*The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn*

STUDY GUIDE

# Chapter I (1)

1. What is your reaction to Twain’s “Notice” (pg. Xi, top)? Is it meant to be taken seriously, humorously, or what?
2. Why does Twain purposely misspell the word “civilize” in the second paragraph? In Huck’s mind, what does being civilized involve?
3. Based on Miss Watson’s description of it, what is Huck’s opinion of heaven?
4. Who is the narrator in the story, and what do we know about him so far?

## Chapter II (2)

1. In this chapter, what does Twain reveal about the Jim, the slave, and his beliefs?
2. Where did Tom get his knowledge of robber bands? How would you describe Tom?

## Chapter III (3)

1. What two views of religions (Providence) does Huck get? What is Twain’s view of superstitions? Huck’s view of superstitions?
2. Why does Huck believe that the body that is found *is not that* of his father?
3. How are Tom and Huck different?
4. What comparison is made in the last line of the chapter between Sunday school and the magic lamp (think fairy tales)?

## Chapter IV (4)

1. Huck becomes upset when he sees the footprint with the cross mark in the heel. Why? What is the first thing he does after he sees the footprint? Why does he do this?
2. Who seem to be more superstitious, Jim or Huck? How do you know?

## Chapter V (5)

1. What did Pap tear up and why?
2. How is the new judge in town at first taken in/sympathetic towards pap?
3. What is Twain saying in the last paragraph of the chapter about pious people who believe in goodness and ignore reality?

## Chapter VI (6)

1. Pap, angry at Judge Thatcher and Widow Douglas, takes Huck away to an island and holds him there. What aspect of this life does Huck start liking again?
2. Despite the humor, on what dark note does this chapter end?

## Chapter VII (7)

1. Why does Huck go to the trouble of pretending to have been killed?
2. Huck wishes that Tom Sawyer were there to give the plan “fancy touches.” Why is it a better plan without Tom’s “fancy touches”?

## Chapter VIII (8)

1. Toward the end of the last chapter and in this one, there are a number of descriptions of the river and the river bank, especially at night. Find one and identify the mood created by these descriptions.
2. What is Jim’s first reaction when he sees Huck?
3. If Huck keeps quiet about Jim being a runaway, what does he say people will call him?
4. Why will Huck so easily accept the fact that Abolitionists are bad people? What does his decision to keep silent about Jim show about Huck’s character?

## Chapter IX (9)

1. Where do Huck and Jim find the dead man?
2. Why does Jim tell Huck not to look at the dead man’s face?

## Chapter X (10)

1. Why does Jim feel so strongly about *not* talking about the dead man?
2. What bad luck happens to them? Why is it Huck’s fault?
3. As the chapter ends, where does Huck go and why?

## Chapter XI (11)

1. What does the woman in town tell Huck about what has happened to pap? Who does the woman say is suspected of murdering Huck?
2. What unsettling bit of information does Huck hear from her about the island?
3. What leads the woman to suspect that Huck is not the girl he claims to be? How does she confirm this suspicion?

## Chapter XII (12)

1. What can you infer about Jim’s natural intelligence from his help with the raft?
2. What happens on the *Walter Scott*? How does this affect Huck?

## Chapter XIII (13)

1. How can we tell that, unlike the men, Huck values human life very highly? What else does the conversation Huck has with the steamboat captain reveal about his character?

## Chapter XIV (14)

1. What can you infer has changed about the relationship between the Huck and Jim?

## Chapter XV (15)

1. Why are they trying to get to Cairo, Illinois?
2. How do Jim and Huck get separated?
3. What trick does Huck play on Jim? Since Huck feels bad about it, why does it take him fifteen minutes to apologize to Jim? What does this scene say to the reader about Huck and Jim’s relative humanity and maturity?

## Chapter XVI (16)

1. When they think they are approaching Cairo, Jim becomes excited and happy; but Huck becomes upset. Why?
2. What about Jim’s future plans further upsets Huck? How would you describe the conflict Huck is feeling at this point? Find a quotation in this chapter that depicts Huck’s conflicting feelings.
3. What does the confrontation between the slave hunters and Huck point out?
4. At the end of this chapter how are Jim and Huck again separated?

## Chapter XVII (17)

1. Why are the Grangerfords so wary of strangers?
2. Critics claim that Twain is making fun of a type of poetry in the poem “Ode to Stephen Dowling Bots, Dec’d.” What type would that be?
3. What do neighbors say about Emmeline?

## Chapter XVIII (18)

1. How does Buck describe to Huck what a feud is? How would you describe the tone of that paragraph?
2. What disparaging remark about the Shepherdsons does Huck make that Buck takes exception to?
3. If, as critics claim, the author’s aim is to attack the tradition of feuding and that false code of honor, why does Twain not make one of the families cowardly?
4. What is the literary allusion that is contained in the elopement of Sophia and Harney?
5. As with the conversation of the robbers overheard on the boat, Huck is again traumatized and scarred by violence (Buck’s death). What does this scene do to him in this chapter? How does the reader know that this scene has made a profound impression on Huck?
6. Why might Huck claim, “there warn’t no home like a raft, after all. Other places do seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don’t. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft”? (pg.117 )

## Chapter XIX (19)

1. At one point, Huck and Jim seem to have a serious philosophical discussion about whether the stars were made, created by a supreme being, or whether the universe was the result of some kind of accident. What is Jim’s theory? What was the point of this conversation in terms of the overall theme of the novel?
2. How does Huck meet the duke and the Dauphin? What is Huck’s opinion of the two?

## Chapter XX (20)

1. Critics say that Twain is satirizing excessive religious fervor in the camp-meeting incident. What is your opinion? Is he satirizing it or simply describing it? Explain.
2. What has the duke done that will allow them to run the raft during daylight hours?

## Chapter XXI (21)

1. Hamlet’s soliloquy on page 136, as remembered by the duke, is a bunch of nice-sounding lines from several different Shakespearean plays jammed together, but they mean nothing. What are some lines you recognize, and from what plays do they come?
2. How do the townspeople describe Boggs? What happens to Boggs?

## Chapter XXII (22)

1. What does Col. Sherbourne say about “the average man”? How does this connect to *Corn Pone Opinions*?
2. This is probably Twain’s bitterest attack on people. Do you think Twain believes that people are as bad as Sherbourne says they are? Do you agree with Sherbourne’s comments on people?
3. After their first show fails, the duke plans a second show. Why does he think his last line on the playbill will really draw the crowd?

## Chapter XXIII (23)

1. Why does the crowd that attends the Royal Nonesuch show tell everyone else in town that it is a good show?
2. Huck tells Jim about king and gets some of his facts straight, but some are totally wrong. What one opinion of Huck’s (and probably Twain’s) comes across clearly?
3. Why is Huck surprised that Jim cares so much for his children? What story does Jim tell that is filled with sentimentality and sadness?

## Chapter XXIV (24)

1. Where does the Dauphin get all his information about the Wilks family? How could this help the group?
2. Huck concludes this chapter by saying, “It was enough to make a body ashamed of the human race” (Pg.160).To what is he referring?

## Chapter XXV (25)

1. In this chapter Twain has his characters misuse two words, “diseased” and “orgies.” What words should the character have used? Why would Twain have his characters do this?
2. What is Huck referring to when he says, “I never see anything so disgusting”?
3. Who challenges all the nonsense of the duke and Dauphin?

## Chapter XXVI (26)

1. Why does Huck start to feel remorse about this hoax in which he has become involved?
2. Despite the doctor nearly spoiling the plan, the Dauphin is still confident. Why?
3. What would you suppose Twain’s opinion of the human race is at the time he wrote these passages?

## Chapter XXVII (27)

1. Where does Huck hide the bag of gold? Who do the Dauphin and duke believe have taken the gold?

## Chapter XXVIII (28)

1. Why does Huck tell Mary Jane the truth?
2. “I see I had spoke too sudden, and said too much, and was in a close place. I asked her to let me think a minute; and she set there, very impatient and excited, and handsome, but looking kind of happy and eased-up, like a person that’s had a tooth pulled out. So I went to studying it out. I says to myself, I reckon a body that ups and tells the truth when he is in a tight place, is taking considerable resks, though I ain’t had no experience, and can’t say for certain; but it looks so to me, anyway; and yet here’s a case where I’m blest if it don’t look to me like the truth is better, and actuly *safer*, than a lie. I must lay it by in my mind, and think it over some time or other, it’s so kind of strange and unregular. I never see nothing like it. Well, I says to myself at last, I’m agoing to chance it; I’ll up and tell the truth this time, though it does seem most like setting down on a kag of powder and touching it off just to see where you’ll go to.” (Pg. 181-182)

The above quotation explains a great deal about Huck’s increasing maturity and understanding of morality, as well as his keen observations. What is explained?

## Chapter XXIX (29)

1. Chapters 27, 28 and 29 move along quickly and hold the reader’s attention. Why?
2. At the end of the chapter why is Huck first elated, then depressed?

## Chapter XXX (30)

1. Why does the Dauphin confess that he is the one who stole the gold and put it in the coffin?
2. What single incident proves the Dauphin and duke to be nearly as stupid as the townspeople?

### Chapter XXXI (31)

1. What is Huck’s reaction when he learns that the duke and the Dauphin sold Jim for $40?
2. Why is Huck’s conscience troubled in this chapter?
3. Part of Twain’s artistry is to attack something while not appearing to be attacking it. Explain how he does this in this chapter.

### Chapter XXXII (32)

1. When Huck makes up a story about a boiler blowing up, he is asked if anyone is hurt. What is Huck’s answer, and what attitude of the people does Twain attack with this answer?
2. Explain the fortunate coincidence that enables Huck to continue his masquerade.

### Chapter XXXIII (33)

1. Why is Huck surprised that Tom gets involved in stealing a slave?
2. Twain, on a number of occasions, has attacked the common man, sometimes savagely; what is his opinion of Uncle Silas and farmers like him?
3. When Huck hurries to town with Tom, what do they see; and what is Huck’s reaction? How is this opinion ironic?
4. At the end of this chapter why is Huck feeling “to blame, somehow – though I hadn’t done nothing”? (Pg. 223) What do his comments about a conscience mean?

### Chapter XXXIV (34)

1. Why does Tom want to make Jim’s escape more difficult and time-consuming than it needs to be?
2. Some readers criticize Twain because they say he has again robbed Jim of his humanity in this and the succeeding chapters, and reduced him to a non-entity, a character who is nearly unnecessary, except to serve as the reason for Tom’s escape plan. Do you agree? Explain.

**Chapter XXXV-XXXIX (35-39)**

1. Tom’s elaborate plans can be seen as merely a child’s imagination filled with incidents from books. However, Twain makes a pointed attack in this planning. Where is it directed?
2. What concession to reality does Tom make in his plan to dig out Jim?
3. How can you explain Jim’s willingness to go along with Tom’s foolishness?
4. How does Tom further complicate the plan to free Jim?

### Chapter XL (40)

1. Why does Tom need a doctor? How does it happen?
2. What startling revelation does Huck come to regarding Jim?

### Chapter XLI (41)

1. Huck shows himself to be a thoughtful, caring person at the end of this chapter. In what way does he do this?

### Chapter XLII (42)

1. What stops the angry farmers from lynching Jim?
2. In this chapter, how does Tom’s earlier willingness to aid in Jim’s escape become understandable?

### Chapter the last

1. What superstition does Jim bring up again?
2. Why do you suppose that Jim kept the dead man’s identity a secret from Huck?
3. Throughout the story, the river represents peace, happiness, and freedom. The towns and civilization represent rules, boredom, and sometimes cruelty and treachery. In the last paragraph of the story, what does Huck say is preferable?
4. By the end of the novel, most of the loose ends are tied. What do we learn about Huck’s father?