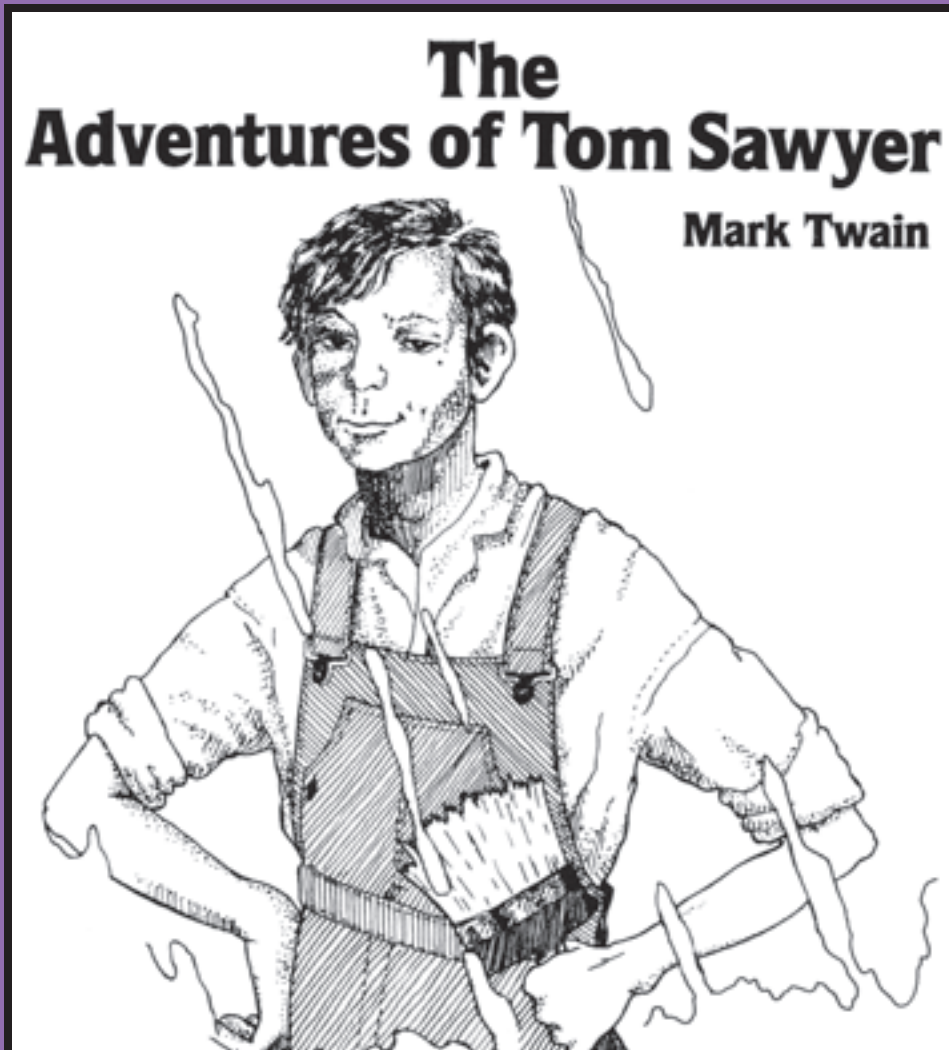


Novel·Ties



A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of instructional material to use in conjunction with the novel *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

NOVEL-TIES are either for whole class instruction using a single title or for group instruction where each group uses a different novel appropriate to its reading level. Depending upon the amount of time allotted to it in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in two to four weeks.

The first step in using NOVEL-TIES is to distribute to each student a copy of the novel and a folder containing all of the duplicated worksheets. Begin instruction by selecting several pre-reading activities in order to set the stage for the reading ahead. Vocabulary exercises for each chapter always precede the reading so that new words will be reinforced in the context of the book. Use the questions on the chapter worksheets for class discussion or as written exercises.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Twain was the first American writer to accurately portray his own real-life experiences in a novel. He drew his characters and the setting for *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* directly from Hannibal, Missouri, population 500. Here are some known examples of relationships between Twain's fictional creations and people he really knew:

Character	Source
Tom Sawyer	a combination of several boys with whom Clemens was familiar, including himself
Huck Finn	Tom Blankenship, a boyhood friend
Widow Douglas	Mrs. Haliday, a widow in Hannibal
Aunt Polly	Clemens's mother
Jim	Uncle Dan'l, an African-American slave

Pre-Reading Activities (cont.)

6. Do some research to learn about “dime-store” novels, a popular new form of literature in the mid-nineteenth century. Typically, the hero saves the heroine from the clutches of a villain, and the writer ends his chapter with a “cliffhanger” in order to build suspense and sustain the reader’s interest. *Tom Sawyer* contains many scenes which are burlesques of these literary styles. As you read, look for scenes of melodrama, mistaken identity, or unlikely coincidence, all of which illustrate Twain’s talent for tongue-in-cheek mockery.

7. Conduct a classroom survey to find out if any of your classmates are superstitious. If so, make a list of commonly held superstitions. As you read, compare the superstitions on this list with those of Tom and his contemporaries.

8. Much of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was written in the vernacular; that is, the language commonplace at the time and in the location represented in the novel, but not necessarily used in standard English. For example:
 - There was a slight noise behind her and she turned in time to seize a small boy by the slack of his roundabout and arrest his flight.
 - And look at your mouth. What is that truck?
 - He plans to know just how long he can torment me before I get my dander up, . . .
 - . . . I’ve *got* to do some of my duty by him, or I’ll be the ruination of the child.
 - . . . I bet you I’ll lam Sid for that. I’ll learn him!
 - . . . when he climbed cautiously in at the window he uncovered an ambuscade, in the person of his aunt.

Keep a list of these expressions as you read the novel. Define as many as possible through context; use a standard dictionary or a dictionary of slang if necessary. Why do you think Twain wrote in the vernacular?

9. **Literary Element—Characterization:** Begin a character chart, such as the one below, listing personality traits of each character. Add to it as new characters are introduced. As you read, consider why some critics have said that Twain’s portraits are caricatures rather than characters.

Character	Personality Traits
Tom	
Huck	
Aunt Polly	