Twain’s Travels

60 minutes+

History/English- High School

DESIRED RESULTS

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

Mark Twain is one of America’s most famous commentators and celebrities, not only because of the popularity of his literature, but also because of his prodigious curiosity about people and places and his inclination toward toleration of their cultural diversity. His numerous, and far-flung, public appearances also gave him the opportunity to personally engage with peoples from many of the world's cultures, leading him to later say that “travel is fatal to prejudice.” By mapping, researching, and reporting on Twain’s life and travels, students can gain an appreciate for how he came to embrace human difference.

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

Where did Twain travel in the United States and across the globe, and how can these travels be represented on a map?

Who were the peoples that Twain encountered on his journeys, and how were they different from each other?

What are the key cultural characteristics of the peoples that Twain encountered on his journeys?

CORE UNDERSTANDINGS

Identify what students will know and/or be able to do:
Students will be able to use maps and atlases to locate and identify places where Mark Twain traveled.

Students will understand the concept of “chronology” by using a timeline to chart the dates and places of Mark Twain’s travels.

Students will be able to use standard references to research the culture(s) of a particular people in a place visited by Mark Twain, and report their findings to their classmates using narrative description and perhaps visual aids, such as posters, PowerPoint presentations, or other multimedia programs.

LIST SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT(S)

Students will complete a full set of map worksheets that illustrate the travels of Mark Twain.

Students will pass a short-answer map test of identifications of places Mark Twain traveled.

Students will produce an oral or written presentation on the culture of the peoples Twain encountered during his travels.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

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

Distribute copies of the handouts “Mark Twain. Biography” and “Twain’s Time.” After reading each section of the biography in class, ask the students to make a written summary of the periods of his life as delineated by the timeline, taking special note of all travel mentioned in Twain’s biography.

Distribute an atlas and/or other geography reference works and a copy of each of the following handouts- “Life on the Mississippi,” “Roughing It Out West,” “An Innocent Abroad in the Old World,” and “Following the Equator, More or Less”- to each student. Working individually (the teacher may adjust this by having small groups of students work together), have students complete the worksheets. If necessary, allow for more time by
assigning the remainder as homework or doing two worksheets during one class period and finishing the other two on the following day in class.

After the students have completed the worksheets, review their answers and inform them that they will later be tested on the content of the worksheets.

For homework, assign each student one of the locations on one of the work sheets and ask them to produce a five-minute oral report or 750 word summary of the culture(s) that could be found during the time of Twain's visit there.

“COMMON CORE” CONNECTIONS

CCSS ELA- Literacy. RH 6-8.4 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS ELA-Literacy RI 6. 7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats- i.e. visually, qualitatively- as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

CCSS ELA-Literacy RH 9-10. 7 Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

CCSS HSS-Literacy RL 9-10. 3. Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text, determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

MATERIALS AND ATTACHMENTS

Colored pencils or markers (black, blue, & red) for student use

Student copies of handout “Twain’s Time” (2 pages)

Student copies of any standard student atlas or similar reference(s)

Student copies of handout “Mark Twain. Biography” (3 pages)
Student copies of handout “Life on the Mississippi” (3 pages)
Student copies of handout “Roughing It Out West” (3 pages)
Student copies of handout “An Innocent Abroad in the Old World” (2 pages)
Student copies of handout “Following the Equator, More or Less” (4 pages)

SUGGESTED LESSON EXTENSIONS TO ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING

Have students produce a more substantial oral and/or written report on their assigned culture(s), and consider having them use a PowerPoint program or similar multi-media format to present their findings to their classmates.

Have students incorporate a timeline of Twain’s travels into their presentation and explain the causes and effect of the event sequence.

Have students, as a class or as individuals, read and report on one or more of Mark Twain’s books that chronicle the travels and which serve as the inspiration for this lesson plan- Life on the Mississippi, Roughing It, The Innocents Abroad, and Following the Equator- these books are in the public domain, and can be easily download in whole, or part, if reading only a portion of the book(s) is desired. A possible theme for these readings and reports is a comparative analysis of Twain’s views on different places and cultures, which allows students to assess what Twain criticized and commended about them against their own research of those cultures and places.
Life on the Mississippi

Part I: “Missouri Born”

Using a blue pencil or marker, draw the location of the Mississippi River on the map. Also draw a roughly accurate line to represent the course of the Missouri River on the map.

Using a black pen or pencil, identify each of the following places by putting the number of each place name opposite the correct dot on the map. Be sure to also remember why each place was important to Mark Twain’s life story.

1. **Florida** (town where Samuel Clemens was born)
2. **Hannibal** (town where Samuel Clemens grew up)
3. **St.Louis** (major city where Clemens worked as a steamboat pilot)
4. **St.Joseph** (city from which the Pony Express and Overland Stage Line originated, and from where Clemens headed out West)

Part II: “Mississippi River States”

Using a blue pencil or marker, draw the course of the Mississippi River on the map. Do the same for the courses of the Ohio River and Missouri River that are visible on the map.

Using a black pen or pencil, identify each of the following U.S. states by putting the number of the state name in the center of the state’s borders on the map, or by placing the letter of the river city name next to the correct “x” on the map:

1. **Mississippi**
2. **Iowa**
3. **Tennessee**
4. **Wisconsin**

   a. **Memphis**
   b. **NewOrleans**
   c. **Cairo**
   d. **Minneapolis/St.Paul**
5. **Louisiana**

6. **Minnesota**

7. **Arkansas**

8. **Illinois**

9. **Kentucky**

10. **Missouri**

**Roughing It Out West**

Part I: “On the Path of the Pony Express”

Mark “X” where **St. Joseph**, Missouri is located on the map;

Mark “Y” where **Fort Kearney**, Nebraska is located on the map;

Mark “Z” where **Fort Laramie**, Wyoming is located on the map;

Mark “XX” where **Salt Lake City**, Utah is located on the map;

Mark “YY” where **Carson City/Virginia City**, Nevada is located on the map;

Mark “ZZ” where **San Francisco**, California is located on the map

Draw a line connecting each location to represent Mark Twain’s travels to California

Part II: “North America”

Draw an arrow from **San Francisco** to **Hawaii**, where Mark Twain went as a correspondent for California newspapers.

Draw an arrow from **Hawaii** to the border of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, where Twain crossed the Central American Isthmus via Lake Nicaragua on his way to New York City.
Draw an arrow from Central America between the Caribbean islands to New York City, where Twain went as a correspondent for California and New York newspapers.

Mark a blue dot at the location of Buffalo NY, where met, married, and lived with his wife, Olivia.

Color the state of CT in blue, where Twain moved to raise his growing family in the wealthy and fashionable city of Hartford.
An Innocent Abroad in the Old World

“The Mediterranean Sea and the Holy Lands”

Identify the location of each city visited by Mark Twain during his 1867 voyage aboard the steamer *Quaker City* by placing the number near the correct dot on the map. Once done, draw a line to connect the dots in the same order to represent Twain’s itinerary in the Mediterranean Sea.

1. Gibraltar
2. Tangiers
3. Marseilles
4. Paris
5. Genoa
6. Milan
7. Venice
8. Florence
9. Rome
10. Naples
11. Messina
12. Athens
13. “Constantinople” (Istanbul)
14. Sevastopol
15. Smyrna
16. Ephesus
17. Beirut
18. Damascus
19. Jerusalem
20. TelAviv
21. Alexandria
22. Cairo/Giza
23. Malta
24. Sardinia
25. Algiers
26. Malaga
Following the Equator, More or Less

Part I: “The 49th Parallel”

Review the copy of “Mark Twain’s Tour – Route in America” ad from 1895, that lists the North American cities where he lectured prior to heading to the South Pacific Ocean. Place the date of his appearance in each location (i.e. “7/15” for Cleveland, OH) near the correct dot on the map of the U.S./Canadian border along the 49th Parallel, and be sure to use two different colors to distinguish Canadian cities from American cities.

Part II: “Following the Equator, More or Less” and “India”

Write the number of each location where Mark Twain lectured at the correct location on the map of the world, except for the locations in India. Put an asterisk (*) on India, and place the numbers of the tour locations on the separate map of India where there is room to do so. Once done, draw a line on the world map from each number (and the asterisk * for India) to represent Twain’s around-the-world trip in 1895-6.

1. Vancouver
2. “Sandwich Islands” (Hawaii)
3. Fiji
4. Sydney,Australia
5. Wellington,NewZealand
6. Tasmania
7. Melbourne,Australia
8. Sydney,Australia(2)
9. “Ceylon”(SriLanka)
10. “Bombay”,(Mumbai)India
11. “Benares”,(Varanasi)India
12. “Calcutta,”(Kolkata)India
13. AgraIndia
14. **Lahore, (Pakistan) India**
15. **Calcutta, (Kolkata) India (2)**
16. “**Madras,” (Chennai) India**
17. “**Ceylon” (Sri Lanka)**
18. **Mauritius**
19. **Mozambique**
20. **Durban, South Africa**
21. **Johannesburg, South Africa**
22. **London, England**

*Twain’s Time*

1835-1846

1847-1850
1851-1856

1857-1860

1861-1869

1870-1873

1874-1882
Mark Twain. biography

SYNOPSIS

Born on November 30, 1835, in Florida, Missouri, Samuel L. Clemens wrote under the pen name Mark Twain and went on to pen several novels, including two major classics of American literature, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. He was also a riverboat pilot, journalist, lecturer, entrepreneur and inventor.

EARLY LIFE

Writing grand tales about Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, and the mighty Mississippi River, Mark Twain explored the American soul with wit, buoyancy, and a sharp eye for truth. He became nothing less than a national treasure.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, later known as Mark Twain, was born on November 30, 1835, in the tiny village of Florida, Missouri, the sixth child of John and Jane Clemens. When he was 4-years-old, the Clemens clan moved to nearby Hannibal, a bustling town of 1,000 people. John Clemens worked as a storekeeper, lawyer, judge, and land speculator, dreaming of wealth but never achieving it, sometimes finding it hard to feed his family. He was an unsmiling fellow; according to one legend, young Sam never saw him laugh. His mother by contrast, was a fun-loving, tenderhearted homemaker who whiled away many a winter’s night for her family by telling stories. She became head of the household in 1847 when John died unexpectedly. The Clemens family “now became almost destitute,” writes biographer Everett Emerson, and was forced into years of economic struggle — a fact that would shape the career of Mark Twain.

Sam Clemens lived in Hannibal from age 4 to age 17. The town, situated on the Mississippi River, was in many ways a splendid place to grow up. Steamboats arrived there three times a day, tooting their whistles, circus shows, minstrel shows, and revivalists paid visits; a decent library was available; and tradesmen such as blacksmiths and tanners practiced their entertaining crafts for all to see. However, violence was commonplace, young Sam witnessed much death. When he was 9 years old he saw a local man murder a cattle rancher, and at 10 he watched a slave die after a white overseer struck him with a piece of iron.

LIFE IN HANNIBAL

Hannibal inspired several of Mark Twain’s fictional locales, including “St. Petersburg” in *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. These imaginary river towns are complex places: sunlit and exuberant on the one hand, but also vipers’ nests of cruelty, poverty, drunkenness, loneliness, and life-crushing boredom. All of that had been a part of Sam Clemens’ boyhood experience.

Sam kept up his schooling until he was about 12 years old, when—with his father dead and needing to earn his keep—he found employment as an apprentice printer at the *Hannibal Courier*, which paid him with a meager ration of food. In 1851, at 15, he got a job as a printer and occasional writer and editor at the *Hannibal Western Union*, a little newspaper owned by his brother, Orion.

Then, in 1857, 21-year-old Clemens fulfilled a dream: He began learning the art of piloting a steamboat on the Mississippi.

A licensed pilot by 1859, he soon found regular employment plying the shallows and channels of the great river. He loved his career—it was exciting, well-paying, and high-status, roughly akin to flying a jetliner today. However, his service was cut short in 1861 by the outbreak of the Civil War, which halted most civilian traffic on the river.

As the war began, the people of Missouri angrily split between support for the Union and the Confederacy. Clemens opted for the latter, joining the Confederate Army in June 1861, but serving for only a couple of weeks until his volunteer unit disbanded.

Where, he wondered then, would he find his future? What venue would bring him both excitement and cash? His answer: the great American West.

HEADING OUT WEST

In July, he climbed onboard a stagecoach and headed for Nevada and California, where he would live for the next five years. At first, he prospected for silver and gold, convinced that he would become the savior of his struggling family and the sharpest-dressed man in Virginia City and San Francisco. But nothing panned out. By the middle of 1862, he was flat broke and in need of a regular job.

He knew his way around a newspaper office, so that September he went to work as a reporter for the *Virginia City Territorial Enterprise*. He churned out news stories, editorials and sketches, and along the way, adopted the pen name “Mark Twain”—steamboat slang for twelve feet of water.

Twain became one of the best known storytellers in the West. He honed a distinctive narrative style—friendly, funny, irreverent, often satirical and always eager to deflate the pretentious. He got a big break in 1865, when one of his tales about life in a mining camp, "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog," was printed in newspapers and magazines around the country (the story later appeared under various titles). His next step up the ladder of success came in 1867, when he took a five-month sea cruise in the
Mediterranean, writing humorously about the sights for American newspapers with an eye toward getting a book out of the trip. And so it came to pass that in 1869 The Innocents Abroad was published, and became a bestseller.

At 34, this westerner—handsome, red-haired, affable, canny, ego-centric and ambitious—had become one of the most popular and famous writers in America.

MARRIAGE TO OLIVIA LANGDON

However, Mark Twain worried about being a westerner. In those years, the country's cultural life was dictated by an Eastern establishment centered in New York and Boston—a straight-laced, Victorian, moneyed group that cowed Twain. "An indubitable and almost overwhelming sense of inferiority bounced around his psyche," wrote scholar Hamlin Hill, comparing his aggressiveness and vanity. Twain's fervent wish was to get rich, support his mother, rise socially, and receive what he called "the respectful regard of a high Eastern civilization."

In February 1870, he improved his social status by marrying 24-year-old Olivia (Livy) Langdon, the daughter of a rich New York coal merchant.

Writing to a friend shortly after his wedding, Twain could not believe his good luck: "I have ... the only sweetheart I have ever loved ... she is the best girl, and the sweetest, and gentlest, and the daintiest, and she is the most perfect gem of woman-kind." Livy, like many people during that time, took pride in her pious, high-minded, genteel approach to life. Twain hoped that she would "reform" him, a mere humorist, from his rustic ways. The couple first settled in Buffalo, but later moved to Hartford CT where they raised three daughters.

Thankfully, Mark Twain's glorious "low-minded" western voice broke through on occasion. The Adventures of Tom Sawyer was published in 1876, and soon thereafter he began writing a sequel, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. (Oddly, the word "The" was not included in the title of book's original edition.) Writing this work, comments biographer Everett Emerson, freed Twain temporarily from the "inhibitions of the culture he had chosen to embrace."

HUCK FINN

"All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called Huckleberry Finn," Ernest Hemingway wrote in 1935, giving short shrift to Herman Melville and others, but making an interesting point. Hemingway's comment refers specifically to the colloquial language of Twain's masterpiece. For perhaps the first time in America, the vivid, raw, not-so-respectable voice of the common folk was used to create great literature.

Huck Finn required years to conceptualize and write, and Twain often put it aside. In the meantime, he pursued respectability with 1881 publication of The Prince and the Pauper, a charming novel endorsed with enthusiasm by his genteel family and friends. In 1883 he put out Life on the Mississippi, and interesting but safe travel book. When Huck Finn finally was published in 1884, Livy Clemens gave it a chilly reception.

After that business and writing were of equal value to Mark Twain as he set about his cardinal task of earning a lot of money. In 1885 he triumphed as a book publisher by issuing the bestselling memoirs of former President Ulysses S. Grant, who had just died. He lavished many hours on this and other business ventures, and was certain that his efforts would be rewarded with enormous wealth, but he never achieved the success he expected. His publishing house eventually went bankrupt.

LATER WORK

Twain's financial failings, reminiscent in some ways to his father's, had serious consequences for his state of mind. They contributed powerfully to a growing pessimism in him, a deep-down feeling that human existence is a cosmic joke perpetrated by a chuckling God. Another cause of his angst, perhaps, was his unconscious anger at himself for not giving undivided attention to his deepest creative instincts, which centered on his Missouri boyhood.

In 1889, Twain published A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, a science-fiction/historical novel about ancient England.

His next major work, in 1894, was The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson, a somber novel that some observers described as "bitter." He also wrote short stories and essays, and several other books, including a study of Joan of Arc. Some of these later works have enduring merit. His unfinished take The Chronicle of Young Saturn has fervent admirers today.

Mark Twain's last fifteen years were filled with public honors, including degrees from Oxford and Yale. Probably the most famous American of the late 19th century, he was much photographed and applauded wherever he went. Indeed, he was one of the most prominent celebrities in the world, traveling widely overseas, including a successful round-the-world lecture tour in 1895-96, undertaken to pay off his debts.

PERSONAL STRUGGLES

But while those years were gilded with awards, they also brought him much anguish. Early in their marriage he and Livy had lost their toddler son, Langdon to diphtheria, now in 1896 his favorite daughter, Susy, died at the age of 24 of spinal meningitis. The loss broke his heart, and adding to his grief, he was out of the country when it happened. His youngest daughter, Jean, was diagnosed with severe epilepsy in the mid-1890s; some years later, during epileptic attacks, she twice tried to murder her housekeeper. In 1909, when she was 29 years old, she died of a heart attack. For many years, Twain's relationship with middle daughter Clara was distant and full of quarrels.

In June 1904, Livy died after a long illness. Her husband traveled often while she was sick. "The full nature of his feelings toward her is puzzling," writes scholar R. Kent Rasmussen. "If he treasured Livy's comradeship as much as he often said, why did he spend so much time away from her?" But absent or not, throughout 34 years of marriage, Twain had indeed loved his wife. "Wheresoever she was, there was Eden," he wrote in tribute to her.

Twain became somewhat bitter in his later years, even while projecting an amiable persona to his public. In private he demonstrated a stunning insensitivity to friends and loved ones. "Much of the last decade of his life, he lived in hell," wrote Hamlin Hill. He wrote a fair amount was unable to finish most of his projects. His memory faltered. He had
volcanic rages and nasty bouts of paranoia, and he experienced many periods of depressed indolence, which he tried to assuage by smoking cigars, reading in bed, and playing endless hours of billiards and cards.

Samuel Clemens died at age 74 on April 21, 1910, at his country home in Redding, Connecticut. He was buried in Elmira, New York.

How to Cite this Page:
Mark Twain

APA Style

Harvard Style

MLA Style

MHRA Style

Chicago Style

CBE/CSE Style

Bluebook Style

AMA Style
MARK TWAIN'S TOUR
AROUND
THE WORLD,
BEGINNING IN CLEVELAND,
OHIO, JULY 15TH, 1895,
CLOSING IN LONDON, MAY, 1896

ROUTE IN AMERICA.

JULY.
Mon 15. Cleveland, Ohio .......... Stillman House
Tues 16. " " " " " " " "
Wed 17. Travel to Chicago.
Fri 19. Mackinac ..................... Grand Hotel
Sat 20. Petoskey, Mich .......... Arlington Hotel
SUN 21. Mackinac..................... Grand Hotel
Mon 22. Duluth, Minn ................. Spalding Hotel
Tues 23. Minneapolis, Minn ......... Hotel West
Thur 25. " " " " " " " "
Fri 26. Winnipeg .................... The Manitoba
Sat 27. " " " " " " " "
SUN 28. " " " " " " " "
Mon 29. Crookston, Minn ........ Crookston Hotel
Tues 30. Travel.
Wed 31. " " " " " " " 

AUGUST.
Thur 1. Butte, Montana ............. The Butte Hotel
Fri 2. Anaconda, Mont ............. The Montana
Sat 3. Helena, Mont ............... Hotel Helena
SUN 4. " " " " " " " "
Mon 5. Great Falls, Mont .......... Park Hotel
Tues 6. Travel.
Wed 7. Spokane, Wash ............. The Spokane
Thur 8. " " " " " " " 
Fri 9. Olympia, Wash ............. The Olympia
Sat 10. Tacoma, Wash ............. The Tacoma
SUN 11. " " " " " " " 
Mon 12. Portland, Or ............... The Portland
Tues 13. Seattle, Wash ............. The Rainier
Wed 14. New Whatcom, Wash ...... " " " " " "
Thur 15. Vancouver, B. C .......... Hotel Vancouver
Fri 16. " " " " " " " 

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Following the Equator, More or Less