

Approved for use in English III

Summary of the Work:

The novel begins with Huck introducing himself as someone you might have heard of in the past. Huck has become rich in his last adventure with Tom Sawyer (*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*). He is taken in to the home of the widow, Ms. Douglas, and her sister Miss Watson to educate and teach him proper manners.

While living with the sisters, Huck’s father, Pap Finn, returns to town. Pap has a history of violence and drunkenness and Huck is concerned about his father’s intentions. Pap confronts Huck and warns him to quit school, stop trying to better himself, and wants Huck’s money. Despite Pap, he continues to go to school. Pap kidnaps Huck and takes him across the Mississippi to a small cabin.

Huck enjoys his life of freedom but Pap becomes too abusive and Huck escapes by faking his own murder. While escaping he comes across another runaway at Jackson’s Island, Jim. A slave of Miss Watson who fears being sold down the river. They escape and travel the river on a raft. While traveling, Huck and Jim encounter many struggles including a band of robbers, two southern families involved in a bloody feud, a duke and king that force them to perform scams in various river towns, and the concept of slavery.

During their travels, Huck and Jim are betrayed; Jim is sold in to slavery. Huck, with the help of Tom Sawyer, develops an elaborate plan to free Jim. When the escape takes place, Tom is shot in the calf and because of Jim’s devotion and loyalty he is captured once again. The plan to free Jim is then revealed and readers learn that Miss Watson has passed away and has freed Jim in her will. Jim is set free and Huck then contemplates his next adventure.

Rationale:

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is a novel that can be examined by students for a theme and deeper plot than just a young boy’s adventure. The main character is at a time in his life when his is forced to make decisions and begin to form his own beliefs. Students reading this novel are at a similar time in their lives. This book will not only serve as a way to experience one of the great pieces of American literature; it will also serve as a valuable history lesson. Teachers incorporate materials and activities before, during, and after reading to facilitate the teaching of *Huckleberry Finn* in a sensitive and thought provoking manner. When students have completed the novel, they will have examined racism, religion, allegiance, and friendship. These issues run throughout the novel and it is important for students to become aware and be able to from their own opinion of these social issues.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn provides us an excellent opportunity to read a piece of American literature and learn an important aspect of our history.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

Lane, Lauriat, Jr., "Why Huckleberry Finn Is a Great World Novel," in *College English*, Vol. 17, No. 1, October, 1955, pp. 1-5. Reproduced in Literature Resource Center.

James, Pearl, An overview of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in, an essay for *Exploring Novels*, Gale, 1998. Reproduced in Literature Resource Center.

* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

- Outstanding books for the college bound.
- Random House 100 best books of the 20th Century.
- American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1904

Readability:

- Lexile Score: 990
- Readability Level: 5.9

Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment: ([link](#))

Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption: Upon inception of Helena Public Schools

Notes on the Text:

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

Huckleberry Finn is written during a critical time period in American history. The novel challenges today’s political and social correctness. Although it appears on many “banned” lists, it holds its place in American literature. Twain’s use of the “n” word in the text reflects the society he is describing. Through his realistic narrative, Twain actually speaks against both slavery and racism through the eyes of young Huckleberry Finn.

Connection to the Curriculum:

The development of analyzing and evaluating are skills learned by students their junior year. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* will explore issues such as racism, slavery, moral themes, and personal responsibility.

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)

Literary adaptations, plays, musicals, audio, and movies can be used to supplement teachings and student learning.