

Mark Twain's The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Study Guide

Chapter 1

1. Personification is a literary term in which an object or animal is given the characteristics of a human. Find an example of personification in this chapter.
2. Find an example of a cliché in this chapter.
3. A theme is a general statement about life. Find an example.
4. Briefly identify Tom, Aunt Polly, and Sid.
5. Why does Tom dislike the new boy?
6. How does Aunt Polly justify her decision to make Tom work on Saturday?
7. Why does Tom want to "lamb Sid for that. I'll learn him!"?
8. In what way may the new boy and Sid be foils for Tom?

Chapter 2

1. Briefly identify Cardiff Hill. Why is it so important to Tom?
2. Briefly identify Jim. How does Tom try to trick him?
3. Find an example of figurative language in this chapter that would mean, "You are in bad shape."
4. How does Tom convince Ben Rogers to give him his whole apple?
5. What two generalizations about people does Twain make from Tom's whitewashing incident?

Chapter 3

1. How does Tom take revenge on Sid?
2. Sarcasm is the way an author says something innocently but really intends an insult or criticism instead. How is the following quotation an example of sarcasm?

"These two great commanders did not condescend to fight in person - that being better suited to the still smaller fry – but sat together on an eminence and conducted the field operations by orders delivered through aides-de-camp."
3. Support the following statement: The new girl appreciates Tom's performances and likes him, too.
4. Why do you think Tom loses interest in Amy Lawrence? Is this quick change of heart normal? Do you find it common that young people fall in and out of love quickly?
5. Do you think Tom is really angry at Aunt Polly for striking him? Find a quotation to support your answer.
6. What has Sid "thought better of" in the following passage?

"Not long after, as Tom,...was surveying his drenched garments...Sid woke up; but if he had any dim idea of making any 'references to allusions,' he thought better of it."

Chapter 4

1. Tom's Sunday clothes are similar to his everyday clothes, except that they are clean. Why is he so uncomfortable?
2. What are blue and yellow tickets? What do they buy?
3. Why does Tom want a Bible?
4. How do Tom, Mr. Walters, and Judge Thatcher "show off" in church?
5. Find a theme for this story found in Judge Thatcher's speech to Tom.

Chapter 5

1. Find an example of humorous exaggeration early in this chapter.
2. What generalization about human behavior may we infer from the reference to the church bulletins.
3. Tom isn't the only one watching the pinch bug and the dog. What is the author trying to say about the sermon?
4. Referring to the following quotation, what do you think is the narrator's opinion of religion?
"...and yet it was an argument that dealt in limitless fire and brimstone and thinned the predestined elect down to a company so small as to be hardly worth saving."
5. State a generalization about human behavior found in the last paragraph of the chapter.
6. Briefly identify Widow Douglas.

Chapter 6

1. How does Tom try to avoid school? Does it work?
2. Why is Tom glad Aunt Polly pulls his tooth?
3. Briefly identify Huckleberry Fin.
4. How does Huck use spunk-water to remove warts?
5. How does Huck know when Mother Hopkins is "a-witching"?
6. Why are the boys going to the graveyard at midnight? Note: Another use of cats in the story.
7. How does Tom outsmart the teacher?

Chapter 7

1. Briefly identify Joe Harper.
2. Why does Becky agree to meet Tom at lunch time?
3. What promises does Tom claim are part of their engagement?
4. How does Tom break Becky's heart? How does he try to make amends?
5. Compare Tom's problems with Becky to his argument with Joe. How does he solve his problems?

Chapter 8

1. To make Becky sorry for rejecting him, what professions does Tom contemplate? Which one does he decide to pursue?
2. List two of Tom's superstitions described in this chapter?

- 3.** What literary allusion do we find in this chapter?

Chapter 9

- 1.** Find two superstitions Tom believes about death?
- 2.** Briefly identify Muff Potter and Injun Joe.
- 3.** Why does Injun Joe insist the doctor pay him more money?
- 4.** What important information is revealed to the reader after the boys flee the murder scene?

Chapter 10

- 1.** Why do Tom and Huck decide to promise in blood not to reveal anything about the murder?
- 2.** What is Huck's opinion of girls?
- 3.** Why are the boys terrified of the stray dog?
- 4.** How does Aunt Polly punish Tom? Is it effective?
- 5.** Why does the brass knob add to Tom's troubles?

Chapter 11

- 1.** Why don't Tom and Huck come to Muff's aide the following afternoon?
- 2.** What superstition is hinted at when the body is moved and bleeds a little?
- 3.** Why does Tom pretend to have a toothache?
- 4.** How does Tom ease his conscience?
- 5.** Why isn't Injun Joe punished for graverobbing?

Chapter 12

- 1.** What statement is the author making about "health" journals? Why is Aunt Polly a perfect customer?
- 2.** What is the water cure?
- 3.** Why does Tom tell Aunt Polly he likes Painkiller? How does it taste?
- 4.** What lesson does Tom teach his Aunt?

Chapter 13

- 1.** Why does Joe Harper want to run away with Tom?
- 2.** Describe Jackson's Island. Why is it attractive to the boys?
- 3.** Why is being a pirate better than being a hermit?
- 4.** Why are Joe and Tom troubled by their consciences? How do they resolve their problem?
- 5.** Support the following statement: Huck is not troubled by a conscience because he doesn't attend school.

Chapter 14

- 1.** What is another of Tom's superstitions we see early in this chapter?
- 2.** How does Tom think bread helps locate a body?
- 3.** Why are the boys thrilled when Tom figures out whose body they are looking for in the river?

4. Speculate on what Tom writes on the two pieces of white bark?
5. Why do you think Tom leaves his valuables in Joe's hat?

Chapter 15

1. How does Tom feel when he hears his aunt and Mrs. Harper talking?
2. Why doesn't Tom leave his Aunt the note as plans?
3. What does the note Tom leaves on Joe's hat say?

Chapter 16

1. List the activities the boys enjoy on the island.
2. Why do Joe and Huck want to go home? How does Tom convince them to stay?
3. What are Joe and Tom doing when they leave Huck to find Tom's "lost knife"?
4. What are the boys thankful for after the storm?
5. State a generalization about human behavior based on the following quotation:
"...for they were but headless lads, like their generation, and had made no provision against rain."
6. What do the boys learn from playing Indians?

Chapter 17

1. What do the school children bicker about before the funeral?
2. State a generalization based on the glowing way the clergyman describes them at their funeral.
3. Why does Twain refer to the congregation as "sold" before they leave the church?
4. Why does Tom get "more cuffs and kisses that day...than he had earned before in a year"?

Chapter 18

1. Why does Tom pretend he dreamed about his aunt? Does Sid believe his story?
2. How do the boys reach "the very summit of glory"?
3. What does Becky do to win back Tom?
4. After Alfred realizes Becky is using him, how does he get revenge?
5. Why doesn't Becky warn Tom?

Chapter 19

1. How does Tom's lie about the dream hurt Aunt Polly?
2. Why is Aunt Polly reluctant to look in tom's pocket?
3. List the two cruel things Tom does because he "doesn't think."

Chapter 20

1. Briefly identify Mr. Dobbins.
2. Why does Tom think Becky's mistake will be discovered?
3. What is Tom's reaction to the whipping for the spilled ink?
4. How does he plan to help Becky? What does he ultimately do?
5. What is worse than a whipping for Tom? How does Becky help?

Chapter 21

1. Define “gilded”. How does the title suggest the action to come?
2. Why do the small boys want revenge on the master?
3. What aspect of the girls’ compositions does the author most dislike?
4. State a theme for this novel based on the author’s opinion of sermons.
5. What aspect of the prank pulled on the headmaster is unbelievable?

Chapter 22

1. Why is Tom depressed to find Huck Finn quoting scriptures?
2. Find an example of a metaphor. What is Tom convinced of?
3. How do Joe and Huck suffer a relapse like Tom?

Chapter 23

1. Why does Muff’s gratitude for the tobacco bother Huck and Tom?
2. How does the attitude of the spectators change as the prosecution put on its case?
3. Where do you think Tom goes the night before the trial, when he “was out late, that night, bed came to bed through the window”?
4. What evidence is there that Muff doesn’t know of his own innocence during the trial?
5. Why do you suppose Injun Joe gives a “barely perceptible start” at the mention of Tom’s hiding place behind the elms?

Chapter 24

1. Why doesn’t Huck trust the defense attorney’s word not to tell anyone Huck had been with Tom?
2. At first, Tom is afraid to go out after dark because Injun Joe is loose. Find a quotation letting the reader know that the old Tom will be back to mischief soon.

Chapter 25

1. Where does Tom think buried treasure is to be found?
2. Dialect is a distinctive variety of language spoken by members of an identifiable regional group, nation, or social class. Find an example in this chapter of dialogue representative of the local dialect.
3. How does Mark Twain insult kings?
4. What does Huck have against marriage?
5. Why do the boys give up digging that night?
6. List the reasons Tom thinks it is safe to dig for treasure un the daytime at the haunted house.

Chapter 26

1. List the superstitions that keep the boys away from the haunted house the next day.
2. What fortunate things happen to the boys at the haunted house?
3. Do you think Injun Joe plans to take revenge on Tom? Find a quotation in the chapter to support your answer.

4. Why are the boys sorry they bring their tools to the house?
5. Is Injun Joe a round character, a flat character, or a caricature? Use events from the story to support your answer.

Chapter 27

1. What evidence is there in Tom's mind that the adventure at the haunted house is only a dream?
2. How does Tom plan to find out if it is all a dream?
3. Why does Tom "...not care to have Huck's company in public places"?
4. Where do they think Injun Joe's Number Two is located?
5. Why are the boys going to get all the door keys they can find? What is implied about the safety of the locks at the time?
6. Do you think Tom is being fair to Huck when he wants him to follow Injun Joe? Why does Huck agree?

Chapter 28

1. Why doesn't Tom want to go back and look for the box?
2. How does Huck get Tom out of his house at night?
3. Why does Tom think, "Maybe all the Temperance Taverns have got a ha'nted room"?

Chapter 29

1. Where does Tom plan to go after the picnic? Does he consider Huck in his plans?
2. Briefly describe McDougal's Cave.
3. Why does Huck decide to follow the men instead of getting Tom?
4. What does Injun Joe have against the Widow? How does he plan to get revenge?
5. Why do you suppose Huck runs to the Welshman's house?

Chapter 30

1. What word is Huck amazed to hear from anyone in town? Why is he hearing it now?
2. Why does Huck reveal the deaf Spaniard's identity?
3. State a theme from this story based on Huck's joke.
4. What is the bundle captured that night? Why is Huck worried about it?
5. Why does the Widow nurse Huck?
6. How do the townspeople discover Tom and Becky missing?
7. How long are Tom and Becky lost in the cave?

Chapter 31

1. Tom makes smoke marks to find his way in the caverns. How then do the children get lost?
2. State a generalization about humans based on the idea of the hope that may be inferred from this section.
3. What is the significance of Tom taking Becky's candle?

4. Why does Tom decide to explore the passages leading away from the Spring? What does he discover?
5. How does Tom find his way back to the Spring? What is Becky's condition?

Chapter 32

1. How do Tom and Becky find their way out of the cave? How far from town are they?
2. Do you think the ragged man has drowned while trying to escape? What else could have happened to him?
3. What does the Judge do that upsets Tom?
4. Speculate on Injun Joe's fate. Where is the treasure?

Chapter 33

1. Describe Injun Joe's cup.
2. What do you think is the author's opinion of pardons for criminals?
3. What does Huck do that surprises Tom?
4. Why is Tom planning to start a gang?
5. What frightens Huck and makes him want to leave the treasure? How does Tom change his mind?
6. Why do the boys leave the guns behind?
7. State a generalization based on the Welshman's ideas of metal collecting.
8. Why do you suppose everyone is waiting at the Widow's home for the boys?

Chapter 34

1. Why does Huck want to run away from the Widow's house?
2. What does Tom say to keep him there?
3. Why do you suppose Tom tells everyone about the treasure after he originally planned to bury the forest?

Chapter 35

1. State a theme for this novel based on the way the community reacts to the boys' wealth.
2. Why does Huck run away from the Widow?
3. State a theme for this novel based on Huck's opinion of civilization and respectability.
4. How does Tom convince Huck to return to the Widow's house? Why do you think Huck does it?
5. What generality about Tom Sawyer does Twain give the reader in the conclusion?

Essay Topics

For each of these, remember to go beyond mere plot summary and argue a point.

1. An idyll is a work that describes country life in terms of idealized innocence and contentment. To what extents is *Tom Sawyer* an idyll? Is Twain sincere in this image or poking fun?
2. “Coming of age” stories are usually one of two types:

Loss of Innocence- The young person is innocent. Through the events in the story he/she comes face to face with evil and recognizes that evil is part of life. As a result, he/she is now wiser about the world and maybe a little sadder.

Rite of Passage-The boy or girl becomes an adult by undergoing a test or ordeal and passing the test.

Is *Tom Sawyer* a “coming of age” story? If so, which kind?

3. Racial bigotry is a part of this story. Find these instances and discuss how they illustrate the beliefs of the time and discuss as well how Twain comments on them.
4. Trace the following motifs and how they add to theme, plot, character, etc.
 - bad boys vs. model boys
 - adults vs. children
 - sincerity vs. insincerity
5. Review the attitudes toward women at this time in history. Are the female characters believable by today’s standards?
6. Trace the development of one of these themes and support your ideas by referring to incidents and comments from the novel:
 - material success as the passport to respectable adult society
 - malignant human behavior as motivated by revenge
 - the moral uncertainty of right and wrong behavior as a part of growing up
 - the conflict between civilization with all of its restrictions and the non-civilized life with all of its freedoms