

Mark Twain - “The Glorious Whitewasher” – Grade 7

Originally published in New York: Modern Library, 2001 (1876).

Learning Objective: The goal of this one day exemplar is to give students the opportunity to use the reading and writing habits they’ve been practicing on a regular basis to discover the rich humor and moral lesson embedded in Twain’s text. By reading and rereading the passage closely, and focusing their reading through a series of questions and discussion about the text, students will explore the problem Tom Sawyer faced and how he “solved” his conundrum. When combined with writing about the passage, students will learn to appreciate how Twain’s humor contains a deeper message and derive satisfaction from the struggle to master complex text.

Reading Task: *Rereading is deliberately built into the instructional unit. Students will silently read the passage in question on a given day—first independently and then following along with the text as the teacher and/or skillful students read aloud. Depending on the difficulties of a given text and the teacher’s knowledge of the fluency abilities of students, the order of the student silent read and the teacher reading aloud with students following might be reversed. What is important is to allow all students to interact with challenging text on their own as frequently and independently as possible. Students will then reread specific passages in response to a set of concise, text-dependent questions that compel them to examine the meaning and structure of Twain’s prose.*

Vocabulary Task: *Most of the meanings of words in this selection can be discovered from careful reading of the context in which they appear. Teachers can use discussions to model and reinforce how to learn vocabulary from contextual clues, and students must be held accountable for engaging in this practice. Where it is judged this is not possible, underlined words are defined briefly for students in a separate column whenever the original text is reproduced. At times, this is all the support these words need. At other times, particularly with abstract words, teachers will need to spend more time explaining and discussing them. In addition, for subsequent readings, high value academic (‘Tier Two’) words have been **bolded** to draw attention to them. Given how crucial vocabulary knowledge is to students’ academic and career success, it is essential that these high value words be discussed and lingered over during the instructional sequence.*

Sentence Syntax Task: *On occasion students will encounter particularly difficult sentences to decode. Teachers should engage in a close examination of such sentences to help students discover how they are built and how they convey meaning. While many questions addressing important aspects of the text double as questions about syntax, students should receive regular supported practice in deciphering complex sentences. It is crucial that the help they receive in unpacking text complexity focuses both on the precise meaning of what the author is saying and why the author might have constructed the sentence in this particular fashion. That practice will in turn support students’ ability to unpack meaning from syntactically complex sentences they encounter in future reading.*

Discussion Task: *Students will discuss the passage in depth with their teacher and their classmates, performing activities that result in a close reading of Twain’s text. The goal is to foster student confidence when encountering complex text and to reinforce the skills they have acquired regarding how to build and extend their understanding of a text. A general principle is to always reread the portion of text that provides evidence for the question under discussion. This gives students another encounter with the text, reinforces the use of text evidence, and helps develop fluency.*

Writing Task: *Students will paraphrase different sentences and sections of Twain's text and then write a narrative inspired by Twain's message. Teachers might afford students the opportunity to rewrite their narrative or revise their in-class paraphrases after participating in classroom discussion, allowing them to refashion both their understanding of the text and their expression of that understanding.*

Text Selection: This scene, taken from Appendix B of the CCSS, is a well-regarded favorite by Twain that illustrates core principles regarding attitudes toward work and play. The scene, drawn from his novel, *Tom Sawyer*, stands on its own and allows for students to read deeply and extract meaning from a relatively brief passage that is rich in humor, insight, and vocabulary. Learning how to identify key passages within a novel for the purposes of close reading is also essential for creating confident, independent readers.

Outline of Lesson Plan: This lesson can be delivered in one day of instruction and reflection on the part of students and their teacher, with the possibility of adding an additional day devoted to peer review and revision of a culminating writing assignment.

Standards Covered: The following Common Core State Standards are the focus of this assignment: RL.6-8.1-3 & 6; W.6-8.3 & 9; SL.6-8.1; L.6-8.4-6.

The Text: Twain, Mark. “Whitewashing the Fence” from *Tom Sawyer*

Exemplar Text	Vocabulary
<p>But Tom’s energy did not last. He began to think of the fun he had planned for this day, and his sorrows multiplied. Soon the free boys would come tripping along on all sorts of delicious expeditions, and they would make a world of fun of him for having to work—the very thought of it burnt him like fire. He got out his worldly wealth and examined it—bits of toys, marbles, and trash; enough to buy an exchange of WORK, maybe, but not half enough to buy so much as half an hour of pure freedom. So he returned his <u>straitened</u> means to his pocket, and gave up the idea of trying to buy the boys. At this dark and hopeless moment an inspiration burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration.</p>	<p><i>sharply limited</i></p>
<p>He took up his brush and went <u>tranquilly</u> to work. Ben Rogers hove in sight presently—the very boy, of all boys, whose ridicule he had been dreading. Ben’s gait was the hop-skip-and-jump—proof enough that his heart was light and his anticipations high. He was eating an apple, and giving a long, melodious whoop, at intervals, followed by a deep-toned ding-dong-dong, ding-dong-dong, for he was <u>personating</u> a steamboat. As he drew near, he slackened speed, took the middle of the street, leaned far over to starboard and rounded to ponderously and with laborious pomp and circumstance—for he was personating the Big Missouri, and considered himself to be drawing nine feet of water. He was boat and captain and engine-bells combined, so he had to imagine himself standing on his own hurricane-deck giving the orders and executing them:</p>	<p><i>peacefully</i></p> <p><i>acting like or imitating</i></p>
<p>“Stop her, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling!” The headway ran almost out, and he drew up slowly toward the sidewalk. “Ship up to back! Ting-a-ling-ling!” His arms straightened and stiffened down his sides.</p>	
<p>“Set her back on the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow! ch-chow-wow! Chow!” His right hand, meantime, describing stately circles—for it was representing a forty-foot wheel.</p>	
<p>“Let her go back on the labboard! Ting-a-lingling! Chow-ch-chow-chow!” The left hand began to describe circles. “Stop the stabboard!</p>	

Exemplar Text	Vocabulary
<p>Ting-a-ling-ling! Stop the labboard! Come ahead on the stabboard! Stop her! Let your outside turn over slow! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow-ow-ow! Get out that head-line! LIVELY now! Come—out with your spring-line—what’re you about there! Take a turn round that stump with the bight of it! Stand by that stage, now—let her go! Done with the engines, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling! SH’T! S’H’T! SH’T!” (trying the gauge-cocks).”</p> <p>Tom went on whitewashing—paid no attention to the steamboat. Ben stared a moment and then said: “Hi-YI! YOU’RE up a stump, ain’t you!”</p> <p>No answer. Tom surveyed his last touch with the eye of an artist, then he gave his brush another gentle sweep and surveyed the result, as before. Ben ranged up alongside of him. Tom’s mouth watered for the apple, but he stuck to his work.</p> <p>Ben said: “Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?”</p> <p>Tom wheeled suddenly and said: “Why, it’s you, Ben! I warn’t noticing.”</p> <p>“Say—I’m going in a-swimming, I am. Don’t you wish you could? But of course you’d druther WORK—wouldn’t you? Course you would!”</p> <p>Tom <u>contemplated</u> the boy a bit, and said: “What do you call work?”</p> <p>“Why, ain’t THAT work?”</p> <p>Tom resumed his whitewashing, and answered carelessly: “Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain’t. All I know, is it suits Tom Sawyer.”</p> <p>“Oh come, now, you don’t mean to let on that you LIKE it?”</p> <p>The brush continued to move.</p> <p>“Like it? Well, I don’t see why I oughtn’t to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?” That put the thing in a new light. Ben stopped nibbling his apple. Tom swept his brush daintily</p>	<p><i>studied carefully</i></p>

Exemplar Text	Vocabulary
<p>back and forth—stepped back to note the effect—added a touch here and there—criticized the effect again—Ben watching every move and getting more and more interested, more and more absorbed. Presently he said:</p> <p>“Say, Tom, let ME whitewash a little.”</p> <p>Tom considered, was about to consent; but he altered his mind:</p> <p>“No—no—I reckon it wouldn’t hardly do, Ben. You see, Aunt Polly’s awful particular about this fence—right here on the street, you know—but if it was the back fence I wouldn’t mind and SHE wouldn’t. Yes, she’s awful particular about this fence; it’s got to be done very careful; I reckon there ain’t one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand, that can do it the way it’s got to be done.”</p> <p>“No—is that so? Oh come now—lemme just try. Only just a little—I’d let YOU, if you was me, Tom.”</p> <p>“Ben, I’d like to, honest injun; but Aunt Polly—well, Jim wanted to do it, but she wouldn’t let him; Sid wanted to do it, and she wouldn’t let Sid. Now don’t you see how I’m fixed? If you was to tackle this fence and anything was to happen to it—” “Oh, shucks, I’ll be just as careful. Now lemme try. Say—I’ll give you the core of my apple.”</p> <p>“Well, here—No, Ben, now don’t. I’m afeard—”</p> <p>“I’ll give you ALL of it!”</p> <p>Tom gave up the brush with reluctance in his face, but <u>alacrity</u> in his heart. And while the late steamer Big Missouri worked and sweated in the sun, the retired artist sat on a barrel in the shade close by, dangled his legs, munched his apple, and planned the slaughter of more innocents. There was no lack of material; boys happened along every little while; they came to jeer, but remained to whitewash. By the time Ben was <u>fagged out</u>, Tom had traded the next chance to Billy Fisher for a kite, in good repair; and when he played out, Johnny Miller bought in for a dead rat and a string to swing it with—and so</p>	<p><i>speedy eagerness</i></p> <p><i>exhausted</i></p>

Exemplar Text	Vocabulary
<p>on, and so on, hour after hour. And when the middle of the afternoon came, from being a poor poverty-stricken boy in the morning, Tom was literally rolling in wealth. He had besides the things before mentioned, twelve marbles, part of a jews-harp, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a spool cannon, a key that wouldn't unlock anything, a fragment of chalk, a glass stopper of a decanter, a tin soldier, a couple of tadpoles, six fire-crackers, a kitten with only one eye, a brass doorknob, a dog-collar—but no dog—the handle of a knife, four pieces of orange-peel, and a dilapidated old window sash.</p> <p>He had had a nice, good, idle time all the while—plenty of company—and the fence had three coats of whitewash on it! If he hadn't run out of whitewash he would have bankrupted every boy in the village.</p> <p>Tom said to himself that it was not such a hollow world, after all. He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy <u>covet</u> a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to <u>attain</u>. If he had been a great and wise philosopher, like the writer of this book, he would now have comprehended that Work consists of whatever a body is OBLIGED to do, and that Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do. And this would help him to understand why constructing artificial flowers or performing on a tread-mill is work, while rolling ten-pins or climbing Mont Blanc is only amusement. There are wealthy gentlemen in England who drive four-horse passenger-coaches twenty or thirty miles on a daily line, in the summer, because the privilege costs them considerable money; but if they were offered wages for the service, that would turn it into work and then they would resign.</p> <p>The boy mused awhile over the substantial change which had taken place in his worldly circumstances, and then wended toward headquarters to report.</p>	<p><i>desire</i> <i>get</i></p>

Day One: Instructional Exemplar for Twain’s *Tom Sawyer*

Summary of Activities

1. The teacher introduces the day’s passage with minimal commentary and students read it independently.
2. The teacher or a skillful student then reads the passage out loud to the class as students follow along in the text.
3. The teacher asks the class to discuss text-dependent questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate.
4. For homework, the teacher asks students to write a narrative exploration of the same moral lesson extracted from the close reading.

Text under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students
<p>But Tom’s energy did not last. He began to think of the fun he had planned for this day, and his sorrows multiplied. Soon the free boys would come tripping along on all sorts of delicious expeditions, and they would make a world of fun of him for having to work—the very thought of it burnt him like fire. He got out his worldly wealth and examined it—bits of toys, marbles, and trash; enough to buy an exchange of WORK, maybe, but not half enough to buy so much as half an hour of pure freedom. So he returned his straitened means to his pocket, and gave up the idea of trying to buy the boys. At this dark and hopeless moment an inspiration burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration...</p> <p>[read entire text]</p> <p>... The boy mused awhile over the substantial change which had taken place in his worldly circumstances, and then wended toward headquarters to report.</p>	<p>1. Introduce the text and students read independently</p> <p>Other than giving the brief definitions offered to words students would likely not be able to define from context (underlined in the text), avoid giving any background context or instructional guidance at the outset of the lesson while students are reading the text silently. This close reading approach forces students to rely exclusively on the text, and levels the playing field for all students as they seek to comprehend Twain’s text. It is critical to cultivating independence and creating a culture of close reading that students initially grapple with rich texts like Twain’s prose without the aid of prefatory material, extensive notes, or even teacher explanations.</p> <p>2. Read the text out loud as students follow along</p> <p>Asking students to listen to Twain’s <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> exposes students a second time to the rhythms and meaning of his language before they begin their own close reading of the text. Speaking clearly and carefully will allow students to follow the shape of Twain’s story, and reading out loud with students following along improves fluency while offering all students access to this complex text. Accurate and skillful modeling of the reading provides students who may be dysfluent with accurate pronunciations and syntactic patterns of English.</p>

Text under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students
<p>But Tom’s energy did not last. He began to think of the fun he had planned for this day, and his sorrows multiplied. Soon the free boys would come tripping along on all sorts of delicious expeditions, and they would make a world of fun of him for having to work—the very thought of it burnt him like fire. He got out his worldly wealth and examined it—bits of toys, marbles, and trash; enough to buy an exchange of WORK, maybe, but not half enough to buy so much as half an hour of pure freedom. So he returned his <u>straitened</u> means to his pocket, and gave up the idea of trying to buy the boys. At this dark and hopeless moment an inspiration burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration.</p> <p>He took up his brush and went <u>tranquilly</u> to work. Ben Rogers hove in sight presently—the very boy, of all boys, whose ridicule he had been dreading. Ben’s gait was the hop-skip-and-jump—proof enough that his heart was light and his anticipations high. He was eating an apple, and giving a long, melodious whoop, at intervals, followed by a deep-toned ding-dong-dong, ding-dong-dong, for he was <u>personating</u> a steamboat. As he drew near, he slackened speed, took the middle of the street, leaned far over to starboard and rounded to ponderously and with laborious pomp and circumstance—for he was personating the Big Missouri, and considered himself to be drawing nine feet of water. He was boat and captain and engine-bells combined, so he had to imagine himself standing on his own hurricane-deck giving the orders and executing them:</p>	<p>3. Ask the class to answer a set of text-dependent guided questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate.</p> <p>As students move through these questions, be sure to check for and reinforce their understanding of academic vocabulary in the corresponding text (which will be boldfaced the first time it appears in the text). At times the questions may focus on academic vocabulary.</p> <p>(Q1) Describe Tom’s state of mind prior to his inspiration.</p> <p>Tom Sawyer is a high-spirited boy who was looking forward to a fun day he had planned, but unfortunately he has to work. This realization “burnt him like fire” and he contemplates trying to buy his way out of his labors, only to realize that he doesn’t possess the financial wherewithal to do so—driving him further into a “dark and hopeless” mood.</p> <p>(Q2) Why was Ben Rogers whooping melodiously? What is occurring in this selection?</p> <p>Unlike Tom, Ben’s “heart was light” in anticipation of the fun he would have this day. His carefree attitude is reflected in his impersonation of a steamboat, captain, and even the bells of the engine.</p> <p>Sidebar: Video of a Steamboat</p> <p>If students are unfamiliar with a steamboat, teachers can show them the following video of a modern-day steamboat on the Mississippi River:</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDYsdoYEna0</p>

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<p>“Stop her, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling!” The headway ran almost out, and he drew up slowly toward the sidewalk. “Ship up to back! Ting-a-ling-ling!” His arms straightened and stiffened down his sides.</p> <p>“Set her back on the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow! ch-chow-wow! Chow!” His right hand, meantime, describing stately circles—for it was representing a forty-foot wheel.</p> <p>“Let her go back on the labboard! Ting-a-lingling! Chow-ch-chow-chow!” The left hand began to describe circles. “Stop the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Stop the labboard! Come ahead on the stabboard! Stop her! Let your outside turn over slow! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow-ow-ow! Get out that head-line! LIVELY now! Come—out with your spring-line—what’re you about there! Take a turn round that stump with the bight of it! Stand by that stage, now—let her go! Done with the engines, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling! SH’T! S’H’T! SH’T!” (trying the gauge-cocks).</p> <p>Tom went on whitewashing—paid no attention to the steamboat. Ben stared a moment and then said: “Hi-YI! YOU’RE up a stump, ain’t you!”</p> <p>No answer. Tom surveyed his last touch with the eye of an artist, then he gave his brush another gentle sweep and surveyed the result, as before. Ben ranged up alongside of him. Tom’s mouth watered for the apple, but he stuck to his work.</p> <p>Ben said: “Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?”</p> <p>Tom wheeled suddenly and said: “Why, it’s you, Ben! I warn’t noticing.”</p> <p>“Say—I’m going in a-swimming, I am. Don’t you wish you could? But of course you’d druther WORK—wouldn’t you? Course you would!”</p> <p>Tom contemplated the boy a bit, and said: “What do you call work?”</p> <p>“Why, ain’t THAT work?”</p> <p>Tom resumed his whitewashing, and answered carelessly: “Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain’t. All I know, is it suits Tom Sawyer.”</p>	<p>Ask students in groups of three to read and act out the passage—one as Tom, one as Ben, and one as the narrator.</p> <p>Asking students to act out this portion of the text engages them in the sights and sounds of Twain’s world and makes them deliberately engage the text. Students should be given wide latitude to interpret both the tone of the dialogue as well as staging the action. Teachers should circulate to check for comprehension and if time permits ask particularly creative groups to present all or a portion of the text to the entire class.</p> <p>(Q3) Why is Ben moving his arms and his hands in the manner he is?</p> <p>This is a logical question to ask as a follow up to the earlier reading and re-enactment of the scene, capturing the manner in which he is imitating a paddlewheel and motion of the steamboat.</p> <p>(Q4) Is Tom’s surprise genuine?</p> <p>This is a good question to ask to determine close reading comprehension. There is ample evidence that Tom is well aware of Ben’s presence (“paid no attention to the steamboat”; “Tom’s mouth watered for the apple”) but is feigning surprise (“Why, it’s you, Ben! I warn’t noticing”).</p> <p><i>studied carefully</i></p>

Text under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students
<p>“Oh come, now, you don’t mean to let on that you LIKE it?”</p> <p>The brush continued to move.</p> <p>“Like it? Well, I don’t see why I oughtn’t to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?” That put the thing in a new light. Ben stopped nibbling his apple. Tom swept his brush daintily back and forth—stepped back to note the effect—added a touch here and there—criticized the effect again—Ben watching every move and getting more and more interested, more and more absorbed. Presently he said:</p> <p>“Say, Tom, let ME whitewash a little.”</p> <p>Tom considered, was about to consent; but he altered his mind:</p> <p>“No—no—I reckon it wouldn’t hardly do, Ben. You see, Aunt Polly’s awful particular about this fence—right here on the street, you know—but if it was the back fence I wouldn’t mind and SHE wouldn’t. Yes, she’s awful particular about this fence; it’s got to be done very careful; I reckon there ain’t one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand, that can do it the way it’s got to be done.”</p> <p>“No—is that so? Oh come now—lemme just try. Only just a little—I’d let YOU, if you was me, Tom.”</p> <p>“Ben, I’d like to, honest injun; but Aunt Polly—well, Jim wanted to do it, but she wouldn’t let him; Sid wanted to do it, and she wouldn’t let Sid. Now don’t you see how I’m fixed? If you was to tackle this fence and anything was to happen to it—” “Oh, shucks, I’ll be just as careful. Now lemme try. Say—I’ll give you the core of my apple.”</p> <p>“Well, here—No, Ben, now don’t. I’m afeard—”</p> <p>“I’ll give you ALL of it!”</p>	<p>Reconfigure students into new groups of three to read and act out this passage—one as Tom, one as Ben, and one as the narrator.</p> <p>Like before, asking students to act out this portion of the text makes them deliberately engage the text while forcing them to deliberate on how to speak and deliver Twain’s dialogue. Teachers can create a competition amongst groups for the most dramatic reading, the funniest reading, the reading that is most faithful to the text and Twain’s intentions, etc.</p> <p>(Q5) List at least four of the ways Twain has used so far to describe Tom painting the fence. What impact do these descriptions have on Ben’s attitude towards painting?</p> <p>Swept brush “daintily,” “surveyed with the eye of an artist,” “Went tranquilly to work,” “put a touch here and there,” “criticized the effect again”. The fact that Tom Sawyer continues to paint the fence is crucial for creating the illusion that the task is genuinely attractive. Twain draws attention to the task through his myriad descriptions of the activity. Tom’s absorption in the task ultimately leads Ben to ask if he can participate.</p> <p>(Q6) Why does Tom hesitate to allow Ben to paint the fence? How are his sentences constructed to reflect that hesitation? What effect do Tom’s hesitations have on Ben?</p> <p>This is another good comprehension question to test to see if students truly understand Tom’s hesitation as not genuine but rather designed to stoke Ben’s interest. Ben’s willingness by the end to give up his apple to Tom for the privilege of painting the fence shows just how much his attitude has changed from the beginning of the text.</p>

Text under Discussion**Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students**

Tom gave up the brush with **reluctance** in his face, but alacrity in his heart. And while the **late** steamer Big Missouri worked and sweated in the sun, the **retired** artist sat on a barrel in the shade close by, dangled his legs, munched his apple, and planned the slaughter of more innocents. There was no lack of **material**; boys happened along every little while; they came to jeer, but remained to whitewash. By the time Ben was fagged out, Tom had traded the next chance to Billy Fisher for a kite, in good repair; and when he played out, Johnny Miller bought in for a dead rat and a string to swing it with—and so on, and so on, hour after hour. And when the middle of the afternoon came, from being a poor **poverty-stricken** boy in the morning, Tom was **literally** rolling in wealth. He had besides the things before mentioned, twelve marbles, part of a jews-harp, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a spool cannon, a key that wouldn't unlock anything, a **fragment** of chalk, a glass **stopper** of a **decanter**, a tin soldier, a couple of tadpoles, six fire-crackers, a kitten with only one eye, a brass doorknob, a dog-collar—but no dog—the handle of a knife, four pieces of orange-peel, and a **dilapidated** old window sash.

He had had a nice, good, idle time all the while—plenty of company—and the fence had three coats of whitewash on it! If he hadn't run out of whitewash he would have **bankrupted** every boy in the village.

Tom said to himself that it was not such a **hollow** world, after all. He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain. If he had been a great and wise **philosopher**, like the writer of this book, he would now have comprehended that Work consists of whatever a body is **OBLIGED** to do, and that Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do. And this would help him to understand why constructing **artificial** flowers or performing on a treadmill is work, while rolling ten-pins or climbing Mont Blanc is only **amusement**. There are wealthy gentlemen in England who drive four-horse passenger-coaches twenty or thirty miles on a daily line, in the summer, because the **privilege** costs them **considerable** money; but if they were offered **wages** for the service, that would turn it into work and then they would resign.

The boy **mused** awhile over the **substantial** change which had taken place in his worldly **circumstances**, and then wended toward headquarters to report.

(Q7) Translate the first two sentences of this paragraph into your own words.

These sentences sum up Tom's state of mind and are an excellent way to test comprehension. Teachers can circulate around the room and perform "over-the-shoulder" conferences to confirm or clarify student understanding of the sentence as reflecting the discrepancy between Tom's public face and the desires of his private heart. Teachers should make sure students notice and wrestle with the classic phrase "and planned the slaughter of more innocents" since many students will be thrown by this.

(Q8) Put the "great law of human action" and the difference between "work" and "play" into your own words.

Insisting that students paraphrase Twain at this point serves the purpose of solidifying their understanding of the moral Tom extracts from his experience—one Twain wanted his readers to appreciate as well. Asking them to paraphrase Twain also tests their ability to communicate their understanding of the text fluently in writing. Teachers should circulate and perform "over the shoulder" conferences with students to check comprehension and offer commentary that could lead to on the spot revision of their "translation" of Tom's insight into human nature.

Narrative Writing Assignment: Directions for Teachers and Students/Guidance for Teachers

For homework, choose one of the following prompts to complete:

- Construct a narrative that teaches the same lesson(s) that Tom learns at the end of the passage. Incorporate both the voice of a narrator, as well as dialogue in your story.
- Write a parody of the scene by changing the characters and work being done to reflect a modern dilemma.

During the next class period the stories could be peer reviewed, shared as public speaking opportunities, and/or time could be set aside to revise them.

Teachers should resist the inclination to provide possible scenarios to explore until after the students have been given a moment to explore possibilities of their own choosing. If students remain stuck, some scenarios that can be suggested include the following:

- Getting friends to do their homework
- Having to do household chores
- Being asked to wash their parents' car on a Saturday morning

Teachers should check for an appropriate balance of the narrator's voice and dialogue, and examine the scenario closely to see if the lesson emerges naturally from the situation selected. Students should also be encouraged to use dialect in their writing (much like Twain employs Southern idiom) and select words that reflect their contemporary understanding.