**Contextualizing *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn***

# INTRODUCTION

In order to enhance our reading experience of Mark Twain’s novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, you first need to uncover pertinent background information. You and your group members will become “experts” about a specific topic related to the novel and will share your newfound knowledge with the class.

We will spend one day in class, where you will complete research on your topic. Once you have your information, you will plan how you will present this information to the class in an interesting, engaging way.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR PRESENTATION:**

* Your presentation should include ***at least 10 interesting and relevant facts about your topic!* Turn in a typed sheet (MLA) with the facts before your presentation.** 10 points
* Keep track of your sources. Maintain a list of the sources you use to gather your research. This list must be turned in before your presentation. 5 points
* Plan how you are going to teach the class this information. (The class will be taking notes on your presentation.) The presentation should be 5-7 minutes. Possible ideas: talk show, TV show parody, video, rap, slide presentation, or any other ***CREATIVE*** way to present the information to the class without just stating the facts. 25 points
* Each group is responsible for creating three quiz questions for the class about your topic and turning them in at the time of your presentation. The class will be taking notes on each presentation followed by a quiz over all topics. Questions should be multiple choice and include an answer key. 10 points
* **Each group member is responsible for playing an active role in the entire project.**

**TOPICS:**

**Start by researching the details listed under each topic. Please consider this a starting point, go above and beyond, but don’t tread into other topics.**

1. Superstitions

Origins

In the novel and how they affected characters

Modern superstitions

Value: Good or Bad

1. Controversy surrounding *Huck Finn* and censorship

Why is this novel banned?

Arguments FOR and Arguments AGAINST teaching it in schools

Censorship

1. Geography

States along the Mississippi

Free or Slave states

River towns especially in Missouri

Map Huck and Jim’s journey

1. Life on the River

Transportation

Daily life for people living near the river 1800s

Weather and flooding

Plants and Animals

1. Daily Life of a Slave

Families and Accommodations

Jobs

Special Events: Marriages, Birthdays, Funerals

1. Slave Owners

Number of slaves per owner on average

Types of people who owned slaves and treatment of slaves

Percentage of people owning slaves

1. Slave History and Laws

Laws regarding Slavery from the 1600s to the end of the Civil War

Overview of how Slavery started

1. Runaway Slaves

Underground Railroad

Consequences for being a slave fugitive

Consequences for aiding a slave fugitive

1. Small Pox

What is it? Symptoms? How did people become infected?

Treatments and level of success (Also, what is a pest house?)

How did it affect people in the 19th century?

1. Education

Typical school day in this time period (1830’s – 1850’s)

Students? Teachers? Subjects?

Value of Education

1. Social Classes

What social classes existed in the US during this time period?

Differences in housing, jobs, and language

Dialects and slang in the novel

1. *Tom Sawyer* and Mark Twain

Summary of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

Mark Twain’s own opinion of his writing novels

Author Details not expressed in the Biography movie

Critics comments on these two novels (*Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn)*

13. Music and the Arts

Slave Spirituals and other songs

The Blues

Famous Musicians

14. Time Line

1835-1850s

Regional Events?

National Events?

Global Events?

15. Political Climate

Presidents?

Political Issues

Other significant information

16. Frederick Douglass

Details about his life and contributions to society

17. Harriet Beecher Stowe

Details about her life and contributions to society

Group Brainstorming, Notes, and Research

My Topic is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Group Members Contact Information: