



Mark Twain House, Hartford, Connecticut

*Tom, Huck, and Susy: Three Views of Childhood*

*Carla Beard  
July 2004*

## Unit Overview

Developing sensitivity to an author's tone is a challenge for many students. By the junior year in high school, students can usually identify sarcasm and humor, but identifying other tones is more difficult. In this lesson, students read three excerpts about childhood, all written by Mark Twain. After analyzing the tone of each excerpt, students select a topic of their own and write about it twice, using a different tone each time.

Each of Twain's excerpts was written with a different tone. The first, drawn from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, is the famous fence whitewashing scene, a humorous and nostalgic view of childhood. The second, drawn from *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, recounts the return of Pap and his verbal abuse of Huck, a dark and unfortunately realistic view of childhood for some of our students. The third, from *Chapters from My Autobiography*, is Twain's description of his daughter Susy, a father's loving description of an incident in his daughter's character development.

In the first part of the lesson, students are asked to read an excerpt and to identify its tone and the words, phrases, or passages that best convey that tone. This part could be approached independently, followed by class discussion. The "think-pair-share" approach will also work well here. If this skill is new for students, teachers might consider completing the activity without assigning a grade.

In the second part students will write about a topic using two different tones. Students may attempt description, narration, or persuasion, depending upon their skill and interest. Students should select their own topics. Their own childhoods may prove fertile sources, and other possibilities are suggested on the assignment sheet, but ultimately students should be free to select topics they are most comfortable with.

This lesson was developed as part of a seminar at the Mark Twain House and Museum sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities in July 2004.

## *Indiana Standards Addressed in this Lesson*

11.3.3 – Analyze the ways in which irony, tone, mood, the author’s style, and the “sound” of language achieve specific rhetorical (persuasive) or aesthetic (artistic) purposes or both.

11.4.1 – Discuss ideas for writing with classmates, teachers, and other writers.

11.4.2 – Demonstrate an understanding of the elements of discourse, such as purpose, speaker, audience, and form, when completing narrative, expository, persuasive, or descriptive writing assignments.

11.4.3 – Use point of view, characterization, style, and relative elements [tone] for specific narrative (communication) and aesthetic (artistic) purposes.

11.4.10 – Review, evaluate, and revise writing for meaning, clarity, achievement of purpose, and mechanics.

11.4.11 – Edit and proofread one’s own writing, as well as that of others, using an editing checklist.

11.4.12 – Revise text to highlight the individual voice, improve sentence variety and style, and enhance subtlety of meaning and tone in ways that are consistent with the purpose, audience, and form of writing.

11.5.2 – Write responses to literature that demonstrate an understanding of the author’s style and an appreciation of the effects created.

11.6.1 – Demonstrate control of grammar, diction, paragraph and sentence structure, and an understanding of English usage.

11.6.2 – Produce writing that shows accurate spelling and correct punctuation and capitalization.

## *Tom, Huck, and Susy: Three Views of Childhood*

---

Writers approach topics using a specific TONE or attitude.

Tone is an important aspect of our everyday conversation. Have you ever heard someone answer the phone with “Hello,” and immediately you knew they were happy or grumpy? Their tone of voice revealed their feelings. Perhaps you have heard parents scold a child, saying, “Don’t speak to me like that.” The child’s voice reveals his/her attitude. A person’s tone of voice can reveal whether he/she feels confident, is lying, or is confused. Because the attitude is an important part of the message, a speaker’s tone is very important.

Tone is also an important part of other communication. Television commercials, for example, are almost always positive: humorous, folksy, sympathetic, or nostalgic. Advertisers recognize that an upbeat attitude sells a product, while a negative tone doesn’t. Political leaders, even in times of crisis, will make statements that are as hopeful as possible because they understand that people want leaders to encourage them. A speaker’s tone of voice is an important part of the message.

Tone is essential in written communication, too, but it’s harder to detect. The e-mail practice of emoticons (“smileys”) helps a reader know easily if the writer is joking, sarcastic, or unhappy. Most writing, however, relies on the writer’s skill and the reader’s attention to reveal the author’s feelings. Careful writers craft their texts according to their audience, subject, and purpose to convey just the right shade of meaning. They depend on their readers to pay attention to the underlying attitude.

Tone may be harder to detect in writing, but it’s there. Writers like Mark Twain are sensitive to its impact and vary it as needed. In the following three excerpts, Mark Twain writes about childhood. At the end of each selection, you will be asked to identify the attitude present in each selection and to analyze the words and phrases that convey it. Then you will select a topic of your own and write about it twice, each time using a different tone.

---

## Selection 1: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

SATURDAY morning was come, and all the summer world was bright and fresh, and brimming with life. There was a song in every heart; and if the heart was young the music issued at the lips. There was cheer in every face and a spring in every step. The locust-trees were in bloom and the fragrance of the blossoms filled the air. Cardiff Hill, beyond the village and above it, was green with vegetation and it lay just far enough away to seem a Delectable Land, dreamy, reposeful, and inviting.

Tom appeared on the sidewalk with a bucket of whitewash and a long-handled brush. He surveyed the fence, and all gladness left him and a deep melancholy settled down upon his spirit. Thirty yards of board fence nine feet high. Life to him seemed hollow, and existence but a burden. Sighing, he dipped his brush and passed it along the topmost plank; repeated the operation; did it again; compared the insignificant whitewashed streak with the far-reaching continent of unwhitewashed fence, and sat down on a tree-box discouraged. Jim came skipping out at the gate with a tin pail, and singing "Buffalo Gals." Bringing water from the town pump had always been hateful work in Tom's eyes, before, but now it did not strike him so. He remembered that there was company at the pump. White, mulatto, and negro boys and girls were always there waiting their turns, resting, trading playthings, quarrelling, fighting, skylarking. And he remembered that although the pump was only a hundred and fifty yards off, Jim never got back with a bucket of water under an hour – and even then somebody generally had to go after him. Tom said:

"Say, Jim, I'll fetch the water if you'll whitewash some."

Jim shook his head and said:

"Can't, Mars Tom. Ole missis, she tole me I got to go an' git dis water an' not stop foolin' roun' wid anybody. She say she spec' Mars Tom gwine to ax me to whitewash, an' so she tole me go 'long an' 'tend to my own business -- she 'lowed *she'd* 'tend to de whitewashin'."

"Oh, never you mind what she said, Jim. That's the way she always talks. Gimme the bucket -- I won't be gone only a minute. SHE won't ever know."

"Oh, I dasn't, Mars Tom. Ole missis she'd take an' tar de head off'n me. 'Deed she would."

"*She!* She never licks anybody -- whacks 'em over the head with her thimble -- and who cares for that, I'd like to know. She talks awful, but talk don't hurt -- anyways it don't if she don't cry. Jim, I'll give you a marvel. I'll give you a white alley!"

Jim began to waver.

"White alley, Jim! And it's a bully taw."

"My! Dat's a mighty gay marvel, I tell you! But Mars Tom I's powerful 'fraid ole missis --"

"And besides, if you will I'll show you my sore toe."

Jim was only human – this attraction was too much for him. He put down his pail, took the white alley, and bent over the toe with absorbing interest while the bandage was being unwound. In another moment he was flying down the street with his pail and a tingling rear, Tom was whitewashing with vigor, and Aunt Polly was retiring from the field with a slipper in her hand and triumph in her eye. But Tom's energy did not last. He began to think of the fun he had planned for this day, and his sorrows multiplied. Soon the free boys would come tripping along on all sorts of delicious expeditions, and they would make a world of fun of him for having to work – the very thought of it burnt him like fire. He got out his worldly wealth and

examined it – bits of toys, marbles, and trash; enough to buy an exchange of WORK, maybe, but not half enough to buy so much as half an hour of pure freedom. So he returned his straitened means to his pocket, and gave up the idea of trying to buy the boys. At this dark and hopeless moment an inspiration burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration.

He took up his brush and went tranquilly to work. Ben Rogers hove in sight presently – the very boy, of all boys, whose ridicule he had been dreading. Ben's gait was the hop-skip-and-jump – proof enough that his heart was light and his anticipations high. He was eating an apple, and giving a long, melodious whoop, at intervals, followed by a deep-toned ding-dong-dong, ding-dong-dong, for he was personating a steamboat. As he drew near, he slackened speed, took the middle of the street, leaned far over to starboard and rounded to ponderously and with laborious pomp and circumstance – for he was personating the *Big Missouri*, and considered himself to be drawing nine feet of water. He was boat and captain and engine-bells combined, so he had to imagine himself standing on his own hurricane-deck giving the orders and executing them:

"Stop her, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling!" The headway ran almost out, and he drew up slowly toward the sidewalk.

"Ship up to back! Ting-a-ling-ling!" His arms straightened and stiffened down his sides.

"Set her back on the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow! ch-chow-wow! Chow!" His right hand, meantime, describing stately circles – for it was representing a forty-foot wheel.

"Let her go back on the labboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow-ch-chow-how! Chow!" The left hand began to describe circles.

"Stop the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Stop the labboard! Come ahead on the stabboard! Stop her! Let your outside turn over slow! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow-ow-ow! Get out that head-line! *lively* now! Come -- out with your spring-line – what're you about there! Take a turn round that stump with the bight of it! Stand by that stage, now – let her go! Done with the engines, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling!"

"*Sh't! s'h't! sh't!*" (trying the gauge-cocks).

Tom went on whitewashing – paid no attention to the steamboat. Ben stared a moment and then said: "Hi- Yi! *you're* up a stump, ain't you!"

No answer. Tom surveyed his last touch with the eye of an artist, then he gave his brush another gentle sweep and surveyed the result, as before. Ben ranged up alongside of him. Tom's mouth watered for the apple, but he stuck to his work. Ben said:

"Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?"

Tom wheeled suddenly and said:

"Why, it's you, Ben! I warn't noticing."

"Say -- I'm going in a-swimming, I am. Don't you wish you could? But of course you'd druther *work* -- wouldn't you? Course you would!"

Tom contemplated the boy a bit, and said:

"What do you call work?"

"Why, ain't *that* work?"

Tom resumed his whitewashing, and answered carelessly:

"Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain't. All I know, is, it suits Tom Sawyer."

"Oh come, now, you don't mean to let on that you *like* it?"

The brush continued to move.

"Like it? Well, I don't see why I oughtn't to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?"

That put the thing in a new light. Ben stopped nibbling his apple. Tom swept his brush daintily back and forth -- stepped back to note the effect -- added a touch here and there -- criticised the effect again -- Ben watching every move and getting more and more interested, more and more absorbed. Presently he said:

"Say, Tom, let *me* whitewash a little."

Tom considered, was about to consent; but he altered his mind:

"No -- no -- I reckon it wouldn't hardly do, Ben. You see, Aunt Polly's awful particular about this fence -- right here on the street, you know -- but if it was the back fence I wouldn't mind and *she* wouldn't. Yes, she's awful particular about this fence; it's got to be done very careful; I reckon there ain't one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand, that can do it the way it's got to be done."

"No -- is that so? Oh come, now -- lemme just try. Only just a little -- I'd let *you*, if you was me, Tom."

"Ben, I'd like to, honest injun; but Aunt Polly -- well, Jim wanted to do it, but she wouldn't let him; Sid wanted to do it, and she wouldn't let Sid. Now don't you see how I'm fixed? If you was to tackle this fence and anything was to happen to it -- "

"Oh, shucks, I'll be just as careful. Now lemme try. Say -- I'll give you the core of my apple."

"Well, here -- No, Ben, now don't. I'm afeard -- "

"I'll give you *all* of it!"

Tom gave up the brush with reluctance in his face, but alacrity in his heart. And while the late steamer *Big Missouri* worked and sweated in the sun, the retired artist sat on a barrel in the shade close by, dangled his legs, munched his apple, and planned the slaughter of more innocents. There was no lack of material; boys happened along every little while; they came to jeer, but remained to whitewash. By the time Ben was fagged out, Tom had traded the next chance to Billy Fisher for a kite, in good repair; and when he played out, Johnny Miller bought in for a dead rat and a string to swing it with -- and so on, and so on, hour after hour. And when the middle of the afternoon came, from being a poor poverty-stricken boy in the morning, Tom was literally rolling in wealth. He had besides the things before mentioned, twelve marbles, part of a jews-harp, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a spool cannon, a key that wouldn't unlock anything, a fragment of chalk, a glass stopper of a decanter, a tin soldier, a couple of tadpoles, six fire-crackers, a kitten with only one eye, a brass doorknob, a dog-collar -- but no dog -- the handle of a knife, four pieces of orange-peel, and a dilapidated old window sash.

He had had a nice, good, idle time all the while – plenty of company – and the fence had three coats of whitewash on it! If he hadn't run out of whitewash he would have bankrupted every boy in the village.

Tom said to himself that it was not such a hollow world, after all. He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it – namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain. If he had been a great and wise philosopher, like the writer of this book, he would now have comprehended that Work consists of whatever a body is *obliged* to do, and that Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do. And this would help him to understand why constructing artificial flowers or performing on a tread-mill is work, while rolling ten-pins or climbing Mont Blanc is only amusement. There are wealthy gentlemen in England who drive four-horse passenger-coaches twenty or thirty miles on a daily line, in the summer, because the privilege costs them considerable money; but if they were offered wages for the service, that would turn it into work and then they would resign.

---

### *Selection 1: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

What tone do you hear in this passage?

What words, phrases, or sentences suggest this tone to you?

---

## Section 2: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

**Introduction:** It is night, and Huck has gone to his room at the home of the Widow Douglas, his foster mother. He closes his door and discovers Pap, his father and the town drunk, waiting for him. Huck hasn't seen Pap for months, but he knew Pap was back in town because he had seen Pap's footprints in the snow. Huck is the narrator.

### CHAPTER V

I HAD shut the door to. Then I turned around, and there he was. I used to be scared of him all the time, he tanned me so much. I reckoned I was scared now, too; but in a minute I see I was mistaken -- that is, after the first jolt, as you may say, when my breath sort of hitched, he being so unexpected; but right away after, I see I warn't scared of him worth bothring about.

He was most fifty, and he looked it. His hair was long and tangled and greasy, and hung down, and you could see his eyes shining through like he was behind vines. It was all black, no gray; so was his long, mixed-up whiskers. There warn't no color in his face, where his face showed; it was white; not like another man's white, but a white to make a body sick, a white to make a body's flesh crawl -- a tree-toad white, a fish-belly white. As for his clothes -- just rags, that was all. He had one ankle resting on t'other knee; the boot on that foot was busted, and two of his toes stuck through, and he worked them now and then. His hat was laying on the floor -- an old black slouch with the top caved in, like a lid.

I stood a-looking at him; he set there a-looking at me, with his chair tilted back a little. I set the candle down. I noticed the window was up; so he had clumb in by the shed. He kept a-looking me all over. By and by he says:

"Starchy clothes -- very. You think you're a good deal of a big-bug, DON'T you?"

"Maybe I am, maybe I ain't," I says.

"Don't you give me none o' your lip," says he. "You've put on considerable many frills since I been away. I'll take you down a peg before I get done with you. You're educated, too, they say -- can read and write. You think you're better'n your father, now, don't you, because he can't? I'LL take it out of you. Who told you you might meddle with such hifalut'n foolishness, hey? -- who told you you could?"

"The widow. She told me."

"The widow, hey? -- and who told the widow she could put in her shovel about a thing that ain't none of her business?"

"Nobody never told her."

"Well, I'll learn her how to meddle. And looky here -- you drop that school, you hear? I'll learn people to bring up a boy to put on airs over his own father and let on to be better'n what HE is. You lemme catch you fooling around that school again, you hear? Your mother couldn't read, and she couldn't write, nuther, before she died. None of the family couldn't before THEY died. I can't; and here you're a-swelling yourself up like this. I ain't the man to stand it -- you hear? Say, lemme hear you read."

I took up a book and begun something about General Washington and the wars. When I'd read about a half a minute, he fetched the book a whack with his hand and knocked it across the house. He says:

"It's so. You can do it. I had my doubts when you told me. Now looky here; you stop that putting on frills. I won't have it. I'll lay for you, my smarty; and if I catch you about that school I'll tan you good. First you know you'll get religion, too. I never see such a son.

He took up a little blue and yaller picture of some cows and a boy, and says:

"What's this?"

"It's something they give me for learning my lessons good."

He tore it up, and says:

"I'll give you something better -- I'll give you a cowhide."

He set there a-mumbling and a-growling a minute, and then he says:

"AIN'T you a sweet-scented dandy, though? A bed; and bedclothes; and a look'n'-glass; and a piece of carpet on the floor -- and your own father got to sleep with the hogs in the tanyard. I never see such a son. I bet I'll take some o' these frills out o' you before I'm done with you. Why, there ain't no end to your airs -- they say you're rich. Hey? -- how's that?"

"They lie -- that's how."

"Looky here -- mind how you talk to me; I'm a- standing about all I can stand now -- so don't gimme no sass. I've been in town two days, and I hain't heard nothing but about you bein' rich. I heard about it away down the river, too. That's why I come. You git me that money to-morrow -- I want it."

"I hain't got no money."

"It's a lie. Judge Thatcher's got it. You git it. I want it."

"I hain't got no money, I tell you. You ask Judge Thatcher; he'll tell you the same."

"All right. I'll ask him; and I'll make him pungle, too, or I'll know the reason why. Say, how much you got in your pocket? I want it."

"I hain't got only a dollar, and I want that to --"

"It don't make no difference what you want it for -- you just shell it out."

He took it and bit it to see if it was good, and then he said he was going down town to get some whisky; said he hadn't had a drink all day. When he had got out on the shed he put his head in again, and cussed me for putting on frills and trying to be better than him; and when I reckoned he was gone he come back and put his head in again, and told me to mind about that school, because he was going to lay for me and lick me if I didn't drop that.

Next day he was drunk, and he went to Judge Thatcher's and bullyragged him, and tried to make him give up the money; but he couldn't, and then he swore he'd make the law force him.

The judge and the widow went to law to get the court to take me away from him and let one of them be my guardian; but it was a new judge that had just come, and he didn't know the old man; so he said courts mustn't interfere and separate families if they could help it; said he'd druther not take a child away from its father. So Judge Thatcher and the widow had to quit on the business.

That pleased the old man till he couldn't rest. He said he'd cowhide me till I was black and blue if I didn't raise some money for him. I borrowed three dollars from Judge Thatcher, and pap took it and got drunk, and went a-blowing around and cussing and whooping and carrying on; and he kept it up all over town, with a tin pan, till most midnight; then they jailed him, and next day they had him before court, and jailed him again for a week. But he said HE was satisfied; said he was boss of his son, and he'd make it warm for HIM.

---

## *Section 2: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

What tone do you hear in this passage?

What words, phrases, or sentences suggest this tone to you?

---

### Section 3: Chapters from My Autobiography

**Introduction:** Sam and Livy Clemens had four children: Langdon, who died at 22 months; Susy, who died at age 24; Clara, the only child to survive her parents; and Jean. In the following excerpt, originally published in the *North American Review* as *Chapters from My Autobiography*, Twain describes an incident from Susy's childhood.

[Note: Twain refers to Susy "correcting" Clara. Susy hit her.]

As a child, Susy had a passionate temper; and it cost her much remorse and many tears before she learned to govern it, but after that it was a wholesome salt, and her character was the stronger and healthier for its presence. It enabled her to be good with dignity; it preserved her not only from being good for vanity's sake, but from even the appearance of it. In looking back over the long vanished years, it seems but natural and excusable that I should dwell with longing affection and preference upon incidents of her young life which made it beautiful to us, and that I should let its few small offences go unsummoned and unapproached.

In the summer of 1880, when Susy was just eight years of age, the family were at Quarry Farm, as usual at that season of the year. Hay-cutting time was approaching, and Susy and Clara were counting the hours, for the time was big with a great event for them; they had been promised that they might mount the wagon and ride home from the fields on the summit of the hay mountain. This perilous privilege, so dear to their age and species, had never been granted them before. Their excitement had no bounds. They could talk of nothing but this epoch-making adventure, now. But misfortune overtook Susy on the very morning of the important day. In a sudden outbreak of passion, she corrected Clara – with a shovel, or stick, or something of the sort. At any rate, the offence committed was of a gravity clearly beyond the limit allowed in the nursery. In accordance with the rule and custom of the house, Susy went to her mother to confess, and to help decide upon the size and character of the punishment due. It was quite understood that, as a punishment could have but one rational object and function – to act as a reminder, and warn the transgressor against transgressing in the same way again – the children would know about as well as any how to choose a penalty which would be rememberable and effective. Susy and her mother discussed various punishments, but none of them seemed adequate. This fault was an unusually serious one, and required the setting up of a danger-signal in the memory that would not blow out nor burn out, but remain a fixture there and furnish its saving warning indefinitely. Among the punishments mentioned was deprivation of the hay-wagon ride. It was noticeable that this one hit Susy hard. Finally, in the summing up, the mother named over the list and asked:

"Which one do you think it ought to be, Susy?"

Susy studied, shrank from her duty, and asked:

"Which do you think, mamma?"

"Well, Susy, I would rather leave it to you. *You* make the choice yourself."

It cost Susy a struggle, and much and deep thinking and weighing – but she came out where any one who knew her could have foretold she would.

"Well, mamma, I'll make it the hay-wagon, because you know the other things might not make me remember not to do it again, but if I don't get to ride on the hay-wagon I can remember it easily."

In this world the real penalty, the sharp one, the lasting one, never falls otherwise than on the wrong person. It was not I that corrected Clara, but the remembrance of poor Susy's lost hay-ride still brings *me* a pang – after twenty-six years.

---

*Section 3: Chapters from My Autobiography*

What tone do you hear in this passage?

What words, phrases, or sentences suggest this tone to you?



## Possible Answers

Note: Student answers may vary. Teachers should accept any answer a student can support with evidence from the text. Possible answers are listed below.

### Section 1: Adventures of Tom Sawyer

#### What tone do you hear in this passage?

Much of this passage suggests a nostalgic look at childhood. Some of it is humorous, and the final paragraph suggests insight.

#### What words, phrases, or sentences suggest this tone to you?

##### These passages suggest nostalgia:

(First paragraph)

... all the summer world was bright and fresh, and brimming with life. There was a song in every heart; and if the heart was young the music issued at the lips. There was cheer in every face and a spring in every step. The locust-trees were in bloom and the fragrance of the blossoms filled the air. Cardiff Hill, beyond the village and above it, was green with vegetation and it lay just far enough away to seem a Delectable Land, dreamy, reposeful, and inviting.

-----

(Second paragraph)

White, mulatto, and negro boys and girls were always there waiting their turns, resting, trading playthings, quarrelling, fighting, skylarking. And he remembered that although the pump was only a hundred and fifty yards off, Jim never got back with a bucket of water under an hour – and even then somebody generally had to go after him.

-----

Soon the free boys would come tripping along on all sorts of delicious expeditions, ...

-----

He got out his worldly wealth and examined it – bits of toys, marbles, and trash ...

-----

Ben Rogers hove in sight presently ... Ben's gait was the hop-skip-and-jump – proof enough that his heart was light and his anticipations high. He was eating an apple, and giving a long, melodious whoop, at intervals, followed by a deep-toned ding-dong-dong, ding-dong-dong, for he was personating a steamboat. As he drew near, he slackened speed, took the middle of the street, leaned far over to starboard and rounded to ponderously and with laborious pomp and circumstance – for he was personating the *Big Missouri*, and considered himself to be drawing nine feet of water. He was boat and captain and engine-bells combined, so he had to imagine himself standing on his own hurricane-deck giving the orders and executing them ...

-----

##### These passages suggest humor:

"And besides, if you will I'll show you my sore toe."

Jim was only human – this attraction was too much for him.

-----

In another moment he was flying down the street with his pail and a tingling rear, Tom was whitewashing with vigor, and Aunt Polly was retiring from the field with a slipper in her hand and triumph in her eye.

-----

And while the late steamer *Big Missouri* worked and sweated in the sun, the retired artist sat on a barrel in the shade close by, dangled his legs, munched his apple, and planned the slaughter of more innocents. There was no lack of material; boys happened along every little while; they came to jeer, but remained to whitewash. By the time Ben was fagged out, Tom had traded the next chance to Billy Fisher for a kite, in good repair; and when he played out, Johnny Miller bought in for a dead rat and a string to swing it with – and so on, and so on, hour after hour. And when the middle of the afternoon came, from being a poor poverty-stricken boy in the morning, Tom was literally rolling in wealth. He had besides the things before mentioned, twelve marbles, part of a jews-harp, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a spool cannon, a key that wouldn't unlock anything, a fragment of chalk, a glass stopper of a decanter, a tin soldier, a couple of tadpoles, six fire-crackers, a kitten with only one eye, a brass doorknob, a dog-collar – but no dog – the handle of a knife, four pieces of orange-peel, and a dilapidated old window sash.

-----

If he hadn't run out of whitewash he would have bankrupted every boy in the village.

### **The final paragraph suggests insight or wisdom:**

Tom said to himself that it was not such a hollow world, after all. He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it – namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain. If he had been a great and wise philosopher, like the writer of this book, he would now have comprehended that Work consists of whatever a body is *obliged* to do, and that Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do. And this would help him to understand why constructing artificial flowers or performing on a tread-mill is work, while rolling ten-pins or climbing Mont Blanc is only amusement.

---

## *Section 2: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

### **What tone do you hear in this passage?**

Both Pap's words and actions toward Huck suggest a bleak view of childhood and a realistic view of an abusive parent. Twain also suggests respect for Huck by giving him a certain courage in his responses to Pap.

### **What words, phrases, or sentences suggest this tone to you?**

Any passage quoting Pap's words or describing his actions shows a bleak/realistic tone:

- Pap's threats to beat Huck.
- Pap's insistence that Huck not think he's better than his father.
- Pap's desire to be in control of Huck, even though he abandons Huck for long periods of time and only comes back to get money for whiskey.

Huck demonstrates courage in his description of Pap and in his responses to Pap:

- "I used to be scared of him all the time, he tanned me so much. I reckoned I was scared now, too; but in a minute I see I was mistaken -- that is, after the first jolt,

as you may say, when my breath sort of hitched, he being so unexpected; but right away after, I see I warn't scared of him worth bothering about."

- The paragraph beginning, "He was most fifty, and he looked it," especially description of Pap's hair, face, clothing, and hat.
- 

### *Section 3: Chapters from My Autobiography*

#### **What tone do you hear in this passage?**

Twain describes this childhood incident with parental affection.

#### **What words, phrases, or sentences suggest this tone to you?**

"As a child, Susy had a passionate temper; and it cost her much remorse and many tears before she learned to govern it, but after that it was a wholesome salt, and her character was the stronger and healthier for its presence. It enabled her to be good with dignity; it preserved her not only from being good for vanity's sake, but from even the appearance of it. In looking back over the long vanished years, it seems but natural and excusable that I should dwell with longing affection and preference upon incidents of her young life which made it beautiful to us, and that I should let its few small offences go unsummoned and unapproached. "

"It cost Susy a struggle, and much and deep thinking and weighing – but she came out where any one who knew her could have foretold she would."

"In this world the real penalty, the sharp one, the lasting one, never falls otherwise than on the wrong person. It was not I that corrected Clara, but the remembrance of poor Susy's lost hay-ride still brings *me* a pang – after twenty-six years."

Even the fact that Twain uses the verb "corrected" instead of "hit" suggests parental indulgence. Parents want to present their children in the best light, even as they admit their children are not perfect.

---

## Writing Task

---

You have just read and analyzed three excerpts on the broad topic of childhood. Now you need to choose a broad topic of your own. You may write about childhood if you wish, but many other possibilities also exist: friendships, work, play, school, your community, your family, holidays. Discuss your ideas with a partner and choose a topic.

Then, using the writing strategies that work best for you, write two passages about your topic using a different tone in each.

Your writing will be assessed using this rubric:

<i>Trait</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
<b>Uses tone for specific aesthetic purposes</b>	Tone is inappropriate for the topic or inconsistent in one or both passages.	Tone is appropriate for the topic and mostly consistent in both passages.	Tone is appropriate for the topic and consistent throughout both passages.
<b>Revision</b>	Submitted draft needs major revision for meaning, clarity, and/or purpose.	Submitted draft needs minor revision for meaning, clarity, and/or purpose.	The meaning and purpose of the submitted draft are clear.
<b>Editing/proofreading</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spelling</li><li>• Punctuation</li><li>• Capitalization</li><li>• S/V Agreement</li><li>• Sentence Structure</li><li>• Format</li></ul>	Numerous lapses in submitted draft suggest lack of attention to editing and proofreading.	A few lapses are present; they do not interfere with understanding.	Almost no lapses present; the draft has been carefully edited and proofread.
<b>Diction</b>	Word choice is inappropriate or dull, possibly conveying wrong or inconsistent tone.	Word choice is appropriate and vivid, helping to convey the tone.	Word choice is appropriate, vivid, and polished, making the writer's tone easily apparent.

The deadline for this assignment is \_\_\_\_\_.

---