

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Discussion Questions

Chapters 19-31

1. What is a “confidence” man, a.k.a. con man? How do the King and the Duke play on the confidences of people to get their money? What do they have to know about the towns, local people, and human nature in order to perfect their scams?
2. Though both men are criminal in their behavior, each is different in his understanding of and abuse of people. Make two columns and list the differences in the King and the Duke. How is one morally superior to the other?
3. What might Twain be satirizing through the use of these characters?
4. Since Huck quickly understands the King and Duke are con men, why doesn’t he confront them or tell Jim?
5. How and by whom is Jim betrayed? Have other slaves been similarly treated by this character? How does Huck respond to Jim’s capture?
6. Twain is a master of satire and of irony. List ironic episodes in this section and explain how Twain uses them to affect readers.
7. Who is Colonel Sherburn? Briefly sum up the speech he makes to the mob. What aspect of human nature does Sherburn criticize?
8. Throughout the novel, Huck is taught that “sivilized society” is right and he is wrong. As a result, he believes he will “go to hell” for rescuing Jim. Discuss the irony in Huck’s situation. What evil does the irony expose?

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9. Mark Twain makes heavy use of dialect in *Huckleberry Finn*. How successful do you feel he is? What are some advantages for an author in deciding to render speech in dialect, as Twain does? What are some possible disadvantages?

10. In this section of the novel, Mark Twain contrasts life on the raft with life on shore. Discuss the differences between what the raft represents to Huck and what life on shore is like.