A glass jar filled with water and a small landscape scene, sitting on grass at night with a warm light source below.

*Illuminating Literature:*  
*When Worlds Collide*

For Christian  
High Schools and  
Homeschools

Sharon Watson

This free download of the student textbook sample of  
*Illuminating Literature: When Worlds Collide*  
is published by Writing with Sharon Watson and is available at  
<http://writingwithsharonwatson.com/illuminating-literature-free-download/>.

The Text and Context lesson is taken from [\*The Power in Your Hands: Writing Nonfiction in High School\*](#).

Special thanks to Esther Moulder of ClickPhotography.biz for the lovely cover photo and to research assistant Hannah Ihms for letting me borrow her elegant mind.

Copyright © 2008-2015 by Sharon Watson. All right reserved. No part of this sample may be copied, reproduced, or in any way transmitted or transmuted without the written permission of the author.

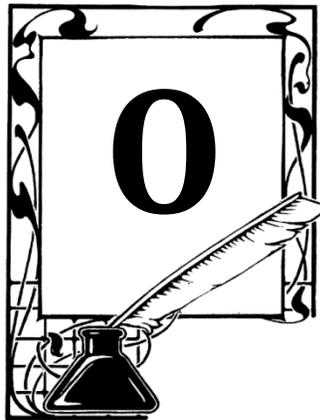
[WritingWithSharonWatson.com](http://WritingWithSharonWatson.com)

## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <i>Start Here</i> .....                 | 4  |
| <b>Welcome!</b> .....                   | 4  |
| Lesson 1 .....                          | 5  |
| Lesson 2 .....                          | 11 |
| <i>Pudd'nhead Wilson</i> .....          | 21 |
| <b>Before You Read the Book</b> .....   | 22 |
| Lesson 1 .....                          | 23 |
| Lesson 2 .....                          | 29 |
| Lesson 3 .....                          | 32 |
| <b>After You've Read the Book</b> ..... | 36 |
| Lesson 4 .....                          | 39 |

**Are you ready?**

**Let's dig in!**



## *Start Here*

### **Welcome!**

Welcome to a year of insightful, illuminating literature. You'll read eight famous books, approximately one a month, while learning about conflict, characters, writer's devices, and a whole lot more. Below are this course's books:

- ✓ *Pudd'nhead Wilson* by Mark Twain
- ✓ *The War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells
- ✓ *The Friendly Persuasion* by Jessamyn West
- ✓ *Peter Pan* by Sir James Barrie
- ✓ *Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba Patillo Beals
- ✓ *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens
- ✓ *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury
- ✓ *The Screwtape Letters* by C. S. Lewis

This sample download covers  
*Pudd'nhead Wilson*.

Which ones do you think will be your favorites? If you have already read some of them, what did you think of them?

## Lesson 1

### What Is Literature?

What is literature? Good question. Experts do not agree on a definition, so feel free to join the debate.

Generally speaking, though, there are a few criteria that can be applied to books (and poetry, plays, and so forth) to see if they measure up to the exalted label of *literature*. Here goes:

- Literature has some artistic value. Its language is lyrical, descriptive, poetic, or vibrant; it has a beauty or starkness that matches its story; it uses synonyms, metaphors, irony, symbols, and other devices to build its theme. Basically, it's not just *what* is written but *how* it is written that counts.
- Literature addresses themes and issues about life, humanity, and society. It shines a mirror on who we are, who we could be, or who we should not become.
- Literature expresses grand ideas and themes. For example, Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* might ask, "Is the attainment of happiness possible?" or "Will revenge make me happy?" Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* might attempt to answer this question: "Just how dark can the human heart grow when it is separated from the rest of humanity?"
- Literature is generally of universal interest: a young boy learning about life during hunting seasons with his elders in William Faulkner's *The Bear*, a young woman facing the possibility of losing the man she loves because of a scandal in her family in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, or a young man dealing with bitter betrayal in George Eliot's *Silas Marner*.
- Literature can sometimes be experimental in nature. For example, James Joyce, in *Ulysses*, writes using a stream of consciousness, a type of writing that follows the stream of what a character is thinking, pinging from one subject to another with no transition. This often makes the writing difficult to follow and would not be tolerated in popular fiction.
- Literature will be read again and again because it delights, enriches, or intrigues the reader on some level.

Some of our literary classics were wildly popular in their day, such as Bram Stoker's *Dracula* or Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Some were not popular at all

when they were first published. Melville's *Moby-Dick* did not obtain a following until after the author's death, and Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was banned from many libraries and schools when first published and was thought by some fine writers of the day to be trash.

In a sense, the difference between literature and popular best-selling fiction is the difference between listening to, say, Vivaldi's series of four violin concertos titled *The Four Seasons* and listening to a top-forty song of the week. They both have meaning and can touch our hearts, but Vivaldi's expressive work, which evokes images in music of each season, is rich and layered. You can listen to it over and over and always hear something new or be enriched by it. It has lasting value. Today's hit tunes are exciting and meaningful today but will be out of style in a few years.



The terms **literary classics** or **the classics** refer to short stories, novels, poems, and plays that have not been written recently but have stood the test of time. In your opinion, what book written recently will be a literary classic in fifty years? Write your answer below:



Some of the books in this course were written over one hundred years ago. You know what that means? You might think some parts of them are—dare I say it?—boring. Why might passages or whole books seem boring to today's teen readers? Here are some thoughts on that topic. Add your own to the list:

1. Most of the books you have to read for school were never meant to be read by teens. They were written for adults, with adult themes, characters, and events. Sorry about that.
2. Teen readers generally like to read about characters their own age or slightly older; since most characters in literature books are adults, this can translate as boring to teens. (See #1.) In addition, guys typically do not like to read about women characters, but most gals will read about either male or female characters.
3. Many older books don't begin *in media res* ("in the midst of things"). They may begin *ab ovo* ("from the egg," meaning "at the very beginning") and take a loooong time to build up to the story's main action and excitement, which leads us to the next point . . .

4. Why didn't readers care that the story began so slowly years ago? Think about it: no TVs, radios, social media, cell phones, or the Internet. Life was lived at a different pace, and readers appreciated a good, long story to entertain them.
5. Reading preferences have changed. Many modern readers now prefer shorter paragraphs, more action, and less description. They are used to quick-changing movie scenes and seven-minute TV sitcom segments. That was not true of the original readers of these classics.
6. Our language is changing; today's readers may find the words and sentence structures (**syntax**) of older classics difficult to understand or wade through.
7. Some students believe that books are old-fashioned or obsolete.
8. Others simply don't like fiction. They appreciate nonfiction books more, books like biographies, self-improvement books, how-to guides, and so on.
9. Add your own reason why older books might be dull or difficult for you or other modern readers:



While writers of popular fiction pay attention to the age and gender of their audience, literary writers are not concerned with such things. They write their stories as they see them. And then you are forced to—I mean “get to”—read them.

You don't have to *like* the book; you just have to *read* the book. But be able to identify why you are not connecting with it. That will give you more patience with the book and make you a smarter reader.

Enough of speculation! It's time to answer a few questions. Get a pen or pencil and answer the following questions. Mark as many answers as apply to you.

1. I read a lot of historical fiction, sci-fi, popular novels, and so forth, already. Why should I read and study literature anyway?
  - Reading literature gives me a better vocabulary.
  - Reading literature gives me less of a headache than doing math does.
  - Great literature makes me think.
  - I want to know what important authors have to say about life and the human condition.

- I want to study literature and become more aware of my culture's ideas of life and its meaning, just as Daniel did in Babylon when he was deported there as a teen.
- I need the course to graduate.
- I love stories with strong, quirky, or fascinating characters.
- I don't want to miss the amazing life-and-death struggles between strong, forceful characters or the exciting, larger-than-life events they are thrown into.
- I have a lot of issues to wrestle with today, and great literature can help me deal with these issues.
- I want to experience more of great literature's important issues such as love, death, betrayal, the condition of the human heart, justice and injustice, growing up, friendship, loss, struggling against great odds, maturity through suffering, despair and hope, and so forth.
- I'll get in trouble with my parent or teacher if I don't read this stuff.
- I want to discover how the ideas and worldviews in literature stack up to the ones I find in the Bible.
- I love the beauty of the English language, a thrilling description, and aptly expressed thoughts and emotions.
- I'll be smarter. Now when someone says he's been "sold down the river" (*Pudd'nhead Wilson*), I'll know what it means and just how treacherous it is.
- I want to get caught up in a good story.
- Add your own reason to read literature:



2. What do I want to learn from this course?

- I want to learn how to be a more discerning and savvy reader.
- I want to learn how to be a more powerful fiction writer by studying how other authors write.
- It would be nice to finally learn what a symbol is and how to recognize it.
- Ditto for theme.
- I want to learn how others view the world and our place in it.
- I want to learn how to get through a literature course without losing my mind.

- I want to recognize and practice writer's devices and other skills of story writers.
- I think the discussions and other students' opinions of these books will be enlightening.
- I want to be more successful in my life by seeing how these characters succeed or fail in their stories.
- I want to learn how to pass a literature class.
- I want to learn literary devices such as repetition, foreshadowing, assonance, allusions, and parallelism.
- Now it's your turn. Finish this sentence: From this course, I want to learn . . .



## Grades

No course would be complete without grades! Here's what you'll be graded on:

- Online "Yes, I read it" quiz, graded online (1-10 points)
- Online literary terms quiz, graded online (1-10 points)
- Participation in opinion/interpretation questions online (1-10 points)
- Quality of participation in discussions (1-20 points)
- Successful completion of lessons and assignments (1-20 points)
- Successful completion of activities (1-10 points)
- Completion of each book on the book list (1-20 points)

## Your Novel Notebook

You'll need a notebook we're calling a Novel Notebook for this course. This notebook can be a spiral-bound notebook, loose pages in a 3-ring binder, or a file on a computer. Or you can download a free one for these first two chapters here: <http://writingwithsharonwatson.com/illuminating-literature-free-download/>.

## This Course's Philosophy

Some people treat the classics as sacred. They wouldn't change a word; they consider the writing to be infallible. They reverence the stories and authors, and they characterize those who don't as rude, crude, uneducated Neanderthals. Saying anything negative about the stories or the authors just proves to those people that you don't appreciate good literature.

Maybe one reason this happens is because those readers have been touched by the stories; they have an emotional connection to them, or something in the stories changed their life. Perhaps they've experienced a piercing, poignant flash of truth that causes trembling or joy, or maybe they've fallen in love with the characters or language of the book. A remarkable book can do that—touch us and change us. As C. S. Lewis explains about some readers in *An Experiment in Criticism*, "Their whole consciousness is changed. They have become what they were not before."



Photo Credit: Graur Razvan Ionut, freedigitalphotos.net

And then someone comes along and shows scorn. This is akin to insulting one of their dearest friends.

This course's philosophy is that our literature is just as fallen as the rest of creation. These books are written by flawed humans who struggled with—or gave in to—their sin natures, who may or may not have been Christians, whose stories may or may not agree with the truths written in the Bible, but whose stories reflect some redeeming truth and are, therefore, worth reading.

These books are not sacred though they may be special. Enjoy them, find pleasure in them, pick them apart, find the flaws in thinking and worldview, ponder changing a passage or an ending, learn from them, copy out favorite passages and try to imitate them, and love or hate the characters.

Respect the stories or dislike them. If you opt to dislike them, have a well-thought-out reason for your opinion.

No matter how you choose to view literature, dig out the nuggets of truth and appreciate the things that make them classics.

"A classic is something that everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read."  
-Mark Twain

After all, there must be something in them that makes them perennial favorites.

You may surprise yourself if you read some of these books years from now. Ones you like now, you might find dull then. Ones you categorize as extremely boring will be suddenly full of interest. Your perspective will have changed because of your life experiences and your season of life.

## Lesson 2

### **Colliding Worlds?**

The theme of this year's literature course is When Worlds Collide. What does that mean? The books in this year's list were chosen because they are grouped around a theme of collisions—physical, political, extraterrestrial, racial, spiritual, and philosophical. Worlds of major proportions are crashing into each another and are creating plenty of trouble for the characters.

When worlds collide, babies are switched in their beds, humans devise methods of staying alive in the face of vicious attacks, books are burned, and innocent men are thrown into prison.

Think about that famous hobbit Bilbo Baggins from J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*.

What worlds are colliding for Bilbo? First, the world of safety clashes with the world of adventure. Second, the cultural world of the dwarfs crashes into the hobbits' culture—enemies for a long time and very suspicious of each other. Third, the gold-hoarding dragon (greed) collides with the gold-mining dwarfs (industriousness). Fourth, humanity (in the character of Bilbo) bangs into dead, empty, soulless humanity (in the character of Gollum). And this is just the beginning.



With each collision, characters are squeezed, challenged, and threatened. Their lives are at stake.

When you stand back and look at the worlds in this year's books, you will see black versus white, French versus English, mercy versus callousness, age versus youth, Martians versus Earthlings, the natural versus the supernatural, and many more. That's the big picture that helps us identify or understand the novels' themes. (Don't start salivating yet, but there's more on themes in chapter 2.)

When you stand closer in, though, and use your microscope, you'll notice the troubles the main characters go through in each story. The troubles or problems the main characters experience are called **conflicts**. Other words for conflict include these: *troubles, struggles, issues, difficulties, problems, hurdles, stresses, attacks, situations, tension, hostilities, resistance, obstacles, or battles*. Some of these words are high-energy trouble, and some are just problems. Either way, without a conflict, you don't have a story. Even those

famous three little pigs have conflicts in the form of homelessness and a hungry wolf. Authors often throw lots of obstacles at their characters in order to tell a good story. And, yes, it is the author doing the throwing. More on authors in later chapters.

When you see the conflicts in a story, also **be looking for how the author resolves those conflicts**. That will give you a key to the author's worldview. As famous British author Virginia Woolf writes, "Every secret of a writer's soul, every experience of his life, every quality of his mind, is written large in his works."

Take, for instance, *Moby-Dick* by Herman Melville. Here you have Captain Ahab in pursuit of a rare white whale. The captain and the whale have a history; therefore, a conflict. In a previous voyage, Ahab had tried to capture the white whale, and the whale had bitten off Ahab's leg. The one-legged Ahab is now out for revenge when we meet him in *Moby-Dick*. That's the major conflict in the story. Is Ahab successful? Does he achieve his goal of capturing the whale?

PLOT SPOILERS AHEAD: No, he doesn't achieve his goal. His conflict with the whale ends in disaster and death not only for himself but also for almost everyone else on the ship. His search for revenge, for fairness, for some sense of justice in the world is dealt the death blow. Though many people say that Melville, through this ending, tells us that happiness is not attainable, it also could be said that Melville is conveying that fairness and justice are not within the grasp of humans, either.



**How characters resolve their conflicts tells us much about them as well.** For example, think of this true story of David in the Bible (I Samuel 24). At one point, he and his men are on the run from King Saul and holed up in a cave when, suddenly, in comes Saul to relieve himself. Look at it from David's perspective: Here's his enemy, the man who has been trying to kill him, in a very vulnerable position, figuratively and literally. David and his men become part of the shadows at the back of the cave and try to keep quiet, but some of his men urge him to kill the king. "Strike," they whisper. "The Lord has given him into your hands."

It is at this point in the narrative that we learn what David is made of. Does he strike? Does he cower in the shadows? Neither. He does something surprisingly brash.

He slips forward, slices off a piece of the king's garment with his sword, and melts into the back of the cave. When the king is through doing his business and has left the cave, David steps up to the mouth of the cave and holds up the piece of the material he'd cut off. "I could have killed you, but I didn't," he shouts to the king and his soldiers.

From this we learn that David is clever, brave, willing to take risks, still loyal to the king, and, while willing to defend himself, does not desire to promote himself.

As you read any book, notice how the author chooses to resolve conflicts. Notice how characters resolve their conflicts. The author, the characters, and the conflicts are all in the same soup together and give us a taste of the author's view of life and its issues.

And now, for some terms.

The main character is most often the **protagonist**. The word *protagonist* is derived from two Greek words: *protos*, meaning *first*, and *agonistes*, meaning *actor*. However, if you look closely at the second half of *protagonist* and the



Greek word for *actor*, you might guess that the word *agony* is in there, and you would be correct. The Greek word for *actor* comes from a word meaning *to agonize* or *to struggle*. It is the job of the protagonist to struggle his or her way through the story, to come up against great odds, to try to reach a goal despite all the forces aligned against success.

In this course, the labels *protagonist*, *main character*, *lead*, and *hero* or *heroine* will be used interchangeably. By the way, *heroine* with an "e" is a female hero; *heroin* without the "e" is an illegal drug. It's unfortunate that the two words are so similar in spelling. What do you think a female hero should be called?



What's keeping the protagonist from reaching his or her goal? The **antagonist**. The antagonist can be a person, group of people, mindset, bad habit, unfair rules, force of nature, or anything else that keeps the protagonist struggling through the story. The word *antagonist* means opponent or rival. Originally it referred to opponents in battles or sporting contests.

Generally, the reader is rooting for the *protagonist* to win and the *antagonist* to fail or get what's coming to him. Often there is more than one

antagonistic force at work against our plucky hero: some character defect in the protagonist, a certain person, a whole society, nature, and so forth.

There are **at least three ways to look at conflict in literature**, just to make it more confusing for you. The following list of conflicts is one way of looking at conflict in a literature class. Not every story will contain all conflicts. Short stories and some plays might have a few; novels will exhibit more of them.

- The character against himself or herself
- The character against another character
- The character against society
- The character against nature
- The character against God/the gods/fate
- The character against technology/biotechnology

This list, before gender-neutral language prevailed, used to be

Man versus himself  
Man versus man (and so forth)

because the main characters truly represent mankind (or humankind) on some level. They are standing in for us. It's not just "character against character," which feels very impersonal; on a very real level, these characters represent us and the struggles we encounter in real life.

Small, nit-picky point: You don't find *people* in works of fiction. You find *characters*. Yes, the characters may remind you of real people or be based on real people, but the correct term for those guys and gals is *character*. So when you are discussing a novel or short story, you'll answer questions like "Why do you think this *character* intentionally broke his arm?" instead of "Why do you think this *person* intentionally broke his arm?"

In the next section, Bilbo Baggins, that intrepid hobbit from J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, will help explain each of the five conflicts in the list above.

## Bilbo Against . . . Well, Everyone

As promised, Bilbo is our guide through the “character against . . .” list. A conflict will be defined first, with examples from novels or short stories, and then examples from Bilbo’s life will follow. Ready?

**The character against himself or herself.** These are personal, inner problems the character has to battle. Maybe he’s lazy or jealous or prideful. Maybe he believes he can’t do anything positive or noteworthy. These inward struggles drive the character and the plot, as in Robinson Crusoe fighting with his rebellious nature.

What are Bilbo’s personal problems? He is afraid of adventure and what others might think of him, and he clings to his creature comforts (the safety of his shire, his comfortable hobbit-hole, his food, his pantry, his routine, and so forth).

How does he resolve these issues? If he had stayed home and refused the adventure, that would tell us something about him. But he doesn’t. He ventures forth, complaining at first, to help the dwarves. He puts their troubles above his own, and that tells us he’s made of sterner stuff than he thinks.

In the real world, this conflict would be “I’m having issues with my weaknesses/faults.”

**The character against another character.** There may be one or more characters that pursue our worthy lead or make life rough for him. It could be a bully, a friend, an evil villain, or, in many modern books, a parent or authority figure. A clear example of a character against another character occurs in *The Screwtape Letters* by C. S. Lewis. Here, the protagonist is in a fight against an invisible antagonist: Wormwood, an apprentice demon.



What characters oppose Bilbo? There are the dwarves, none of which like Bilbo; they remain antagonistic toward him until he shows his bravery in Mirkwood. And, of course, there’s the dragon who would dearly like to kill him.

How does Bilbo overcome some of the antagonism the dwarves feel toward him? He helps them. He reaches deep within himself, exhibits a cleverness he didn’t know was there, and rescues them. The dwarves begin to respect this whiner, and so do we.

In real life, this conflict might be called “I’m having trouble with other people” or “other people giving me trouble.”

**The character against society.** In addition to being in conflict with one character, the protagonist may have to struggle against a whole group of characters who have a different way of thinking or a culture with its own set of rules that may be harmful to the protagonist.

“Things that are uncomfortable, palpitating, and even gruesome, may make a good tale, and take a deal of telling anyway.”

-J. R. R. Tolkien, in *The Hobbit*

Madeleine L’Engle’s *A Wrinkle in Time* contains a whole planet of people who have been duped into believing they must act, think, and even dress alike. It is this culture and thinking that protagonist Meg Murry must fight against while she struggles to rescue her brother and father.

What society does Bilbo have to battle? Hobbits, as a rule, are against adventures and look down on those who experience them. In fact, Bilbo suffers some negative consequences upon returning home from his adventures; “he had lost his reputation,” in addition to losing many of his possessions. Also, the dwarves think, fight, and live differently from him. It takes him a long time to understand their culture and mindset. Then there are groups of spiders, wolves, goblins, and other assorted denizens of Middle Earth—all glad to be rid of a troublesome hobbit.

How does he deal with his conflict against his fellow hobbits? In the beginning, Bilbo cares a great deal about what others think of him. He does not want to risk losing his reputation by going on an adventure. By the end of the story, even though the “Tookish part [of him] was getting very tired, and the Baggins was daily getting stronger,” or, put another way, “But our back is to legends and we are coming home,” we see him generous and content in the face of being shunned by his family and the shire. He has not changed society, as characters in other stories often do, but he has become resilient and brave through his other conflicts and so rises above the community’s view of him. Though not snobbish about it, he sees more value in what he’s learned and done than in how others view him.

In life, this conflict might be called “my struggles with the culture’s wrong thinking or harmful rules.”

**The character against nature.** Nature or physical difficulties abound in stories. Tornados (*The Wizard of Oz*), fire (*Lord of the Flies*), ocean currents and storms (*Robinson Crusoe*), and extreme cold (“To Build a Fire” by Jack London) are only a few troubles nature can throw at the characters.

What were some of Bilbo's struggles against nature? Hunger, cold, fatigue, difficult mountain climbing, huge spider webs, exhausting treks, and much more.

How does Bilbo resolve his conflicts with these natural antagonists? He keeps moving, keeps fighting, and keeps the end goal in view—the stolen gold hidden in the mountain.

In our lives, we might call this conflict “I'm trying to deal with the forces of nature” or “the natural world against me.”

**The character against God/the gods/fate.** In “character against God,” the character ends up fighting with God or doubting Him for some reason. This conflict does not surface in all stories; however, it is a main component of *Silas Marner* by George Eliot, *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe, and *Green Mansions* by W. H. Hudson.

How does Silas in *Silas Marner* wrestle with God? In the beginning of the novel, he loses his faith in God through a close friend's betrayal. Basically, that friend stabs him in the back by stealing money and blaming it on Silas, which leads to Silas' loss of reputation in his church, along with losing his fiancée to the real thief. He flees the area and becomes a recluse. Later, he is robbed again, receives a beautiful gift that shows him God's kindness, and later is in danger of being robbed of this gift. Near the end of the story, how has he resolved his issues with God? It is a provisional resolution. Because he ultimately does not lose the person he loves the most, he declares about God, “I think I shall trusten till I die.”

On the other hand, there's Abel from *Green Mansions* by W. H. Hudson who develops an anger toward God when someone dear to him is brutally murdered.

When does Bilbo fight against God? This conflict does not appear in *The Hobbit*.

“Character against the gods” or “character against fate” occurs often in ancient Greek plays.

In the real world, we might call “character against God” something like “my doubts, frustrations, rebellion against or anger with God.”

**The character against technology/biotechnology.** This is a recent addition to the list of conflicts because of the proliferation of technology. This conflict occurs in many science-fiction (sci-fi or SF) stories and movies, as in *I, Robot* by Isaac Asimov and in the 2004 movie of the same name starring Will Smith. It also raises its head in *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* by H. G. Wells, and in the 1999 movie *The Matrix*. Now that you've got the idea, you could add at least a dozen more recent movies to this list.



Photo credit: Victor Habbick, freedigitalphotos.net

In many of these stories, humankind is struggling to deal with its own inventions or progress.

As you might guess, Bilbo did not have to deal with this conflict. He had enough on his plate.

In real life, this conflict might be called “I’m overwhelmed with the harmful effects of ever-present technology or life-altering biotechnology.”

## Two More Ways of Looking at Conflict

A second way of looking at conflict in a literature class is to categorize the forces of antagonism like this:

*Internal* (doubts, fears, moral laziness, being a loner, and things of that nature)

*External* (a gossiping friend, a system of harmful rules, or an attack of vampire zombies).

A third way of examining conflict is taught in fiction-writing classes:

What are the lead’s **goals** and who or what is keeping him from them? For instance, if his goal is to find the buried treasure, characters from the story and other forces of antagonism are going to try to keep him from getting it.

What is the lead’s **deep desire**? For example, is he seeking this buried treasure because his dad is a famous treasure hunter and he wants to earn his father’s respect? Is he aware of this yearning, or is it subconscious? How is he sabotaging himself concerning this desire?

**Evaluate!**

Every novel, short story, play, TV show, movie, and comic book has a conflict. Even most songs contain conflicts, for instance, “I love him, but he doesn’t even know I exist.” Think of a story you have read or a movie you’ve seen lately and evaluate the main character’s conflicts. Then list them under the appropriate headings on the next pages.

**Note:** Not every story will contain all the conflicts, but there will be *at least* one conflict in each story.

Title of book or story: \_\_\_\_\_

1. The character against himself or herself.

2. The character against another character.

3. The character against society.

4. The character against nature.

5. The character against God/the gods/fate.

6. The character against technology/biotechnology.

In your opinion, which one of the above types of conflict is the strongest or the most important conflict in the story you chose? Answer in the space below and then answer the next two questions:

What is the lead's main goal?

What is the lead's deep desire?



## *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Have you ever done something silly or stupid and been labeled with that for the rest of your life? I know a man who, in his youth, used a karate kick on a certain red Christmas tree ornament. It hung on a branch about five feet off the ground. He aimed, he jumped, he kicked—and he missed, landing on his back with lots of noise. Guess what his brothers and sisters bring up at family reunions. He has not been able to live down that failed feat.

In *Pudd'nhead Wilson* you will meet a man who cannot live down a joke about a dog and, because of it, is labeled for years. Then you will meet a slave woman who is only one-sixteenth black and who, although she looks white, is still considered a slave. And you will meet two young boys who grow up in this story. One is the slave woman's son; the other is the son of a prominent citizen. But the slave woman . . . well, I can't give away the story.

Don't forget to watch out for a set of twins. And keep your eyes on their knife!

*Pudd'nhead Wilson* was rare in its day because Roxy, a black protagonist ("black" from the perspective of those around her) is not a stereotype of a slave but a real figure with normal human feelings, pains, dreams, and goals. You may definitely

consider it unusual and refreshing that in the days between the failed Reconstruction of the Civil War and the codified Jim Crow laws of the South, a novel was published that contained a respectful rendering of its “black” protagonist.

## Before You Read the Book

### Suggested Reading and Homework Plan: Preview

Below is a four-week plan that will help you complete all the tasks in this chapter. It appears here to give you an idea of what is going on. You don’t need to memorize this plan; it will be repeated for you when it’s time to read *Pudd’nhead Wilson*. Feel free to check off the tasks as you complete them.

Check with your teacher to see if this schedule fits his or her plans.

#### Week 1:

- Hand in your Imitate! paragraph (see the next page) a week from now, at noon.
- Read lessons 1-3.

#### Week 2:

- Read chapters I – XII of *Pudd’nhead Wilson*.

#### Week 3:

- Read chapters XIII – XXI of *Pudd’nhead Wilson*.

#### Week 4:

- Decide on one activity and begin work on it. You’ll find the list of activities at the end of this chapter. Your teacher will tell you when this is due.
- Complete the online *Pudd’nhead Wilson* “Yes, I read the book” Quiz.
- Complete the online *Pudd’nhead Wilson* Literary Terms Quiz.
- Complete the online, ungraded *Pudd’nhead Wilson* Opinion Survey.
- Complete the Vocabulary Quizzola in your book.
- Unscramble your brains after all those quizzes.
- Read lesson 4.
- Discuss selected discussion questions with your teacher, reading group, or class.
- Hand in your activity and breathe a sigh of relief.

Begin your Week 1 tasks now.

## Imitate!

As an example of something written well, turn to the chapter “The Nymph Revealed” and read the paragraph that begins like this: “A gigantic eruption, like that of Krakatoa a few years ago, . . .” The paragraph is comparing Roxie’s life-altering revelation and its effects on Tom to a huge volcanic explosion and eruption.

Most likely, you have had something cataclysmic happen to you, too, or you have watched a friend go through something catastrophic.

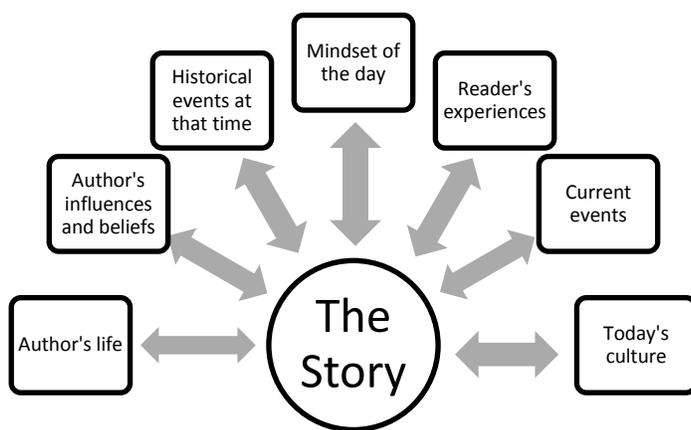
Choose a natural disaster and then write about your own personal upheaval or that of your friend’s using verbs and word images normally associated with the natural disaster.

## Lesson 1

### Text and Context

Before we examine *Pudd’nhead Wilson* in particular, let’s become familiar with a few basic concepts important to the study of literature.

When you read a novel or short story, you’re reading the primary source or what is called the **text**. The word *text* simply refers to the story you are reading. The **context** is all the stuff outside the story that may color it and put it in a different



Text and Context

light: the author’s upbringing; events that were shaping the author and the world at the time; the moral, spiritual, or ethical temperature of those first readers; your life experiences, and so forth. In the figure to the left, the story is the *text*, and the rectangles are the *context* through which it is viewed or interpreted.

Books do not simply spring to life. They have a parent (the author), a family tree (its kind or *genre*), and a

family history (where it fits in literary history). A careful reading of the text is important, but so is the book’s context. Here are some questions to help you place any story in its proper context:

- What historical or political events were occurring when the author wrote this book? How do they affect the story?
- What historical or political events, that may or may not have been mentioned, were occurring during the story's setting? How do they affect the story?
- When was this book first published?
- How did readers and critics view the book when it was originally published?
- Is it the first book of its kind? In what way?
- Did this author try something that had never been tried in a story before or was considered questionable at the time?
- Is there anything notable or unusual in the text: use of the present tense, use of second-person point of view, the shape of the plot, and so forth?
- Consider the author's life. How is the author's life reflected in the novel?
- Consider the author's times. How might these have shaped the author's views, beliefs, or subject matter?
- Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (pictured to the right), author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, used the **nom de plume** (pen name) Lewis Carroll. Does your author use a nom de plume? If so, why?
- Who were the author's influences?
- To what genre does your story belong (adventure, mystery, historical fiction, science-fiction, literary, and so forth)?
- Compare the reactions of today's readers with those first readers. How are the reactions different? And why? How would our culture view some events and characters differently from those first readers?
- What personal life experiences and beliefs color the way you view the book?



Sometimes you can read a book and think it's about one thing, but someone else thinks it's about another. Who's right?

"The best book is a collaboration between author and reader."

-Barbara Tuchman,  
historian

If you and the other reader can support your views or interpretations by quotes and incidents from the book and by what you know of the author's life, times, and views, you both could be right.

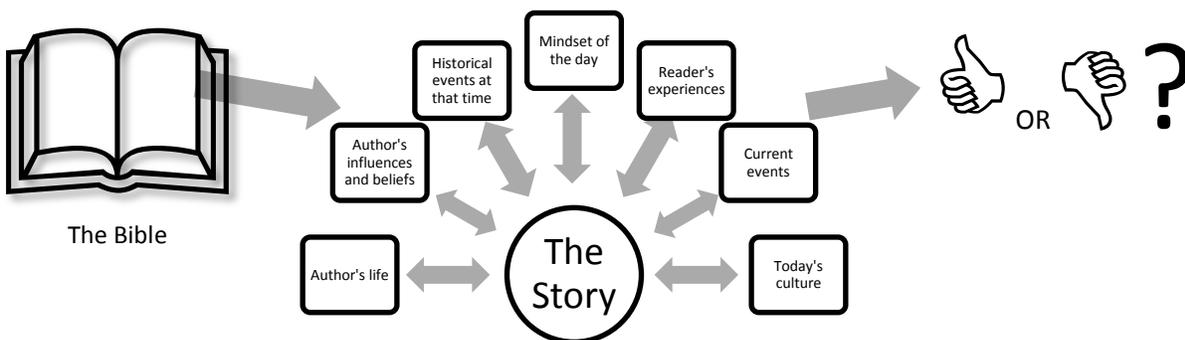
Sometimes authors like to tell us what their story is about or why they wrote it. They tell all in interviews, in personal letters sent to friends and colleagues, in essays or speeches, or in journals found after their death. Other times, authors refuse to shine that kind of light on their work; they might dislike spilling their guts or sharing their creative process, or they might feel that being specific about it takes it out of the realm of being universally appealing. That way, without knowing the author's original intent, those who read it can come

to their own conclusions, interpret it through their own lens of life experiences, and not be put off by the author's personal message hidden in the story.

It is often fashionable today for the author not to dish on the novel's meaning, but that doesn't mean the author didn't have a meaning in mind when he wrote it.

Reading a book without knowing anything about the author's life or the historical context is not wrong. A book should stand on its own merit. Reading a book with awareness of its context, however, will give you a deeper and more meaningful reading experience. You will be able to interpret some dialog or incidents in the book according to how the author might have meant it or even through the lens of history. Even if the author chooses to keep mum about "what the book means," astute readers can research the author and make some educated guesses, draw well-informed conclusions, and have a better understanding of what the author had in his mind and heart when he wrote it.

Christian readers will read the text and want to understand the context, but they also will want to evaluate everything they read through the filter of the truths in the Bible. It will look something like the following chart to those readers. This is a simplification of the process, but you get the idea:



Text and Context through the lens of the Bible

In an effort to help you understand some of the context of the books in this course, a summation of each author's life is included in each chapter. Take advantage of this free gift today.

As you read this month's book by Mark Twain, note how your views of the story are affected due to your knowledge of his life.

## Meet Mr. Twain—or Is it Mr. Clemens?

Knowing the author's life is part of reading a book in context. Let's find out about Twain *and* Clemens.

- Born Samuel Langhorne Clemens in Florida, Missouri, on November 30, 1835.
- Fourth son, sixth of seven children (only four lived to adulthood). Sam was born two months premature. His mother thought he wouldn't make it but took Halley's Comet blazing on the night of his birth as a good omen. That comet is visible from Earth only every 76 years.
- Had thick reddish-brown hair and shared his mother's love of storytelling.
- Grew up in Hannibal, Missouri, a port on the Mississippi River.
- Visited his aunt and uncle's farm 30 miles away each summer of his youth. He became friends with the slaves on that farm, both the ones his age and the older ones. He listened well to their tales and their dialect.
- Liked to read, especially Robinson Crusoe and The Arabian Nights.
- Father was distant and a bad money manager. He died when Sam was 11.
- Left school and became apprentice to a printer upon his father's death.
- Left Hannibal the summer of 1853 at age seventeen. Worked in St. Louis, New York City, Chicago, Cincinnati, and Iowa. He was on his way to New Orleans to visit Brazil when he signed on to become a cub (apprentice) riverboat pilot on the Mississippi.
- Got his younger brother Henry a job as a clerk on a steamboat. Henry was burned in a boiler explosion on the boat, and a few days later he died, along with about 150 other people. Sam blamed himself.
- Became an official riverboat pilot on April 9, 1859. He loved the independence and met all kinds of people. Commercial travel stopped on the Mississippi at the beginning of the Civil War in April of 1861. The Union army fired on his steamboat, one of the last to make it from New Orleans to St. Louis. His adventures on the river eventually became *Life on the Mississippi*.
- Joined a Confederate militia for two weeks in Hannibal.
- Bored. He left the war and accompanied his older brother Orion to the Territory of Nevada. There he prospected for silver but soon quit. He contributed a few news stories to the *Territorial Enterprise*.
- Became a full-time reporter for \$25.00 a week, often padding his stories to make them more interesting. He continued his use of pseudonyms, using Mark Twain for the first time February 3, 1863. He was 27 years old. From these adventures, he later wrote *Roughing It*.
- Moved to San Francisco in May 1864. He covered the earthquake stories, denounced mob violence against Chinese immigrants, and exposed brutality and

corruption in the San Francisco police department. His scathing articles got him fired and almost sued.

- Heard a story in a mining camp and wrote it down as “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County.” He sent it to a friend back East. Sam was unemployed, broke, and jailed for public drunkenness. He put a revolver to his head and almost pulled the trigger. Meanwhile, his friend had sent the frog story to the *New York Saturday Press*, where it was an instant hit.
- Visited the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) for a Sacramento paper and sent back dispatches about what life was like there. These stories/letters were wildly successful. They later became *Following the Equator*.
- Toured the Mediterranean and the Holy Land. These adventures, along with the articles he wrote from them, became *Innocents Abroad*.
- Met Olivia (“Livy”) Langdon August 1868. She was 22 years old; he was 32. When he asked for her hand in marriage, her father asked for letters of reference. By the time the letters of Sam’s former friends arrived with negative references, Mr. Langdon had grown to like him anyway. Sam and Livy married February 2, 1870, and moved to Buffalo, New York. She called him “Youth.”
- Langdon Clemens born prematurely. At four and a half pounds, he was sickly. Livy named him after her father, who recently had died.
- Often went on lecture tours to pay debts. People loved to hear his stories; he was very popular and entertaining.
- Had three daughters: Olivia Susan (Susy—her father’s favorite) in 1872, Clara in 1874, and Jean in 1880. Jean suffered a head injury and developed epilepsy.
- Took his toddler son on a carriage ride. The boy developed a bad cold and died a few days later. Sam blamed himself. He and Livy never had another son.
- Left for England and Europe to lecture and collect material for a new book seven weeks after his son died. His trip became *A Tramp Abroad*.
- Had a house built in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1874. Lived in it until 1891.
- Vacationed in the summers on Quarry Farm in Elmira, New York, where Livy’s adopted sister lived. Her sister had an octagonal summerhouse constructed so Twain could write uninterrupted. It was reminiscent of a steamboat pilothouse. There he wrote most of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1874) and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1876-83), along with *The Prince and the Pauper* (1877-80), *A Tramp Abroad* (1879), *Life on the Mississippi* (1882), and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* (1888). You can visit it on the grounds of Elmira College in Elmira, New York.
- When in Hartford, Connecticut, wrote from the third-floor billiards room as he smoked many cigars a day. Sam liked to play billiards and often made new rules for each shot.

- Was temperamental and moody; had a volcanic temper. When home, everything revolved around him.
- *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* banned from libraries one month after its publication (1885). It was called “trash.” Louisa May Alcott called it an “unworthy” work and said Twain had “no reliable sense of propriety.” Twain thought the bad publicity would be good for sales. It was.
- Founded a publishing house and published former-president Ulysses S. Grant’s *Memoirs* in 1885. It was hugely successful. Twain was 50.
- Owned first household telephone in Hartford. He loved technology and invested much money in inventions that eventually failed. He refused to invest in Alexander Graham Bell’s company because the household telephone’s ringing irked him and the service was bad.
- Sank money into James W. Paige’s typesetting compositor, a machine designed to set the type for newspapers. He lost thousands of dollars more than once on this ill-fated invention and went on tour again to get out of debt.
- Paid the way for a young black man to finish law school at Yale.
- Arthritis in his right arm was so bad that he taught himself how to write with his left hand.
- Wrote *Pudd’nhead Wilson* in Florence, Italy, in 1894.
- On his 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in 1895, felt like a total failure because of all his business losses. He began an around-the-world tour in that year to recuperate some of his losses, making 150 appearances on five continents in about one year. Livy and Clara accompanied him.
- Susy, at home in Hartford, died of spinal meningitis at 24 years old. Sam, Livy, and Clara were in Europe. Sam blamed himself. The family did not celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas, or birthdays for years.
- Livy had a heart attack in 1902. Sam was not allowed to see her because of his fiery temperament, but he wrote little notes to her and pinned them to the tree outside her bedroom window or slid them under her door.
- Destroyed a 38,000-word manuscript of Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer as grown-ups.
- June 5, 1904—Livy died. His last sentence in *The Diaries of Adam and Eve* is a tribute to her: “Wherever she was, *there* was Eden.”
- Became bitter over all the losses in his life. He blamed God.
- Served as vice president of the Congo Reform Association in 1905. It protested Belgian brutality toward her African subjects. Random fact: This brutality was the subject matter of Joseph Conrad’s novella *Heart of Darkness* published in 1902.
- Daughter Jean died of a heart attack following an epileptic seizure on Christmas Eve in 1909. She had just finished decorating the house and was taking a bath.

- Samuel Clemens and Mark Twain both died 6:22 p.m., April 21, 1910, of heart failure. Halley’s Comet was visible in the night sky just above the horizon.

Write two things about his life that you find interesting:

- 1.
- 2.

## Lesson 2

### **Conflicts**

Fill in the list of conflicts you learned on page 14 of this course. Write as many as you can from memory; then look back, if you need help, to fill in the rest. Your list does not have to be in any particular order.

Character against

Character against

Character against

Character against

Character against

Character against

After you read *Pudd’nhead Wilson*, you’ll fill in the conflicts for three separate characters: Mr. Wilson, Roxy, and Tom Driscoll.

### **Pseudonym**

“How I hate that name!” Susy, daughter of Samuel Clemens, exclaimed one day about the name Mark Twain. What did she mean?

You’ve already learned that “Mark Twain” is not Mark Twain’s given name. It is the **pseudonym** (SUE də nim) for Samuel Langhorne Clemens. A pseudonym is, literally, “false name,” but when talking about writers, it means a *pen name* or a *nom de plume*—in other words, an assumed name a writer uses when being published.

The name “Mark Twain” first appeared in print when Samuel Clemens was 27 years old. He signed it to an article he’d written for a newspaper in Nevada, the *Territorial Enterprise*. “Mark twain” was a term he had heard often as a steamboat pilot navigating the Mississippi River. When men measured the depth of the water, they would shout out, “quarter-twain,” “half-twain,” or “mark twain.” “Mark twain” meant that the depth of the water was two fathoms or twelve feet deep—in other words, safe water. The granite shaft that marks Sam Clemens’ family’s burial site in Elmira, New York, is—you guessed it—two fathoms tall.

Clemens used other pseudonyms as well. Before he settled on Mark Twain, he’d used W. Epaminondas Adrastus Blab, Thomas Jefferson Snodgrass, Sergeant Fathom, Rambler, and Josh (a tip of the hat to his sense of humor).

What did Susy mean when she said she hated the name Mark Twain? She was frustrated that people assumed they knew her father when all they really knew was the persona of a humorist, a “funny man,” the man he was in public. They didn’t know the real man as well as she did.

If you wrote with a pseudonym, what would it be and why would you choose that one? Answer below:



### Fun Fact

Mark Twain had a natural fascination with the idea of twins. Twenty-five years before he wrote *Pudd’nhead Wilson*, he wrote a humorous article titled “Personal Habits of the Siamese Twins,” in which he completely made up “facts” about the original Siamese twins, Eng and Chang (pictured to the right). He also wrote a story titled *Those Extraordinary Twins*, a story of Siamese twins (now called “conjoined twins”). This story used to be entwined in the *Pudd’nhead Wilson* story. In fact, the original 1894 version of the book published by the American Publishing Company is *The Tragedy of Pudd’nhead Wilson and the Comedy of Those Extraordinary Twins*. Twain modified the *Pudd’nhead Wilson* story, though, and used simple twins who had different personalities. In the twin story that he expunged, one twin drinks alcohol but the other gets drunk. As you read your book this month, see if you can find where this plot point used to be.



Hear or read *Those Extraordinary Twins* at <http://www.gutenberg.org>.

Read Twain's fascinating Author's Note to *Those Extraordinary Twins* at [http://www.classicbookshelf.com/library/mark twain/the tragedy of pudd nhead wilson/23/](http://www.classicbookshelf.com/library/mark%20twain/the%20tragedy%20of%20pudd%20nhead%20wilson/23/).

These two stories are not the only place you'll find twins or switched characters in Twain's work. Have you ever read *The Prince and the Pauper*? Mark Twain used the idea of changing one look-alike for another in that story, too.

Think about this: Was it Mark Twain (the public persona) who wrote these books, or was it Samuel Clemens (the private man)? Even the word *twain* means *two*. Hmmm . . .

### Literary Terms: Foreshadowing and Irony

Conflict. Protagonist. Antagonist. Text. Context. Pseudonym. We've hit these already. When these terms are discussed in a literature class, they are called *literary terms* or *literary devices*. When writers discuss them, the terms are more often called *writers' devices*. Whatever the label, here are two terms that apply to *Pudd'nhead Wilson*:

Foreshadowing  
Irony

**Foreshadowing** Giving a hint that something interesting, traumatic, or suspenseful will be coming later in the story. Foreshadowing can be achieved by a line of dialog, like this: "If I had only known what would happen next!" Or the narrator may tell readers something like this: "But it was not to be." The author might mention a particular item early in the story like a gun or a knife (hint, hint) or a particular habit a character has (wink, wink), or he may mention a curse or a prophecy. Even foul weather can foreshadow turbulent times ahead.

An author can foreshadow an event not only by using an object but also by using key warnings that promise trouble ahead, for example, "He thought that tying the kangaroo to the tree would solve all his problems, but he was very wrong." Judge Driscoll's prophecy in chapter XVII that the knife's "owner would know where to find it whenever he should have occasion *to assassinate somebody*" is a perfect example of foreshadowing.

If foreshadowing is done well, the effect on the reader can be a heightened sense of excitement or foreboding.

**Irony** A significant difference between what is said and what is meant (verbal irony), or between what is done and what is meant, especially when the action is looked at in the context of the story events. A dramatic or tragic irony occurs when

the audience understands the dialog, actions, or events of the story but the characters themselves do not, as when we know Long John Silver is a scoundrel long before Jim Hawkins knows it in *Treasure Island*.

You'll soon read the description of Dawson's Landing in the beginning of chapter 1, "Pudd'nhead Wins His Name." It sounds like a lovely place to live—flowers in the gardens, trees along the thoroughfares, the little shops on the main street. It is ironic, however, that this idyllic town setting hides characters who treat their black population as though they are not humans and who hide dark secrets that will be revealed in the story. The irony is in the difference between what the town looks like on the outside and what the townsfolk harbor in their hearts.

Irony can be expressed in a line of dialog, such as "Yes, Mother, I can't wait to clean the garage for you on Saturday!" There is a significant difference between what is said and what is meant! (Sarcasm is a kind of verbal irony.) And, of course, there's this: Irony is when someone writes, "Your an idiot". Get it?

Descriptions are a source of irony, as noted above. Situations, especially in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, can be laden with irony. Even the name "Pudd'nhead" is ironic because this man is no dunce; he's very intelligent. The irony is in the name but also in the fact that the townsfolk believe this man to be a fool—when they're the fools for taking his joke literally instead of figuratively. They are the real pudd'nheads.

## Lesson 3

### **Your Novel Notebook**

Read *Pudd'nhead Wilson* with your Novel Notebook handy. You may use a notebook of your own or download the Novel Notebook that corresponds with the first two chapters in this course by going here:

<http://writingwithsharonwatson.com/illuminating-literature-free-download/> .

Here's what to write in it this month. Include page numbers:

1. Any of Mr. Wilson's witty sayings you especially like.
2. Two examples of prejudice.
3. At least one place where Mark Twain uses foreshadowing.
4. Something ironic.
5. Any ideas about why *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* is, well, a tragedy for Pudd'nhead Wilson.

During the discussion time you have with your class or reading group after you've read the book, you'll report what you found. Or your teacher may want to look at your Novel Notebook to see what you found.

### **Too Good to Forget**

Mark any passages in *Pudd'nhead Wilson* you especially like or don't like, that you find interesting or well written. Or enter them in your Novel Notebook for future reference. If you want to remember a long passage, you might want to type it into a special file on your computer instead of using your Novel Notebook. You'll do this activity for each book you read in this course. Why?

Taking note of interesting, well-written, or super-boring passages makes you a better reader and a better writer. By examining what makes the passage so appealing or appalling, you can delight in the way it was put together, and you can teach yourself how to write effective fiction. Or you can learn how *not* to write!

### **Setting and Year of Publication**

*Pudd'nhead Wilson* begins in 1830. That's about 50 years after the American Revolution and 30 years before the Civil War. It is set in Dawson's Landing, Missouri, a fictional town a half-day's journey by steamboat south of St. Louis. So what? Why is that important?

It is important because the Missouri of those days was a slave-holding state. The state of Missouri believed that slaves—blacks—were not humans and did not deserve the rights of the nation's "real" citizens.

Are there any people or people groups in the United States or in the world today who are not considered human?

In the blank, write the year that *Pudd'nhead Wilson* was first published: \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Read "A Whisper to the Reader"**

Take a moment to read "A Whisper to the Reader" in the beginning of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Go ahead. I'll wait.

This intro is basically Twain's humorous disclaimer saying, "Don't blame me if the court scenes aren't right." There are two especially long sentences. Count the words in either and write the number in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_. It is sometimes in his most long-winded sentences that Twain really shines. In this preface, he is setting the tone for the book and is showing off his style.

What is the name of the man that his friend William Hicks is boarding with in Italy? Write it here:



You will be astute enough to notice that this man's name is really two kinds of pastas. In this way, Twain is telling his reader not to take the information about "legal matters" and "court scenes" too seriously. And he's just plain pulling your leg for the fun of it.

He also alludes to Dante and Beatrice. (Don't worry about "alludes to" yet. You'll learn about this literary term in the next chapter.) Dante Alighieri is the author of *The Inferno*, a fourteenth-century epic poem about hell. *The Inferno* is part of his trilogy *The Divine Comedy*. A piece of the inscription over the gate of hell is this: "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here." Beatrice is a woman Dante loved and lost; she appears throughout *The Divine Comedy* in critical places, and part of Dante's motivation to ascend to heaven is to see Beatrice again.

Twain's allusion to Dante and Beatrice alerts readers that, while we might have some fun along the way, the themes of this story are serious and, at times, tragic. After all, abandoning all hope is a pretty big deal.

### Stuff You Might Want to Know

A short dialect dictionary:

gwine, gwyne = going  
 bmeby = by and by  
 chile = child  
 kyer = care  
 marse, marster = master  
 nemmine = never mind  
 clah = declare  
 bawn = born  
 tuck 'n' dissenhurrit = took and disinherited  
 fambly = family  
 skyer = scare  
 swah = swear  
 whale 'em = beat them  
 pusson = person

- Being "sold down the river" meant being sold into Southern states on a plantation, where the work was harder and hotter. The phrase eventually came to mean "being betrayed."

- Be aware that the last paragraph in chapter 2 is quite serious from Percy Driscoll's point of view, but Twain's tone is sarcastic. Twain is trying to show you the mindset of the average slaveholder while showing you how awful the reasoning is.
- One of the babies is named Thomas à Becket Driscoll. The man for whom he is named—Thomas à Becket—was a real person in history: the Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the Church of England. In England in 1170, there was only one person more powerful than the Archbishop, and that was King Henry II, who had Thomas à Becket murdered. *The Canterbury Tales*, written by Chaucer, was written around people making a pilgrimage to Canterbury to a shrine erected in honor of Thomas à Becket. Even three hundred years after his death, he was venerated. Contrast that to the other baby's name in this book—Valet de Chambre or “Chambers,” which in French means “personal servant.” You can hear how to pronounce this in French by going to [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary) and searching for “valet de chambre,” though, of course, no one in Dawson's Landing says it like that!
- Twain addresses a controversial issue of his day: passing. Passing is when a person of color passed for white, which was made illegal in many states. If you visit [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen\\_Craft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen_Craft) , you'll find an extraordinary story of a fair-skinned slave who passed for white so she and her husband could escape.
- David (“Pudd'nhead”) Wilson joins the Society of Free-thinkers, which is a real organization. Freethinkers tend to be negative about Christianity, the church, and religion in general and value independent thinking.
- Although you will not find the term *manumission* used in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, one character is manumitted, that is, freed from slavery.
- In “The Shame of Judge Driscoll,” the judge “totters to his secretary.” This is not a person but a desk used for writing.
- The word “nigger” is used in the manner it presumably was used historically. It may be offensive to some readers.

## Suggested Reading and Homework Plan

Check with your teacher to see if this schedule fits his or her plans.

Week 1:

- Read lessons 1-3.
- Hand in your Imitate! paragraph. If you've been working along, you have finished this week's work already. If something is incomplete from Week 1, please finish it now.

Week 2:

- Read chapters I – XII of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.

Week 3:

- Read chapters XIII – XXI of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.

Week 4:

- Decide on one activity and begin work on it. You'll find the list of activities at the end of this chapter. Your teacher will tell you when this is due.
- Complete the online *Pudd'nhead Wilson* "Yes, I read the book" Quiz.
- Complete the online *Pudd'nhead Wilson* Literary Terms Quiz (protagonist, antagonist, conflict, text, context, pseudonym, foreshadowing, and irony).
- Complete the online, ungraded *Pudd'nhead Wilson* Opinion Survey.
- Complete the Vocabulary Quizzola in your book.
- Read lesson 4.
- Discuss selected discussion questions with your teacher, reading group, or class.
- Hand in your activity and breathe a sigh of relief.

## Read the Book

### After You've Read the Book

#### Five-Star Report

Give *Pudd'nhead Wilson* a rating by circling the number that best describes how you feel about it.

|   |                    |   |           |   |
|---|--------------------|---|-----------|---|
|   | Couldn't stand it. | It was okay.  | Loved it! |   |
|  | 1                  | 2   | 3         | 4 |
|   | 5                  |  |           |   |

## Complete the Online Quizzes and Survey

*Pudd'nhead Wilson* "Yes, I read it" Quiz. Password: TWAIN

Go to <http://writingwithsharonwatson.com/illuminating-literature-free-download/> or <http://writingwithsharonwatson.com/illuminating-literature-when-worlds-collide-gateway/> and click on the *Pudd'nhead Wilson* "Yes, I read it" Quiz link to complete this short, graded quiz. The quiz contains certain facts you will know because you read the book. After completing the quiz, a graded report will be sent to the email address you use when you sign in.

*Pudd'nhead Wilson* Literary Terms Quiz. Password: TWAIN

Go to <http://writingwithsharonwatson.com/illuminating-literature-free-download/> or <http://writingwithsharonwatson.com/illuminating-literature-when-worlds-collide-gateway/> and click on the *Pudd'nhead Wilson* Literary Terms Quiz link to complete the short, graded literary terms quiz. Review these terms for the literary terms quiz: conflict, protagonist, antagonist, text, context, foreshadowing, irony, and pseudonym. After completing the quiz, a graded report will be sent to the email address you use when you sign in.

*Pudd'nhead Wilson* Opinion Survey. Password: TWAIN

Go to <http://writingwithsharonwatson.com/illuminating-literature-free-download/> or <http://writingwithsharonwatson.com/illuminating-literature-when-worlds-collide-gateway/> and click on the *Pudd'nhead Wilson* Opinion Survey link to answer the ungraded set of opinion questions.

When you finish those, take the Vocabulary Quizzola on the next page and look for the secret word encoded vertically in the correct answers. Then try to unscramble your brains because that's a lot of quizzes in one day.

Before you finish today's work, look at Your Choice of Activities at the end of this chapter. Choose one of the activities today and begin work on it soon so it will be completed by the due date your teacher gives you.

## Vocabulary Quizzola for *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

**Directions:** Match the meaning in the right column to the correct word in the left column. The numbers after the words indicate page numbers where the words can be found in the Dover Thrift Edition of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. indolent, 22       | A. a mark of disgrace                          |
| ___ 2. usurpation, 16     | B. deep in thought                             |
| ___ 3. sycophancy, 41     | C. to scout out                                |
| ___ 4. gibe, 81           | D. property                                    |
| ___ 5. chattel, 47        | E. to taunt; a taunt                           |
| ___ 6. stigma, 84         | F. flattery in order to gain something         |
| ___ 7. calaboose, 66      | G. a mongrel dog (insulting to be called this) |
| ___ 8. perdition, 57      | H. apparent, but usually fake                  |
| ___ 9. atrophied, 100     | I. one who talks sheer nonsense                |
| ___ 10. grenadier, 40     | J. generosity                                  |
| ___ 11. blatherskite, 42  | K. taking someone else's place                 |
| ___ 12. skiff, 61         | L. a state of being lost; hell                 |
| ___ 13. benefactor, 101   | M. lazy  |
| ___ 14. teetotaler, 57    | N. a small rowboat or sailboat                 |
| ___ 15. magnanimity, 55   | O. slang for <i>jail</i>                       |
| ___ 16. pensive, 68       | P. wasted away, not strong                     |
| ___ 17. ostensible, 47    | Q. done by stealth, sneaky                     |
| ___ 18. reconnoiter, 49   | R. a soldier                                   |
| ___ 19. surreptitious, 51 | S. one who abstains from alcoholic drinks      |
| ___ 20. cur, 62           | T. one who does good for others                |

Total number correct \_\_\_\_\_

Vertical word encoded in your correct answers: \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 4

### **Colliding Worlds**

What worlds were colliding with each other? What people, philosophies, ideas, worldviews, or cultures were in conflict with each other? Fill in the list below. The first one is done for you.

1. Slavery versus Freedom
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What happens when these worlds collide? Roxy feels trapped. She feels compelled to switch the babies and, thus, alter their futures and how they viewed themselves. The twins are accused of a crime they didn't commit. Tom (the real Chambers) assumes he is entitled to do whatever he wants to do. The real Tom develops an unreal view of himself and is robbed of his place in the family and the community. David Wilson, for most of the book, is an outcast. And Roxy ends up a broken woman.

These collisions do not end well for most of the characters in this book. They take their toll.

Choose one conflict from *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. How could it have been prevented? Write your answer below:

Here's an interesting set of verses from the book of Job, who is giving this advice (Job 8:8-9 NIV):

Ask the former generations and find out what their fathers learned, for we were born only yesterday and know nothing, and our days on earth are but a shadow.

Each generation starts out knowing nothing about past generations and their wealth of knowledge. They know nothing of history, philosophies argued about and fought over, or the wisdom stored in old libraries. All of us must “ask the former generations,” discard their folly and embrace their wisdom.

If you were on a fact-finding mission and found *Pudd'nhead Wilson* in the corner of some dilapidated brick building, what would you surmise about their culture? What wisdom would you bring back to make life better today? Write your answer below:

## Conflicts

As promised, now is your chance to fill out the conflict chart for three separate characters: Pudd'nhead Wilson, Roxy, and Thomas Driscoll (who is really Chambers). Not all conflicts will apply to each character; fill in only the ones that apply.

Pudd'nhead Wilson's Conflicts:

1. Pudd'nhead Wilson's struggles with himself
2. Pudd'nhead Wilson against a person
3. Pudd'nhead Wilson against society
4. Pudd'nhead Wilson against nature
5. Pudd'nhead Wilson against God/the gods/fate

Roxy's Conflicts:

1. Roxy's struggles with herself
2. Roxy against a person
3. Roxy against society
4. Roxy against nature
5. Roxy against God/the gods/fate

Tom Driscoll's Conflicts (the man who was really born as "Chambers," Roxy's son):

1. Tom's struggles with himself
2. Tom against a person
3. Tom against society
4. Tom against nature
5. Tom against God/the gods/fate

How can you tell which character is the main character of this or any book? In chapter 0, you learned how writers look at conflict. They don't sit around asking themselves if a particular character has enough conflict with nature, with other characters, or with society. That's for the luckless literature student to decipher.

Writers ask these questions of themselves: What is the character's goal? What is the character's deep desire? Who is moving this story along with the strongest motivations and deepest needs?

It's the answer to *these* questions that will show you who the main character is because the character expending the most energy to reach a goal and with the strongest desires is the protagonist. These goals and desires are driving the story.

Look at Pudd'nhead. What are his goals? Does he have any stated desires?

Look at Roxy. What are her goals? What are her stated longings?

Look at Tom. What are his goals? What are his desires?

Which character in *Pudd'nhead Wilson* has the strongest goals, is working the hardest toward them, and has the most plans to achieve them? Which character has the deepest desires, the most heart-felt yearnings, and moves those yearnings from internal to external by doing something about them? Which one has the strongest forces of antagonism against him or her because of those goals or desires?

This character can be viewed today as the true protagonist of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Write the name of the character below:

Readers' expectations today have changed from one hundred years ago, which is a piece of the context puzzle: what we expect in a story. To understand just how different expectations were when Twain wrote *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, read this letter by Twain to Fred Hall, dated July 30, 1893, about *Pudd'nhead Wilson* and see if you agree with Twain's assessment of his own story:

The whole story is centered on the murder and the trial; from the first chapter the movement is straight ahead without divergence or side-play to the murder and the trial; everything that is done or said or that happens is a preparation for those events. Therefore, 3 people stand up high, from beginning to end, and only 3—Pudd'nhead, "Tom" Driscoll, and his nigger mother, Roxana; none of the others are important, or get in the way of the story or require the reader's attention.<sup>1</sup>

Do you agree with him?

Today's authors introduce you to the main character early in the story and, in fact, the first character we see in a story is generally the main character. Twain follows this expectation. Where today's readers diverge from Twain's original audience is in the area of conflict: We expect the main character to experience most of the conflict and are confused when the novel really doesn't seem as though it's

about Pudd'nhead, who drops out of the middle of the story. What a difference the context can make!

## The Curse of Ham

On page 47 of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, you will find this sentence: "He said to himself that the curse of Ham was upon him." Who is saying this to himself? Write your answer here: \_\_\_\_\_

The curse of Ham?! What does this mean? Is someone destined to eat too much bacon or, worse yet, fated to live too close to a stinky pig farm?

No, nothing that benign. But "the curse of Ham" is worth looking into because it has been used as an excuse to enslave black people.

You may already be familiar with the phrase "the curse of Ham." It sort of comes from the Bible. Look up Genesis 9:18-27 and read it. Then answer the following questions:

1. Who is Ham?
2. Whom does Noah curse?
3. What is the curse?

Some proponents of slavery have used these verses (and others) to say that God made the black race to be slaves. However, a careful reading of Genesis 9:18-27 will show otherwise. It clearly states that *Canaan* will be slave to his brothers. If Noah's curse was meant simply for the generation of the brothers, then the curse is over. If it was meant for that generation and all their descendants, it completely excludes the black race.

If you read very far into Genesis 10, you will find that Ham, a survivor of the Flood, was the father of Canaan, Cush, Mizraim, and Put. In Genesis 10:15-18, you see that Canaan was the father of all those "ites": the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, and so on. These folks were the people who lived in the Promised Land and were the enemies of the Israelites under Joshua. They became slaves of the Israelites (see Judges 1:28-30), who are Shem's descendants.

Canaan, the object of the curse, did not go into Africa. He did not emigrate or settle there.

The descendants of his brothers Cush, Mizraim, and Put, however, did move into Mesopotamia and what we now call Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan, and the rest of Africa. Many of *them* were the darker skinned people, not Canaan. Canaan's descendants were not black-skinned.

Even if the curse of slavery had extended to blacks, it still wouldn't be an excuse for Christians or other moral people to exploit a whole people group based on skin color. The phrase "made in god's image" includes people of all colors.

Unfortunately, early evolutionists used evolution to bolster the horrible notion that the black race is inferior to the lighter-skinned races. Darwin and many others often called people of color "the lower races." In a letter he wrote, Darwin stated that, in the near future, "what an endless number of the lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world."<sup>2</sup>



Thomas Huxley, the man who taught H. G. Wells biology in college and who strongly pushed Darwin's theories, stated: "No rational man, cognizant of the facts, believes that the average Negro is the equal, still less the superior, of the white man."<sup>3</sup>

A leading evolutionist in the 1920s, Henry Fairfield Osborn, wrote that "the standard of intelligence of the average adult Negro is similar to that of the eleven-year-old youth of the species *Homo sapiens*."<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, he misjudged the intelligence of an entire race and did not even include blacks in the same species as whites.

These men believed that the black race was closer to being apes than lighter-skinned races, who had supposedly progressed further along the evolutionary trail. Therefore, according to the early evolutionary scientists, blacks were less human, less developed mentally and emotionally, and inferior to the lighter races. Slave owners used this errant information, their own prejudice, and the supposed "curse of Ham" to perpetuate the lie that blacks were not human and did not deserve the most basic and common rights of men.

For more interesting information on the races and the "curse of Ham," go to <http://www.icr.org> (search "origin, races") or <https://www.AnswersinGenesis.org>.

This is the end of Lesson 4.

## Questions for Discussion

You will not discuss all the questions in this section unless you want to beat the book to death. Your teacher will choose which ones to discuss, or you may be asked to answer some of these in writing.

The first five questions aren't really questions but items you were looking for and recording in your Novel Notebook as you read *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.

1. Any of Mr. Wilson's witty sayings that you especially like.
2. Two examples of prejudice.
3. At least one place where Mark Twain uses foreshadowing.
4. Something ironic.
5. Any ideas about why *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* is, well, a tragedy for Pudd'nhead Wilson.

Questions to get the facts straight:

1. How does Tom Driscoll's father differentiate the babies from one another?
2. What happens on September 4 to scare Roxy into changing the babies around?
3. Who is the biological father of Roxy's child?
4. Who is the girl Pudd'nhead Wilson saw in Tom's bedroom?
5. How does Tom pay his gambling debts?

Questions for discussion on the topics of abortion and suicide:

1. When Sam Clemens was a young reporter in San Francisco, he lost his job, was broke, and then landed in jail for drunkenness. Shortly afterward, he put a gun to his head and almost pulled the trigger. Unbeknownst to him, his newest short story was a wild hit back East. In *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Roxy almost commits suicide three times. What could you tell Sam or Roxy to convince either of them not to commit suicide?
2. In "Roxy Plays a Shrewd Trick," Roxy is in terror of her infant son growing up and being sold down the river, so she declares to him that she has "to kill you to save you, honey." Compare her statement with this question some abortion counselors ask their clients: "Can you see abortion as a 'loving act' toward your children and yourself?"<sup>5</sup>

Questions for discussion on the topic of how we view ourselves and others:

1. Why is Roxy treated so poorly at the plantation?
2. The electioneering in “The Judge Utters Dire Prophecy” is conducted with bribery, innuendo, scoffing, derision, lies, using facts out of context, impugning the twins’ characters and leveling ridicule against them. Even the facts are not used properly. Give an example from everyday life when people use any of the negative strategies listed above to harm someone or to sway others.
3. Apply the following quotations to any of the characters in *Pudd’nhead Wilson*. The second quotation is spoken by Schmendrick, a magician in *The Last Unicorn* who is still learning his trade and is viewed as a bungler.

“The eyes of others our prisons; their thoughts our cages.” (Virginia Woolf)

“It’s a rare man who is taken for what he truly is,” [Schmendrick] said.

“There is much misjudgment in the world. Now I knew you for a unicorn when I first saw you, and I know that I am your friend. Yet you take me for a clown, or a clod, or a betrayer, and so must I be if you see me so. The magic on you is only magic and will vanish as soon as you are free, but the enchantment of error that you put on me I must wear forever in your eyes.” (*The Last Unicorn* by Peter S. Beagle)

4. When Judge Driscoll hears from a friend that Tom didn’t challenge Luigi to a duel, the judge faints. At home, he yells at Tom and calls him a coward. Later, Tom lies and explains that he didn’t challenge Luigi to a duel because he thought it would be dishonorable to challenge an admitted killer to a duel, to which Judge Driscoll agrees. This “massaging the story” happens all the time in news reports and in real life. How is it that *when* you hear a story and *how* you hear it affects your perception of it?
5. If you can’t tell a person’s race by the color of his or her skin, what does race matter? Is outer appearance an artificial line?
6. What role does fate play in our lives? What role does ancestry play? What role does environment play? What role does personal choice play?
7. Tom Driscoll (Roxy’s real son Chambers) was raised with every advantage, yet his character, which Roxy attributed to his drop of black blood, kept tripping him up. Is a person’s life determined by how he is raised or by what he is born with?
8. What are ways that people can sell each other downriver? In what ways do you sell someone downriver, metaphorically speaking?
9. Have you ever felt out of place somewhere? When is this a good thing? When is it a bad thing?

10. Who or what do you want to be? How much of it will be accomplished by using what you've been born with or been given? How much is what you do to make it happen?

### **If You Liked this Book...**

If you liked *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, you might like some of these other books:

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain

*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

*The Prince and the Pauper* by Mark Twain (switched identities)

*Kingsblood Royal* by Sinclair Lewis (a drop of "black" blood in a "white" man)

*The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde (double identities)

*A Midsummer-Night's Dream* by Shakespeare (mistaken identities everywhere!)

*The Man in the Iron Mask* by Alexandre Dumas (brothers separated at birth.

Dumas was of mixed races: His father was a French general and his mother was a native Haitian.)

*To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee (racial tensions in the South in the 1930s)

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe (a novel of slavery)

*The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* by James Weldon Johnson (a biracial man has to choose between living as black or as white)

Can you think of any others that share similarities with *Pudd'nhead Wilson* that you would like to add to the list? Write them here:

### **Can't Get Enough of Mark Twain?**

For more information on Mark Twain, try searching these Web sites:

- <http://www.marktwainmuseum.org>
- [http://www.elmira.edu/academics/Academic Resources/Library/Collection s/Mark Twain Archive.html](http://www.elmira.edu/academics/Academic%20Resources/Library/Collection%20s/Mark%20Twain%20Archive.html)
- <http://www.pbs.org/marktwain>
- <http://www.marktwaincountry.com/mark-twain>

The first one will give you information about his life in Hannibal, Missouri, including pictures of his old house and how he developed some of his characters from people he knew. The second one will give you information of his adult life and his summers at the Quarry Farm on the outskirts of Elmira, New York, where he wrote much of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and other famous books.

The actual Quarry Farm summerhouse still exists but is in a new location. You can visit it on the campus of Elmira College in Elmira, New York. You can also visit a small museum there and view some first editions of his books, foreign language editions of his more famous books, and two of his patented, self-pasting scrapbooks. He is buried in the Woodlawn Cemetery, 1200 Walnut Street in Elmira, under both of his names. There you will see not only his headstone but those of his wife, his three daughters, his son, and various Langdon family members (Livy's family).

If you are traveling through Hannibal, Missouri, or Hartford, Connecticut, be sure to stop in and see the museums located there, too.

Your library will be an invaluable source of information. Many biographies of Mark Twain exist, as does his autobiography. And don't forget to view the video *Mark Twain*, directed by Ken Burns. It contains wonderful pictures and biographical information, a short film of Twain, and fascinating quotations by and about Twain.

## Your Choice of Activities

**Note:** Choose only one of the following activities. Read all of them carefully before you make your decision. Below you will find a short explanation of each activity. Your teacher will tell you when this is due.

- A Calendar—Create witty sayings for your own calendar.
- The Artist in You—Paint or draw a scene or character from the book.
- Find Your Roots—Research your genealogy.
- With a Friend—Interview someone of a different ethnic background than yours.
- I'll Watch the Movie—Compare book to movie and write a movie review.
- You Are the Expert—Research and write a short essay on fingerprinting, twins, conjoined twins, or blood.
- Sometimes I Feel like a Motherless Child—Explore the musical world of spirituals.
- Double the Trouble—Write a short story about twins or other topic of interest.
- Unrelated—Write a short story using five unrelated props and a twist.

- Black Is Beautiful—Investigate famous African Americans or international blacks.
- History Buff—Create a timeline of major events in African American or world black history or research another topic concerning race, racism, modern slavery, and so forth.

Below are the explanations of the activities.

### A Calendar

The calendar in *Pudd'nhead Wilson* was similar to Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac* into which Franklin inserted plenty of original quips and sayings. Even today many people like to buy a tear-off calendar that includes a word of the day, a comic strip, or a witty saying for each day.

Design your own calendar. Include pictures and plenty of aphorisms.

### The Artist in You

The Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum in Hannibal, Missouri, boasts a fascinating model for a projected sculpture that never was completed. It is comprised of characters from four of Twain's books, standing or sitting, artfully arranged with Twain and Tom Sawyer in the middle. Draw or paint your own picture of an exciting event or person in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Include a caption for your picture. Or create a diorama (a creative miniaturization) of a critical scene or sculpt something or someone from the book.

### Find Your Roots

The famous black poet Langston Hughes writes this in his memoir:

"You see, unfortunately, I am not black. There are lots of different kinds of blood in our family. But here in the United States, the word 'Negro' is used to mean anyone who has any Negro blood at all in his veins. In Africa, the word is more pure. It means all Negro, therefore black. I am brown."

Henry Louis Gates Jr. is the scholar who hosts the PBS *African American Lives* and *Faces of America*, in which he uses historical documents and DNA to trace the

genealogies of famous African Americans. Gates reveals that “the average African American is 77 percent black and 20 percent white.”<sup>6</sup>

What are you?

Research your family history and/or genealogy. Record your findings and share them in a report or oral presentation.

### With a Friend

Find an older member of a minority group and interview him or her. It is important to choose an older person who has had many decades of experiences. With your friend, develop a list of questions to ask that will help you decide if your community is less prejudiced of this people group than it was years ago.

What if you don't know anyone of a different ethnic culture or race than yours? Many cities have ethnic groups that your library can help you find. You may also want to check the phone book for local churches whose membership is composed of a race or nationality different from yours. Visit a restaurant with an international flavor—Chinese, Thai, or Indian—and ask a worker to introduce you to someone of that nationality.

After you have done your interview, report your findings to an interested listener. Hopefully, you will have made a new friend of a different culture, too.

### I'll Watch the Movie

*Pudd'nhead Wilson* was made into a movie in 1983. It starred Ken Howard as Pudd'nhead. The scriptwriter moved some plot points around and omitted others. View the movie and note the differences. Determine which you like better—the movie or the book. Decide whether the changes make the story better. Give a movie review in which you reveal the movie's merits and flaws but not the ending!

Another movie you may want to add to this list is *Pinky*, a 1949 film about a light-skinned young woman with a black heritage. Try to view the movie as those first movie-goers might have. Give a movie review in writing or on video.

Or try the 1927, 1929, 1936, or 1951 version of *Show Boat*, all based on Edna Ferber's bestselling book *Show Boat*. The book and the movies address racial prejudice in the 1880s along the Mississippi River. Write a review of any of them or make a video review.

## You Are the Expert

Research one of the following subjects and write a short report (400-1,000 words) on it:

- Fingerprinting—history, techniques, patterns, uses, etc.
- Twins—ones that have grown up together or have been separated at a young age; include an interview with a twin or a set of twins, if possible
- Conjoined twins—formerly called “Siamese twins”
- Blood—find the differences, if any, between the bloods of different races

## Sometimes I Feel like a Motherless Child

Negro spirituals (or just “spirituals”) are powerful songs that express deep feelings about life’s events and troubles. Research these songs, learn some, and perform them for your class. Or perhaps you would like to write one of your own and perform it for the class. Here are two sites to get you started: <http://www.negrospirituals.com> and <http://thenegrospiritualinc.com>.

## Double the Trouble

Sam Clemens had an interest in twins and changelings, and it appears in his books. But he isn’t the only one interested in switched or dual personalities. The movie *Freaky Friday* is based on the switched personalities of a mother and daughter. Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* plays with the idea of a man using one persona in the city and one in the country. These are interesting ways to look at what happens when people switch places with each other or create double personalities (as Sam Clemens did when he created the persona of Mark Twain).

Write a short story or play in which twins or other people switch places for a while. What trouble will they encounter? Will they get back to normal?

## Unrelated

Sam Clemens’ three daughters often asked him to make up stories for them, and he liked to oblige. One way in which he created stories was to look at the items on the mantelpiece and incorporate each piece, from left to right, into the story. His daughters were delighted with this method and would not let him deviate from the order of the items. I wonder how many stories he told using those same five or six items (a vase, a picture frame, a candlestick, etc.).

Your mission is to collect five totally unrelated items and place them in front of you. If it would be more interesting to have someone else gather the items and surprise you, then by all means, ask them to.

The next part of the mission is to write a short story using all of those items. Incorporate them into the story in any way you like and use them in any order. Your story might be easier to write if you try to write it for a child, or you may have fun writing it for someone your own age.

If you are feeling brave, write the story with your non-dominant hand, just as Mark Twain taught himself to do when he developed arthritis. In other words, if you are right handed, write with your left.

## Black Is Beautiful

Investigate famous African Americans or international blacks. Create a list of three African Americans and their accomplishments and report your findings to an interested listener.

## History Buff

Research the history of blacks in America and create a timeline. These might get you started: the Supreme Court's 1857 Dred Scott decision, the Missouri Compromise, the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments, *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* case has particular interest to this year of literature because the Supreme Court's decision in this case was the major factor in the book you will read soon, *Warriors Don't Cry*.

If you do not live in America or would rather research another topic, try racism, the origin of races, the differences in human blood, modern-day slavery, or the link between racism and Planned Parenthood. Below are some resources to start you out:

"The Ascent of Racism" by Paul Humber  
<http://www.icr.org/article/ascent-racism/>

"Where Did the Races Come From?" by John D. Morris  
<http://www.icr.org/article/1062/>

"It's not just Black and White" by Ken Ham, an article about the origin of the races and about multicolored twins  
<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v3/n2/twins-black-and-white>

*Maafa 21: Black Genocide in 21<sup>st</sup> Century America*, a documentary on black genocide and Planned Parenthood

<http://maafa21.com/>

Modern-day slavery

<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/slavery1.html>

**Thank you for downloading the first two chapters of  
*Illuminating Literature: When Worlds Collide.***

**We hope you enjoyed this sneak preview!**

**The complete course will be available from [Writing with Sharon Watson](#)  
in June 2015!**

## Photo credits

Art Deco images, Dover Publications

Girl with red sunglasses, Dangubic, dollarphotoclub.com

Student reading , jzlomek, morguefile.com

Ship, revwarheart, morguefile.com

Sword fight, Grafixar, morguefile.com

Lewis Carroll (Charles Dodgson) self portrait, "LewisCarrollSelfPhoto" by Unknown - Losslessly cropped from <http://international.loc.gov/intldl/carrollhtml/lcgallery.html> (specifically <http://international.loc.gov/intldl/carrollhtml/images/dodgson.jpg>). Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons - <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:LewisCarrollSelfPhoto.jpg#mediaviewer/File:LewisCarrollSelfPhoto.jpg>

Drawing of dwarf, Schneeweisschen und Rosenrot; Darstellung von Alexander Zick, public domain, [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Schneeweisschen\\_und\\_Rosenrot.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Schneeweisschen_und_Rosenrot.jpg)

Eng and Chang, "Chang-eng-bunker-PD" by User CatherineMunro on en.wikipedia - Originally from en.wikipedia. Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons -

<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chang-eng-bunker-PD.png#mediaviewer/File:Chang-eng-bunker-PD.png>

Am I not a man and a brother, 1788, public domain,

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Am\\_I\\_not\\_a\\_man.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Am_I_not_a_man.jpg)

### Meet the author **Sharon Watson**

Sharon Watson is the author of *Jump In*, Apologia's easy-to-use middle school writing curriculum, which appears in Cathy Duffy's *102 Top Picks for Homeschool Curriculum*. She was forced to retire from homeschooling after 18 years when she ran out of her own children but still teaches writing and literature courses in her local area. Her popular course *The Power in Your Hands: Writing Nonfiction in High School* is based on her sought-after writing classes and is the sequel to *Jump In*.

Let her **practical textbooks** teach writing for you:

- [Jump In](#), Apologia's popular middle school writing curriculum
- [The Power in Your Hands: Writing Nonfiction in High School](#)
- [Writing Fiction \[in High School\]](#)



Get **FREE writing lessons** when you subscribe to Writing with Sharon Watson. You'll also receive her fun [Middle School Prompts](#), [High School Prompts](#), and informative [Sharon's Blog](#) filled with tutorials and writing tips.

**Connect** with her here:



### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Mark Twain, *Mark Twain's Letters, Vol. II*, ed. Albert Bigelow Paine (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1917), pp. 590-1.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Darwin to W. Graham, July 3, 1881, quoted in Henry Morris ed., *Scientific Creationism* (San Diego: Creation-Life Publishers, 1974), 179.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Huxley, *Lay Sermons, Addresses and Reviews* (New York: Appleton, 1871), 20, quoted in Henry Morris, ed., *Scientific Creationism* (San Diego: Creation-Life Publishers, 1984), 178-80.

<sup>4</sup> *Natural History*, April, 1980, quoted in Henry M. Morris and Gary E. Parker, *What Is Creation Science?* (San Diego: Creation-Life Publishers, 1982), 117.

<sup>5</sup> Chuck Colson, "Pretty Stones and Dead Babies," *BreakPoint*, 1 Oct. 2003, 31 Jan. 2013, <http://www.breakpoint.org/bpcommentaries/entry/13/11555>.

<sup>6</sup> Lindsey Ziliak, "Finding your roots," *Kokomo Tribune* (Kokomo, IN) Jan. 26, 2013.