

# [A literary analysis of “the celebrated jumping frog of calaveras county”](https://assignbuster.com/a-literary-analysis-of-the-celebrated-jumping-frog-of-calaveras-county/)

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A Literary Analysis of “ The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" Mark Twain is considered not only one of the most well-known American authors in history, but also one of the most recognizable figures in American history (Hannibal). Twain is most well-known for his stories, “ The Adventures of Huckleberry Fin" and “ The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" although, his short story “ The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" was the story that gave him his big break and got his name on the map. Though it is not very long, it has a lot of insight and Twain uses a lot of symbolism. Mark Twain was born on November 30th, 1835, in Florida, Missouri as Samuel Langhorne Clemens. When Twain was four, his family (including his six siblings) picked up and moved to Hannibal, Missouri, to try and find a better living situation. He spent most of his boyhood on the West bank of the Mississippi River. His father passed away when Twain was twelve and he then started apprenticing at a print shop. It was there that Twain found humorous southern tall tales, poems, and jokes in the literature of the newspaper. These stories educated him and made him the great writer. Twain did a lot of traveling including going west to California and Hawaii, and even to other countries. Twain also held a lot of different jobs along the way. While visiting California, in 1865, Twain heard the tale “ The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" by a local miner. This story really turned the tide for Twain and got his name out there. “ The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" was Twain’s first literary success and started his road to fame (American). This short story is a great piece that has humor, and a good moral to it. It is short enough to keep a newspaper readers attention, but also has a lot of information in a well-plotted story. The story starts with the narrator, who is from the east, stopping at a bar in the western town of Angel’s mining camp. He starts talking to a man named Simon Wheeler. The narrator then asks Simon Wheeler for a man named Leonidas Smiley. Instead of telling the narrator what he wants, Mr. Wheeler launches into a completely irrelevant story. The story he tells is about a man named Jim Smiley, who would gamble and bet on just about anything. “ He was the curiosest man about always betting on any thing that turned up you ever see, if he could get any body to bet on the other side; and if he couldn't, he'd change sides. " (Celebrating). Mr. Smiley didn’t just do it for the money; he liked the thrill and excitement of the competition. Jim Smiley also had incredible luck and would always win, especially since he trained most of the animals he bet on. Except one time, where he bet another man that his frog would out-jump any other. The man accepted and while Jim Smiley went out to fetch another frog, the man filled Smiley’s frog up with quail shot. When Jim Smiley returned and the frog he caught started to jump, his frog just stayed there. Jim Smiley then picked up his frog and the quail shot fell out of his mouth. The man then took off with his winnings and Mr. Smiley never caught him. This story shows how wit and brilliance can beat even the best luck. Seeing that Mr. Smileys animals are somewhat trained, Mr. Smiley sort of deceives everyone he bets. The story illustrates how even the best can be beaten with a little trickery. Another thing that Twain makes clear in the story is the difference between the narrator (who is from the east), and the man who tells the story of the frog (from the west). The narrator is very educated and speaks clean English whereas the man from the west does not speak at a very intellectual level. He has a very strong dialect, and does not sound like he has a very high level of education. Simon wheeler said of Jim Smiley’s dog, “ And he had a little small bull pup, that to look at him you'd think he wan's worth a cent, but to set around and look ornery, and lay for a chance to steal something. But as soon as money was up on him, he was a different dog; his underjaw'd begin to stick out like the fo'castle of a steamboat, and his teeth would uncover, and shine savage like the furnaces. And a dog might tackle him, and bully- rag him, and bite him, and throw him over his shoulder two or three times, and Andrew Jackson which was the name of the pup Andrew Jackson would never let on but what he was satisfied, and hadn't expected nothing else and the bets being doubled and doubled on the other side all the time, till the money was all up; and then all of a sudden he would grab that other dog jest by the j'int of his hind leg and freeze on it not chew, you understand, but only jest grip and hang on till they thronged up the sponge, if it was a year. Smiley always come out winner on that pup…" (Celebrating). Twain shows how Mr. Smiley could deceive people and win more money. Regardless of how short the story was, Mark Twain put a lot of detail and great wording into this piece. Even though this wasn’t Twain’s more historic or well-known pieces, it still is a great piece of American literature, and a great piece of history. The dialect and storytelling is phenomenal, and this was only the beginning to a great legacy that Mark Twain would leave behind. Works Cited " American Experience: TV's Most-watched History Series." PBS. PBS, n. d. Web. 15 Nov. 2012. . " Hannibal. net | The Hannibal Courier-Post." Hannibal. net | The Hannibal Courier-Post. N. p., n. d. Web. 15 Nov. 2012. . " The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County. N. p., n. d. Web. 15 Nov. 2012. . " Mark Twain - Biography & Works." Mark Twain - Biography & Works. N. p., n. d. Web. 15 Nov. 2012. . .