

Before You Read

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer Chapters 1–10

FOCUS ACTIVITY

You have probably heard the expression, “boys will be boys.” What does it mean to you?

Journal

Write in your journal about what this phrase means to you. Think about the circumstances in which you’ve heard it, the ways it can be used to excuse certain behavior, and the attitude it conveys.

Setting a Purpose

Read to discover Mark Twain’s attitude toward the behavior of Tom Sawyer.

BACKGROUND

Point of View

Point of view is the relationship of the **narrator**, or storyteller, to the events of the story. *Tom Sawyer* is told from the **third-person point of view**. You can imagine the narrator as a person who observes the action but does not take part in it. The reader sees everything through the narrator’s eyes and is given this perspective on events. In the **first-person point of view**, one of the characters, often the main character, tells the story using pronouns like *I* and *me*.

Sometimes, as in *Tom Sawyer*, the third-person narrator is very similar to the author. In this novel, it is safe to assume that the opinions of the narrator are those of Mark Twain himself. In other third-person books, the narrator does not express the opinions of the author. However, the characters in a novel speak with their own voices. One example is Huckleberry Finn’s colorful but grammatically incorrect language. This is not the way Twain himself spoke. Another important example occurs in Chapter 6, when Huck and Tom use racial slurs. Mark Twain himself became a supporter of equal rights for African Americans. One of Twain’s last works was a bitter attack on European colonial exploitation of Africa.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

anatomy [ə nat’ə mē] *n.* study of the body

apprehensively [ap’ri hen’siv lē] *adv.* cautiously

beguiled [bi gīld’] *adj.* tricked, misled

despair [di spār] *n.* hopelessness

loathe [lōth] *v.* to hate

perplexed [pər plekst’] *adj.* confused

reluctance [ri luk’təns] *n.* hesitation

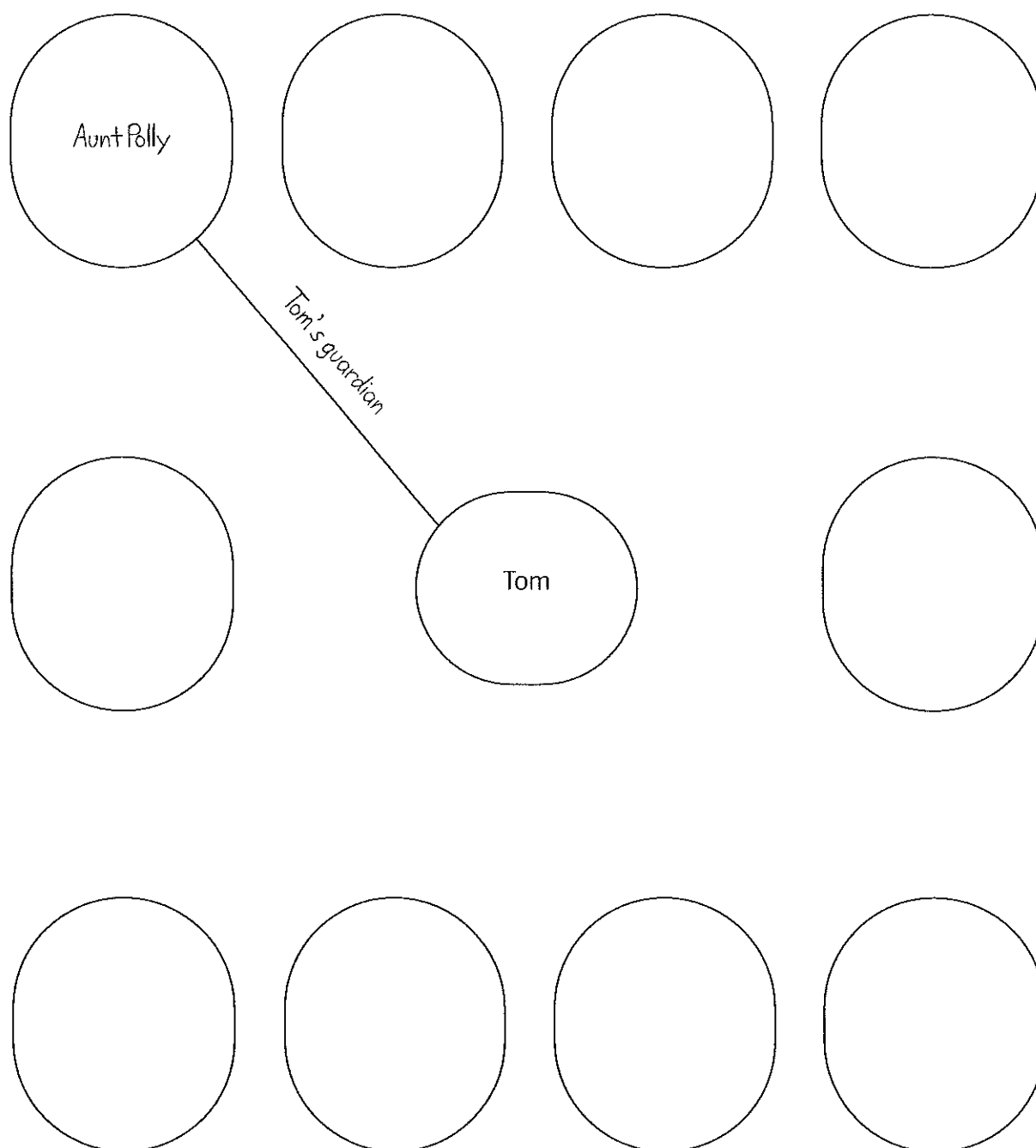
turmoil [tur’moil] *n.* uproar

wily [wī’lē] *adj.* sly

Active Reading

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer Chapters 1–10

Many new characters are introduced in the first section of *Tom Sawyer*. Use the web diagram on this page to keep track of the new characters and their relationship to Tom. As new characters appear, add each name to a circle and connect to the “Tom” circle with a line. On the line, write a short description of the character’s relationship to Tom. Also connect each new character with any other appropriate circle, and explain the relationship on a connecting line.



Responding

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer Chapters 1–10

Personal Response

What is your first impression of Tom?

Make a list of words or phrases that you think describe him.

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. How does Tom get his friends to whitewash the fence for him? According to Mark Twain, what “great law of human action” is he following?

2. Who is Huckleberry Finn? Why does Tom find him appealing?

3. What do Tom and Huck witness in the graveyard? What agreement do they make about what they have seen?

Responding

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer Chapters 1–10

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. Mark Twain does not tell us what happens at the end of Chapter 4, when Tom is unable to answer the judge's question correctly. Why, in your opinion, did Twain not explain how the scene ends?

5. Tom uses his imagination to escape from the boredom of everyday life. Is this a positive or a negative characteristic? What are its advantages and disadvantages? Explain your answer.

Literature and Writing

Turning Point

Chapter 9 marks a turning point in the novel. Up to now, Tom's adventures have been play and make-believe. In the scene at the graveyard, he and Huck witness real evil. Tom is forced to make life and death decisions. Analyze this chapter, addressing such questions as the following: How does Twain create the frightening atmosphere in the graveyard? To which senses does he appeal? How does he use **foreshadowing**—clues planted by an author that point to events to come—to prepare the reader for the change in mood? End your analysis by making a prediction about how you think the events Tom and Huck witness will affect the rest of the novel.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

In the **Focus Activity**, you wrote about the use of the expression “boys will be boys” to excuse irresponsible behavior. Do you think Mark Twain is excusing behavior in Tom that others would find irresponsible or annoying? In your group, examine the text for evidence of Twain's attitude towards Tom's pranks, schemes, and, especially, treatment of other people. Do you find any indication that Mark Twain disapproves of Tom? If not, discuss why the author might be so forgiving of Tom's behavior.

Learning for Life

In Chapter 6, Twain introduces Huckleberry Finn. It is obvious that Tom and Huck have become friends. Interview one or more classmates for their views on what makes for a lasting friendship between young people.

Before You Read

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer Chapters 11–24

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Why, do you think, do some people see past events through “rose-colored glasses”? In other words, why does the past sometimes look better than it actually was?

Discuss

Discuss with a partner an experience in which you or a friend were looking through rose-colored glasses. What led to the positive feeling about the event? Did the view of the event ever change?

Setting a Purpose

Read to examine the possible influence of rose-colored glasses on *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

BACKGROUND

Irony and Satire

Irony and satire are two literary techniques used by Mark Twain in *Tom Sawyer*. **Irony** is a contrast between reality and what seems to be real. Twain comments on aspects of society that he dislikes and pokes fun at people and behavior. An example of his irony is the funeral sermon in Chapter 17. Although Tom, Joe, and Huck were considered troublemakers, the minister's sermon paints them as sweet, generous, noble, and beautiful.

Twain's comedy is also expressed by satire. **Satire** is a form of writing that exposes social evils and abuses by making fun of them. Twain hated many things about the society he grew up in: its cruelty, its hypocrisy, its greed, and its ignorance. Even though these elements do not dominate *Tom Sawyer*, they are there. For example, Twain satirizes the ignorance and cruelty of small-town schoolteachers in the character of Dobbins.

Did You Know?

Mark Twain created the characters and places in his novels partly from the people and places he knew. Tom, Mark Twain later wrote, is made up of himself as a child and two of his friends. Aunt Polly is based on Twain's mother, and Becky on Laura Hawkins, a neighbor. Henry, Twain's younger brother, appears in the book as Sid, but Twain noted that Henry was never a tattletale. Tom Blankenship, son of a Hannibal ne'er-do-well, was the model for Huck. In real life, Injun Joe was a pitiful homeless person. Keep in mind that the real-life people Twain used are not the characters themselves. They have been filtered through Twain's imagination.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

apprehension [ap'ri hen'shən] *n.* worry

chronic [kron'ik] *adj.* permanent, long-term

conspicuous [kən spik'ū əs] *adj.* obvious

frivolous [friv'ə ləs] *adj.* not serious

notoriety [nō'tə rī 'ə tē] *n.* fame

ominous [om'ə nəs] *adj.* threatening

repentant [ri pent'ənt] *adj.* sorry, apologetic

vindictive [vin dik'tiv] *adj.* keen for revenge

Active Reading

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer Chapters 11–24

The long second paragraph of Chapter 14 contains one of the best descriptions in the novel. It contains many striking words and phrases that create a word painting of waking up on Jackson's Island. As you read this paragraph, keep track of words and phrases that you feel are especially colorful and memorable. In one column of the chart below, write the word or phrase. In the other, explain how the description appeals to a reader.

Word or Phrase	How or Why It Works
cool gray dawn	appeals to senses of both touch (cool) and sight (gray)

Responding

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer Chapters 11–24

Personal Response

Which scene was your favorite in this section? Why?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. How do Tom and Huck treat Muff Potter after he has been put in jail? Why, in your opinion, do they treat him in this way?

2. Compare and contrast Tom's and Becky's actions when Tom is punished for spilling the ink and Becky is almost punished for tearing the book.

3. What important decision does Tom make at the end of this section? What result does the decision have?

Responding

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer Chapters 11–24

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. Do you feel that Mark Twain is successful in creating Injun Joe as a villain? Does Injun Joe seem like a real person to you? Explain your answer.

5. Some readers feel that Tom goes too far in his pranks. What do you think? How would you feel if you were one of the people affected by his jokes, such as Aunt Polly or the people who attended his funeral?

Literature and Writing

Point of View

In the **Focus Activity**, you examined the experience of seeing things through “rose-colored glasses.” Apply what you learned in that activity to Chapters 11 through 24. Can you find evidence that Twain’s story and its setting are not entirely viewed through rose-colored glasses? Does he focus only on the good aspects of life in the small town, or does he include both good and bad aspects? Use examples from the novel to support your argument in writing.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

Superstition, or belief in magic and the supernatural, plays an important part in the lives of the people who live in St. Petersburg. Examine the text to make a list of some of the superstitions that characters mention. Discuss reasons why people on the frontier in the 1840s would have been superstitious. Then discuss superstitions that still exist, such as not walking under a ladder and avoiding the number thirteen. Examine such questions as why people still believe in superstitions and whether such beliefs are harmful or harmless.

Art Connection

The first authorized edition of *Tom Sawyer*, published in 1876, contained illustrations by the artist True Williams. Some contemporary editions include these drawings. Chapters 11 through 24 of the novel contain many colorful, humorous, and even frightening scenes. Choose one to illustrate using any medium you wish. Share your illustration with the class, read the passage on which it is based, and explain the challenges you faced in illustrating it.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer Chapters 25–35

FOCUS ACTIVITY

One of the characters in the novel says, “being rich ain’t what it’s cracked up to be. It’s just worry and worry, and sweat and sweat.”

Sharing Ideas

Share ideas with a partner about the advantages and disadvantages of being wealthy. How might your life change—for the better and for the worse?

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how the characters feel about suddenly becoming wealthy.

BACKGROUND

Bad Boys and Good Boys

You read on pages 10 and 11 about the “good boy” novels that Mark Twain poked fun at. In the final section of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, you’ll see what happens to Tom, the bad boy, and his “bad” comrade, Huck Finn. Keep in mind that the good boys of the other books never misbehaved and were rewarded with wealth, true love, and the respect and admiration of others. These good boys avoided the activities that Tom takes most pleasure in: dreaming about pirates and robbers, playing hooky, smoking, stealing, and making mischief.

The Return of Tom Sawyer—and Huck Finn

Mark Twain had great affection for his literary creations, Tom and Huck. He brought them back in other novels. In 1885, nine years after *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was published, Twain published the first sequel to *Tom Sawyer*. This novel, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, is considered Twain’s masterpiece and one of the great American novels. It follows Huck and the runaway Jim on a journey down the Mississippi River to freedom. In 1894 Twain published *Tom Sawyer Abroad* and two years later, *Tom Sawyer, Detective*.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

apathy [ap’ə thē] *n.* lack of interest

boundless [bound’lis] *adj.* without limits

insignificance [in’ sig nif’i kəns] *n.* lack of importance

insipid [in sip’id] *adj.* uninteresting

sentry [sen’trē] *n.* guard

subdued [səb dōōd’] *adj.* quiet

tedious [tē’dē əs] *adj.* boring

threadbare [thred’bār’] *adj.* poor; worn out

windfall [wind’fôl] *n.* unexpected gain

Active Reading

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer Chapters 25–35

Following the different events in the final chapters of *Tom Sawyer* is important to understanding the novel's ending. Use the step-by-step chart on this page to record the events as they occur in the novel, starting with the first one listed.

Tom and Huck look for treasure in the haunted house.	→	
	↓	
	←	
	↓	
	→	
	↓	
	←	
	↓	
	→	
	↓	
	←	
	↓	
	→	Tom and Huck find the treasure and attend Widow Douglas's party.

Responding

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer Chapters 25–35

Personal Response

Are you satisfied with the ending of *Tom Sawyer*? Why or why not?

Do you feel the ending fits with the rest of the novel? If so, explain why. If not, what kind of ending might you prefer?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. Who is Uncle Jake? What does Huck's friendship with him say about Huck?
What does it say about the different levels of St. Petersburg society?

2. How does Huck help Widow Douglas? Why does he want his actions kept secret?

3. How would you describe Tom's behavior in the cave with Becky? What personal characteristics does he demonstrate?

Responding

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer Chapters 25–35

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. In what ways can the novel be seen as a study of the effects money has on people's lives?

5. The final section of the novel contains two examples of racist attitudes expressed by the characters, along with a sexist remark. Identify one of these examples.

Literature and Writing

Tom and Huck

By the end of the novel, Tom and Huck have shared a life-changing experience and become good friends. But they are quite different in many ways. Examine the text to compare and contrast the two characters' personalities, citing differences and similarities. Offer evidence from the text to support a one- or two-paragraph comparison. Passages you may want to pay special attention to are the treasure hunting scene in Chapter 26, the scene in which the boys dig for the treasure in the cave in Chapter 33, Widow Douglas's party in Chapter 34, and the last chapter.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

By the time the novel ends, has Tom changed in any important way or learned something new about himself and his place in society? In your group, discuss what Tom learns in the novel, how he may have changed, what new beliefs he may have developed, and how his understanding of himself and St. Petersburg may have become sharper. Pay special attention to his final conversation with Huck in Chapter 35. Do you think Tom has become a spokesperson for the adult values of the town that he previously rebelled against?

Performing

Many readers feel that Chapter 31, when Tom and Becky are lost in the cave, is the most exciting and best written in the novel. Prepare a dramatic reading of this scene, complete with background music and sound effects that enhance the mood in the cave and the feelings of the two characters. You may want to assign three parts: Tom, Becky, and the narrator. Rehearse your reading and present it to the class.



Save your work for your portfolio.

GUIDED ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

Below are the introductory and concluding paragraphs of an essay, along with the topic sentences of the four supporting paragraphs. The underlined sentence of the introductory paragraph is the thesis, or central point, of the essay.

Revenge and How Tom Sawyer Changes

Introductory Paragraph

In Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, the desire for revenge appears frequently. Alfred Temple gets revenge on Tom Sawyer by pouring ink on Tom's spelling book. The younger students in the school get revenge on the teacher, Silas Dobbins, by removing his wig and revealing a bald head painted gold. Injun Joe's whole reason for living is to get revenge on people he feels have wronged him. Tom is not immune to the desire for revenge. But Tom's attitude toward revenge changes. Over the course of the first ten chapters of the novel, Tom Sawyer changes from a boy who vows and gets revenge to a boy who takes punishment on himself instead of getting revenge. By looking at four specific scenes—two from chapter 2, one from chapter 8, and one from chapter 10—we can trace this evolution in Tom.

Supporting Paragraph 1

Topic sentence: : One of the few times in the book that we see Tom seek and actually get revenge comes early in the novel when he "gets even" with Sid. (*Add specific details from the book that describe Tom seeking and getting revenge on Sid.*)

Supporting Paragraph 2

Topic sentence: When Sid drops the sugar bowl, Tom decides to remain silent and watch Sid get what he deserves, but Tom's plan backfires. (*Add specific details from the book that describe how Tom's plan for seeing Sid punished backfires.*)

Supporting Paragraph 3

Topic sentence: At the beginning of Chapter 8, Aunt Polly makes Tom feel so guilty (on top of the emotional upset he is already feeling from witnessing a stabbing the night before) that he cannot even think about revenge. (*Add specific details from the book that describe how Tom becomes so upset that he cannot even think about revenge.*)

Supporting Paragraph 4

Topic sentence: Because Tom cannot stand to see Becky Thatcher suffer, he forgets about getting revenge and instead takes her punishment on himself. (*Add specific details from the book that describe how Tom had planned to get revenge on Becky but instead takes her punishment on himself.*)

Concluding Paragraph

Over the first ten chapters of the novel, Tom goes from pelting Sid with dirt bombs to get even with him to replacing revenge with his own punishment. This change reflects a change in Tom's emotions. He starts feeling anger at someone else. Then he moves to feeling guilty for his own actions. Finally, he feels the suffering of another and takes that person's pain on himself. This change suggests that Tom is moving from a selfish, child-like way of seeing things to a compassionate, selfless, mature view of the world. This change prepares Tom for his most selfless and compassionate act of the entire novel—his willingness to testify at Muff Potter's trial in Chapter 12.

Assignment: Write the four supporting paragraphs needed to complete the essay.

The Results of Revenge

Introductory Paragraph

In Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, many characters seek revenge. Alfred Temple gets revenge on Tom. The younger students in the school get revenge on the teacher, Silas Dobbins. Injun Joe gets revenge on Dr. Robinson. The consequences of the actions of these actions vary. In the novel, the consequences of vengeful actions range from physically painful to humiliating to deadly.

Supporting Paragraph 1

Topic sentence: Alfred Temple's revenge on Tom is physically painful because it results in a whipping for Tom. *(Add specific details from the book that describe Alfred Temple's revenge and its consequences.)*

Supporting Paragraph 2

Topic sentence: The students' revenge on Silas Dobbins is humiliating but in some ways fitting. *(Add specific details from the book that describe the students' revenge and its consequences.)*

Supporting Paragraph 3

Topic sentence: Injun Joe's revenge on Dr. Robinson is deadly and inexcusable. *(Add specific details from the book that describe Joe's revenge and its consequences.)*

Concluding Paragraph

Revenge always has some consequences. Whether or not the consequences are justifiable depends on how close they come to equaling the act that triggered them. But, justifiable or not, it is clearly important to think carefully before seeking revenge. Even when the consequences are minor, they always end up hurting someone.

A BRIEF GUIDE TO WRITING

Remember that the two basic goals in writing are to **make a point** and to **support that point**. Here are steps to follow while working on your paper:

Step 1: Think about your topic by writing about it in one of three ways.

- *Freewrite for ten minutes.* Write whatever comes into your head about your subject. Don't worry about spelling or grammar. Just get down on paper all the information that occurs to you.
- *Make up a list of ideas and details that could go into your paper.* Pile these items up, one after another, like a shopping list, without worrying about putting them in any special order.
- *Write down a series of questions and answers about your topic.* Your questions can start with words like *what, why, how, when, and where.*

Step 2: Plan your paper with an informal outline.

- First of all, decide on and write out the point of your paper.
- Then list the supporting reasons, examples, or other details that will back up your point. Try to have two or three items of support.

Step 3: Use transitions.

Use your outline as a guide while writing the early drafts of your paper. Use transitions to introduce each of the separate supporting items (reasons, examples, or other details) you present to back up the point of your paper. Transitions include such words as *First of all, Secondly, Another reason or Another example, and Finally.*

Step 4: Always read your paper aloud.

Chances are you'll find grammar or punctuation mistakes at those places where the paper does not read smoothly and clearly. Make the corrections needed.