

Study Guide prepared by
Catherine Bush
Barter Playwright-in-Residence

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Adapted from the novel by Mark Twain

*Especially for Grades 3-10

By the Barter Players, Barter Stage II Fall, 2018

(NOTE: standards are included for reading the novel *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain, seeing a performance of the play, and completing the study guide.)

Virginia SOLs

English – 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7, 3.9, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.9, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.7, 5.9, 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, 6.9, 7.1, 7.2, 7.4, 7.5, 7.7, 7.9, 8.1, 8.2, 8.4, 8.5, 8.7, 8.9, 9.1, 9.3, 9.4, 9.6, 9.8, 10.1, 10.3, 10.4, 10.6, 10.8

Theatre Arts – 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.17, 6.18, 6.21, 7.6, 7.7, 7.18, 7.20, 8.5, 8.12, 8.18, 8.22, TL.10, TL.11, TL.13, TL.17, TH.6, TH.9, TH.12, TH.15, TH.17

Tennessee/North Carolina Common Core State Standards

English Language Arts – Reading Literature: 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, 5.6, 6.1, 6.4, 6.6, 6.7, 6.10, 7.1, 7.4, 7.6, 7.7, 7.10, 8.1, 8.4, 8.6, 8.7, 8.10, 9-10.1, 9-10.4, 9-10.7, 9-10.10

English Language Arts – Writing: 3.1, 3.3, 3.7, 4.1, 4.3, 4.7, 4.9, 5.1, 5.3, 5.7, 5.9, 6.1, 6.4, 6.6, 6.7, 6.9, 7.1, 7.3, 7.7, 7.9, 8.1, 8.3, 8.7, 8.9, 9-10.1, 9-10.3, 9-10.7, 9-10.9

TCAPS

Theatre – 3.6.1, 3.6.4, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 4.6.1, 4.6.4, 4.7.1, 4.7.2, 5.6.1, 5.6.4, 5.7.1, 5.7.2

Theatre 6-8 – 3.2, 6.2, 7.1 **Theatre 9-12** – 1.3, 7.1, 7.2

North Carolina Essential Standards

Theatre Arts – 3.A.1, 3.AE.1, 3.CU.2, 4.A.1, 4.AE.1, 5.A.1, 5.AE.1, 6.A.1, 6.AE.1, 7.A.1, 7.AE.1, 8.A.1, 8.AE.1, 8.CU.2, B.A.1, B.AE.1, B.CU.2, I.A.1, I.AE.1

Setting

In and around the Mississippi River town of St. Petersburg, Missouri. 1845



Characters

Tom Sawyer – A mischievous boy

Aunt Polly – Tom's aunt and guardian

Huckleberry Finn – Tom's renegade friend

Becky Thatcher – The new girl in town

Injun Joe – A murdering scoundrel

Joe Harper – Tom's schoolmate

Susy Harper – Joe's little sister

Mrs. Harper – Joe's mother

Billy Fisher – Tom's schoolmate

Johnny Miller – Tom's playmate

Dr. Robinson – The local physician

Judge Thatcher – Becky's father, county judge

Muff Potter – the town drunk

Widow Douglas – a local townswoman

Miss Dobbins – the school teacher

Amy Lawrence – Tom's former girlfriend

Prosecuting Attorney – lawyer prosecuting Muff Potter

Defense Attorney – lawyer defending Muff Potter



Note: Cast Size and Doubling of Actors

In this production of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* we will be using six actors; the actor playing Tom will play that role only; the other five actors will play three or four roles each. Doubling (and tripling) of actors requires distinction between characters. In this production, characters will be distinguished by costume, voice and other physical character traits.

Background

Most people don't know that Mark Twain wrote about Tom Sawyer three different times: the winter of 1872-73, the spring and summer of 1874 and the spring and summer of 1875. He would return it to his editor who insisted that this be a book for boys, not men. Twain complied, and after the book was published in 1876, Twain wrote *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which he felt, was for adults instead. Both books have gone on to be two of the best loved, most read books in American Literature.

Synopsis

Tom Sawyer lives with his Aunt Polly in the Mississippi River town of St. Petersburg, Missouri. Tom always seems to be in trouble. When Aunt Polly catches him stealing jam, she makes him whitewash the fence as punishment. Tom quickly concocts a way to get the other kids to do the work for him, and to pay for the privilege! Tom considers himself to be in love with Amy Lawrence, but forgets her as soon as the beautiful Becky Thatcher moves to town. At school one day, Becky agrees to be “engaged” to Tom, but breaks it off when she finds out that he was previously engaged to Amy. She tells Tom she can’t be engaged to a boy with warts. Tom’s friend Huck Finn convinced Tom that the best way to get rid of warts is to “heave a cat” in the graveyard at midnight. Desperate to get Becky back, Tom is willing to try anything, and he and Huck rendezvous at the appointed time and place. While there, however, they witness Doc Robinson, along with Muff Potter and Injun Joe, trying to rob a grave. A fight breaks out among the men, and Injun Joe murders Doc Robinson. Muff Potter is wrongfully arrested for the murder but Huck and Tom, fearful of Injun Joe’s wrath, swear to keep the killer’s true identity a secret. At school the next day, Becky spurns Tom again and Tom, along with Huck and another friend, Joe Harper, decide to abandon civilized society and live the life of a pirate. They steal a raft and sail to Jackson’s Island where they spend their time sword-fighting and digging for buried treasure. Aunt Polly and Joe’s mother,



Mrs. Harper, convinced that Tom and the others are drowned, plan their funeral. Tom, realizing the townsfolk thinks they are dead, convinces Joe and Huck to join him in attending their own funeral. The townspeople – including Becky Thatcher – are overjoyed upon their return. Then the time finally arrives for Muff Potter’s trial. Tom, despite his oath, testifies at the trial that it was not Muff but Injun Joe who murdered the doctor. Injun Joe escapes before he can be arrested. Muff thanks Tom for saving his life by telling Tom that Injun Joe’s treasure is buried in “the den under the cross”...

Synopsis (cont.)

Huck and Tom are about to search for it when Becky invites Tom to her birthday picnic, an outing that includes exploring McDougal Cave. Tom accompanies her, but the two children end up lost in the labyrinth of tunnels. Suddenly Tom and Becky encounters Injun Joe, who had been using the cave to hide from his captors. A struggle ensues, and Injun Joe falls to his death. Meanwhile, a search is being conducted for them, but to no avail. Tom finally discovers a way out of the cave and everyone celebrates. Then Tom convinces Huck to go back into the cave with him to look for Injun Joe's treasure, which they find. Aunt Polly puts Tom's half of the money in the bank and Widow Douglas adopts the wayward Huck. Huck hates living by the widow's rules and regulations; he tells Tom that being rich isn't all it's cracked up to be. Tom convinces Huck that life is still worth living and as the story ends the two of them are off to seek new adventures.

Vocabulary Words

pantry	wicked	witness
punishment	slate	testify
whitewash	engaged	innocent
reprobate	ignorant	guilty
slingshot	half-breed	physician
mischief	mum	substantiate
influence	swear	tombstone
sober	spooky	coffin
rheumatism	adventure	appreciate
tincture	scoundrel	treasure
appointment	avenge	cave
vagrant	cannon	tunnel
dawdling	funeral	permission
warts	mourn	temptation
corpse	jury	hogshead

Define each of the vocabulary words listed above then write sentences using them. Remember: anyone reading your sentence should be able to understand the word from the context in which it is used.

Biography of the Author

Samuel Langhorne Clemens was born November 30, 1835 in Florida, Missouri. When he was four, the family moved to Hannibal, where steamboats paddled up and down the Mississippi River. At thirteen, Samuel left school to become a printer's apprentice. Two years later, he began working for a newspaper and started writing. In his late teens, Samuel moved to St. Louis and became a river pilot's assistant, and later became a licensed river pilot. This is where his pseudonym comes from: "Mark Twain" is a river term that lets boats know that water is deep enough to be navigated. River trade slowed to a stop during the Civil War, so Mark Twain began working all over the country as a newspaper reporter. In 1865, Twain began to gain fame with his story, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* appeared in New York Saturday Press. His first book, *The Innocents Abroad*, was published in 1869, *The Adventure of Tom Sawyer* in 1869, and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in 1885. He wrote numerous books, short stories, and letters, and is known as one of the most quoted people of all time.



Biography of the Playwright

Catherine Bush has been Barter Theatre's playwright-in-residence since 2007. Her produced plays include: *The Other Side of the Mountain*, *The Quiltmaker*, *Comin' Up A Storm*, *Wooden Snowflakes*, *Tradin' Paint*, *Where Trouble Sleeps*, *Walking Across Egypt*, *I'll Never Be Hungry Again* (book & lyrics), *The Three Musketeers*, *The Frankenstein Summer*, *unhINGEd*, *The Executioner's Sons*, *The Controversial Rescue of Fatty the Pig*, *Winter Wheat* (book & lyrics) and *Just a Kiss*, which was a finalist for the 2007 Steinberg Award presented by the American Theatre Critics Association. Plays for Young Audiences: *Cry Wolf!*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Rapunzel*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth*, *My Imaginary Pirate*, *The Call of the Wild*, *The Princess and the Pea*, *Aesop's Fables*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, *Frosty*, *Santa Claus is Coming to Town*, *Mother Goose: The Musical*, *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*, *Jingle All the Way*, *Old Turtle and the Broken Truth*, *Antigone*, *Robin Hood*, *Clementine the Musical*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and *Great Expectations*. www.catherinebushplays.com



Questions/Activities

1. Why did Aunt Polly discipline Tom at the beginning of the play? What had he done wrong? Why was whitewashing the fence such an awful punishment for a boy like Tom? What would he rather be doing? How does Tom convince the other children to whitewash the fence for him? Have you ever convinced someone to do your work for you? How did you do it?

Discuss.

2. According to the novel, the dimensions of the fence Tom was assigned to whitewash was nine feet high by thirty yards long. On the classroom chalkboard, draw a portion of the fence. Pick five students. Give them a piece of chalk and give them the assignment of coloring in every square inch of the fence with no spaces showing. Raise the stakes by telling them that the entire class must wait for recess until they are finished. **Discuss with your students how this made them feel and relate it to Tom's feelings about whitewashing Aunt Polly's fence.**

3. What is your favorite scene from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*?

Illustrate this scene using paint, markers, colored pencils, pen and ink, charcoal, colored paper, photographic collage, etc. **Be prepared to explain to the class** why this scene is your favorite.



4. **Write a letter to your favorite actors** from this production. Tell them what you liked about the play, their performance, etc. Mail your letters to:

The Barter Players
c/o Barter Theatre
P.O. Box 867
Abingdon, VA 24212-0867
ATTN: Tom Sawyer

5. Even though Muff Potter was innocent, he was viewed as guilty until Tom shared what he knew. What does “guilty” mean? How can we determine if someone is guilty? **Discuss.**

6. Superstitions are ideas that people believe are true even though they cannot be proven and may even go against nature. Tom and Huck go to the graveyard with a dead cat to cure Tom’s wart. Can you think of other superstitions? **Make a list** of them then take a poll to see who believes in them and who doesn’t. **Research superstitions about the theatre and present them to your class.** How did these superstitions begin?



7. This play is set in 1845. Using the internet, research the differences between that time and the present. What did they do for transportation? For news? For communication? For fun? How did they see at night? **Present your findings to the class.** The setting for this story, St Petersburg, is based on Mark Twain’s hometown of Hannibal, Missouri. Locate Hannibal on a map of the United States. In what part of the country is it found? How did this setting influence the adventures of Tom and his friends? **Discuss how the time and setting of this story affected the plot.**

8. Read the book *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain, then make a list of the scenes/characters from the book that were left out of the play. Why do you think this was done? **Discuss.**



From the Page to the Stage!

How does a book become a stage play? Here are some of the elements that went into the Barter Players' production of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*...

1. Script

It all starts here. A playwright (in this case, Playwright-in-Residence Catherine Bush) turns the prose of literature into dialogue and dramatic action. This is called "adapting". Sound easy? **Try it yourself!** Pick a scene from your favorite story and adapt it into a scene for the stage. Try not to use the narrative voice – focus instead on creating "dialogue" between the characters.

2. Director/Actors

The director and actors begin the rehearsal process. The director "blocks" the play, which means he tells the actors where to move and stand and sit. The actors work on learning their lines, finding their character's motivation and creating the world of the play. The length of a rehearsal process for a Barter Player production ranges from 30 – 40 hours spread out over 3-4 weeks, depending on the play.

3. Set Design

The set designer designs a set that will not only serve the aesthetic needs of the production by creating visuals that represent the various locations in the story (i.e. Aunt Polly's fence, the schoolhouse, the cave) but also function as a safe environment upon which the actors will move (or be moved). A good set design will also allow the action to flow from one scene to another smoothly, with seamless transitions. **Try it yourself!** Using the scene you adapted, design a set that will both visually serve the story and function effectively for the actors.

4. Costumes/Wigs

The costume designer is responsible for creating a different look for each character while maintaining the overall aesthetic of the production. Each actor's costume must be tailored to fit and be built to take the wear-and-tear of 6 shows a week *plus* tour! Also, in a show where the actor is required to play more than one character, the design must incorporate a method to facilitate "quick changes". The wig designer is responsible for designing, building and styling the wigs that will appear in the show. Like the costumes, wigs are necessary to help distinguish characters. **Try it yourself!** Design a costume/wig for the character in your scene. Make sure your costume includes a mechanism to make "quick changes possible."

5. Props

Tom's paintbrush! Injun Joe's knife! Becky's candle! These are a few examples of the props designed and built by Barter's props department for this production. A **prop** is defined as an object used on stage by actors for use in the plot of a theatrical production. **Try it yourself!** Design and build the props you will need for your scene.

6. Lights/Sound

Lights not only illuminate the actors and pull focus to various spots on the stage but, together with sound, help create a mood. Lights and sound can also, along with the set, help establish location. The sound of echoes, dripping water, and the glow of candlelight and voila! We are in the cave with Tom and Becky! **Try it yourself!** Put together a soundtrack for your scene that establishes place and mood. Feel free to use recorded music/sound effects or perform it live!

7. Stage Manager

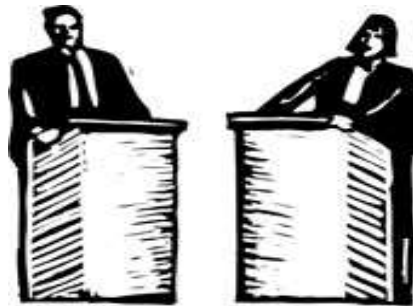
The Stage Manager attends all the rehearsals and once the show goes into production, is "in charge", calling all the sound and light cues and maintaining the integrity of the piece during its run.

9. **Compare and contrast** the adventures Tom takes with his friends to the adventures Harry takes in the *Harry Potter* books by J.K. Rowling. What traits do Harry Potter and Tom Sawyer have in common? Imagine that Harry Potter and Tom Sawyer switched places. **Write a story about an adventure that Harry Potter and Huck Finn might go on in St. Petersburg.** What kind of mischief might Tom Sawyer get into at Hogwarts?

11. Describe the set used for the Barter Players' production of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. How realistic was it? How were the set pieces used to convey place? Time? Mood? **Discuss.**

12. After reading *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and seeing the play, compare the passage of time in each. How much time elapses between the opening scene of the book and the last page? Does the same amount of time pass in the play? How is the passing of time handled in the play? **Discuss the difference between dramatic action and exposition.** Does this explain why time may seem "collapsed" in a theatrical adaptation of a novel?

13. Analyze the relationship between Tom and Huck Finn, paying close attention to their trip to the graveyard and their hunt for treasure. What is it that motivates these two friends? What does this story teach us about money and the happiness it supposedly brings with it? **Does money give you freedom or take it away? Divide the class into two teams and debate this topic.** Support your position with stories from newspapers, magazines, books, etc. What was Mark Twain's opinion on the subject?



14. At first Tom and Huck are scared to stand up for Muff Potter. What changed Tom's mind? Pick between the characters of Tom, Huck, and Muff Potter. **Write two journal entries as that character – the first entry should be made the night before the trial, the second entry the night after the trial.** Compare your journal's entries with those made by the other characters. **Discuss how point-of-view influences the documenting of an event.**

Be Descriptive!

Read Mark Twain's description of McDougal's Cave below...

"They wound this way and that, far down in to the secret depths of the cave... This shortly brought them to a bewitching spring, whose basin was encrusted with a frostwork of glittering crystals; it was in the midst of a cavern whose walls were supported by many fantastic pillars which had been formed by the joining of great stalactites and stalagmites together, the result of the ceaseless water-drip of centuries. Under the roof, vast knots of bats had packed themselves together, thousands in a bunch; the lights disturbed the creatures and they came flocking down by hundreds, squeaking and darting furiously at the candles..."



Students:

Find a picture of a person, place or thing from a magazine and **write a description of him/her/it in your own words**. Be as descriptive as possible.

Teacher:

Number the pictures and place them on one wall of the classroom. Give the students copies of the descriptions and see if they are able to match them to the appropriate picture!

Write a critique of The Barter Player's production of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

Be sure to include descriptions and analyses of the individual performances, the directing/staging choices, and the design elements (costume, set, props, & sound). Why do you think some of these artistic choices were made? How would you have done it differently?



How did the play compare to the novel? How do the structural elements of a play (using dialogue and action to tell the story) differ from that of prose? Discuss.

In this play the actors have to change quickly from playing character to character. What movements, gestures, and other forms of physical expression did they use to accomplish these changes? Did you think they were effective?

How were costumes used? **Discuss.**

Define *comedy* and *tragedy*.

Is *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* a comedy or a tragedy? **Cite three samples from the book to support your position.** How much does a character's point-of-view determine whether an event is comic or tragic? **Discuss.**



Word Search

Find the following words in the puzzle below: **Aunt Polly, cave, Becky Thatcher, engaged, fence, fishing, graveyard, raft, Huckleberry, Injun Joe, pirate, treasure, Tom Sawyer, whitewash.**

P	F	Y	D	Y	G	F	W	E	I	H	Y	R	E	W
I	Y	I	Y	R	E	A	R	A	E	J	E	N	O	H
R	B	V	S	N	A	U	U	D	I	H	T	W	J	I
A	Y	N	C	H	S	Y	N	N	C	V	Q	Y	N	T
T	Y	E	R	A	I	X	E	T	T	X	E	V	U	E
E	D	I	E	M	H	N	A	V	W	P	F	C	J	W
G	Y	R	C	D	Y	H	G	L	A	F	O	G	N	A
M	T	N	K	X	T	F	O	P	H	R	G	L	I	S
W	M	N	H	Y	C	I	U	K	I	E	G	A	L	H
P	G	F	K	H	U	C	K	L	E	B	E	R	R	Y
U	C	C	R	J	F	G	D	T	I	K	N	Y	O	D
R	E	Y	W	A	S	M	O	T	F	P	H	S	I	G
B	U	H	P	R	C	P	E	X	Z	A	S	K	C	B
M	Z	A	I	Q	E	V	A	C	V	R	R	E	Y	I
E	N	G	A	G	E	D	B	O	P	M	P	G	U	G

True and False

Write **T** if the statement is **True** and **F** if the statement is **False**.

1. ____ *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is a novel written by Walt Whitman.
2. ____ Tom Sawyer is an orphan forced to live with the Widow Douglas.
3. ____ Huck Finn falls in love with Becky Thatcher.
4. ____ Tom whitewashes the fence all by himself.
5. ____ Tom Sawyer and Amy Lawrence were once “engaged”.
6. ____ Tom and Huck go to the graveyard to hunt for 4-leaf clovers.
7. ____ Injun Joe killed Dr. Robinson in the graveyard.
8. ____ Muff Potter is the town drunk.
9. ____ Aunt Polly loves to go fishing with Mrs. Harper.
10. ____ Becky Thatcher is the daughter of a judge.
11. ____ Tom, Joe Harper and Huck Finn run away to Jackson Island..
12. ____ Tom attends his own funeral.
13. ____ Tom Sawyer killed Injun Joe in McDougal Cave.
14. ____ The Widow Douglas adopts Huckleberry Finn.

Matching

Match the person in the first column with the corresponding description in the second.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1. Huck Finn | a. where Tom and Huck play “pirates” |
| 2. McDougal Cave | b. adopts Huck Finn |
| 3. Tom Sawyer | c. Tom’s guardian |
| 4. Widow Douglas | d. owner of a dead cat |
| 5. Muff Potter | e. a mischievous boy who seeks adventure |
| 6. Aunt Polly | f. daughter of the Judge |
| 7. Becky Thatcher | g. a murdering renegade |
| 8. Jackson Island | h. the town drunk |
| 9. Injun Joe | i. the “den under the cross” |

Suggested Further Reading/Links

Other stories by Mark Twain include: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, *Life on the Mississippi*, *The Prince and The Pauper* and *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*.

To find out more about Mark Twain, his life and his work, check out the following links

The Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum - Mark Twain timeline, pictures and information of buildings, and the origin of the characters.

<http://www.marktwainmuseum.org/>

California Museum of Photography - Go their collections page and type in Mark Twain. You will see great pictures of him (some of them in 3-D!) next to quotes he wrote.

<http://www.cmp.ucr.edu/>

Mark Twain Quotes - A rich collection of Mark Twain quotes, articles, and many other features and illustrations, organized by the notes Mark Twain researcher Barbara Schmidt.

www.twainquotes.com

The Mark Twain House and Museum - The official site of the Clemens family's restored Hartford home

www.marktwainhouse.org

Hannibal Courier Post - Mark Twain's hometown newspaper will take you on a tour of Hannibal and connect you to the town's resources on Mark Twain.

<http://www.hannibal.net/twain>

Mark Twain Cave - History and pictures of the cave Tom, Becky, and Huck climb into during the play.

<http://www.marktwaincave.com>

