

Your topic: Vendetta

Originally, a vendetta was a blood feud between two families where kinsmen of the victim intended to avenge his or her death by killing either those responsible for the killing or some of their relatives. The responsibility to maintain the vendetta usually falls on the closest male relative to whoever has been killed or wronged, but other members of the family may take the mantle as well. If the culprit had disappeared or was already dead, the vengeance could extend to other relatives.

1. Find an example of vendetta in *Huck Finn*. Be specific: look for a passage where characters actually discuss their vendetta. Underline the text in your book and write the page number here.

2. How is vendetta portrayed in *Huck Finn*? Does it seem honorable, important, questionable, etc.? Explain your answer.

3. The vendetta we see in the text is a microcosm, meaning it takes a big problem and scales it down to just being a problem among families. What could be the big problems represented by the families' feud?

4. Develop five discussion questions inspired by your close-reading of vendetta. You will lead a discussion, centering on these questions, for the class.

Your topic: Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy is acting in a manner contradictory to one's professed beliefs and feelings, or conversely, expressing false beliefs and opinions in order to conceal one's real feelings or motives.

1. Find an example of hypocrisy in *Huck Finn*. Underline the text in your book and write the page number here.

2. Who are the hypocritical people in *Huck Finn* (you may mention more than just the people in your chosen example)? Who isn't hypocritical? Do you notice any patterns?

3. Twain gives many examples of hypocrisy to bring our attention to the hypocrisy of slave-holding. What are some hypocritical slave-holding beliefs, and how are some other examples parallels to those beliefs?

4. Develop five discussion questions inspired by your close-reading of hypocrisy. You will lead a discussion, centering on these discussions, for the class.

Your topic: Doubles and foils

A double is a character who is almost an exact duplicate of another character. A foil is a character that contrasts with another character (usually the protagonist) and so highlights various facets of the main character's personality.

1. Without even knowing their personalities, how could you infer that Huck and Buck are meant to be compared and contrasted with one another?
2. In what ways are they similar, and in what ways are they different? (Find at least two reasons for each.)
3. When Buck dies and Huck decides to cover his body, Huck says, "I cried a little when I was covering up Buck's face, for he was mighty good to me" (115). What qualities did Buck have that Huck did not, and that Twain was probably eager to symbolically sacrifice?
4. Develop five discussion questions, inspired by your close reading of doubles and foils. You will lead a discussion, centering on these questions, for the class.

Your topic: Home

For many people, “home” is just as much of an *idea* as a *place*. Before your group ventures into the set of questions, talk about what makes a “house” different from a “home.”

1. Huck has never felt at home in any sheltered dwelling. So where does he feel at home? Once you find out, underline the passage and write the page number here.

2. Why does Huck feel at home in this place?

3. What does Twain suggest is the relationship between home and freedom?

4. Develop five discussion questions inspired by your close reading of home. You will lead the class in a discussion, centering on these questions.

Your topic: Scams

A scam is an attempt to defraud a person or group by gaining their confidence. Usually the goal is to trick somebody into trusting you enough to give you money, and then just after they give you the cash, you bolt.

1. Find 2 scams in *Huck Finn*. Underline the passages and write the page numbers here.

2. What types of people do the “scam-artists” seem to be? What types of people do their victims tend to be?

3. Since Twain wrote largely about human nature, what do you think he could be saying about human nature through these repeated references to scams?

4. Develop 5 discussion questions inspired by your close reading of scams. You will lead the class in a discussion centering on these questions.

Your topic: Identity

1. Find at least two examples where a character claims to have an identity other than their own. Underline the passages and write the page numbers here.

2. What were the motivations for the characters to change identities? Why couldn't the character just be his or herself?

3. Reflect on the integrity of each scene where an identity is faked. What might Twain be suggesting is true about people who aren't true to themselves? How can that idea be expanded to slavery?

4. Develop five discussion questions inspired by your close reading of identity. You will lead the class in a discussion, centering around these questions.