

Mark

The Man of the Year Twain

that Twain's novel accurately portrays the language used at that time and that the language helps paint an ugly picture of slavery in the south. When upset parents in Arizona sued⁷ the local school for requiring students to read the book in 1998, the case went as far as the nation's federal courts. The parents lost the court battle, but the case has raised a serious question: Should *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* be required reading when its language may still offend some readers? What do you think?

Quote Activity

Without a doubt, Mark Twain ruffled a lot of feathers⁸ with his writing and his talk while alive. Read these quotes by Mark Twain and choose your favorite to debate. Do you agree or disagree? Make your argument:

- "A classic is a book which people praise⁹ and don't read."
- "Be good and you will be lonesome¹⁰."
- "It is more satisfactory to be pretty than right."
- "Of all the animals, man is the only one that is cruel. He is the only one that inflicts¹¹ pain for the pleasure of doing it. It is a trait¹² that is not known to the higher animals."
- "The more things are forbidden, the more popular they become."
- "If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything."

Comprehension Check:

1. Find out where his pen-name "Mark Twain" came from.
2. What are Mark Twain's two most famous novels?
3. List some reasons why *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was banned in the late 1800s. Why is this book still controversial in the year 2010?
4. The years of Mark Twain's birth and death coincided with the appearance of a comet. Which one?

Clues for Question 4:

1/ 'I came in with Halley's Comet in 1835. It is coming again next year (1910), and I expect to go out with it. It will be the greatest disappointment of my life if I don't go out with Halley's Comet.

from Mark Twain's biography

2/ Halley's Comet is the best-known of the short-period comets, and is visible from Earth every 75 to 76 years. Halley's Comet is clearly visible to the naked eye from Earth, and thus the only naked-eye comet that might appear twice in a human lifetime. Other naked-eye comets may be brighter and more spectacular, but will appear only once in thousands of years. Halley's Comet's returns to the inner Solar System have been observed by astronomers since at least 240 BC. The comet's periodicity was first determined in 1705 by English astronomer Edmond Halley, after whom it is now named. Halley's Comet last appeared in the inner Solar System in 1986 and will next appear in mid-2061.

source: Wikipedia

Prepared by Lindsey Halas

Mark Twain lovers are celebrating 2010 as the 100th anniversary of this beloved author's death, the 175th anniversary of his birth, and the 125th anniversary of his famous and still controversial novel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Check out the site below. You can catch a virtual tour of his museum as well as see the Missouri landmarks that appear in both *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.
<http://www.twain2010.org/>

THE ANNIVERSARY OF A TROUBLEMAKER

Mark Twain, whose real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens, was born and raised in Missouri, which is the setting for his two famous novels. Like most great authors in their time, Mark Twain's books were banned¹ and censored in his lifetime.

Complaints about his books ranged from their use of "coarse² language," Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer as bad influences on youth, and problems with his anti-slavery and pro-women's rights views that frequently crept³ into his writing. *The Adventures of Huckleberry*

Finn remains one of the most challenged books in the United States to this day, even though it is true that it is not banned from libraries or reading lists as before. Most American teens are required to read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which has angered many African-Americans across the country. Even though Samuel Langhorne Clemens was a well-known abolitionist⁴ and an advocate for equal rights for both women and African-Americans, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* contains some very derogatory⁵ language about the slave Jim that still incites⁶ powerful feelings from the African-American community. Mark Twain advocates argue

VOCABULARY:

1/bænd/ zakázaný; 2/hrubý, nekultivovaný; 3/vkradnúť sa – vloudit; 4/abolicionista – přívrženec zrušení otroctva – přívrženec zrušení otroctví; 5/diřogðtri/ hanlivý, nactiutřačný; 6/insait/ podnecovat, provokovat – podněcovat, provokovat; 7/sju:/ podat žalobu – podat žalobu; 8/podráždit – podráždit; 9/vychvalovať – vychvalovat; 10/opustený, sám – opuštěný; 11/uvaliť, uložiť – uvalit, uložit; 12/rys, stránka povahy