

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Group Theme Project

- I. **The Theme Journal:** There are a number of themes that Mark Twain presents in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, such as Freedom, Education, Society vs. Nature, and Religion and Superstition. As you read *Huck Finn*, keep a journal that notes each time your assigned theme is mentioned. This should include direct quotes from the novel with page numbers (or percentage if you're using a Kindle) and your analysis of the quote. This journal will help you in the essay and presentation portions of this over-arching assignment.

- II. **The Presentation:** After finishing *Huck Finn* and completing a journal about your theme, it's time to start thinking about which of those scenes in the book which relate to your theme are the strongest. Choose three key scenes that you believe are the best representation of Twain's feelings about your theme. The next step is to research how your theme is to examine your theme in our world today. What issues, topics, events, and ideas in our world today relate to your theme? When you have examined the theme in relation to the novel and our current world, it is time to create a presentation that will convey all of your findings. (See Presentation Guidelines at the end)

- III. **The Essay:** Now that you have finished reading *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and kept a detailed journal about your assigned theme, it is time to write a composition about your theme as it relates to the book. Ask yourself what Mark Twain was trying to say about the theme you've been looking at.

Freedom: Do all of your entries deal with the same kinds of freedom or are there examples of many kinds of freedom/bondage? What different kinds are there? Note which of your examples in your journal support which different aspects of freedom/bondage. After you have grouped them, look at your data for each set. What does each set of examples seem to be showing?

Religion and Superstition: If you look carefully at your journal entries, you will probably see that different characters in the book have different opinions about religion, and through those characters, Twain also gives his opinions. Categorize your data by characters. After you have done so, look at the examples of what each character says or does relating to the theme of religion. Jot down your notes about each character's views on the topic. What do you think Twain's view is?

Education: As you look at your examples in your journal, you will probably see that there are two main ideas presented about this topic. Some characters think book learning is more important than practical knowledge from/about life experiences, and some characters think vice versa. Group your data into these two categories. Then, make notes about which characters believe schooling is more important and which characters believe

practical knowledge from life experiences is more important. What do you think Twain believed?

Nature vs. Society: There is a basic conflict between nature and civilization. Look at your data references to nature. What kinds of things happen when the characters are in nature, away from civilization? Think back to the story and jot down a few notes about what things happen when the characters are back in "civilization." Judging from this data, what do you think Twain was perhaps trying to tell us about nature, civilization, and people?

PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

PROMPT

You have taken a close look at your theme in the text and in real life. Now it is time to put it all together into a presentation. You are no longer an investigative reporter; you are a director, editor and producer of a prime-time television special about your topic.

REQUIREMENTS

1. This must be a multi-media presentation. That is, you can't just stand up there in front of the class and read a boring report to the class. You must incorporate audio or visual materials -- photos, drawings, charts, maps, video tapes, and/or models, sound recordings -- you can even dress up as the characters if you want to -- anything that will give some life to your presentation.
2. Each person must have at least one specific assignment contributing to the production and/or presentation of your project.
3. You must include information about your topic in the text, information about your topic in real life, and a closing which summarizes your main points and ties the two portions of your presentation together if possible.
4. Your presentation must last between 5 and 7 minutes.

Note: These are not the only things on which you will be graded, but they are the basic requirements for the assignment. You will also be graded on how well these requirements are fulfilled, how thoroughly you cover your topic, and how well you actually do your presentation.

ESSAY GUIDELINES

PROMPT

In your journal you took note of scenes when your theme was present in *Huck Finn* and then analyzed the use of this theme in the novel. Based on this journal, you will have discovered some interesting insights about your theme as it relates to the novel. You will

now write an essay about those discoveries to argue what Twain seems to be saying about your theme in the novel.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Your essay must be your own. You may discuss your thoughts with your theme partner, but you will each turn in your own original work.
2. Textual evidence from the novel is a must. You've done the leg work with your journal, so pull from there! While it is up to you how to structure the body of your essay, you must include at least three pieces of textual evidence in each body paragraph.
3. Use MLA format when citing the novel. If you need help with this, please see me!
4. Length of essay should fall somewhere between 3-5 pages. (Double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-pt font, with appropriate header - see attachment)