*Studies in American Literature*: **Twain’s Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**: Final Essay Assignment

You will all be asked to write a final essay on this novel after we have finished reading it. I am going to give you the list of essay topics for this final essay now, while we are only a few chapters in. This gives you the option of determining which essay you would like to write now, and as you are reading you may focus on particular passages that you can later include as textual evidence in that final essay.

One way to do that is to use post-it notes (or “sticky notes”). Anytime you notice something in the reading that relates to one (or more) of these topics, make note of it, with the page number, and stick in it the book. You will be able to refer to those later when you are determining which passages in the novel can be included in your essay as support. *This is not a required part of your reading assignments, but I do strongly recommend that you do it! It will save you time and effort later and will most likely result in a better final essay on the novel!*

Choose one of the following topics to address in an essay on *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain. Your essay must begin with a clear thesis statement, your thesis must be supported by quotes/passages found in the novel (with correctly formatted citations), and it must be your own original work.

**Option #1** Trace how Huck’s view of Jim and of slavery changes throughout the novel.

(Be sure to refer to points in the novel where Huck sees Jim in a new light. Explain what leads to these changes in the way that Huck sees Jim and/or the issue of slavery.)

**Option #2** Discuss Huck’s view of right and wrong, and show how his understanding of what is right and what is wrong develops over the course of the novel.

(According to Huck, how does a person know the difference? Why is it often a struggle for him? What does he believe is right and wrong?)

**Option #3** Discuss Twain’s use of symbolism with the raft and the land (being off the raft).

(Think about what each might be meant to represent. Why do you think Twain made such a distinction between the two? What point do you think he was trying to make? Include plenty of examples of both situations in your essay.)

**Option #4** Discuss the portrayal of Jim in the novel.

(Do you think Twain meant for Jim to be a positive representative of a black character, or is he simply a stereotype of the typical view of slaves at that time period? What does the text say that makes you see his character is this way?)

**Option #5** Evaluate the relationship between Huck and Jim.

(What do they mean to each other? Why do they depend on each other? How does their relationship change at various points in the novel?)

*(over)*

**Length Requirement:** Honors Students must write a minimum of 3 pages

College Prep Advanced Students must write a minimum of 2 pages

**Format:** Typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, one inch margins.

Third person point of view (no “I”)

**Due:**  Sometime in late November/after Thanksgiving- more information on that later

**NOTE:**

At this point in the semester (and in your high school career), all of you should understand that when you write an essay that analyzes a piece of literature, you MUST make references to what is said in that literature within your essay. In order to analyze the work and to support the thesis of your essay, it is necessary to include references to places in the novel where the author’s words relate to the topic of your essay. When I read a student’s literary analysis, I am looking for the connection the student makes between his/her own thoughts and what is actually said in the novel. I MUST see multiple citations within the body of your essay!

You must include parenthetical citations for ALL references to the text (not just direct quotes!)

**Students who do not make any reference to the text and who do not include any (or very few) citations in their essays on *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* will receive a FAILING GRADE on this assignment.**

\*You should be able to write an essay that refers to the novel as the only source- in that case only a page number is necessary- For example: In Chapter XIX Huck described the carefree life that he and Jim enjoyed as they were traveling down the river together, mentioning “it’s lovely to live on a raft” (90).

If you chose to consult other sources outside just the text of the novel, you MUST include a proper Works Cited Page and parenthetical citations that use proper MLA format. If you have questions about how to do this, please ask during class.