

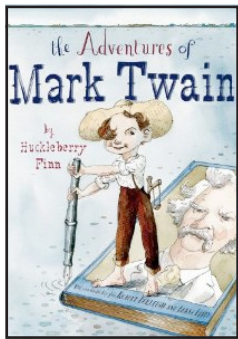


# CRUCHLEY'S COLLECTION

Diana Cruchley is an award-winning educator and author, who has taught at elementary and secondary levels. Her workshops are practical, include detailed handouts, and are always enthusiastically received.

H. Diana Cruchley©2011, dianacruchley.com

## THE ADVENTURES OF MARK TWAIN BY HUCKLEBERRY FINN



Robert Burleigh and Barry Blitt, Atheneum Books, ©2011, 978-0-689-83041-9

Huckleberry Finn tells, in his own voice, of the life of his author Mark Twain, aka Samuel Clemens.

## MORE ABOUT MARK TWAIN

Huckleberry Finn says "I left a lot out, which is for you to fill in later." Assign students in groups of 4 to research more about the life of Mark Twain. Each student must come up with 5 interesting facts - making 20 in total from their group.

## JOURNAL IDEAS

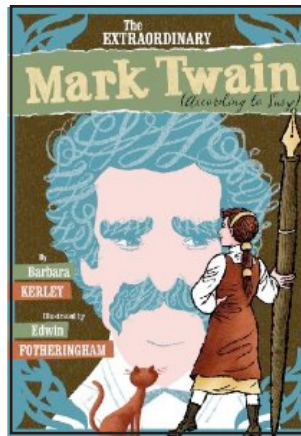
Picture books often lend themselves to journal responses. Provide several for students so that you are sure that they can tap into a related experience of their own.

- Mark Twain had a wonderful childhood playing on the shores of the Mississippi. Tell stories about great "adventures" you have with friends.
- Mark Twain built a gorgeous family home. Describe the perfect family home in your mind. What would be in it? Why?
- Mark Twain was famous as a speaker and a writer. What kinds of things would you like to be famous for? Describe what you would do to become famous.

## OPENING NOTES BY "THE EDITORS"

Why has this section been included? Is it necessary? It explains the use of *ain't*, the dropping of the g's, the use of *I reckon* to mean *I think*, and expressions such as *poke your shovel* and *in his craw*.

Mark Twain was one of the first writers to write "the way people speak." What do students think is a good thing about writing the way people actually speak? What makes it difficult?



## THE EXTRAORDINARY MARK TWAIN

The picture book, *The Extraordinary Mark Twain*, is a version of Mark Twain's private life as told by his daughter Susy. It was actually inspired by the real journal of Susy which she kept for several months and which describes the "real Mark Twain" behind the famous man.

It provides an excellent model for students to write their own biography, or that of a person under study in the curriculum.

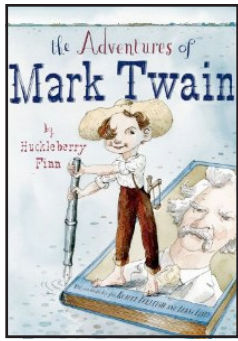
## TRANSLATION

Duplicate the first page of the book and ask students to "translate" it into conventional English.

## BAD LUCK SUPERSTITIONS

Huck Finn said that Mark Twain's luck turned bad like after "killing a spider." Ask students to brainstorm bad luck superstitions they have heard. They should be able to come up with:

- Step on a crack, break your mother's back.
- Break a mirror - 7 years bad luck.
- Walk under a ladder.
- Cross the path of a black cat.
- A shiver means a goose walked over your grave.
- Open an umbrella inside brings bad luck.
- If you spill salt, toss it over your left shoulder or you'll have bad luck.



## THE ADVENTURES OF MARK TWAIN, CONT.

### WHO WAS THE REAL HUCK FINN?

Although Mark Twain may have used several characters to make Huck Finn, he once said that he was modelled on Tom Blankenship who was the son of a drunkard. He was “*ignorant, unwashed, and insufficiently fed; but he had as good a heart as ever any boy had.*” He was the son of a drunkard but was the only truly independent person the boys in Mark Twain’s neighbourhood knew.

### HALLEY’S COMET

Mark Twain was born under Halley’s Comet in 1835. He vowed he would not die until it passed over again. He died the day after, on April 10th, in 1910. Students might like to know more about Halley’s Comet which is the only regularly recurring comet easily seen by the naked eye. It has been observed since 240 BC but wasn’t known to be the same comet returning until 1705. In that year, Edmund Halley identified it as recurring. It last appeared in 1986 and won’t return until 1261.

### A STORY WITH MODERN EXPRESSIONS

Huck Finn was written in the language of a back country boy in the 1800’s in the USA. Ask students to write any story in which they use common 21st century expressions to show how people “really talk”. First brainstorm the possible expressions students could consider: *OMG, BFF, 2 cents worth, having a rush, goofing off, being gross, or lame, or awesome, or sweet, or cool.* Something could *rock* or *suck*. Things happen *24/7*. There are *zits*. Things *rule*.

Then ask students to write a very brief monologue in that “voice” as in the opening of Huck Finn. Maybe a total of 100 words in all.

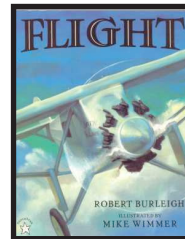
### MARK TWAIN SAYS

Mark Twain is as frequently quoted as Einstein. Google “*Mark Twain Expressions*” and you’ll find many. Here are just a few of his expressions that you could ask students to explain, or use as the closing line of a story of their own:

- Always do right. This will gratify some and astonish the rest.
- Buy land, they’re not making any more.
- All you need is ignorance and confidence and then success is sure.
- Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt.

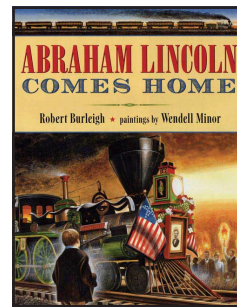
### OTHER BOOKS BY ROBERT BURLEIGH

Burleigh has written 35 books for children. His non-fiction picture books try to find “*the essence*” of the character about which he is writing. Below is a small sample. Select some of his books, and ask students to extract the details from the book and make a presentation to fellow students about the famous character, perhaps using the illustrations in their speech. This has the advantages of providing an easy-to-read piece by authoritative source on the character; enhancing student cultural literacy; and providing a chance for an easy oral presentation.



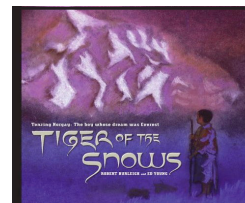
#### FLIGHT

The story of Charles Lindbergh’s famous flight.



#### ABRAHAM LINCOLN COMES HOME

The story of the funeral train of Abraham Lincoln bringing his body home to Springfield, Illinois.



#### TIGER OF THE SNOWS; TENZING NORGAY: THE BOY WHOSE DREAM WAS EVEREST

Tenzing Norgay was the Sherpa who climbed with Sir Edmund Hillary - the first team to climb Everest.