

# Samuel Clemens & Mark Twain: Having a Pen Name

3-5 days

English/Psychology: High School

## DESIRED RESULTS

What are the “big ideas” that drive this lesson?

- ❖ Many students do not realize that some of their favorite and most notable authors, actors, musicians, and even athletes often take on pen or stage names. One was Samuel Clemens and his pen name of Mark Twain. There have been many reasons as to why this is done. Some seek to make a name more memorable or easier to pronounce, while others see deeper, psychological motives for going by a pen name.

What are the “essential questions” that students must answer in order to understand the “big ideas?”

- ❖ What is a pen or stage name?
- ❖ Who are some notable figures that adopt pen or stage names, why do they do it?
- ❖ How does a pen or stage name define ones identity?
- ❖ Is the use of a pen or stage name ethical?
- ❖ How can a stage/pen name impact a writers opinion and persona?

## CORE UNDERSTANDINGS

Identify what students will know and/or be able to do.

- ❖ Identify notable cultural/historical figures and their pen or stage names.
- ❖ Correctly define the terms: pen name, nom de plume, stage name, and nom de guerre.
- ❖ Identify possible social and psychological motivations behind a person’s choice to adopt a pen or stage name.
- ❖ Identify the reason(s) for Samuel Clemens to have adopted the pen name Mark Twain.

## LIST SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT(S)

- ❖ “Uncovering True Identities Matching” worksheet
- ❖ “Why Do Writers Use Pen Names and How is it Connected to Psychology?” worksheet
- ❖ “Forming an Opinion on Samuel Clemens Use of a Pen Name” worksheet
- ❖ “Create Your Own Pen Name” worksheet
- ❖ Psychology of Pen Names” worksheet

- ❖ “Ethical vs. Unethical” graphic organizer worksheet
- ❖ Assess students on their participation in classroom discussions

## LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND “COMMON CORE” CONNECTIONS

What are the specific activities and sequence of instruction that will be used to engage students in this lesson?

- ❖ To introduce pen names, have students complete this worksheet. In this worksheet, the students will write down short reactions to the quotation on the issue presented: “Why do writers use pen names and how is it connected to psychology?”
- ❖ “Key Terms and Definitions” graphic organizer (this activity should be completed as a class to assure that student’s definitions are correct).
- ❖ “Ethical vs. Unethical” graphic organizer (this activity includes a list of several different realistic scenarios in which students will have the opportunity to debate whether or not the use of pen or stage names is ethical).
- ❖ “Psychology of Pen Names” worksheet (listing some of the psychological disorders suggested to be connected to the use of pen or stage names as well as a diagram of Freud’s levels of consciousness).
- ❖ “Create Your Own Pen Name” worksheet (this requires an internet connection and links to a website that generates a pen name for students).
- ❖ “Forming an Opinion on Samuel Clemens Use of a Pen Name” persuasive writing exercise (this will provide the link between the background information of pen names and their knowledge of Samuel Clemens).
- ❖ “Uncovering True Identities Matching” worksheet (good to use as a homework assignment and “fun” activity for students using more modern/familiar examples of pen/stage names).

### Suggested Common Core Connections:

- ❖ [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.5](#) Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.
- ❖ [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.4](#) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).
- ❖ [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6](#) Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

## MATERIALS AND ATTACHMENTS

- ❖ Pen, pencil and paper
- ❖ Internet connection

- ❖ Make copies of the following worksheets:
  - ❖ “Uncovering True Identities Matching” worksheet
  - ❖ “Why Do Writers Use Pen Names and How is it Connected to Psychology?” worksheet
  - ❖ “Forming an Opinion on Samuel Clemens Use of a Pen Name”
  - ❖ “Create Your Own Pen Name” worksheet
  - ❖ Psychology of Pen Names” worksheet
  - ❖ “Ethical vs. Unethical” graphic organizer worksheet

### SUGGESTED LESSON EXTENSIONS TO ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING

- ❖ Students could create a Facebook or MySpace page (either actually online or using a template) for a pen or stage name’s “real personality” and then compare them to the pen/stage name’s better-known personality and character traits.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

### Discovering the Reasoning Behind Pen Names (with a focus on Samuel Clemens)

Directions: throughout the next couple of classes we will make connections between Clemens' personality and choice to use the pen name of Mark Twain. We will also relate this to our study of psychology and debate the ethical issue over the use of a pen or stage name. Later in our unit we will also make a connection between the use of an "alter ego" and our modern internet practices. You will have multiple opportunities to express your opinion on the issue in a variety of different ways.

#### PART I: What is a pen name?

Directions: following along with our notes on the board, please record definitions in your own word of the following key terms.

| <b>Key Term</b>      | <b>Definition in my OWN Words</b> | <b>Use the word in a SENTENCE or create an IMAGE</b> |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Pen Name</b>      |                                   |  |
| <b>Nom de Plume</b>  |                                   |  |
| <b>Stage Name</b>    |                                   |  |
| <b>Nom de Guerre</b> |                                   |  |

#### Part II: Why would someone use a pen name or stage name?

Directions: For one or two minutes sit quietly on your own and brainstorm a list of reasons that YOU think someone might want to create a pen or stage name for themselves. After the two minutes we will share our responses and discuss them as a class, you can then add any additional reasons to your list below.

Part III: Is it ethical?

Directions: Now that we all know what a pen name is and why someone might want to adopt one, let's discuss whether or not we think using one is ethical. Read each scenario below, decide if you think this is an ethical or unethical use of a pen name and support your decision.

| Example of Pen Name Usage   | Ethical or Unethical | Why? |
|---|----------------------|------|
| 1. You hire a "ghost writer" to blog or copy an author's content.       |                      |      |
| 2. Using multiple fake identities online to write content for websites. |                      |      |
| 3. Use a pen name to change your age or gender.                         |                      |      |
| 4. Use a fake photo to give a false image of yourself.                  |                      |      |
| 5. Use a pen name to create a more "evocative" name.                    |                      |      |
| 6. Use a pen name to protect your privacy or for protection.            |                      |      |

Reflection Questions: Based on your thoughts on pen names, please respond to the question below.

➤ ***What are (or can be) some consequences, either positive or negative of publishing works (books, music, movies) under a pen name?***

➤ ***What is acceptable and what isn't with pen names? How far is too far?***

Part IV: Making a Modern Connection

Directions: Please complete this portion outside of class for homework. You will be expected to share at least one portion of your opinion during our class discussion tomorrow. Use the following guiding questions below to help you create your argument.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: follow the directions below to create your own pen or stage name. What qualities do you think your new pen or stage name would poses? How do you think that would change your life, personality, etc.

1. Go onto the following website: <http://www.poemofquotes.com/tools/pen-name.php>
2. Follow the directions online to see what pen name you are given and record it below. Then complete the graphic organizer to add more details to your “new” name!





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

**Uncovering the True Identities of Pen and Stage Names**

Directions: based on our discussion of authors, musicians, and actors use of “pen” or “stage” names, see if you can match the identities! (Use the code in the box below to help you see what they were/are known for.)

| “Birth/Real” Name                 | “Pen/Stage” Name     |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| _____ 1. Eric Arthur Blair        | a. Muhammad Ali      |
| _____ 2. Joanne Rowling           | b. Foxy Brown        |
| _____ 3. Shelton Lee Jackson      | c. Carmen Electra    |
| _____ 4. Samuel Clemens           | d. Snoop Dogg        |
| _____ 5. Tara Leigh Patrick       | e. Ice-T             |
| _____ 6. Dwayne Johnson           | f. Bow Wow           |
| _____ 7. Inga Marchaud            | g. Whoopi Goldberg   |
| _____ 8. Theodor Geisel           | h. Pee Wee Herman    |
| _____ 9. Lee Jun Fan              | j. Mark Twain        |
| _____ 10. Carlos Ray              | k. George Orwell     |
| _____ 11. Stefani Germanotta      | l. Lady Gaga         |
| _____ 12. Jayson Tyrone Phillips  | m. Daddy Yankee      |
| _____ 13. Cassius Clay            | n. Chuck Norris      |
| _____ 14. Paul Rubenfield         | o. The Rock          |
| _____ 15. Tracy Marrow            | p. Jadakiss          |
| _____ 16. Ramon Ayala             | q. Spike Lee         |
| _____ 17. Shad Gregory Moss       | r. Dr. Seuss         |
| _____ 18. Caryn Johnson           | s. Jamie Foxx        |
| _____ 19. Vickie Lynn<br>Marshall | t. J.K. Rowling      |
| _____ 20. Cordazer Calvin Broadus | u. Anna Nicole Smith |
| _____ 21. Eric Bishop             | v. Bruce Lee         |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

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