



English 3B: American Literature and Composition
Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*



RAFT Persuasive Literary Analysis Essay

As we have discussed, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has been a highly controversial novel ever since its first publication in 1885. At first, people criticized the novel because they did not think that its protagonist, Huck Finn, was a very good role model for America's youth. During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, people started to question whether or not the novel was racist in its use of the infamous "n word" and its seemingly stereotypical caricature of Jim. In addition, many critics, past and present, find the concluding chapters at the Phelps farm to be completely absurd and unnecessary. In fact, even Ernest Hemingway, who argued that "all modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*," said that the end of the novel is "cheating."

Despite these criticisms, many people consider *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* to be one of the greatest American novels ever written. People who advocate the novel contend that the novel is not racist but realistic; that the novel traces the moral development of a young male protagonist in a corrupt society, thus serving as a model for ethical behavior; and that Twain uses the novel to satirize the absurd, unjust, and unethical elements of the society in which he was raised and lived—a social satire that in many ways remains relevant today.

That being said, what is your opinion? Do you think Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is an American classic worthy of remaining on the required reading list at not only Fenton High School but also high schools throughout America, or should it be pulled from the required reading list and placed on a supplemental or optional reading list?

In your essay, take a position on the aforementioned question. You may write about either one of the two points of view given, or you may present a different point of view on this question. Use specific reasons and examples, including direct references/quotes from the novel, to support your position.

Your role will be a student in English 3B: American Literature and Composition, your audience will be the Fenton High School English department and school board, your format will be multiple-paragraph persuasive literary analysis essay, and your topic, once again, will be to argue whether or not *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* should remain on the required reading list for all juniors in English 3: American Literature and Composition.

This essay will need to be typed, it will need to follow MLA formatting guidelines, it will need to contain direct references/quotes from the text of the novel for support (at least three per body paragraph), and it will need to be submitted to *Turnitin.com*. Essays will need to be submitted to *Turnitin.com* by 11:59 p.m. on **Thursday, March 1, 2012**.

RAFT

Role: FHS student in English 3B: American Literature and Composition

Audience: FHS English department and school board

Format: Multiple-paragraph persuasive literary analysis essay

Topic: Should Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* remain on the required reading list for students in English 3B: American Literature and Composition?

Outline

- I. Introduction
 - A. Generate interest.
 - B. Provide necessary background information.
 - C. State your thesis and preview your main points.
- II. Body Paragraph 1: Does Huck serve as a negative or positive role model?
 - A. Analysis and explanation of Huck challenging authority
 - B. Analysis and explanation of Huck lying
 - C. Analysis and explanation of Huck breaking the law by helping Jim run away
- III. Body Paragraph 2: Is the novel racist or an indictment of racism and slavery?
 - A. Analysis and explanation of Twain's use of the "n word"
 - B. Analysis and explanation of Twain's portrayal of Jim
- IV. Body Paragraph 3: Is the conclusion (chapters 32-43) cheating, or is there a method to Twain's apparent madness?
 - A. Analysis and explanation of Huck pretending to be Tom
 - B. Analysis and explanation of Jim's imprisonment on the Phelps farm
 - C. Analysis and explanation of Huck and Jim following Tom's elaborate and foolish escape plan
 - D. Analysis and explanation of the news Tom shares at the end of the novel
- V. Conclusion
 - A. Summarize main points.
 - B. Restate thesis.
 - C. Leave a lasting impression.