

October 10 2014 Literature Circle 7<sup>th</sup> grade #1

*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

This week, read chapters 1-16 – which is a third of the book. We can see if that's too much, or about right – it's 110 pages in my edition.

As you're reading, use sticky notes to mark passages that stand out to you, whether because they are strong, or make you feel uncomfortable, or whatever. You can mark a few then pick the one you want to talk about.

Also, look up at least one new word and bring that in.

For next time, each person will do a little bit of research into one of the following topics (we'll assign each person one). It does not have to be in depth, just a little to informally share with the group.

Mark Twain's biography and dates

Jim Crow laws

The Civil War (overview, dates)

history of banning of the book

log rafts and steamboats – economy of the Mississippi River in 1840

slavery in the American south before the Civil War

bring in a map of the Mississippi River from around this time – it can be a print out or in a book or hand drawn – from Hannibal, Missouri to the Louisiana border

the picaresque novel – what it is, some examples

what kind of clothes did people wear in that place and time (Mississippi River around 1840) – if you can, bring in a book or a print out, or just describe

public education in this place and time

A few things you might notice, after you read the first part of the book.

Is Tom a psycho or what? How his fantasies of life-and-death adventures relate to Huck's real ones  
Huck's ignorance, innocence, and intelligence

being free on the river

systems of belief – Christianity, superstition, Tom's fantasy life, Huck's

author's attitude toward the various characters

Playing the trick on Jim, and the description of slave society: does it feel affectionate, or just yucky?

Huck's knowledge of the river and the environment and his practical abilities

Excitement and danger – how does the author make things thrilling

What does Huck want/need?

How do you think it would feel to read this book if your ancestors had been slaves?

How is the way Huck is treated in the book compare to Jim's treatment (as a character). Huck grows and changes – could Jim? Does Huck seem believable? Any of the other characters?

Notice how the author is using characters, landscape and incident to create a whole

how important are relationships in this book?

The way characters are fleshed out, the way they interact, the way relationships change (or not).

Huck's innocent morality, compared to the morals of others in the book

the book is a picaresque novel, where the action is a series of adventures as the hero moves through space and time. One thing we might write about, after we finish reading the book, is how a particular adventure fits into the book.