

Name _____

River Symbolism

In *Huck Finn*, the Mississippi River is a symbolism for Jim and Huck's freedom. It carries them away from their respective "enslavements," and while at first the river is a place of total escape, the real world eventually catches up with them and they are not free from conflict. In order to understand this symbolism more, and to think critically about what Twain conveys about freedom, discuss the following questions in your small group and write down your answers.

1. What are Jim and Huck "escaping" from? What freedoms are they looking for?
2. At first, the river is a place of perfect freedom. Give an example that shows Jim and Huck enjoying their first tastes of freedom.
3. Problems arise for Jim and Huck, both because of the river, and at the site of the river.
 - a. Name at least two of Jim and Huck's problems that come from the river itself (not surrounding people or events).
 - b. Name at least two of Jim and Huck's problems that come from people associated with the river.
4. In this light, we see that freedom (the river) isn't perfect. What might Twain be saying about freedom here? If we embrace freedom, what else do we have to accept?