

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

The Prince and the Pauper

by Mark Twain

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Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. understand the literal events in the story and enjoy the comic adventures.
2. read selected passages of dialect aloud and understand their meaning.
3. define “irony” and point to at least five examples from the novel that illustrate this definition.
4. discuss the development of the following concepts in the novel:
 - The king’s and Tom’s “rite of passage”
 - Man’s inhumanity to man
 - Individual sympathy in conflict with the laws and expectations of one’s culture
 - Society’s judgment of others based on physical appearance
 - The cruelty/oppression of laws and punishments in sixteenth-century England
5. discuss the literary devices used in this novel and how they enhance the plot.
6. note and discuss these objects of Twain’s satire:
 - Sentimentality (being influenced more by emotion than reason) and gullibility (being easily tricked, cheated, or fooled)
 - The average man
 - The traditions of sixteenth-century royalty
 - Romantic literature with its mournful subject matter in poetry and in ridiculous plots in novels
 - A code of honor that results in needless bloodshed
7. relate the themes to modern-day life.
8. infer ideas and events that are not directly stated.

Questions for Essay or Discussion

1. Explain why this novel is sometimes seen as a “rite of passage” story.
2. Consider the life situations and personalities of Tom and the king at the beginning of the novel, what ordeals they undergo, and how they survive at the end.
3. Define the term “irony” and cite five examples from the novel that support your definition.
4. By citing incidents from the novel, demonstrate that a major theme is “man’s inhumanity to man.”
5. Trace the development of Tom’s attitude on being royalty. What is his initial attitude, and how does it change?
6. Explain why the king wanted to swap places in the first place and why he could not simply switch back.
7. Prove the following thesis by citing passages or incidents from the novel: Hasty assumptions based on physical appearance can change the outcomes in a person’s life.
8. In what ways does Tom have to adapt to the hardships of the prince’s life? In what ways does the prince have to adapt to the hardships in Tom’s life? Who helps each boy adjust and how?
9. List as many points of contrast as you can between Tom and the prince.
10. A work of literary art is frequently described as a book that has something important to say and says it with great artistry. What important comments on the human experience does this book make?
11. Identify passages from the novel in which Twain satirizes the average man, human gullibility, and romantic literature.
12. Explain the idea, “Be careful what you wish for; you might get it,” as it relates to this novel.

Chapter II

VOCABULARY

bedstead – the frame of a bed
ceremonious – formal, solemn
chamberlains – high-ranking court officials
clad – dressed, clothed
comrades – friends, companions
courtly – in a royal manner
decrees – rulings, commands
despondently – hopelessly, dejectedly
equerries – attendants who manage the horses of a royal household
fiends – evil or cruel people
forlorn – sad, lonely
genii – mythological guardian spirits
gilded – covered with gold
lament – to mourn or grieve
melancholy – sad, depressed
mendicancy – the act of begging for a living
mimic – to imitate
murky – dim, gloomy
obeisances – respectful gestures
perplexities – problems, questions
picturesque – attractive, striking
princelings – young princes
profoundly – extremely, intensely
rabble – a mob, crowd
regal – royal
reverent – respectful, worshipful
salaaming – bowing in a particular way
sordidness – a disgusting quality or state
stealthily – furtively, quietly
stringent – severe, strict
thrash – to beat or whip
throng – a crowd
viceroalties – governorships under the rule of a king or queen
wherefore – for what reason
withal – in addition
wretchedly – miserably, pitifully
wrought – formed, produced

Chapter VII

VOCABULARY

constitutional – basic, essential
discomposure – agitation, uneasiness
divan – a type of sofa
eccentricity – a peculiarity, strangeness
gauntlets – steel-plated gloves worn with a suit of armor
greaves – armor for the legs
martial – relating to the military
panoply – the full armor of a warrior or soldier
resignedly – wearily, tiredly
ruff – a type of collar worn during the 16th and 17th centuries
tribulation – distress, suffering
unheedfulness – carelessness
vagaries – whims, capricious notions or ideas
wainscoting – a type of paneling on the walls of a room

1. Why does Twain describe all the prince’s servants in so much detail?

2. What simple acts make Tom happy?

3. Explain the incident about Tom’s unwillingness at first to scratch his own nose.

Chapter XIII

VOCABULARY

athwart – across; from one end to the other
detestable – hateful
dissipated – dissolved
meddle – to interfere
paltry – worthless, trivial
perplexity – bewilderment, confusion
prating – idle chatter
profane – to abuse; to treat with disrespect
ruefully – regretfully
scrivener – a writer or scribe

1. Why does Hendon leave the king alone?

2. How is the king taken from Hendon?

Chapter XVIII

VOCABULARY

- abate – to subside or decrease
- benevolent – kind
- chaff – to tease or mock
- epithets – derogatory or abusive terms used to characterize people
- inscrutable – difficult to make out or understand
- kine – [archaic] cattle
- levy – to impose a tax; confiscate property
- petulant – irritable, bad-tempered
- pungent – strong, sharp in taste or odor
- ribald – vulgar, lewd
- spectral – ghostly
- uncanny – eerie, strange
- waive – to give up rights; pass

1. How does the king free himself from Hugo?

2. What literary term is demonstrated in the following quote? Hugo ran “off like the wind.” (Pg. 111)

Chapter XXV

VOCABULARY

blithely – merrily; without a care
brook – to tolerate or allow
deflections – swerving or turning to the side
fervency – passion, ardor
hillock – a small hill
illiberal – not generous or abundant
leal – [archaic] loyal, faithful
prodigal – a wasteful or reckless person
undulations – wave-like movements

1. What type of welcome does Hendon expect at Hendon Hall, and what type of welcome does he get?

2. What is ironic about the following quote by the king?

“Mind not thy mischance, good man; there be others in the world whose identity is denied, and whose claims are derided.” (Pg. 149)

Chapter XXXIII

VOCABULARY

aught – anything
blenched – blanched, became pale
canvassed – scrutinized or investigated
clove – divided or split
flunkies – assistants, lackeys
inconspicuous – discreet, unnoticed
lee – the sheltered side of an object or structure
mesmerizes – hypnotizes or captivates
ordained – ordered, decreed
torpid – lazy, stagnant
transfixed – mesmerized, hypnotized
veritable – authentic, real, genuine
wrathful – furious, enraged

1. Why does Miles Hendon want to find Sir Humphrey Marlow?

2. How does the whipping-boy know Miles Hendon?
