

Mark Twain

Literary Analysis Essay

Assignment: Write an essay in which you address one of the following ideas and demonstrate how *The Adventures of Huckleberry* is representative of the ideas of Realism.

1. Why did Twain name his title character Huckleberry? In the late nineteenth century, the word referred to an utterly insignificant person or event. This is how Ralph Waldo Emerson used the term in his 1862 eulogy for Henry David Thoreau: “Instead of engineering for all America, he was the captain of a huckleberry party.”
2. The novel’s overarching theme is how young Huck has internalized his society’s racial prejudice yet is able, at times, to rise above it.
3. Huckleberry Finn is also our greatest example of regional or “local color” writing, a genre that flourished following the Civil War. The war ushered in an era of centralization and organization building that undermined the culture of the nation’s unique regions. Local color fiction documented the distinctive cultures of those parts of the country that were being lost to social and economic modernization, in this case, the culture of the Mississippi River. And so the novel is a “people’s history” of a community and way of life that has been lost to “progress,” a concept that Twain hated.

Refer to class handouts/questions and include examples from the text to support your answer. Use specific examples from various chapters, including quotations and page numbers. ****Essay should be written in MLA format.**

Tips for writing your essay:

- Quotations should not float as their own, separate sentences. Embed them into your sentences. (See the quotation example below)
- Follow this format for punctuation around parenthetical citations:

Twain demonstrates the variety of dialects surrounding the Mississippi River through many characters’ dialogue and Huckleberry’s narration. Huckleberry shows his own aversion to education and the new restrictions on his life when he describes that he “clumb up the shed” getting his “new clothes was all greased up and clayey”(4).
- Write in PRESENT TENSE, not past. (See the quotation example above: Twain **demonstrates**, Huckleberry **shows**, etc.)
- Refer to the author by his full name or last name only. You may refer to characters within the text by first name only.
- Do not use first-person (I, me, we, us) or second-person (you) pronouns in your essay. Use only third-person pronouns (he, she, they, one).

Essay must be submitted to turnitin.com by 11:59:59pm on **Monday, April 6**

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Structure of the Essay:

I. Introduction

- A. Attention-getter. (Options: interesting, related statement about Twain or Huckleberry Finn, a quotation from the novel, etc. *"Have you ever wondered...?" is **not** an option.*)
- B. Thesis. Include the author's full name and the title of the book.
Example: In his novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain represents the disappearing culture of the Mississippi River in an attempt to preserve it.
- C. Preview (Three) Main Points.

II. Body of Essay

- A. Paragraph 2 – First main point
 - 1. Explain the main point.
 - 2. Example from a chapter (including quotation and page number).
Analyze how quotation demonstrates the main point.
 - 3. Example from a second chapter (including quotation and page number). Analyze how quotation demonstrates the main point.
- B. Paragraph 3 – Second main point
 - 1. Explain the main point.
 - 2. Example from one chapter (including quotation and page number).
Analyze how quotation demonstrates the main point.
 - 3. Example from second chapter (including quotation and page number). Analyze how quotation demonstrates the main point.
- C. Paragraph 4 – Third main point (How *Huckleberry Finn* is a representation of Realism)
 - 1. Explain the main point.
 - 2. Example from one chapter (including quotation and page number).
Analyze how quotation demonstrates the main point.
 - 3. Example from second chapter (including quotation and page number). Analyze how quotation demonstrates the main point.

III. Conclusion

- A. Restate thesis (in different words), including recap of three main points.
- B. Final thought (connecting *Huckleberry Finn* to Realism, or the Topic/theme to Realism, or Twain to Realism). *What is Twain's reason for creating the characters or story this way? What statement is he making on Realism or his time? What idea(s) does Twain want the reader to walk away with?*