

# Huck finn notes

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Huck Finn Notes Satire -Think: Scary Movie, SNL, National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation, Weird Al Yankovic, Supersize Me, Saved, Mean Girls - In satire, human or individual vices, abuses, or shortcomings are held up to censure by means of ridicule, derision, irony, etc., with the intent to bring about changes/improvements. -Although satire is usually meant to be funny, the purpose of satire is not primarily Humor; instead, it is an attack on something of which the author disapproved, using the weapon of wit. - Often, the author uses irony, sarcasm, exaggeration, analogy, comparison, or double meaning to prove a point. - Satire is found in music, plays, movies, literature, and political cartoons -In Jonathon Swift's " A Modest Proposal", Swift suggests that poor Irish parents would sell their own children as food to attack the indifference of society and government towards poor people. - Mark Twain was a great American Satirist; his novel " The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" uses the main character Huck, a good hearted person, to " mock" to so-called good morals of society. Themes -Fundamental, universal ideas explored in literature. I. Racism & Slavery A. Novel written two decades after Emancipation Proclamation and Civil War 1. South esp. still struggling with racism and after-effects of Slavery 2. Reconstruction plans hit a snag in 1880's a. Race relations were strained b. Jim Crow laws limited Black rights in the South B. Novel set before Civil War: Slavery still intact C. Twain exposes the hypocrisy of slavery and demonstrates how racism hurts the oppressors as much as the oppressed 1. The result? A world of moral confusion. 2. Good people, like Miss. Watson and Sally Phelps, expressed no concern about the injustice of slavery. II. Intellectual and Moral Education A. Huck is poor and uneducated. B. He mistrusts the morals and rules of society

that treats him as an outcast and fails to protect him from abuse. 1. He questions lessons he had learned, esp. those about race and Slavery. 2. He would rather " go to hell" than to go along with the rules. 3. Through introspection, he comes to the conclusions- unaffected by the accepted, hypocritical rules of the southern, white society. III. The Hypocrisy of "civilized" Society A. Twain shows society as a set of degraded rules that defy logic/common sense. 1. The new judge allows Pap to keep Huck, even though he's abusive 2. A white man's right to his " property" (slave or son) over welfare or freedom. B. Twain emphasizes that it is impossible for a society that owns slaves to be " just", no matter how civilized they may seem. Motifs - Recurring structures, contrasts, or literary devices that help develop the theme. I. Childhood A. Huck often knows better than adults around him, even without the benefit of a family or community B. Although Jim is a man; he is vulnerable like a youth. C. Twain narrates through a boy, allowing the silliness of childhood to come through. II. Lies and Cons A. Bad lies coming from the con-men help themselves, but hurt others. B. Hucks' lies sometimes con people, like the slave hunters, but they can help, too. III. Superstitions and Folk Beliefs A. Jim has many superstitions. B. His superstitions may seem silly, but they also show deep knowledge of the world. IV. Parodies of Popular Romance Novels A. Tom based his life and actions on adventure novels B. Emmeline Grangerford painted weepy maidens and wrote sentimental poetry. C. The Shepherdsons and Grangerfords kill each other over exaggerated family honor. D. This style rarely reflects the reality of society. Symbols -Objects, characters, figures, or colors used to represent abstract items or concepts. I. The Mississippi River-

the ultimate symbol of freedom for Huck and Jim A. Alone on raft, they do not have to answer to anyone B. The river carries them toward freedom: 1. Jim towards freedom states. 2. Huck away from an abusive Father in "civilized" St. Petersburg. C. Much like the ever-changing river, Huck and Jim are in a flux, willing to change, esp. their attitudes toward each other D. The river, however, is not free from evils and dangers — flooding, criminals, wrecks, etc. E. As the story progresses, the river often is the exchange of one bad situation to another, including moving into the perilous Deep South. II.

Money A. Does not equal culture or true sophistication and often causes problems. Forms I. Realism - a revolt against Romanticism; portray ordinary life as real people live it; attempting to show characters and events in an objective, almost factual way. A. True to life depiction of Pap's abusiveness and scammers like the Duke and King. B. Examples of life in the small, semi-civilized towns along the Mississippi Valley. C. Exceptions: far-fetched and mellow-dramatic coincidences. 1. Huck's arrival at the Phelps' farm when Tom is to be expected. 2. The quarrel on the wrecked steamboat. 3. Digging up the coffin containing the body of Peter Wilks. \* These make the novel more of a romantic novel (mysterious and extraordinary adventures) \* The author grew up reading those types of stories II. Bildungsroman - A novel about growth and maturity A. Huck develops a deeper understanding of and sympathy for, other human beings, esp. Jim. B. Huck begins to accept the responsibilities of his actions III. Picaresque Narrative - A story set along a road (or in this case, a river); a journey often consisting of unrelated or self-contained episodes, in which one or more central characters encounter many people who represent a range of social types: A. The Grangerford v. s

Shepherdson Feud B. The events leading up to the mobbing of Colonel Sherburn