

Credits:

Chapter 1 of the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* - by Mark Twain - read by Carole Bos (creator of Awesome Stories).

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Adventures-of-Huck-Finn-by-Mark-Twain-Chapter-1-Audio-0>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Adventures-of-Huck-Finn-by-Mark-Twain-Chapter-1-Audio-0>

Questions 2 Ponder

What Form Does Censorship Take in the 21st-Century?

Mark Twain used words in *Huck Finn* which are highly offensive to people of color, but he also supported several black university students, including one at Yale Law School. He did so because, as he states in an 1885 letter to Francis Wayland (the Dean of Yale Law School), white people had a debt to pay to the former slaves:

We have ground the manhood out of them, & the shame is ours, not theirs, & we should pay for it.

This was the same year in which Twain published *Huck Finn*.

Warner T. McGuinn, the African-American Yale Law student whom Twain supported, went on to become a highly respected, distinguished lawyer. Of him, Supreme-Court Justice Thurgood Marshall declared:

He was one of the greatest lawyers who ever lived. If he had been white, he'd have been a judge.

Using the “n word,” in today's America, is highly offensive to African-Americans. Twain uses the word throughout the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* because that is the way people talked at the time he wrote the story. Do you think the word should be removed from the book? Why, or why not?

Do you think changing words, which an author wrote many years ago, amounts to a form of censorship? Why, or why not?

Do you think it is fair to look at Twain, or any other writer, with 21st-century eyes—or—do you think it is fair to assess authors as people “of their time?” Explain your answer.

Should Gratitude Override Personal Emotions?

Mark Twain's fictional character, Huck Finn, is a young white boy without a family on whom he can depend. Although grateful, Huck complains about aspects of life at the Widow Douglas' home after she “takes him in.”

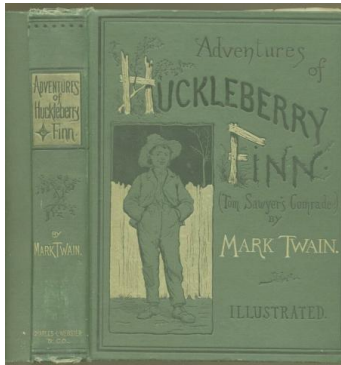
Although the Widow Douglas is helping him, Huck complains anyway. Do you think Huck is being ungrateful - or - is he just thinking about life from his own perspective (as a lonely young boy in need of a friend)? Explain your answer.

Would you recognize Huck as a boy, of any color, who could be alive today - or - does he sound (and act) totally different from everyone you know? Explain your answer.

Do you think a person can be grateful but upset at the same time? Explain your answer.

Is it reasonable to think that our gratitude, for someone's help, could ever replace - let alone override - our personal emotions?

Media Stream



Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Image online via Project Gutenberg.

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Huck Finn by E.W. Kemble

Image, described above, online via Archive.org.

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Huck Finn - Learning about Moses and the "Bulrushers"

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Huck Finn and Miss Watson

Image, described above, online via Archive.org.

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Huck Finn "Steals Away" from the Widow Douglas' Home

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