

Teacher's Guide: Cobblestone: Mark Twain (May/June 2009)

Gail Hennessey recently retired after teaching 6th for 33 1/2 years at Harpursville Central School, Harpursville, NY. She writes for children and teaching publications and has a website for educators:
<http://www.gailhennessey.com>

Objectives:

- * Students will gain an understanding of the character traits, struggles and accomplishments of Mark Twain
- * Students will be able to explain how writers such as Mark Twain often use memories from personal experiences to help share characters, plot and settings.

Prior Knowledge:

- Before reading the articles, ask the students to share what they know Mark Twain.
- * Show a copy of *Tom Sawyer*, *Prince and the Pauper*, *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* or another book by Mark Twain. Ask the students if they have ever read any works by Mark Twain.

A Good Deal of Trouble:(pages 2-4)

Possible Vocabulary Words: *prank, apprentice, exaggeration, epidemic, restored and rival.*

*Locate Florida, Missouri and Hannibal, Missouri, on a map of the United States.

- What were some character traits you might give to Samuel Clemens? Find examples in the reading to support your character traits.
- Have you ever played a harmless prank on someone? If, so, what did you do?
- Make a chart of Samuel Clemens' early job as a printer's apprentice. Write five facts from the reading.
- What experiences in your childhood might you use to draw upon for a story?
- Write something you did this week. For example, I went to karate practice or I took a test in science. Use this sentence , add 3 sentences to exaggerate what you did.

Blazing a Path: (page 5)

*Review the reading and write four facts about Haley's Comet. Draw/color a picture of a Haley's Comet and write four facts on your drawing.

- This site has lots of information on comets: <http://science.nationalgeographic.com/science/space/solar-system/asteroids-comets-article.html>
- Label the parts of a comet using the following diagram:
<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/astronomy/activities/label/comet/>

Riverboat Days: (Pages 6- 8)

Possible Vocabulary Words: *chandeliers, elegant, submerged, snags, pseudonym, and exceptional*

*State 5 facts about a typical riverboat that went up and down the Mississippi River in the 1800s.

- What were some of the dangers a riverboat pilot faced?
- Write a paragraph on being a riverboat pilot. What did you see? What did you hear? etc.
- Think of something that you'd like to learn to do. What might that be? Who might you contact to learn more about the job?

- Mark Twain was a *pseudonym* for Samuel Clemens. Think of a pseudonym that you might give yourself? From what did you draw upon to come up with the name?

Finding Voice: (Pages 9-11)

Possible Vocabulary words: *petrified, embedded, hoax, and composing,*

*Have groups of students assigned Petrified Man, Bloody Massacre Near Carson, or Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County. Make a graphic organizer of 4-5 facts on the topic and then draw/color a picture placing the information on the poster.

- Have groups of students find 10 facts from the reading. Print off a number of frogs. On the board, make 10 spaces. Use the facts for a comprehension activity. If the team answers a question correctly, their frog "hops" to the next space on the board. If they answer incorrectly, it goes back a space. Students can opt to not move forward and move another team's frog back a space. The team with the frog that has hopped the furthest wins!

The Quaker City Tour:(Page 12)

- Show a world map and have students locate Israel, Turkey and Lebanon. Ask the students to share any prior knowledge they might have on these areas of the world.

The Trouble Begins at Eight (pages 13- 15)

- * Who might be a famous person in history you might have liked to meet in person?
- Mark Twain feared that no one would come to hear him give a lecture. Have you ever done something and had the same worry?
- * What are the things that a good speaker does? (for example: good speaking voice, looks at the audience, talks doesn't read, etc.)
- What do you know of the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). Have small groups look up information on the Hawaiian Islands: Four Places to Visit and why/ Three Geographic sights to see / Three facts about its history/ Three famous people from Hawaii/ Two souvenirs of Hawaii). Use the information and create a poster.

Famous Friends:(Pages 16- 17)

Possible Vocabulary Words: *acquaintance, autobiography, promote,, abolitionist, speculation, and distain.*

- *Of these "friends", which would be three you would like to have been able to know and why.

Newfangled Machines:(Pages 18-21)

Possible Vocabulary Words: *invest, transferred, and contraption*

- *Make a list of the different inventions that Mark Twain was interested in trying.

People's Author: (Pages 26- 28)

- How did Mark Twain get the nickname, "the People's Author"?
- Why did some parents think Tom Sawyer was a bad influence on other children reading about the character? (trickster, troublesome, etc.)
- * What are some of the reasons that some people feel that the book *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* should be banned?(description of African Americans in negative stereotypes,etc.)
- What was Mark Twain's original purpose for writing *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*? (as a sequel to Tom Sawyer)

A Happy Home: Pages 32- 34

- Name all the children of Mark Twain and his wife, Livy. What became of the children?

- Write a diary entry pretending to be one of Twain's children. First make a graphic organizer to compile 7 facts. (Using information you've learned in other articles such as inventions, famous people that came to visit, etc.)
- A visitor once said about the Twain home, "There was magic in the air!" Think of a place where you could use this same statement.

Life in Hartford: (Pages 36-39)

- **Possible Vocabulary Words:** *parlor, immense, elaborate, distractions, frustrated, and refurbished*
- Pretend you are the governess, Rosa Hayes. What are some of the positive aspects of living in the Twain home? What are some of the negative aspects? Write a letter back home to one of your relatives back in Germany.
- Have students take notes on some of the specific areas of the Twain home. Have students volunteer to be "tour guides" and give a "tour" of the specific areas.

Culminating Activities:

•Make a chart

Growing Up Jobs Through the Years Events in History during Twain's Life Writing Career

Have groups of students find 4 facts from the issue to place in the different headings with a specific detail. Have them place their facts on strips of paper. Place the headings on the board. Give another group the facts strips and have them categorize the strips under the different headings.

- Timeline:** Have groups of students review the issue and make a timeline of 10 events discussed in the issue on Mark Twain

Trivia Safari:

Have teams of students do the following trivia safari:

1. Which of Mark Twain's books is considered one of the earliest forms of science fiction?(*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*)
2. What popular pastime of today did Mark Twain like to do? What "invention" did he have to make it easier to do?(Scrap booking/ self-adhesive tape)
3. Mark Twain's home in Hartford, Ct, had one of the first of these inventions. (telephone)
4. What did Mark Twain challenge a rival journalist in 1864? (to a duel)
5. What was the cause of a manuscript of Twain's ending up in the fireplace? (cigar smoke so thick, someone opened window and the papers blew into the fireplace)
6. In addition to slavery and racial equality, what was another issue which Twain was opposed to? (imperialism) Specifically, which country did Twain think we should have not expand into?(Philippines) What were two other issues that Twain supported?(women's suffrage, public education and labor unions)
7. What does annexation mean? (to take control of territory)
8. Who was the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, whom Twain knew?(Harriet Beecher Stowe)
9. From which country was Alexander Graham Bell from? (Scotland)
10. With which US President did Twain dine at the White House in 1905? (Theodore Roosevelt)