

The Artios Home Companion Series Literature and Composition

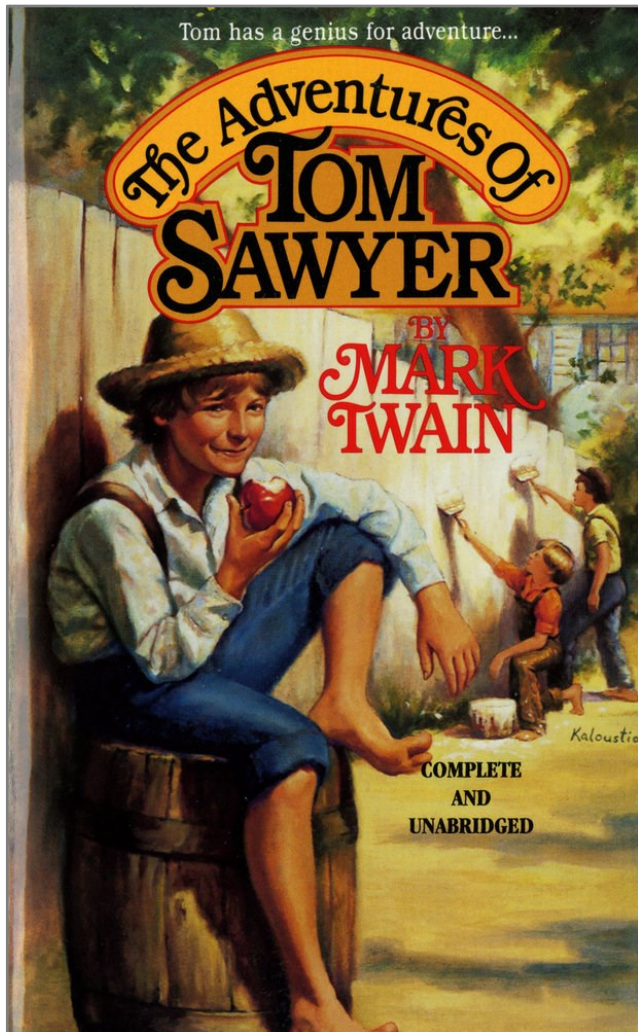
Units 24 – 28: Book Report Writing

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

by Mark Twain

Literature for Units 24-28

<http://www.archive.org/stream/advtomsawyerootwairich#page/n9/mode/2up>



A book report is an essay that reveals certain things about a piece of literature. Mainly, a book report reveals the elements of the story: setting, character, point of view, theme, etc.; a summary of the events in the story; and a personal evaluation of the story. In Units 24-28, we will discuss the elements of a story and keep notes on these elements as we read *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

Unit 24 – Assignments

Literature and Composition

- Read the Assignment Background below.
- Read Chapters 1-7 of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

Activity While Reading: As you read the novel, study Twain's style.

- In your reading journal, write a brief overview of Mark Twain's writing style and use of literary.
- In addition to making notes on style, also note the characters who are introduced in the novel and the way Twain reveals the characters to the reader. (Review Units 19 and 20 for methods of characterization.)



American Folklore Issue

- Tom Sawyer -

8-cent 1972 US stamp

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Unit 24 – Assignment Background

Style

The first thing we will cover is style. This is how the author presents the material to the reader. Some authors like to use many descriptive words to paint a picture for their readers; while others will be more direct and tell the reader what is happening, where it is happening, and to whom it is happening. An author's style will be revealed through his use of literary elements, his use of humor, and his use of formal or more casual speech. The author will use a certain style in order to reflect the characters and the time period in which the story is written. You could think of an author's style the same way you think of types of fashion or types of cars. Each style has a unique use and portrays a certain message. How the author says things is just as important as what he is saying in his works. Much can be revealed when we study the style exhibited in a literary work.

The following literary terms should be familiar to you as you examine Twain's style in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

- **Characterization** is the way the author reveals his characters to the reader (refer to Units 19 and 20 for more information on characterization).
- **Sentence structure** refers to the length, word order, and construction of sentences in the novel. If a novel contains too many sentences of similar structure, the work can become boring and familiar to the reader.
- **Mood/Atmosphere** is the overall feeling of the piece. Some authors are adept at writing horror stories and are able to create an atmosphere of suspense and dread. Others are able to create a humorous piece, including many sections of absurd behavior, resulting in an enjoyable experience for the reader.
- **Use of dialogue** in the novel can reveal an author's style. How often does the author rely on dialogue to tell the story? The author may use dialogue to reveal a certain dialect spoken by the characters in order for the reader to become more familiar with the characters.

Depending on the **point-of-view** chosen by the author, the reader may experience a more intimate relationship with the narrator of the story. When a story is written in first person participant point-of-view, the reader receives a direct connection with the narrator and may become more involved in the story.

Figurative language and literary devices reveal an author's style. Consider these as accessories—the more they are used, the more dressed-up the writing will appear.

- **Simile** is a form of comparison in which one thing is likened to another. It is usually introduced by *like* or *as*, or some other word of comparison.
- **Metaphor** is an abridged simile, the words expressing likeness being omitted. In the sentence, "Roderick Dhu fought like a lion," we have a simile; but when we say, "He was a lion in the fight," we have a metaphor.
- **Personification** is the attribution of life to inanimate things. When we speak of "the *thirsty* ground" or "the *angry* ocean," we endow these objects with the feelings of living creatures.
- **Alliteration** is the use of repeating sounds in several words or lines of text.
- **Anthropomorphism** is giving human characteristics to inanimate objects.
- **Synecdoche** puts a part for the whole, or a whole for the part; as, "The harbor was crowded with *masts*."
- **Exclamation** is a figure of thought. It is the result of kindled emotion and expresses in exclamatory form what would usually be stated in declarative form.

- **Apostrophe** is a direct address to the absent as present, the inanimate as living, or the abstract as personal. It is closely allied to personification, with which it is often associated.
- **Imagery** uses vivid, descriptive language to paint a picture in the reader's mind.
- **Hyperbole** is an exaggerated form of statement and is used to magnify or diminish an object.
- **Irony** expresses a thought contrary to the form of words. Three types of irony are:
 - **Situational irony** – involves a situation in which the actions result in an outcome that is contrary to what was expected.
 - **Verbal irony** – what is said is opposite of what is meant.
 - **Dramatic irony** – the outcome of a situation is known by the audience but is not known by the characters.

Unit 25 – Assignments

Literature

- Read the Assignment Background below.
- Read chapters 8-14 of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

Activity While Reading: As you read the novel, determine the point of view of the story and give examples from the story that show what point of view is used.

- Write a brief summary of the events so far, noting the characters who are involved.

Unit 25 – Assignment Background

Point of View

Point of view is the perception through which a story is written. There are two main types of point of view: first person and third person. You may hear about second person, but there are few, if any, novels written in second person. In order to determine in what point of view the story is written, look at the narrative portion of the story - the narrative portion is anything that is not dialogue. If the pronoun “I” is used in the narrative, then the story is written in first person; if the pronouns “he, she, it” are used, then the story is written in third person.

We will begin with looking at first person point of view. When a story is written in first person, it is important to tell the difference between the narrator and the author. In a first-person fiction story, the narrator is not the author (if it is an autobiography, then the narrator is the author). There are two ways

the narrator of a first-person story will be connected to the story: as a participant or as an observer.

If our narrator is a main character in the story and is telling about the events from his point of view, we consider the story to be told from a first-person participant viewpoint. When our narrator is not a main character in the story, this is known as first person observer, our narrator is merely revealing what he has observed rather than what he experienced. The limitation of first person (either participant or observer) is that the audience will only learn about the events and other characters from the perspective of the narrator. We must trust that what the narrator reveals is true.

If the narrator is outside the story and uses third person pronouns (he, she, it), then we say the story is written in third person. There are three types of third person

narrators: third person limited, third person variable, and third person omniscient. Third person limited has the same limitations as first-person participant - the audience is only able to learn about the personal thoughts and feelings of one main character and learns about the other characters only through the perceptions of that character. In third person variable, the perspective shifts from that of one character to another during the course of

a narrative, usually making the shift during a scene or chapter break. In third person omniscient, the story is still written from an outsider's perception; however, this narrator has access to the private thoughts and feelings of the main characters. With this point of view, the reader has the unique ability to connect with more than one character and can gain access to different views of each character.

Unit 26 – Assignments

Literature

- Read the Assignment Background below.
- Read chapters 15-21 of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

Activity While Reading: As you read the novel, determine the conflict, and explain what forces are opposing the protagonist.

- Create a plot diagram and fill in as much information as you know at this point. Look in the **Language Arts Resources** section at your **ArtiosHCS** curriculum website at www.ArtiosHCS.com for a story chart and a link to an interactive story chart.

Unit 26 – Assignment Background

Conflict

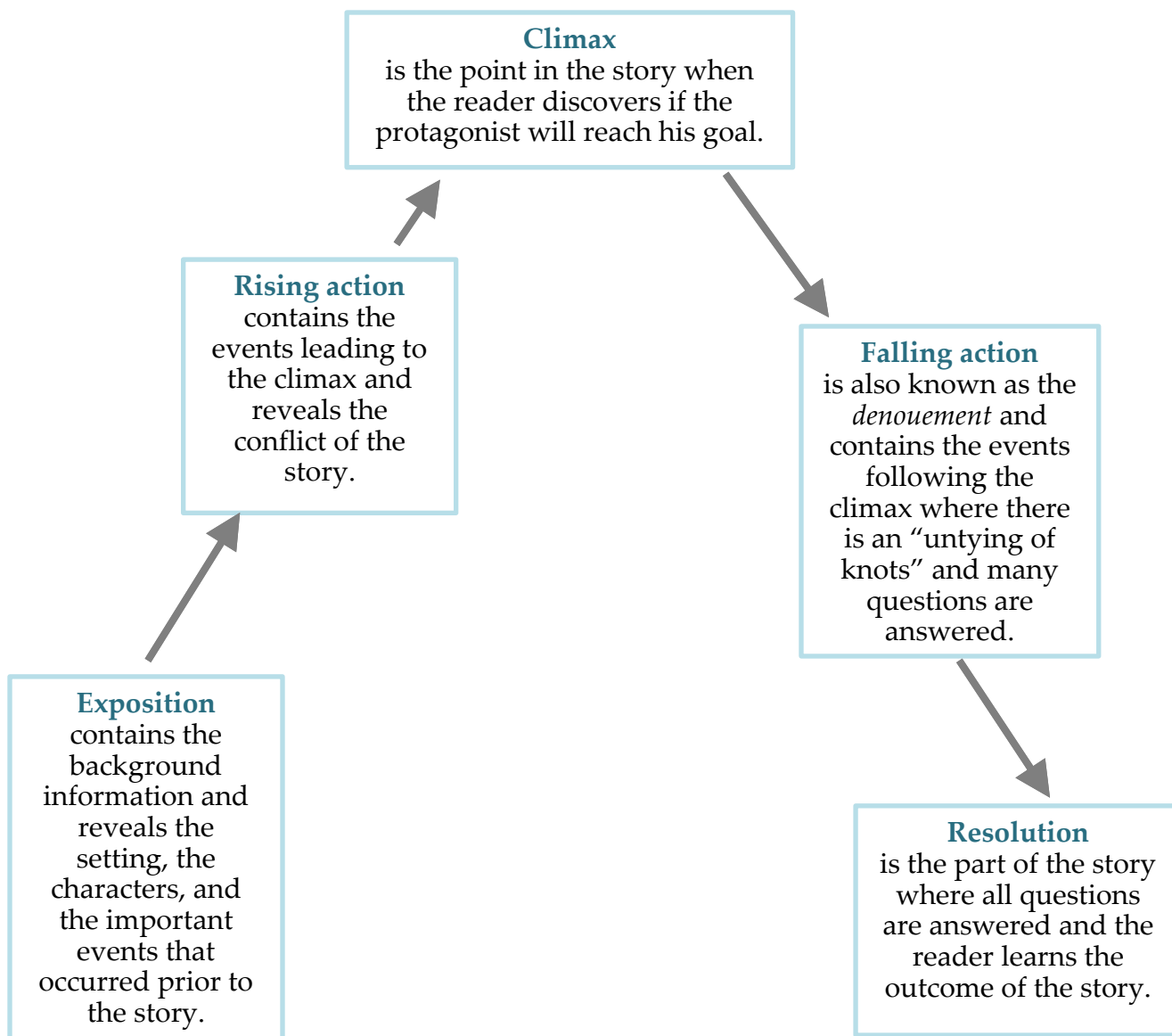
Each story contains some type of conflict. Conflict in a story helps the reader identify with the protagonist. It also helps move the story along as it approaches the climax. There are two types of conflict: internal and external. Internal conflict arises when the protagonist is fighting against himself or some ideal. External conflict arises when the protagonist fights against another character, against the forces of nature, or against the rules of society. There are five types of conflict:

- Internal:
man vs. self – the character is struggling within himself to attain his goals. Sometimes he must fight between good and bad ideals or between two solutions to a problem that are preventing him from reaching his goal.
- External:
man vs. man – our protagonist wrestles against another character or an external force. This force or character must be defeated in order for our protagonist to attain his goal.
man vs. nature – our protagonist struggles against the setting. It could be that he is lost in the wilderness or stranded on an island.
man vs. God/fate – our protagonist struggles against an unseen force that controls his destiny or struggles with his own beliefs.

man vs. society – our protagonist must overcome societal pressures or prejudices in order to reach his goals.

Plot

The plot of a story contains the series of events in the story that takes the reader from the beginning to the climax to the resolution. Each story's plot can be divided into six sections and can be plotted along a story diagram as follows:



Unit 27 – Assignments

Literature

- Read the Assignment Background below.
- Read chapters 22-35 of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

Activity While Reading: As you finish the novel, try to find the theme of the story.

- Look through the novel and try to find examples of the different types of irony. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* contains at least one example of each.

Unit 27 – Assignment Background

Irony and Theme

- **Irony** can be defined as a discrepancy how things are and how things seem to be, how things should be, or how things are expected to be. There are three types of irony: verbal, dramatic, and situational.
 - **Verbal irony** refers to the spoken word when a character says one thing but means another. A good example of verbal irony comes from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* when Mark Antony gives his speech to the Roman people after Brutus and others have slain Caesar. He says:

He [Caesar] was my friend, faithful and just to me.

But Brutus says he was ambitious,

And Brutus is an honourable man.

(Act III, scenes ii, lines 93-95)

- Antony is mocking Brutus at this point. The audience can almost visualize the quotation marks around “honourable” when Antony delivers his line. Antony does not believe Brutus is honorable; he thinks that Brutus is a murderer and a false friend.
 - **Dramatic irony** occurs when the reader has knowledge that the character does not possess. In O’Henry’s “The Gift of the Magi,” the two main characters sell their prized possessions in order to buy gifts for each other. The wife sells her hair to buy a watch chain for her husband, and the husband sells his watch to buy a barrette for his wife’s beautiful hair. In the story, the reader is aware of the useless gifts; however, the couple does not know until they see each other and exchange gifts. Because the reader is aware of the uselessness of the gifts and the characters are not, this is considered dramatic irony.
 - **Situational irony** occurs when the audience and characters are expecting a certain outcome and something unexpected happens at the end. In the short story “The Most Dangerous Game,” a man named Rainsford is being hunted and jumps off a cliff. At this point in the story, the man hunting him, General Zaroff, and the reader assume that Rainsford has died and General Zaroff is the victor of the game. However, when General Zaroff arrives at his house, Rainsford is waiting for him and the story ends with Rainsford sleeping comfortably in General Zaroff’s bed. Everyone expects Rainsford to be dead and for Zaroff to sleep comfortably in his bed; however, the irony is that Rainsford is the victor of the game at the end of the story.
- **Theme** is the underlying message of a story. Theme is one of the hardest concepts to grasp; many people mistake it for the moral of the story. Unlike a fable, novels and short stories contain an underlying message that the author is illustrating through his story. For example, in *Oliver Twist*, Dickens is presenting the message of the innocence of youth or purity of youth. Throughout the story, the main character, Oliver, remains innocent and pure even when he is threatened.

In order to find the theme of a story, there are a few steps to take:

- Look at the title—in the case of *Oliver Twist*, because if the title is also the name of the protagonist, the reader can assume that the theme has something to do with Oliver.
- Think about the symbolism and literary devices used in the story.

- Is there a common event, person, or item threaded throughout the story? If so, what could it symbolize?

Once each of these is considered, the reader should be able to come up with the theme of the story and understand why the author wrote the story.

Unit 28 – Assignments

Composition

- Read the Assignment Background below.
- Use the information from your reading journal and from this lesson to complete a rough draft of your book report.
- Read your book report aloud and note any changes that should be made to your rough draft.
- Write a final draft of your book report and use the rubric to assess your writing.

Unit 28 – Assignment Background

Writing a Book Report

Remember that a book report does not only summarize the events in the book, but it also reveals information about the figurative language and literary elements found in the story, as well as your assessment of the story. A book report should contain the following information:

- **Introduction:** should introduce the book, the author, and give a brief introduction to the story itself, and perhaps present any background information the reader should know.
- **Body paragraphs:**
 - **First Paragraph** (this could also be written over several paragraphs):
 - Tell about the point of view—from whose point of view is the story written? What effect does this have on the story?
 - Give details about the setting—does the setting serve a purpose? Does it affect the conflict?
 - Introduce the major characters—who is the protagonist? Who is the antagonist? How does the author reveal the characters?
 - **Second Paragraph:**
 - Write a summary of the events—look at your plot chart and write down the important events. Be sure to include the climax, the conflict, and the resolution.
 - **Third Paragraph:**
 - Explain the theme of the novel.
 - Give your thoughts and opinions about the novel and its representation of the theme.
 - Tell whether you agree or disagree with the author’s opinions expressed about the theme.
- **Conclusion** – should finalize your thoughts on the book:
 - Would you recommend this book to others?
 - What is your overall opinion about the book?
 - Finish this paragraph with information about your reaction to the book and leave readers with a statement that would compel them to read the novel.