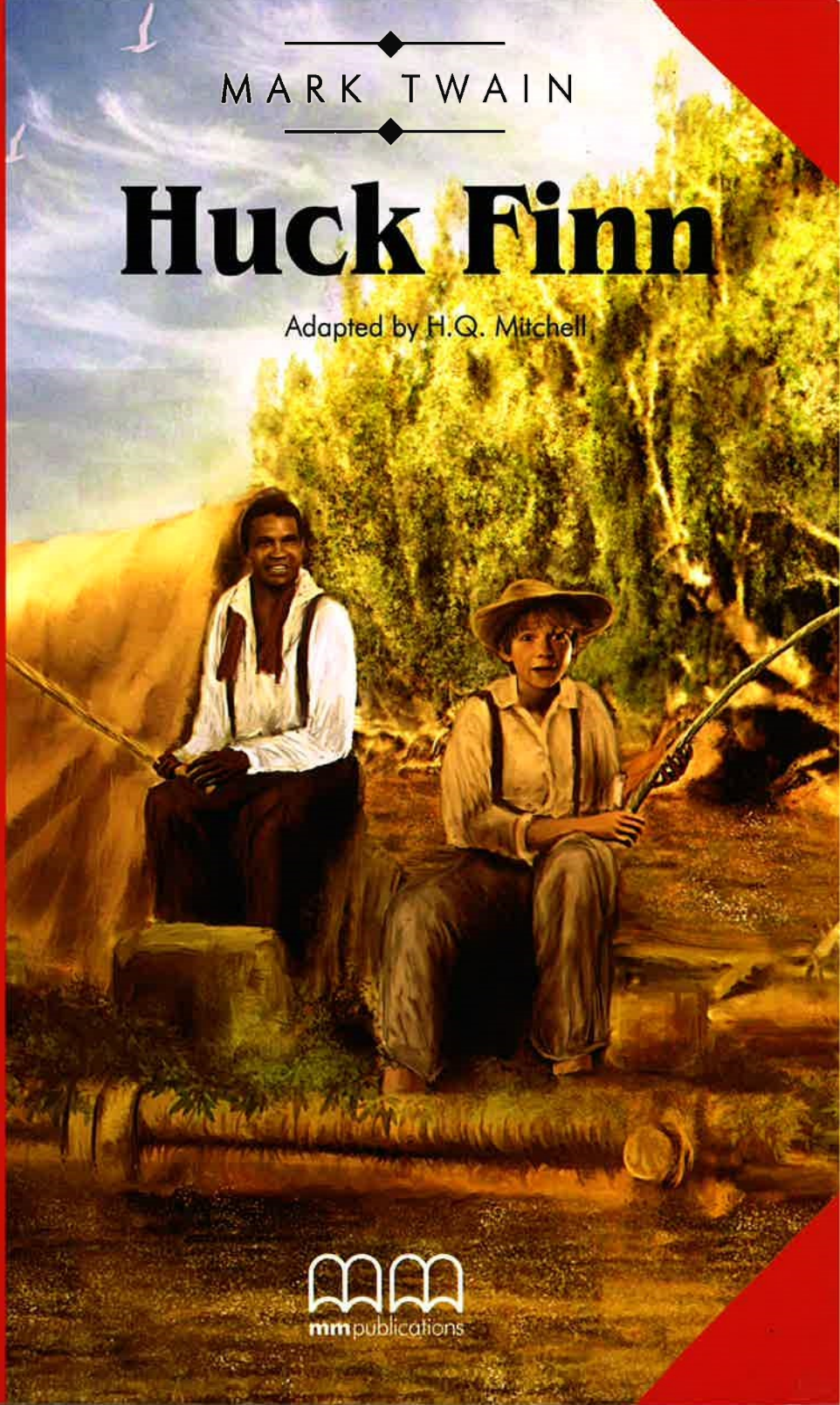


TOP READERS

MARK TWAIN

Huck Finn

Adapted by H.Q. Mitchell



level

2

mm
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Introduction

Mark Twain (1835-1910) was born and raised in the small town of Hannibal in Missouri. His real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens but he took the pseudonym Mark Twain to sign his books. He was an enormously popular author who is considered to be “the father of American literature.” He wrote numerous books, many of which tell stories of his life on the Mississippi, where he worked as a steamboat pilot. In 1871, Mark Twain went to live in Connecticut with his family. During that time, he wrote his most successful books: *Roughing It*, *Life on the Mississippi*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, he continues the story he started when he wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. It is the story of a boy and the adventures he has on a journey down the river. The adventures make Huck mature and make decisions about right and wrong. The book is an amazing description of life in the American South and it is also an opportunity to discuss sensitive subjects as slavery or social problems, which were common at the time of the writer.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is considered one of Mark Twain's masterpieces. It has been made into a film several times. One of the most successful was the Disney version in 1993, with Elijah Wood as Huck Finn.

Contents

Chapter 1.....	4
Chapter 2.....	7
Chapter 3.....	10
Chapter 4.....	12
Chapter 5.....	15
Chapter 6.....	18
Chapter 7.....	22
Chapter 8.....	25
Chapter 9.....	28
Chapter 10.....	32
Chapter 11.....	36
Activity Section	41
Chapter 1.....	42
Chapter 2.....	44
Chapter 3.....	46
Chapter 4.....	48
Chapter 5.....	50
Chapter 6.....	52
Chapter 7.....	54
Chapter 8.....	56
Chapter 9.....	58
Chapter 10.....	60
Chapter 11.....	62
Extra Activities.....	64

CHAPTER 1

HUCKLEBERRY FINN WAS FAMOUS IN THE VILLAGE OF St Petersburg, although he was only 14 years old. There were two reasons for this. First, he was the only boy with no home at all. His father was a tramp and he travelled from town to town begging for his food. Huck almost never saw him, but he managed to take care of himself. When he was hungry, he hunted and fished. He slept in empty boats or caves, under trees, anywhere there was shelter. The people of St Petersburg sometimes helped him too, because he was all alone.

For most of his life Huck was poor, and his clothes were rags. But all the other boys wanted to be like him. He didn't have to be home by a certain time; he didn't have to stay clean; and best of all, he never went to school. Every boy wanted to be his friend, but his best friend was Tom Sawyer. Tom was an orphan. He lived with his Aunt Polly and his half-brother Sid. When he had nothing to do, he found Huck and they had a lot of fun together. One of their adventures was the second reason Huck was famous.

What happened was this: Tom got lost in a huge cave near St Petersburg. In the cave there was treasure. Huck found Tom and got him out of the cave. The boys also found the treasure. The money made them very rich! Of course, they didn't spend it all at once. Judge Thatcher took Huck's money and kept it in a bank for him until he was older. That was fine with Huck. He didn't need money; he was happy already.

Then the widow Douglas adopted Huck because she felt sorry for him and she wanted to help him. She lived by herself in a big house, with her black slave, Jim. She wanted to give Huck a real home and she sent him to school, too. Huck knew she was a kind person, but he felt more comfortable with Jim.

"The widow has so many rules," Huck told Jim one evening. "For her there's only one right way to do everything. 'Don't eat with your fingers' she says. But eating with a knife and fork is nothing but trouble. I'd just like to catch a fish and eat it how I



like.”

Jim took Huck’s hand and looked at it. “Let me tell you about your future,” he said.

“You will have a lot of trouble in your life,” said Jim. “But you will also have a lot of joy. Sometimes you’ll get sick, or hurt, but you will get better again. But you should stay away from water, because that’s bad luck.”

Huck went up to his room, thinking about that. But when he got there, he had a surprise.





CHAPTER 2

A MAN ABOUT FIFTY YEARS OLD WAS SITTING ON HUCK'S BED. He had long, dirty hair, and his clothes were old and very dirty. This was Huck's father, Pap Finn.

"What are you doing here, Pap?" asked Huck. "How did you come in?"

"I climbed in through the window," answered Pap. "It wasn't difficult."

Pap looked around Huck's room. "A bed, a blanket, a mirror, a rug on the floor! You're important now, aren't you? But your own father sleeps in the mud!" He saw one of Huck's school books on the table. "Can you read, too?"

"Yes," said Huck. "I learnt at school." Pap grabbed the book and threw it at him, but Huck jumped away. "I can't read," said Pap. "Before she died, your mother couldn't read. Why is it OK for you to read?"

"The widow decided it," replied Huck.

"The widow should stay out of it," said Pap. "Tell me now. You're rich, I hear. How did you get rich?"

Now Huck knew. His father was there because of the treasure. "They're lying," he said. "The widow adopted me because I was living on the street."

"Oh, no," replied Pap. "*You* are lying. Look here, Huck, I want that money. You're my son and it belongs to me. I have to have it. Don't ever go to that school again! Do you hear?" he said to Huck and he climbed out of the window.

Huck used to be afraid of his father. But he wasn't anymore. 'Pap doesn't want me to go to school,' he thought. 'But I will. He's wrong and I'm right.' At breakfast, however, he learned something else that worried him. It was about Jim. A man from New Orleans wanted to buy Jim from the widow for eight hundred dollars. In the Southern States white people could buy and sell black people, just like horses or furniture.

They were the slaves of their white owners and had to obey their masters at all times. The widow didn't really want to sell Jim, but eight hundred dollars was a lot of money, and she was thinking about it.

Huck didn't want the widow to sell Jim. He thought about it as he walked to school. 'Jim has a wife and children,' he thought. 'If she sells him to this man, Jim will never see them again. It's not right. And I will lose my friend.' Suddenly, someone grabbed Huck from behind, and knocked him down. Huck tried to fight back, but the person dragged him away. It was Pap again.



CHAPTER 1

Comprehension

1 Choose **a, b** or **c** to answer the following questions.

1. Why did all the boys want to be like Huckleberry Finn ?
 - a. Because he was an orphan
 - b. Because he was very rich
 - c. Because he never went to school
2. What did Judge Thatcher do with Huck's money?
 - a. He put it in a bank
 - b. He hid it in a cave
 - c. He spent it
3. Who made lots of rules?
 - a. Aunt Polly
 - b. Widow Douglas
 - c. Jim
4. Who had a surprise when he went into his bedroom?
 - a. Tom
 - b. Huck
 - c. Sid

2 Read the sentences. Write **T** for True or **F** for False in the boxes.

1. The people of St Petersburg never helped Huckleberry Finn. ☐
2. Huck was lucky and became rich. ☐
3. Widow Douglas liked to eat with her fingers. ☐
4. Huck told Tom about his future. ☐
5. Huck should stay away from water. ☐

Vocabulary

3 Match the words 1-6 with their meanings a-f.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. tramp | a. old and usually dirty clothes |
| 2. rags | b. a person with the same mother or father |
| 3. cave | c. a large hole in the side of a hill or under the ground |
| 4. half-brother | d. protection from rain or danger |
| 5. shelter | e. a person without a home or a job, travelling from one place to another |

4 Complete the following sentences using the prepositions in the box.

with for about from of

1. 'Stay away _____ me. I'm sick!'
2. 'Did Martin tell you _____ our adventure in the snow?'
3. 'What is the reason _____ the mess in the kitchen?'
4. 'How long has Sue lived _____ her sister in Cambridge?'
5. 'It's OK, you don't need to help me. I can take care _____ myself.'

Follow-up activities

5 Discuss

1. Huck sometimes goes fishing when he is hungry. Would you enjoy going fishing in a river? Why? / Why not?
2. Huck didn't have a home for a long time. How do you think that made him feel?
3. The widow Douglas has too many rules. Do you find it easy or difficult to follow rules? Which rules do you find most difficult to follow?
4. What do you think is the surprise in Huck's bedroom?

6 Imagine that you are Tom Sawyer. Your teacher has asked you to write a description of your best friend. Write a description of Huck Finn. (60-80 words)