

# Illustrations of Jim and the Evolution of Racial Representation

1-2 Days

High School English/American Studies/Art

## DESIRED RESULTS:

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

- This lesson will allow students to see how the publishers seeking to appeal to the mass market of the American public changed their view of African Americans over the course of the publication history of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885-1990). This inquiry will involve subjective judgments on the part of students, and affords teachers a great opportunity to create a forum for students to express their views as to the “progress” of race relations in the United States. (Note: This lesson may be taught during the reading of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, when students have gained some familiarity with the characters, or after the reading of the novel has been completed.)

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

- How do differing print representations of “Jim” as compared with other characters in the book reflect changing attitudes of society toward race?
- What does someone’s response to the earlier illustrations of “Jim” and the other characters in the book reveal about his/her perceptions of our social history?

## CORE UNDERSTANDINGS:

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

- Students will be able to examine primary sources from a particular period in history in order to draw conclusions about societal norms and culture at that time.
- Students will develop the ability to explain, justify, and/or demonstrate their opinions through discussion, writing, and/or drawing.
- Students will reinforce their reading comprehension of the novel and how it has been represented over time through study of its illustrations.

- Students will develop an awareness of their own attitudes towards race by analyzing the book's illustrations of "Jim".

### **SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT(S):**

- Have students write a character description of Jim and/or draw an illustration of how they perceive him after having read the book.
- Have students write a short analysis (500 words maximum) regarding how their illustration reflects their attitudes and how/why they might differ from those of earlier illustrators of Jim.
- Evaluate student participation in the small group and class discussions that focus on the presentation of the assignments above.

### **LEARNING EXPERIENCES:**

- Introduce the lesson by explaining that there have been many editions of *Huckleberry Finn* since its original publication in 1885. Explain that some editions, including the first, were illustrated, and that these illustrations have differed over time.
- Allow students to explore and discuss the images in small groups (see "Mark Twain and His Times" <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/huckfinn/jiminpix.html>); direct students to make notes about each illustration.
- Each student should receive a worksheet (see below) to complete.
- Discussion of each student's worksheet responses will be done in small groups. After students have had an opportunity to discuss their worksheet responses, the teacher should guide an overall class discussion to compare the results from all the small groups.
- Direct students to focus on the "wh" questions, who, what, when, where, why, and how i.e. "Who among the character(s) from the novel are primarily represented in these illustrations?" "What questions would you ask the illustrators and publishers?" "When/Why is there a difference in the illustrations over time? If so, why?"
- (Where/Why) Does the British publication differ from the American publications in representing Jim? Why do you think this might be? Note that no original American publication has ever depicted an illustration of Jim after Huck "returns" from the fog in Chapter 15, "Fooling Poor Old Jim" and Jim calls Huck trash after Jim learns that Huck has tricked him Why do you suppose this is? Does this say something about the publisher and the majority of American's view of race? E.g. Would the American public accept an illustration of a black man calling a white boy "trash?"
- Also direct students to consider historical context i.e. "Remembering what was happening in history, do any of the illustrations surprise you?" (For

example, examine those from the 1960s, illustrations that would have been done during the Civil Rights movement.)

- For homework: Assign the following: (How?) 1. How would you depict Jim? You may either: write a narrative description as an author, draw your own illustration, or write a poem describing Jim. 2. Write a short analysis (500 words maximum) regarding how your illustration reflects your feelings and how and why they might differ from those of the early illustrators of Jim.

### COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS:

- CCSS-Literacy RSI 11-12. 7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (i.e. visual, quantitative) as well as words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

### MATERIALS AND ATTACHMENTS:

- Since this lesson is intended as part of a study of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, all students should have a copy of the novel.
- This lesson is drawn from Dr. Stephen Railton's, "Mark Twain in his Times" <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/index2.html>, specifically: Railton, Stephen, "Representing Jim" <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/huckfinn/jiminpix.html>.  
The website details the history and offers commentary regarding the many illustrations of the character, Jim. The following links to images present a sampling of the illustrations on the website. The selections for this lesson have been made to represent an historical overview through the decades of the novel's publication and to allow students the ability to compare and contrast similar images.
- Website Reference for Students:
  1. Illustration #1: <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/huckfinn/jimill01.html>  
Huck finds Jim on Jackson's Island. Original publication, E. W. Kemble, illustrator, Charles L. Webster and Company (1885).
  2. Illustration #2: <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/huckfinn/jimill05.html>  
Huck finds Jim on Jackson's Island. Worth Brem, illustrator, Harper and Row (1923). Note that the illustration appears quite similar to a lynching.
  3. Additional resource on KKK- "African American Registry" found [:http://www.aaregistry.com/african\\_american\\_history/2207/The\\_Ku\\_Klux\\_Klan\\_a\\_brief\\_biography](http://www.aaregistry.com/african_american_history/2207/The_Ku_Klux_Klan_a_brief_biography).
  4. Illustration #3: <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/huckfinn/jimill07.html>  
Jim examines the hairball. Norman Rockwell, illustrator, (1940) Heritage Press Publication.

5. Illustration #4: <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/huckfinn/jimill11.html>  
Jim and Huck on the river. Comic book version, Zansky, illustrator, *Classics Comics* (1946). (Note, there is no mention of Jim on the cover summary of the story.)
6. Illustration #5: <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/huckfinn/jimbr55a.html>  
Huck and Jim after Huck “returns” from the fog. C. Walter Hodges, illustrator, the London firm J. M. Dent & Sons (1955). According to Railton, this was published in the US by E. P. Dutton & Co. in the same year and is the only publication that illustrates Jim’s reference to Huck as trash for mistreating a friend.
7. Illustration #6: <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/huckfinn/jimill19.html>  
Huck finds Jim on Jackson’s Island. John Falter, illustrator, MacMillan Edition (1962).
8. Illustration #7: <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/huckfinn/jimill22.html>  
Jim’s relief at finding Huck. Warren Chappell, illustrator, Harper and Row: *The Complete Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn* (1978).
9. Illustration #8: <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/huckfinn/jimill24.html>  
Huck and Jim. Barry Moser, illustrator, Centenary Edition, University of California Press (1985).

- **Worksheet [see attached]**

<b>Names:</b>	
Date:	
Period:	Class:

Which characters are represented in the illustrations?

What differences do you note over time? When were the changes? Note specific details for each illustration and your conclusions about the particular illustration.

Illustration 1
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Illustration 2

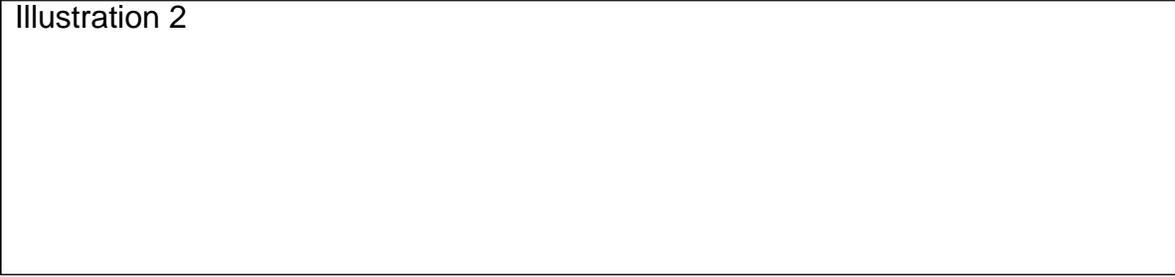


Illustration 3

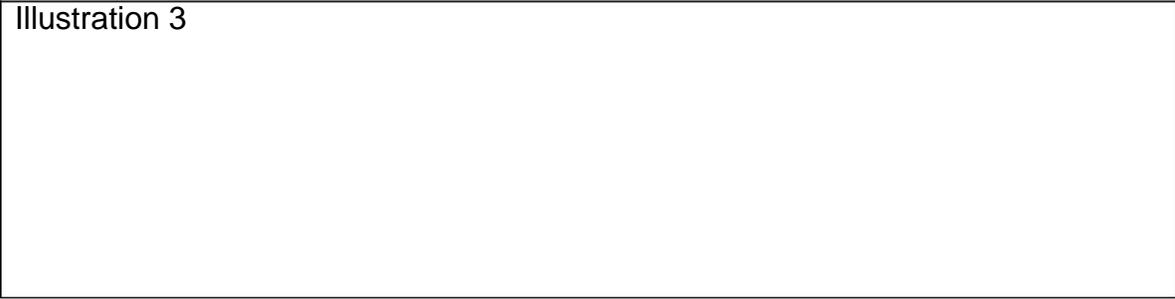


Illustration 4



Illustration 5

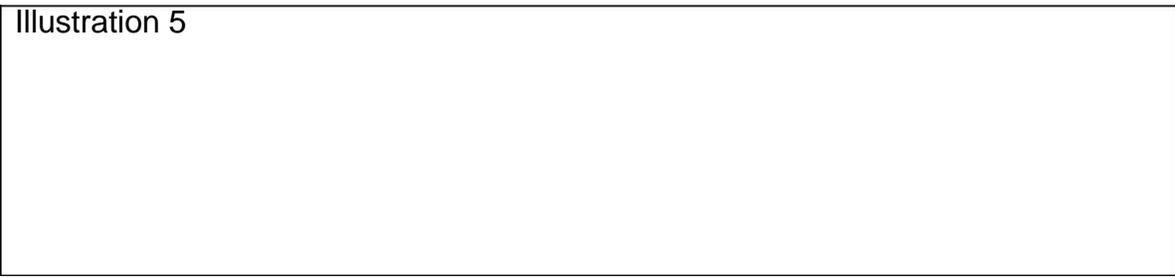


Illustration 6



Illustration 7

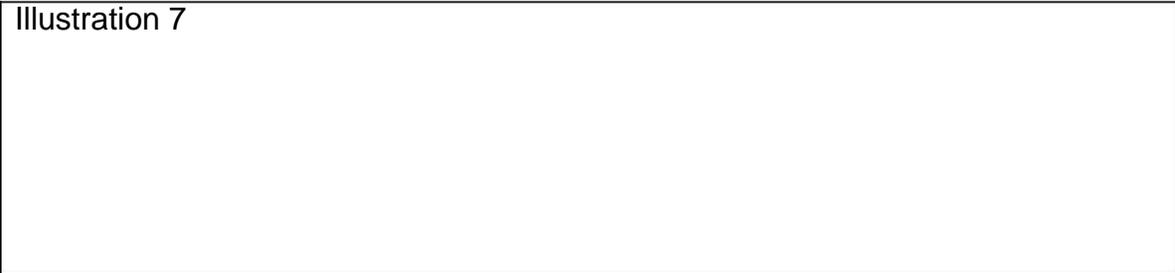
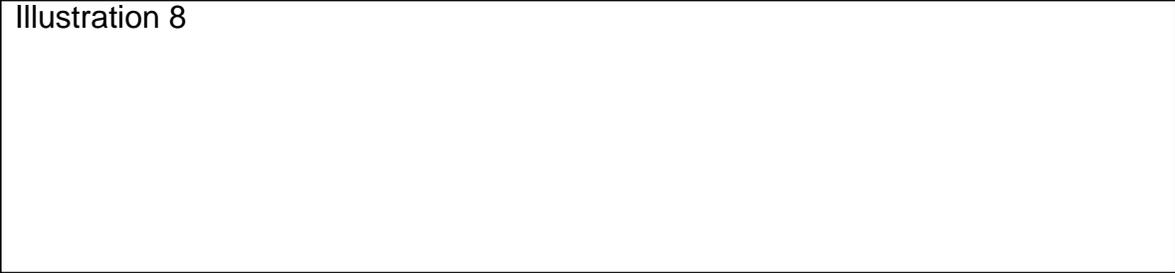


Illustration 8



Does the British publication differ from the American publication? If so, why?

Develop a group thesis regarding your observations. Be prepared to defend your thesis with direct observations of the illustrations.