

# **Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**

## **Study Guide**

### **In your reading of the novel, take note of the following:**

1. The characters of Huck and Tom Sawyer. How do they differ? Which of these two characters is the realist? Which is the romantic?
2. Mark Twain's view and criticism of society through the eyes of Huck.
3. The character development of Jim. When is he a main character and when is he a minor character, and why?
4. Notice the various changes that Huck undergoes during the novel.
5. Notice the river and its symbolic function in the novel.

### **Chapters 1-5**

1. What is the setting of this portion of the story?
2. Identify Widow Douglas and her sister Miss Watson. How do they differ from one another? Contrast the ways they treat Huck.
3. Who is Jim and what do you learn about him in these chapters?
4. Who is Tom Sawyer and what is his relationship to Huck?
5. What does Huck do when he discovers the footprint in the snow? Whose footprint is it?
6. What is said about Pap and what impression do you have of him?
7. Why does Pap mistreat Huck, and what is it about Huck that upsets him the most?
8. Identify the following:
  - a. Moses and the Bullrushers
  - b. Tom Sawyer's gang
  - c. Jim's hat
  - d. "being ransomed"

### **Chapters 6-9**

1. Where does Pap take Huck, and how does Huck feel about it?
2. How does Huck set the stage for his own pretended murder?
3. What are the "booms" that Huck hears the morning after he has run away? What are the floating loaves of bread?
4. Why does Jim run away? Huck promises not to tell on Jim: How does Huck think the people back home would feel about him if they found this out?
5. Why doesn't Jim cross the state line into Illinois and gain his freedom?
6. How did Huck and Jim obtain their raft?
7. What did they find in the floating house?

### **Chapters 10-13**

1. Huck visits Mrs. Loftus dressed as a girl. Why does he do this, and what kind of mistakes did he make in trying to impersonate a girl? Why does Mrs. Loftus want her husband to catch Jim? What other information does Huck get from Mrs. Loftus?
2. Contrast the way that Jim treats Huck with the way that Pap did.
3. Identify the following:
  - a. Sarah Williams
  - b. George Peters
  - c. a towhead
4. Huck shows compassion for anyone in trouble. What does Huck do that shows he has a kind heart and strong conscience? Find evidence that shows Huck's attitude toward the murderers and their plight.

### **Chapters 14-16**

1. As Jim and Huck travel down the river, they travel deeper and deeper into slave territory. What plans do they make to get themselves out of the trouble that they are sure to encounter?
2. Discuss the incident that takes place on the raft when Jim and Huck become separated in the fog.
3. Why does Huck finally decide not to betray Jim, but rather to help him by tricking the two slave hunters?
4. The river is a very complex and important symbol:
  - a. How does the river serve as a natural force that helps Huck and Jim?

- b. How is the river also a source of danger?
- 5. Identify the following:
  - a. "King Sollermun"
  - b. Cairo, Illinois
  - c. two twenty-dollar gold pieces

### **Chapters 17-18**

1. How do you feel about Buck Grangerford?
2. How does Huck regard the entire Grangerford family?
3. According to Huck, what kind of man is Colonel Grangerford?
4. Define satire. In Huck's description of the Grangerford house and family, what are the chief targets of satire?
5. How are Huck, Jim, and the raft reunited?
6. Identify the following:
  - a. George Jackson
  - b. the Shepherdsons
  - c. Harney and Sophia

### **Chapters 19-23**

1. What are your first impressions of the Duke and the King?
2. How do they arrive at their respective titles—the Dauphin and the Duke of Bridgewater?
3. Is Huck deceived by the lies of these two men?
4. Discuss the different ways in which Twain displays his social criticisms. Keep in mind the following when discussing this question: the Pokeville camp-meeting, the lynch mob, the people of Bricksville.
5. What does land symbolize in the story if the river seems to symbolize the benevolent life forces of nature?
6. Contrast Jim and Pap as fathers on the basis of information in chapter 23.
7. Identify the following:
  - a. a deserted printing office in Pokeville
  - b. a reformed pirate
  - c. Hamlet's soliloquy
  - d. Boggs
  - e. Colonel Sherburn
  - f. the circus
  - g. the Royal Nonesuch

### **Chapters 24-26**

1. What is the sick Arab?
2. Who was Tim Collins? What information did he provide?
3. Why does the King's plan succeed?
4. Identify the following:
  - a. Mary Jane, Susan, and JoAnna Wilks
  - b. Peter Wilks
  - c. a bag of gold

### **Chapters 27-29**

1. Is Huck justified in his disapproval of the King? What difference do you see, if any, between Huck's lies and disguises and those of the King?
2. In chapter 25, Huck decides to tell Mary Jane the truth. How does he feel about telling the truth? Is there anything amusing about Huck's point of view?

### **Chapters 30-31**

1. As a result of the King's careful probing, what truth is revealed about the secret thoughts each man had concerning the gold?
2. Alone on the raft, Huck suffers agonies of guilt and misery.
  - a. What makes Huck feel guilty?

- b. What letter does he think he should write?
- c. What does he do with the letter?
- 3. Why does Huck tear up the letter he has written?
- 4. Does Huck's attitude toward the institution of slavery make his decision to help Jim escape seem more or less admirable? Explain.

### **Chapters 32-39**

- 1. What are your first impressions of Mrs. Phelps (Aunt Sally)?
- 2. Aunt Sally assumes that Huck is a visitor whom her husband and she have been eagerly awaiting.
  - a. How does Huck deal with her mistake?
  - b. When Uncle Silas returns, Huck learns what his new name is supposed to be. What is it?
- 3. How does Tom react on first seeing Huck? Why?
- 4. How does Tom help Huck out of his predicament with the Phelpses?
- 5. When Huck tells Tom that he intends to set Jim free, how does Tom respond? What is Huck's reaction to this? Why?
- 6. What is Huck's plan for freeing Jim?
- 7. What kind of man is Uncle Silas?
- 8. How is Huck's relationship with Tom at the end of the novel similar to that in the early chapters?

### **Chapters 40-42 and Chapter the Last**

- 1. In the course of the "evasion," while Jim, Huck, and Tom are making the raft, what happens to Tom?
- 2. When they reach the raft, what does Tom want to do?

### **Topics to consider upon the completion of *Huck Finn***

- 1. Analyze the use of superstition in *Huckleberry Finn*.
- 2. Analyze the use of dialects in *Huckleberry Finn*.
- 3. Contrast Huck with Tom.
- 4. Trace the changes in Huck and in his attitudes through the narrative and explain why these changes occur.
- 5. Explain Twain's social criticism.
- 6. Discuss the symbolic juxtaposition of the land and the river.
- 7. Discuss each of the following as theme:
  - a. appearance versus reality
  - b. man's inhumanity to man
  - c. the discrepancy between the "American Ideal" and reality
  - d. initiation
- 8. Support or refute Ernest Hemingway's statement:
 

"All modern American literature came from one book by Mark Twain called *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*."
- 9. How is *Huckleberry Finn* a humorous book?