and place, geography and history.

Start with exploring what the students already know.

Begin class with a reflective Anchor Chart elicitation:

"What do you know about slavery?"

"What do you know about Civil War?"

"What do you know about the Mississippi River?"

"What do you wish you knew about slavery, the Civil War, and the Mississippi River?"

After the students have responded to each Anchor Chart, pull them down for a group review and brief discussion.

#### **Teaching of the Concept(s):**

1. Go to the school's playground and run around the US map to identify several locations relevant to them and Huck Finn: California, New York, DC, Missouri, Louisiana, the start of the Mississippi River, Cairo, Illinois, and the Gulf of Mexico. Make a line along the Mississippi. Return to the classroom and color in the same identified locations on a US Map handout. Their homework will be a worksheet on Facts about the Mississippi.
2. Introduce Seven Historical Events in a PowerPoint presentation. Have the students take notes in the composition books of the name of the event and the date. Students research one event and come up with their own description of the event. In two groups, create a timeline through expert jigsaw groups. ("**I Have/Who Has**") Review each group and compare paraphrases.
3. Their exit ticket is to complete a matching quiz on the 6 Historical Events.
4. Hand out the Mississippi Facts Worksheet for homework.

#### **Suggested Questions:**

What are the significant historical markers to understand Huck Finn that takes place before the Civil War but was written after and for a Post-War audience?

Why do you think these are significant events?

What kind of journey can you predict Huck will take down the river?

Looking at the timeline, what kind of audience is Twain writing for and how might the history they experienced influence their reading of the novel? How will their understanding differ from yours?

**Hook/Intro:**

**Teaching of the Concept(s):**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- ...

**Suggested Questions:**

**Learning Activity:**

**Review/Closure:**

**Teaching of the Concept(s):**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- ...

**Suggested Questions:**

**Learning Activity:**

**Review/Closure:**

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**Day 3: Time Periods and Twain Biography  
(45 minutes)**

**Hook/Intro:**

**Teaching of the Concept(s):**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- ...

**Suggested Questions:**

**Learning Activity:**

**Review/Closure:**

## **UNIT PLAN for *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn***

**Learning Activity:**

Researching and creating classroom timeline of the significant events summarizing in their own words in jigsaw groups.

**Review/Closure:**

Matching Quiz

**Homework (for the unit):**

1. Complete the Mississippi Facts Worksheet.
2. Complete a first draft of the Persuasive Essay.
3. Re-read Chapter One with the homework handout: "Huck Finn, Chapter 1B, What is the chapter really about?"

**Strategies for Exceptional Students:**

1. More challenging: Create a more event-detailed timeline of the Civil War and Reconstruction
2. More challenging: Researching the history of censorship of Huck Finn  
Less challenging: create an iMovie video discussion of the same topic
3. More challenging: Research more biographical information on Mark Twain post-Huck Finn and present to the class in digital media of their choice; i.e. PowerPoint, iMovie, TedTalk, etc.

**Suggested Follow-Up Activities:**

1. Create a more extensive historical US and World History timeline 1835-1910, include any significant cultural touchstones.
2. Find contemporary song lyrics using the n-word and discuss/write about a lens for contextualization based on personal identity.
3. Create a visual narrative of the life of Mark Twain using downloaded images on iMovie. Underscore the story with relevantly-themed audio.

**Lesson Sequence:****Day 2: The N-word and Cultural Competency**

Before beginning the lesson, give any kids-of-color a heads up about this lesson. Let them know what we're doing and ask if they have any concerns about it.

**(45 minutes)**

**Hook/Intro:**

SEL Self-Identity Activity and discussion on how we generally treat race as a community. What is the difference between racism and racial?

**Teaching of the Concept(s):**

1. Awareness of Cultural Competency issues and the N-Word, both historical and contemporary
2. Persuasive Essay and the writing process with an emphasis on in-class pre-writing and outlining
3. Pre-writing note-taking using digital visual media as mentor text
4. Drawing authentic conclusions based on personal experience
5. Drafting, revising, peer-editing and proofreading (homework)

**Suggested Questions:**

What is the difference between racism and racial?

What is the history of the n-word?

What are the many sides of the issue?

How does your identity impact your response to this issue?

Where did the term "white" come from?

What does it mean to be "white" to you?

Are there similarly derogatory terms for non-blacks?

What process do you use to come to a conclusion about your personal choice regarding how you'll approach the n-word while reading Huck Finn?

How open are you and what is your level of receptivity about this conversation? (SEL feelings check-in)

What criteria should we use as a class to come to a consensus about what we'll do about this word as we read Huck Finn?

**Learning Activity:**

Using videos and mentor texts for note-taking to inspire the persuasive essay content.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nW9-qee1m9o> (60 Minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFnF1c2Tbfw> (history)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Yv2BnfbUFs> (history)

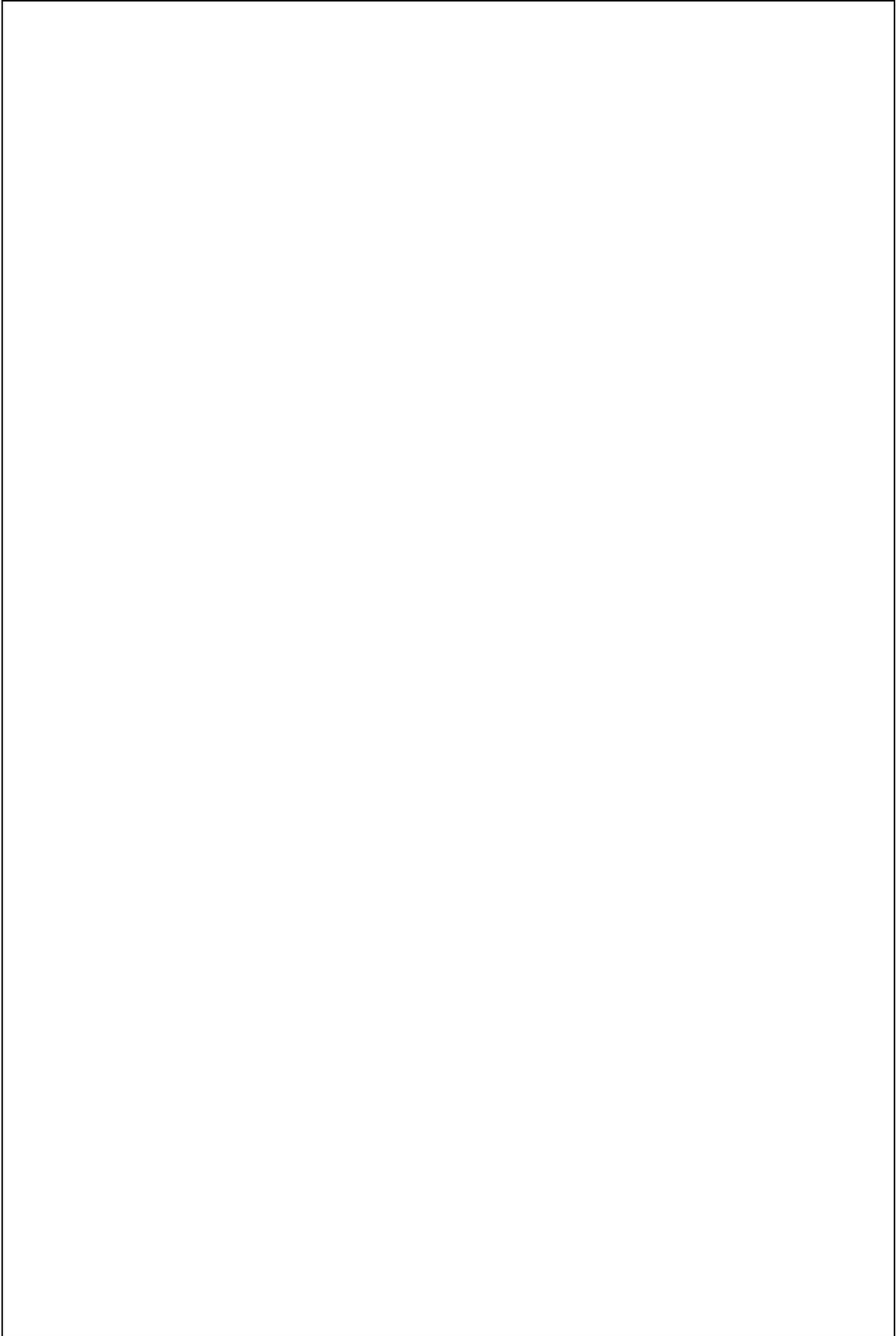
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTJlfWPc09I> (CNN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR6UwAez8Ko> (Obama)

**Review/Closure:**

Share out of pre-writing/outline.

Pass out and review the rubric



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AAO1eJ9Rcw> (Larry Wilmore)  
[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/12/jon-stewart-takes-on-huck\\_n\\_807921.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/12/jon-stewart-takes-on-huck_n_807921.html)

(Jon Stewart and Larry Wilmore)

**Day 3:**

**The Eras and Biographical Influences of Mark Twain's Huck Finn (with an emphasis on childhood)**  
**(45 minutes)**

**Hook/Intro:**

Activity: playing games from Twain's childhood (yoyo, top, marbles, dominoes, etc.) and time how long it takes for them to feel "done."

Next, have the class fill out a reflective Anchor Chart elicitation with the following questions:

"What do you know about Twain's life and biography?"

"At what moment will you know your childhood will officially be over?"

"How do you describe and label the era we are currently living in?"

After the students have responded to each Anchor Chart, pull them down for a group share out and brief discussion.

**Teaching of the Concept(s):**

1. Introduce Twain's Bio in a PowerPoint presentation. Have the students take notes in the composition books of the significant events in Twain's life.
2. Introduce Twain's Eras in a PowerPoint presentation. Have the students take notes in the composition books of the significant eras in Twain's life.
3. Understand and synthesize how these major influences in Twain's life affected Huck Finn.
4. State a claim on the definition of childhood and labels for our current era.
5. Analyze, evaluate, compare, and contrast the eras and childhoods of the present with the eras and childhoods of Twain's life.

**Suggested Questions:**

1. How do you define childhood?
2. How will you know when childhood is over? Are there specific markers you can predict?
3. What are the similarities and difference is the games kids played now and then?
4. What do you think the major influences in Twain's life were on writing Huck Finn?
5. How do you think living in overlapping eras affected Mark Twain as a writer and specifically his writing Huck Finn?
6. What connections about Mark Twain's childhood can you draw with Huck Finn?
7. How do we come to a consensus about the labels we use to describe our own eras?

Active note-taking and informal group discussion.

Reflection on personal childhood feelings and events

Harkness-focused discussion on the topic of writers' influences

Pass out homework worksheet

Quiz, Quiz, Trade game as a review of the quiz

**Review/Closure:**

Quiz on biographical influences and 4 eras

**Learning Activity:**

Day 1:

Mississippi River Facts homework and Huck Finn Seven Historical Events Matching Quiz

**SEVEN MISSISSIPPI RIVER FACTS**

1. In the Chippewa language, *Mis Sipi* means  
\_\_\_\_\_.
2. The approximate length of the river is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Mark Twain was born in the small town of  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. The famous landmark on the river in St. Louis City is the  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. The river which joins the Mississippi right below Cairo, Illinois is the  
\_\_\_\_\_.
6. The ten U.S. states that border the river are ...  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Huck Finn Six Historical Events Matching**

Draw a line to connect the event to the description:

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Missouri Compromise            | A. 1884, Mark Twain's novel about a boy helping an enslaved man is published                      |
| 2. Emancipation Proclamation      | B. 1964, outlaws discrimination based on race, color religion, sex, or national origin            |
| 3. Lincoln Assassination          | C. 1877, state and local laws that enforced racial segregation in the Southern United States      |
| 4. Jim Crow Era Starts            | D. 1865, the 16th President was killed at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C.                      |
| 5. Adventures of Huckleberry Finn | E. 1863, "All persons held as slaves ... shall be free."  |
| 6. Civil Rights Act               | F . 1820, the admission to the U.S. of Maine as a free state along with Missouri as a slave state |

7. Fugitive Slave Act

G. 1850, required that all escaped slaves, upon capture, be returned to their masters and that officials and citizens of free states had to cooperate

## Day 2:

### Persuasive Essay Prompt and Outline

Compare/Contrast: Should we, as a class, use the N-word while reading *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* aloud in class? Your essay will be four paragraphs. As you watch the videos, take notes in your composition book and use a graphic organizer that will work best for you. The T-Bone format (two columns) is recommended.

#### Introduction

1. Can you come up with a powerful hook about using the n-word in Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*?
2. Identify yourself based on the Koosh Ball Worksheet and the situation in the class room.
3. What is your claim?

Discuss one side of the issue (this should be the side you disagree with).

1. Identify at least three reasons (weak, weaker, weakest) for this side.
2. Conclude with your opinion of disagreement about these three issues.

Discuss one side of the issue (this should be the side you agree with).

1. Identify at least three reasons (strong, stronger, strongest) for this side.
2. Conclude with your opinion of agreement about these three issues.

#### Conclusion

1. Summarize your major findings.
2. Make a decision and take a strong, clear side on this issue.

### WORDS USED TO COMPARE AND CONTRAST

#### COMPARE/CONTRAST

same/differ

similar/different

similarly/difference

in the same way/however

the same as/but

both/like

like/although

in common/even though

as well/on the other hand

also/while

**Rubric for written expression: Argument Writing:**

PERSUSIVE ESSAY RUBRIC			
OVERALL DEVELOPMENT	How well the writer communicates with the reader, shows awareness of the audience, task, and purpose for writing, and writes in the appropriate mode of discourse. (15-sentence minimum)	10	
ORGANIZATION	The writer's ability to develop a logical plan of organization, maintain coherence throughout the paper, and follows the outline.	10	
DETAILS	The use of 3 appropriate, well supported items to support the main idea of the piece.	5	
EXPLANATIONS	Full, complete, and insightful explanations that build in strength.	10	
SENTENCE STRUCTURE	Completeness, correct usage, and variety or sophistication of sentences. Avoids run ons, rambling sentences, or fragments.	5	

MECHANICS	The correct and effective use of spelling, punctuation, indentation, and capitalization	10	
Task #1	Effective first sentence. Attention grabbing, hooks the reader's attention.	5	
Task #2	Concluding logical call to action	5	
Task #3	Includes a counterargument	5	
Task #4	Only use 2nd person (you) in the hook and conclusion	5	
PROOFREADING	Read your essay aloud to a classmate, correcting your mistakes as you go. Use Grammarly.	5	
	Peer Edit Signature _____		
Total		75	

**Day 3:**

**Quiz on biographical information and eras**

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

**TWAIN'S INFLUENCES for HUCK FINN: QUIZ**

Circle the one correct answer to each multiple choice question.

A. Why is Samuel's father's dying when he was 11 significant?

1. That is the same age Huck and Tom were when they lost their fathers
2. 11 is considered an unlucky number in the South
3. When his father died, Samuel changed his name to Mark Twain
4. All of the above

B. What does Mark Twain mean?

1. A measure of water depth
2. 12 feet
3. 2 fathoms
4. All of the above

C. Why is Twain's time as a riverboat pilot significant to Huck Finn?

1. He was able to observe the nature of the river.
2. He understood navigating and mapping the river.
3. He owned a slave named Jim who traveled with him.
4. A and B but not C

D. How long does it take him to complete and publish *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*?

1. 8 months
2. 1 year
3. 8 years
4. 3 years

E. Where was Samuel Clemens born?

1. Hannibal, Missouri
2. Florida, Missouri
3. Miami, Florida
4. London, England

F. What is the natural phenomena that occurred at Twain's birth and death?

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### **Homework worksheet on biographical information and eras**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

#### HUCK FINN CHAPTER 1B: What is the chapter really about?

Re-read the chapter jotting notes for discussion about the following questions:

1. Of all the Bible stories, why did Twain use the story of Moses and the Bulrushes?  
(If you don't know the story, look it up.)
2. Morality is one of the themes of the book. Why is the opening discussion of lies ironic?
3. Huck wishes for a "change" early on. Why might this be a case of "be careful what you wish for?"

4. What is Miss Watson's religious belief based on? Why is this ironic? Why is Huck's treatment of her ironic considering his belief system?
5. Why might Twain be giving us a lengthy description of nature towards the end of the chapter?
6. There are many references of death in the chapter. Consider the literal and the figurative possibilities of death.
7. Text to world: Huck wants to smoke and Widow Douglas enjoys snuff. What connections can you draw to today's world and what might you assume about life in St. Petersburg from this detail?
8. Superstition is one of the themes in the novel. What does superstition reveal about a culture?
9. Assume that everything in Chapter One is important to the story. What kind of story do you think Mark Twain is setting up?
10. Twain changed the name of his hometown Hannibal to St. Petersburg in his books about childhood adventures. Both names are loaded with symbolism. What might Twain be saying about this location as a place to live as a young person?
11. The word "lonesome" appears several times in the chapter. What exactly do you think Huck is lonesome for?
12. Text to self: Do you have any places in nature you personally connect with? What makes that place special to you?
13. Text to text: does the first chapter of this book remind you in any way of other books you have read? How do they connect?
14. What is the difference between racial and racism? The n-word appears many times in this book. What is your personal relationship with that word? What is your opinion in how we, as a class, should handle the word as we read it?
15. Mark Twain is one of the great American humorists. How many kinds of comedy do you know? What do you know about satire? What is the relationship between

satire and hypocrisy?