



Materials:

Draft of *Tom Sawyer*, prior to edits (enclosed)
Copies of handwritten edits of *Tom Sawyer* (enclosed)

Objectives: Students will be able to analyze the writing process of a successful writer and evaluate it in terms of their own process for writing fiction.

Procedure:

1. Hand out copies of the typed draft of *Tom Sawyer*. Explain that this draft is one of Twain's later revisions (major edits have already been completed). Have students read and try to edit the draft material.
2. Pass out copies of the handwritten *Tom Sawyer* edits (explain that this is Twain's handwriting and edits). Have students examine Twain's edits and compare them to their own editing suggestions.
3. Discuss: Discuss the differences between their edits and his, what was similar and what was different. Discuss what evidence they can find of his writing process, thought process and personal quest for perfection.
4. Read the Twain quote:

“The difference between the almost-right word & the right word is really a large matter – it’s the difference between the lightning-bug & the lightning.”

(from a letter to George Bainton, October 15, 1888)

5. Discuss: What is the meaning of that quote and how can it be applied to the evolution of Twain's drafts that you just examined? How can that quote apply to your own writing?
6. Conclusion: For any writer, the writing process is complex and multi-faceted. Twain was a highly successful writer and although he was prolific, every piece was subjected to his writing process – editing, re-writing, getting other people's opinions, striving for perfection. All writing must go through such a process to be good. What is your process? What elements of writing process can you add to improve your writing?



Chapter 1

"Tom!"

No answer.

"Tom!"

No answer.

"Where can that boy be, I wonder? You Tom!"

No answer.

The old lady pulled her spectacles down and looked over them, about the room; then she put them up and looked from under them. She never looked through them for so small a thing as a boy, for they were her state pair, and the pride her never-ceasing comfort and satisfaction; but apart from their value as a decoration, they were useless -- she could have seen through a pair of frying pans as well. She looked perplexed a moment, and said, not fiercely, but still loud enough for the furniture to hear:

"Well, I lay if I get hold of you I'll - "

She did not finish, for by this time she was bending down and punching under the bed with the broom, and so she needed questioning breath to punctuate the punches with. She resurrected nothing but the cat.

"I never see such a boy!"

She went to the open door and stood in it and looked out among the tomato vines and "jimpson" weeds that constituted the garden. No Tom. So she lifted up her voice, at an angle calculated for distance and shouted:

"Y-o-u-u Tom!"

There was a slight noise behind her and she turned just in time to seize a small boy by the slack of his roundabout and arrest his flight.

"There! I never 'a' thought of that closet. What you been doing in there?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing! Look at those hands. What is that truck?"

"I don't know, aunt." He pronounced it ant, being a Westerner.

"Well, I know. It's jam - that's what it is. Forty times I've said if you didn't let that jam alone I'd skin you. Hand me that switch."



Draft of *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Prior to Edits, *continued*

The switch hovered in the air - the peril was desperate -

"My! Look behind you, aunt!"

The old lady skipped around, like a scared girl and snatched her skirts out of danger. And Tom fled, on the instant, scrambled up the high board fence, and disappeared over it.

His aunt Polly stood surprised a moment, and then broke into a gentle laugh.

"Hang the boy, can't I never learn anything? Ain't he played me tricks enough like that for me to be looking out for him by this time? But old fools are the biggest fools there is. Can't learn an old dog new tricks, as the saying is. But my goodness, he never plays them alike, two days, and how is a body to know what's coming? He 'pears to know just how long he can torment me before I get my dander up, and he knows if he can put me off for a minute or make me laugh, it's all down again and I can't hit him a lick. I ain't doing my duty by that boy, and that's the facts of it, Lord forgive me. Spare the rod and spile the child, as the Good Book says. I'm a-laying up sin and suffering for us both, I know. He's full of the cursedness, but laws-a-me! He's my own dead sister's boy, and God forgive me, I ain't got the heart to lash him, somehow. Every time I let him off, my conscience does hurt me so, and every time I hit him my old heart breaks. Well-a-well, man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble, as the Scripture says, and I reckon it's so. He'll play hooky this afternoon, and I'll just be obleeged to make him work, tomorrow, to punish him. It's mighty hard to make him work Saturdays, when all the boys are having holiday, but he hates work more than he hates anything else, and I've got to do some of my duty by him, or the child will just be ruined."

Tom did play hookey, and he had a very good time too. He got back home barely in time to help Jim, the small colored boy, saw the morrow's wood and split the kindlings before supper - at least he was there in time to tell his adventures to Jim while Jim did threefourths of the work. Tom's younger brother, Sid, was already through with his part of the work (picking up chips), for he was a good boy, and had no adventurous, troublesome ways.

While Tom was devouring hot biscuits and beefsteak and stealing sugar as opportunity offered, aunt Polly asked him questions that were full of guile, and very, very deep - for she wanted to trap him into damaging revealments. Like other simple-hearted souls, it was her pet little vanity to believe she was endowed with a talent for dark and mysterious diplomacy, and she loved to contemplate her most transparent devices as marvels of low cunning. Said she:



... now yet.

[Handwritten scribbles]

Chap. I.

"Tom!"

No answer.

"Tom!"

No answer.

"~~What's gone with that boy, I~~
~~where can that boy be, I~~

wonder? You Tom!"

No answer.

The old lady pulled her spectacles down & looked over them, about the room; then she put them up & looked under

Well - a - well, man that is born
 of woman is of few days
 & full of trouble, as the Scrip-
 ture says, & I reckon it's so.
 Will play hokey this ^{winning} afternoon,
 & I'll just be obliged to make
 him work, to-morrow, to pin-
 ish him. It's mighty hard to
 make him work Saturdays,
 when all the boys ^{are} having
 holiday, but he hates work
 more than he hates anything
 else, & I've got to do some of
 my duty by him, or the child.
~~will just be ruined~~

Tom did play hokey, he had
 a very good time, ^{too}. He got back
 home barely in ^{season} to help Jim,
 the small colored boy, saw ~~the~~
~~the~~ ~~wood~~ & split the kind-
 ling^s before supper - at least
 he was there in time to tell his
 adventures to Jim while Jim
 did three-fourths of the work.
 # Smith, western bk. afternoon

(or rather, half-brother)

Tom's younger brother, Sid, was
 already through with his part
 of the work (picking up chips,
 for he was a ^{put} good boy & had
 no adventurous, troublesome
 ways.

While Tom was ~~down~~
~~at his work~~ & ~~leaving~~
 eating his supper, &
 stealing sugar as opportunity
 offered, Aunt Sally asked him
 questions that were full of
 guile, & very deep -
 she wanted to trap him into
 damaging revelations.

Like ^{many} other simple-hearted souls,
 it was her pet ~~idea~~ vanity to
 believe she was endowed with
 a talent for dark & mysterious
 diplomacy & she loved to
 contemplate her most trou-
 perous devices as marvels
 of low cunning. Said she:

"Tom, it was middling warm

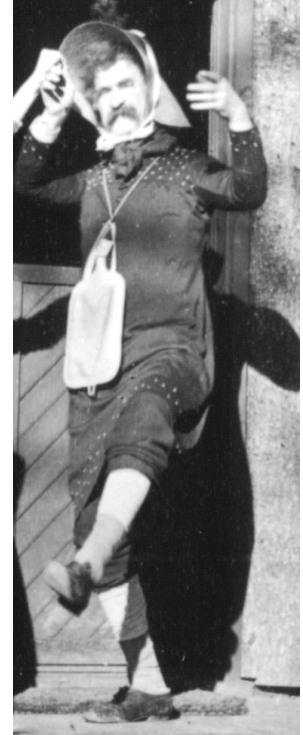


Against the assault of laughter, nothing can stand.

– Mark Twain

Mark Twain (Sam Clemens) was a very successful writer and one of his most powerful tools was his use of humor. Twain use humor in his writing to poke fun at people's behaviors, society's values and even his own traits and weaknesses. By making fun of everyday events or actions, Twain was able to easily connect with his audience. Readers would relate to the characters' sense of embarrassment, awkwardness, or silliness of a situation. As a result, Twain's readers were readily engaged and entertained by his work, earning him the title of America's greatest humorist.

Can you write with a sense of humor? Can you make fun of yourself or an unusual situation? This activity will help you to try. Enclosed you will find an excerpt from Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. You will need an encyclopedia, on-line source, or a secondary source from the library.



PROCEDURE:

1. Twain's story takes place in the year 528 in the era of kings and castles, when men wore suits of armor. Using your resources, research information about this time period and King Arthur's court and try to find pictures of the sport of jousting and suits of armor.
2. Read the attached excerpts from Twain's book.
3. 3. Discuss and list which parts of the story you thought were funny and why. Could you relate to Hank Morgan's situation? Have you ever had trouble mastering something new? Have you ever felt uncomfortable in something you had to wear?
4. What other differences can you think of that Hank Morgan would encounter by traveling back in time to another country? Make a list. Try to think of a variety of everyday things in your life that would be different such as buildings, technology, language, transportation, etc.
5. If you could travel back in time, what year would you pick? What country or place would you choose? Using your resources, research that time and place. Find out as much as you can about everyday life things such as food, clothing, houses, animals, and transportation.
6. Try to sketch a picture of yourself in that time and place. Then, think of an ordinary situation (such as eating dinner) and the differences you would encounter compared to the present. Make a list of differences. Then, using that list, try to write a humorous short story, similar to Twain's, that describes your encounter with life in a long ago time and place.



A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, Chapter XII

...Meantime it was getting hotter and hotter in there. You see, the sun was beating down and warming up the iron more and more all the time. Well, when you are hot, that way, every little thing irritates you. When I trotted, I rattled like a crate of dishes, and that annoyed me; and moreover I couldn't seem to stand that shield slatting and banking, now about my breast, now around my back; and if I dropped into a walk my joints creaked and screeched in that wearisome way that a wheelbarrow does, and as we didn't create any breeze at that gait, I was like to get fried in that stove; and besides, the quieter you went the heavier the iron settled down on you and the more and more tons you seemed to weigh every minute. And you had to be always changing hands, and passing your spear over to the other foot, it got so irksome for one hand to hold it long at a time. Well, you know, when you perspire that way, in rivers, there comes a time when you – when you – well, when you itch. You are inside, your hands are outside; so there you are; nothing but iron between. It is not a light thing; let it sound as it may. First it is one place; then another; then some more; and it goes on spreading and spreading, and at last the territory is all occupied, and nobody can imagine what you feel like, nor how unpleasant it is. And when it had got to the worst, and it seemed to me that I could not stand anything more, a fly got it through the bars and settled on my nose, and the bars were stuck and wouldn't work, and I couldn't get the visor up; and I could only shake my head, which was baking hot by this time, and the fly – well, you know how a fly acts when he has got a certainty – he only minded the shaking long enough to change from nose to lip, and lip to ear, and buzz and buzz all around din there, and keep on lighting and biting, in a way that a person already so distressed as I was, simply could not stand. So I gave in, and got Alisande to unship the helmet and relieve me of it. Then she emptied the conveniences out of it and fetched it full of water, and I drank and then stood up and she poured the rest down inside the armor. One cannot think how refreshing it was. She continued to fetch and pour until I was well soaked and thoroughly comfortable.



"SHE CONTINUED TO FETCH AND POUR UNTIL I WAS WELL SOAKED."



The Mark Twain House & Museum

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, Chapter XIII

...Night approached, and with it a storm. The darkness came on fast. We must camp, of course. I found a good shelter for the demoiselle under a rock, and went off and found another for myself. But I was obliged to remain in my armor, because I could not get it off by myself and yet could not allow Alisande to help, because it would have seemed so like undressing before folk. It would not have amounted to that in reality, because I had clothes on underneath; but the prejudices of one's breeding are not gotten rid of just at a jump, and I knew that when it came to stripping off that bobtailed iron petticoat I should be embarrassed.

With the storm came a change of weather; and the stronger the wind blew, and the wilder the rain lashed around, the colder and colder it go. Pretty soon, various kinds of bugs and ants and worms and things began to flock in out of the wet and crawl down inside my armor to get warm; and while some of them behaved well enough, and got quiet, the majority were of a restless, uncomfortable sort, and never stayed still, but went on prowling and hunting for they did not know what; especially the ants, which went tickling along in wearisome procession from one end of me to the other by the hour, and are a kind of creatures which I never wish to sleep with again. It would be my advice to persons situated in this way, to not roll or thrash around, because this excites the interest of all the different sorts of animals and makes every last one of them want to turn out and see what is going on, and this makes things worse than they were before, and of course makes you adjurate harder, too, if you can. Still, if one did not roll and thrash around he would die; so perhaps it is as well to do one way as the other, there is no real choice. Even after I was frozen sold I could still distinguish that tickling, just as a corpse does when he is taking electrical treatment. I said I would never wear armor after this trip.



Source: Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, (New York, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1904).

Twain published A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court in 1889, but the story was about an earlier time. The main character came from 1879 Hartford. In the story Hank Morgan (the main character) has traveled back in time 1,300 years to King Arthur's Court in the year 528 and is struggling with the differences in life. In this section he is traveling across the countryside to perform daring and brave deeds so he can become a knight and gain the respect of everyone at court. The woman traveling with him is Demoiselle (short for mademoiselle, the French term for miss) Alisande de Carteloise. Throughout the book Hank must learn a way of life completely different from the one he knew in Hartford. One of the differences he must face is wearing a heavy, uncomfortable suit of armor, made out of metal, which was intended to protect him from harm in battle.