

TITLE OF LESSON

American Literature Unit 1 Lesson 33 – Using Twain’s Tools: Satire  
*Should Huckleberry Finn Stay on School Reading Lists?*

TIME ESTIMATE FOR THIS LESSON

One class period

ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS

California – Eng 11-12: R1.0-3, 2.0, 3.0-5, W1.0-5, 2.0, 2.2, 2.3, W/O1.0-2, L/S1.0, 1.6-9, 2.0, 2.2, 2.3

MATERIALS

Class sets of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*  
**Satire Techniques Lecture** – Teacher Page  
**Essay 3: Satire** – Student Page

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To learn an expanded definition of satire that includes the purpose of the genre
- To review the literary terms and techniques associated with satire
- To identify the purpose and the presumed audience of *Huckleberry Finn*
- To locate examples of the satirical techniques being used in *Huckleberry Finn*

FOCUS AND MOTIVATE STUDENTS – WARM-UP ACTIVITY

- 1) Homework Check – Stamp/initial all complete homework assignments (Essay 2). Collect Journal 14. Tell students to keep their essays and Journal 13.
- 2) **Daily Log** – Tell students to copy the **Daily Log** below.
- 3) **Sustained Silent Reading** – Read for fifteen minutes. At the end of the reading, ask students to point out an example of satire in their novels. Ask them to explain why they believe it is an example of satire. Point out an example of satire from your novel also.

Date	Journal	Lecture Discussion	Activity	Readings	Homework
		Characteristics and Techniques of Satire	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Journal Read Around</li> <li>2. What if?</li> <li>3. Lecture: Characteristics and Techniques of Satire</li> </ol>	<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify satirical techniques being used in the novel.</li> <li>2. Mind Web Essay 3 (Step 1 of guidelines).</li> <li>3. Define vocabulary words.</li> <li>4. Study Vocabulary.</li> <li>5. Continue reading novels.</li> </ol>

ACTIVITIES – INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

1. Ground Rules for Discussions – Remind students of the ground rules for discussions involving potentially offensive language
2. **Journal Read Around**– Have students pass their **Journal** 13 response to the person sitting on their right. Then read them. When they are done, have them pass it again to the right and read them. Continue the process until each person’s journal has been read by each group member and the author’s own journal is returned. Tell everyone to look at you when they are finished. Give them five minutes. At the end of five minutes, call time.

3. What If? – Tell students that they will choose one group member's alternative ending to present to the class. Whichever ending they choose to present, they must create a tableau of one scene. A tableau is a scene that represents a moment in time. Tell the students to write down the word "tableau" and its definition on their vocabulary lists. The writer of the ending will be the director. The writer will choose a scene from the alternative ending and assign character roles to each group member. The scene will not be acted out; it will just be a moment frozen in time. (For example, if a group were to present a tableau of Huck apologizing to Jim on the raft, they would pose, as the characters, in the position of the critical moment of that scene, as if a photograph had been taken of it.) Tell everyone to take five minutes arranging the scene. Then have each group present the scene to the class, with the director explaining the critical portion of the scene and describing who each person represents. Point out that, just as they are choosing critical moments of the novel to present in their tableaux, they will be creating movie scenes in Flash to demonstrate meaning. But – whereas they can only present one static moment here – in their movies, they can use motion to help demonstrate the meaning. When everyone has presented, tell the class that the Phelps farm section, the ending of Huckleberry Finn, has been considered by many critics as problematic. Many people feel that the novel is a flawed masterpiece, and that the ending is the flaw. Ask the students why they think people have criticized the novels ending, and why they chose to change what they did about the ending.

4. Lecture and [Notetaking](#) – The Characteristics and Techniques of Satire – Tell students to bring out a sheet of paper and a pencil for taking notes. Tell them that you are going to be discussing some of the main techniques used by writers of satire. This lecture will help them prepare to write their own satirical piece, which they will be Mind Webbing tonight and writing tomorrow. Their satirical piece will be based on Essay 2: To Ban or Not to Ban? Ask if anyone can remind you of the definition of satire. They should be able to come up with the definition discussed in Lesson 21 (from *Abrams Glossary of Literary Terms*):

*Satire can be described as the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation. It differs from the comic in that comedy evokes laughter mainly as an end in itself, while satire 'derides'; that is, it uses laughter as a weapon, and against a butt existing outside the work itself. That butt may be an individual (in 'personal satire'), or a type of person, a class, an institution, a nation, or even ... the whole human race.*

Tell them that you are going to expand that definition now. Bring out the teacher page **Satire Techniques Lecture** and read the definition that opens the lecture. Stop and ask the students what is different about this definition from the other one. They should be able to tell you that this new definition states that the purpose of satire is to improve mankind and human institutions. Ask them to tell you how Mark Twain is trying to improve mankind in his novel. They should be able to come up with an answer about the injustice of slavery.

5. The Purpose of Satire – Deliver the part of the lecture titled, The Purpose of Satire. After this section, stop and ask students who the presumed audience of *Huckleberry Finn* is. Is Mark Twain trying to enlist his audience in support of his cause, or is his audience the target of his attack?
6. The Tools and Techniques of Satire – Deliver the part of the lecture titled, The Tools and Techniques of Satire. Tell students that these are some of the common literary devices used by satirists. Tell them to pay careful attention and take notes, because you are going to present examples from the novel, and you will want them to describe which technique is being used by Twain. Tell them that each technique you name should also be added to their vocabulary lists. They should define the terms, using their class notes, tonight.
7. Group Discuss – Each time you introduce a new tool/technique in the lecture, stop and ask the students to take just a minute to discuss it in their groups and come up with an example of the technique being introduced. Then call on groups randomly to offer their examples before going on to the next technique.
8. Examples – Tell students that you are going to read some examples of Twain using the techniques described in the lecture, and you want them to discuss, in their groups, which techniques are being employed. Tell them to read along as you read, and jot down notes about their ideas. (You will need to find the appropriate pages for your class edition of the book. Chapter locations are given below.)
  - A) Read Pap's speech from Chapter 6 (located on **Satire Techniques Lecture Page**)

B) Read the section in Chapter 32, where Aunt Sally hears of a steamboat explosion (located on **Satire Techniques Lecture Page**)

9. Group Discussion – Tell the students to discuss, in groups, which techniques of satire are being employed in the above examples, and decide on a group answer. Their answer should also say why they believe the examples illustrate the specific techniques they've identified. Give the students five minutes to discuss this, and then have them present their answers. Example A is illustrative of irony (the speech, being delivered by the drunken and distasteful pap, is not meant to elicit our sympathy, but our ridicule). Because of our knowledge about the character, and his repulsiveness, his words take on a meaning other than the most apparent meaning. Moreover, he speaks of the effort of raising a son, a statement that elicits more humor and ridicule, since we know that he has no interest in raising Huck. The speech is also a good example of hyperbole—Pap, by raging against the government, paints himself as the ultimate martyr to the system. Example B shows both irony and understatement. The irony is derived from Aunt Sally's compassion for the victims of the explosion, a compassion that is limited to White people. The understatement is so subtle that many might read it seriously, and believe that Twain doesn't consider the death of an African American as important.
  10. Essay 3 – Distribute the **Essay 3: Satire** guidelines and tell students to complete Step One tonight: Mind Web for the satirical essay. If anyone does not remember the Mind Web process, remind them to draw a circle and write the topic of their paper in the center of the circle. In this case, they should write their opinion about whether or not to keep Huckleberry Finn on reading lists. So the central circle could say "Ban Huck Finn." Underneath, tell them to write the opposite of their belief. (The opposite of the above would be "Keep Huck Finn on reading lists.") This will be their thesis statement, the opposite of their true belief. Remind them of Mark Twain's essay "Only a Nigger," where he seemed to be saying one thing but he was really arguing the other point of view. On the clusters around the central circle, they should write down all their ideas of what they want to include in their satire essay – which satirical techniques they want to use, who their audience is, who is the target of their attack, what behavior you want to change by writing this essay, and so forth. Remind them that they can use the evidence from their persuasive essay (Essay 2) to make their point. They will just need to figure out a way to convey it within a satirical piece.
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#### HOMEWORK

- 1) Identify satirical techniques used in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.
  - 2) Essay 3 – Mind Web satirical essay, To Ban or Not to Ban? Finish Step 1.
  - 3) Define vocabulary words.
  - 4) Study vocabulary.
  - 5) Continue reading novels.
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#### GROUP ROLES

None

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#### DOCUMENTATION FOR PORTFOLIO

##### Unit 1

Project 1: A True Story

Evaluation Essay 1

Incident Poem

Essay 2