**Contextualizing *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn***

# INTRODUCTION

In order to enhance our reading experience of Mark Twain’s novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, you first need to uncover pertinent background information about the life and times of life on the Mississippi prior to the Civil War. Therefore, you and your group members will become “experts” about a specific topic related to the novel and will share your newfound knowledge with the class!

We will spend one day in the Media Center, where you will complete research on your topic. Once you have your information, you will have one day in class to plan how you will present this information to the class in an interesting, engaging way.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR PRESENTATION:**

1. Research information about your assigned topic and the starter questions.
2. Your presentation should include ***at least 10 interesting and relevant facts about your topic!*** Turn in a typed sheet with the facts before your presentation.
3. Keep track of your sources. Maintain a list of the sources you use to gather your research. This list must be turned in when you present to the class.
4. Plan how you are going to teach the class this information. (The class will be taking notes on your presentation.) The presentation should be approximately 10 minutes. Possible ideas: skit, puppet show, talk show, TV show parody, video, rap, or any other creative way to present the information to the class without just stating the facts.
5. Your presentation must include a visual aid. Choose one of the following: detailed poster, PowerPoint presentation, or overhead.
6. Each group is responsible for creating three quiz questions for the class about your topic along with a note-taking sheet for the class and turning them in at the time of your presentation. The class will be taking notes on each presentation and taking a quiz over all topics at the end of the activity. Questions can be multiple choice or short answer.
7. **Each group member is responsible for playing an active role in the entire project. However, appointing group members to specific roles will aid this group experience. The following four roles are for each group. Before beginning this project, meet as a group to determine who will assume which role.**

A. Director (oversees entire project) C. Lead Visual Aid Designer/Creator

B. Lead Researcher D. Lead Presenter

Appendix #6a

**Group #1**

**Your topic is the following: Mark Twain**

Choose what you think is the most important and interesting information about your topic to present to the class. In addition, your presentation must include the following:

1. Provide biographical information about the author.
2. How old was Mark Twain when he began writing professionally? What kind of writing did he do over the course of his life?
3. What did his fans and his critics say about him and his books?
4. What were his political views?

Director (oversees project from beginning to end) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Researcher\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Visual Aid Designer/Creator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Presenter \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Group #2**

**Your topic is the following: Controversy surrounding *Huck Finn* and censorship**

Choose what you think is the most important and interesting information about your topic to present to the class. In addition, your presentation must include the following:

1. Why is Huck Finn a banned book in many schools?

2. What are arguments for and against the teaching of the novel?

3. How are students affected by the use of “the ‘N’ word”? Does the use of the word in a classic piece of literature affect student usage of the word outside of the classroom?

Director (oversees project from beginning to end) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Researcher\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Visual Aid Designer/Creator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Presenter \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Group #3**

**Your topic is the following: Geography and Life on the River**

Choose what you think is the most important and interesting information about your topic to present to the class. In addition, your presentation must include the following:

1. What is the geographical picture of the journey Huck and Jim take on the Mississippi River from St. Petersburg (Hannibal, Missouri) to Northern Alabama?

2. What was life like for people living on the river in the 1800s?

3. Provide a map of the region.

Director (oversees project from beginning to end) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Researcher\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Visual Aid Designer/Creator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Presenter \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix #6b

**Group #4**

**Your topic is the following: Slavery and Abolitionists**

Choose what you think is the most important and interesting information about your topic to present to the class. In addition, your presentation must include the following:

1. What was daily life like for a slave?

2. Who were slave holders? What was life like for them?

3. What is an abolitionist?

Director (oversees project from beginning to end) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Researcher\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Visual Aid Designer/Creator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Presenter \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Group #5**

**Your topic is the following: Time Line**

Choose what you think is the most important and interesting information about your topic to present to the class. In addition, your presentation must include the following:

1. Research the time period of the novel (approximately 1835-1850s). What was happening in this region at this time?

2. What events were happening in the United States?

3. What events were happening globally?

Director (oversees project from beginning to end) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Researcher\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Visual Aid Designer/Creator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Presenter \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### Group #6

#### Your topic is the following: Slave Laws

Choose what you think is the most important and interesting information about your topic to present to the class. In addition, your presentation must include the following:

1. What were the specific laws regarding slavery from the 1600s to the end of the Civil War?

2. What were the consequences for being a slave fugitive?

3. What were the consequences for aiding slave fugitives?

Director (oversees project from beginning to end) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Researcher\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Visual Aid Designer/Creator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Presenter \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix #6c

#### Group #7

**Your topic is the following: Smallpox**

Choose what you think is the most important and interesting information about your topic to present to the class. In addition, your presentation must include the following:

1. What is smallpox?

2. How did smallpox affect the lives of people in the 19th century?

3. What vaccinations were available? What is a “pest house”?

Director (oversees project from beginning to end) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Researcher\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Visual Aid Designer/Creator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Presenter \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_