



PRESTWICK HOUSE

Activity Pack

PUDD'NHEAD WILSON

BY MARK TWAIN



Copyright © 2011 by Prestwick House, Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938. 1-800-932-4593. www.prestwickhouse.com Permission to use this unit for classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her personal use. This material, in whole or part, may not be copied for resale.

Item No. 308859

ISBN-13 978-0-9823095-0-6

Written by Elizabeth Keenan

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter I

Adjective Hunt

Objective: Identifying and explaining Twain's use of adjectives

Activity

Mark Twain uses many adjectives in his writing, especially in the first chapter of the book. Adjectives add dimension and depth to a written work. By using adjectives, writers paint a picture so that readers can clearly imagine what the writer is describing. For example, Twain writes at the beginning of Chapter II, "Pudd'nhead Wilson had a trifle of money when he arrived, and he bought a small house on the extreme western verge of the town." By using adjectives such as "small" and "extreme western verge," Twain lets the audience know that Wilson is not rich and lives far from the center of town. Such a description helps highlight the fact that Wilson is an outsider in the town and frequently ridiculed.

Underline each adjective in the second paragraph of Chapter I. Then, write a paragraph explaining what these adjectives add to the passage and how the writing would be different without them. Explain in these paragraphs if you like or dislike Twain's writing style so far, and why.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter II

Fingerprinting

Objective: Learning the history behind a plot element

Activity

Pudd'nhead Wilson is criticized by the other residents of Dawson's Landing for several of his personality traits and his odd behavior. His collecting of fingerprints, though, garners the most censure from the community. Despite the lack of enthusiasm from his neighbors and friends, Pudd'nhead continues his curiosity and pursuit of fingerprinting.

Although people have been aware of the existence of fingerprints since ancient times, the use of fingerprints as an identification tool and their validity in solving crimes was not accepted until the 20th century.

Working in pairs, research the history of fingerprinting and its use in criminal cases, and write a report on your findings. Then, fingerprint each other using stamp ink and paper, and compare and contrast each other's fingerprints. Identify the similarities and differences between the two sets of fingerprints.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter III

Horoscopes

Objective: Using events in the novel and character traits to make predictions

Activity

Astrology is the study of celestial bodies and their influence over natural behaviors, particularly human behaviors. People are born under certain astrological signs (also known as zodiac signs), and there are certain personality traits associated with those signs. Astrology can be used to create horoscopes, which are commonly found in newspapers and magazines, and on the Internet. While most people read horoscopes purely for entertainment, others rely on them for daily guidance and forecasts of the future.

By the end of Chapter III, Roxy has switched her son Chambers with Tom, the son of the master of the house. Roxy feels incredibly nervous about this switch and worries that someone, such as Pudd'nhead Wilson, might discover her deed.

Write a horoscope for Roxy for the month after she switches the babies. Use the events in the novel and Roxy's character traits to predict future events and provide advice to her. Since Roxy's birthday or astrological sign is not revealed in the story, you can choose any sign for her that you'd like.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter IV**Chambers's Journal**

Objectives: Interpreting the text
Extrapolating a character's feelings

Activity

In Chapter IV, Twain describes the relationship between Tom Driscoll and Chambers. As Twain describes it, Tom is very cruel to Chambers, constantly torturing and harassing him. In addition, Tom orders Chambers around, forcing him to do his bidding, even when Chambers feels that Tom is wrong in doing what he does. Clearly, Chambers does not have a very easy life as a slave and as Tom's target.

Write a journal entry from Chambers's perspective. Make sure to chronicle the day, and write down how you feel about Tom's treatment of you and your situation as a slave. Although Chambers does not appear directly in Chapter IV, you should be able to infer how he feels about the situations that he experiences. Feel free to choose an instance of Tom's abuse of Chambers that Twain describes for your journal entry or make one up, as long as it is consistent with the rest of the novel. Your journal entry should be at least two paragraphs long, but it can be longer. One paragraph should describe your day, and the second should explain how you feel. You do not need to write in dialect, although you certainly may.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter V

Calendar of Aphorisms

Objective: Creating modern day sayings in the style of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Activity

The beginning of each chapter starts with a quote or aphorism from Pudd'nhead Wilson's Calendar. An aphorism is a saying that embodies some general truth or belief and is usually curt, ironic, or humorous in nature. The aphorisms that begin each chapter of the novel sometimes reflect or comment on the action that occurs in that chapter, but often they do not; they are just meant to be funny or provide some insight into Twain's views of the world.

Create a 12-month calendar of aphorisms. You can choose any topics you want. Then, write an aphorism for each month. The topics can be different for each month, or they can focus on a single theme. Write a short explanation of what each aphorism means.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter VI

Writing a Poem

Objective: Exploring the significance of a word through poetry

Activity

Aunt Patsy and Rowena have the opportunity of having many people to their house in order to show off their new and exotic guests, the Capello brothers. Until this point, Aunt Patsy and Rowena have experienced very little attention or excitement, so both characters are very pleased to be the center of attention. Twain describes how they feel with the word *glory*, which is used several times throughout the chapter.

Consider how Aunt Patsy and Rowena feel in Chapter VI and then write a poem inspired by the word *glory*. The poem should be at least 10 lines long. The poem can rhyme, but does not have to. It can be written in any poetic form except Haiku.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter VII

Free-thinkers' Society

Objective: Creating an effective advertisement

Activity

The two most knowledgeable men in Dawson's Landing are Judge Driscoll and Pudd'nhead Wilson. Together, they constitute the Free-thinkers' Society. The society meets to discuss the benefits of thinking for one's self, despite others' views. In Chapter VII, the two men invite the twin brothers to meet with them. Judge Driscoll and Pudd'nhead Wilson are, however, the only members of their society.

Imagine that you have been hired to help the Free-thinkers' Society recruit new members. Create a poster for the society that will attract new members. Be sure to include important information, like where and when the society meets and what it stands for. Feel free to draw your own images, cut pictures from print media, or find computer-generated images. Incorporate plenty of eye-catching images and text to convey your ideas.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter VIII**Text Messages****Objective:** Rewriting dialogue using text messages**Activity**

In Chapter VIII, Roxy approaches Tom to ask for money, which leads to an extended dialogue between the two characters. Imagine that Tom and Roxy have cell phones, and instead of having a face-to-face meeting, they conduct this conversation through text messages.

Rewrite the dialogue between Roxy and Tom, beginning where Roxy says, "Oh, Marse Tom, de po' ole mammy is in sich hard luck dese days..." and ending where she says, "Gimme de dollah bill!" Text messages are limited to 160 characters, so make sure each text does not exceed that number. You may use texting shorthand and emoticons (to express what the characters are feeling), as long as your message is understandable.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter IX

Character Changes

Objective: Understanding how a character changes through the course of the novel

Activity

At the beginning of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Roxy is a sympathetic character; she is likable and her motivations are understandable. Once she returns to Dawson's Landing, however, Roxy changes considerably. Make a list of all of Roxy's characteristics before she leaves Dawson's Landing and another list of her characteristics after she returns. Compare the lists you have made, and decide if you think Roxy is still a sympathetic character.