

Reflections:

*A Student Response Journal for...*

*The Adventures of  
Huckleberry Finn*

*by Mark Twain*

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*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

## **Chapter One**

1. Huck reasons that some people reject certain activity only because “they don’t know nothing about it.” The Widow Douglas “took snuff...of course that was all right, because she done it herself.” What do you think Huck is saying about the way people discriminate between right or wrong behavior? Explain Huck’s point to a class member who does not understand.
2. Huck has many superstitious explanations for otherwise ordinary events. An owl “hoots about somebody that was dead,” and dogs cry “about somebody that was going to die.” Huck even ties locks in his hair to keep witches away. Think of two superstitions that you know about. Do you believe in them? Why or why not? How do you think they began?

## **Chapter Two**

3. Huck shrugs off his religion lessons, he enjoys smoking, and he sneaks out of the house at midnight to meet Tom Sawyer. If this story took place in the present, how would you describe Huck and Tom? Are they juvenile delinquents or are they normal young boys? How do you interpret the act of Tom leaving money for the candles he takes?
4. Tom Sawyer organizes a secret gang of “highwaymen” for the business of “robbery and murder.” Were you ever a member of a secret club or “gang” when you were growing up? What made you join? If you did not stay in the club, what made you leave?

## **Chapter Four**

5. Frightened by his father's footprints in the snow, Huck runs to Judge Thatcher's house. Huck tries to give his money to the judge, but he does not explain why. Write a letter to Judge Thatcher and explain Huck's motives.

## **Chapter Five**

6. Imagine that you are Huck and your father is ordering you to stop going to school. What would you say to make him change his mind? Would Huck's father consider it? Why or why not?
7. Construct a dialogue between you as Huck and his father about pap's decision. It might begin like this:

**pap:** Now, larnin' never did nobody no good. It's tellin' ya, ya ain't goin' to school.

**You (Huck):** But pap, the reason I wanna go is...

## Chapter Six

8. Huck never cared for school, but he continues to go just “to spite pap.” Have you ever done something you did not like just to spite someone? In your opinion, is spite a good reason to do something? Why or why not? Think of an instance when it might actually be beneficial.
9. After his father kidnaps him, Huck sometimes spends days locked in the cabin. Take Huck’s place as a prisoner of the cabin. What do you do to pass the time? Do you simply wait for pap to return, or do you try to escape? Based on what you know about the inside of the cabin, outline an escape plan. You must use only what is in the cabin to escape.

## Chapter Seven

10. Tom thinks Huck is dead. Write the entry in Tom’s diary for that day. See if you can write it the way Tom would have, in dialect. We have begun it for you.

Dear Diary,

My closest pal done gone and got hisself kilt. Now...

11. While staging his own “murder,” Huck carefully provides clues that lead people to believe that he is dead. “They won’t ever hunt the river for anything but my dead carcass. They’ll soon get tired of that, and won’t bother no more about me.” Why do you suppose Huck does not worry about how people (such as pap or the widow) will feel about his “death”?
12. After Huck escapes, he discovers the beauty of the night sky for the first time. Describe one of your own memories of an experience in nature. If you do not remember, think of a place where you would like to go. What makes it appealing?

## **Chapter Eight**

13. Jim is frightened by Huck's amazing appearance on the island. Jim believes in ghosts. Many people believe in life after death. Do you have a strong belief in something that most people would find strange? Explain what that belief is.
14. In one of Twain's other books, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, he writes, "But the elastic heart of youth cannot be compressed into one constrained shape long at a time." Explain what Twain means by that sentence.

## **Chapter Nine**

15. Put yourself in Huck's place as he explores the house in the river. The dead body does not seem to bother him very much; he continues to forage with Jim. Would you continue exploring the house if you found a dead body? Why or why not?

## **Chapter Ten**

16. Huck's joke backfires when a rattlesnake bites Jim. Describe an incident from a book, movie, or your own life in which a joke caused more harm than good. Write an apology to a person who was injured or harmed by the joke.

## **Chapter Eleven**

17. Huck chooses to disguise himself as a girl, but he does a poor job. If you were helping him prepare and practice his disguise, what suggestions would you give him? After that, reverse the gender. If a girl were disguising herself as a boy, what would you suggest to her?

## **Chapter Twelve**

18. Huck “borrows” vegetables from gardens. “Pap always said it warn’t no harm to borrow things, if you was meaning to pay them back, sometime; but the widow said it warn’t anything but a soft name for stealing.” Do you agree with pap or the widow? Why?
19. The raft gets swept away after Huck talks the reluctant Jim into boarding the wrecked steamboat. Have you, like Jim, ever let a friend talk you into a bad decision? Compare the way you thought about yourself before you agreed and after you agreed. If you changed, how did it affect the way that you thought about your friend?

## **Chapter Thirteen**

20. After escaping from the steamboat, Huck worries about the thieves. “I says to myself, there ain’t no telling but I might come to be a murderer myself, yet, and then how would *I* like it?” Do you really think that he might become a murderer? Make a list in two columns and list five good or bad things Huck has done so far. Does your list point to Huck as a moral or immoral character?