

Mark Twain - “The Glorious Whitewasher” – Grade 7 (*updated with Mini-Assessment*)

Originally published in New York: Modern Library, 2001 (1876).

Note to educators

Learning Objective: The goal of this brief exemplar combined with the one day mini-assessment¹ is to give students the opportunity to use the reading and writing habits they’ve been practicing on a regular basis to discover the rich humor and moral lesson embedded in Twain’s text. Students can explore for themselves the problem Tom Sawyer faced, how he “solved” his conundrum, and what he learned about human nature in the process. When combined with writing about the passage, students will learn to appreciate how Twain’s humor contains a deeper message and to derive satisfaction from struggling to master complex text.

This lesson is designed to be done either as part of a full novel study of *Tom Sawyer* or as a stand-alone reading of a great passage. It is worth slowing down for, but in no way is it intended to dictate how to read the full length novel. On the contrary, it is intended to demonstrate how teachers can align their instruction to the standards by embedding close, careful reading into their lessons.

Reading Task: *Rereading is deliberately built into the instructional unit. Students will silently read the passage to get a sense of it—first independently and then following along with the text as the teacher and/or skillful students read aloud. Depending on the teacher’s knowledge of the fluency abilities of her students, the order of the student silent read and the teacher reading aloud with students following might be reversed. What is important is to allow all students to interact with challenging text on their own as frequently and independently as possible. Students will then reread, think about, discuss and write about specific aspects of the passage in response to a set of concise, text-dependent questions that compel them to examine the meaning and structure of Twain’s prose.*

Vocabulary Task: *Most of the meanings of words in this selection can be discovered from careful reading of the context in which they appear. Teachers can use discussions to model and reinforce how to learn vocabulary from contextual clues, and students must be held accountable for engaging in this practice. Where it is judged this is not possible, underlined words are defined briefly for students in a separate column whenever the original text is reproduced. At times, this is all the support these words need. At other times, particularly with abstract words, teachers will need to spend more time explaining and discussing them. In addition, for subsequent readings, high value academic (‘Tier Two’) words have been **bolded** to draw attention to them. Given how crucial vocabulary knowledge is to students’ academic and career success, it is essential that these high value words be discussed and lingered over during the instructional sequence.*

Sentence Syntax Task: *On occasion, students will encounter particularly difficult sentences. Teachers should help students engage in a close examination of such sentences to discover how they are built and how they convey meaning. While many questions addressing important aspects of the text double as questions about syntax, students should receive regular supported practice in deciphering complex sentences. It is crucial that the help they receive in unpacking text complexity focuses both on the precise meaning of what the author is*

¹ We expect the mini-assessment to take students about 25 minutes to complete, but it is encouraged that students take the time that they need within a class period to read closely.

saying and why the author might have constructed the sentence in this particular fashion. That practice will in turn support students' ability to unpack meaning from syntactically complex sentences they encounter in future reading.

Discussion Task: *Students will discuss the passage in depth with each other, the full class and their teacher as they move through these activities that result in a close reading of Twain's text. The goal is to foster student confidence when encountering complex text and to reinforce the skills they have acquired regarding how to build and extend their understanding of a text. A general principle is to always have a student reread the portion of text that provides evidence for the question under discussion while the rest of the group follows silently. This gives students another encounter with the text, reinforces the use of textual evidence, and helps develop fluency.*

Writing Task: *Students will paraphrase different sentences and sections of Twain's text and then write a narrative inspired by Twain's message. Teachers might give students the opportunity to rewrite their narrative or revise their in-class paraphrases after participating in classroom discussion, allowing them to refashion both their understanding of the text and their expression of that understanding.*

Assessment Task: Day Two: *There is an optional day two mini assessment that follows this short, close study of the text. This task is designed to give students some familiarity with the types of assessment tasks that are designed to illustrate the Common Core State Standards' demand for use of evidence and close reading. Students may complete the task within one class period, although some students may need additional time to complete the assessment.*

Text Selection: This scene, taken from Appendix B of the CCSS, is a well-regarded favorite by Twain that illustrates core principles regarding attitudes toward work and play. The scene, drawn from his novel, *Tom Sawyer*, stands on its own and allows for students to read deeply and extract meaning from a relatively brief passage that is rich in humor, insight, and vocabulary. Learning how to identify key passages within a novel for the purposes of close reading is also essential for creating confident, independent readers.

Outline of Lesson Plan: This lesson can be delivered in one day of instruction and reflection on the part of students and their teacher, with the possibility of adding an additional day devoted to peer review and revision of a culminating writing assignment and/or the mini-assessment.

Additional resources: At the end of the mini-assessment, there is a full discussion of the qualitative and quantitative complexity of this passage as well as links to other exemplars and CCSS materials.

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The Text: Twain, Mark. “Whitewashing the Fence” from *Tom Sawyer*

Exemplar Text	Vocabulary
<p>But Tom’s energy did not last. He began to think of the fun he had planned for this day, and his sorrows multiplied. Soon the free boys would come tripping along on all sorts of delicious expeditions, and they would make a world of fun of him for having to work—the very thought of it burnt him like fire. He got out his worldly wealth and examined it—bits of toys, marbles, and trash; enough to buy an exchange of WORK, maybe, but not half enough to buy so much as half an hour of pure freedom. So he returned his <u>straitened</u> means to his pocket, and gave up the idea of trying to buy the boys. At this dark and hopeless moment an inspiration burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration.</p>	<p><i>sharply limited</i></p>
<p>He took up his brush and went <u>tranquilly</u> to work. Ben Rogers hove in sight presently—the very boy, of all boys, whose ridicule he had been dreading. Ben’s gait was the hop-skip-and-jump—proof enough that his heart was light and his anticipations high. He was eating an apple, and giving a long, melodious whoop, at intervals, followed by a deep-toned ding-dong-dong, ding-dong-dong, for he was <u>personating</u> a steamboat. As he drew near, he slackened speed, took the middle of the street, leaned far over to starboard and rounded to ponderously and with laborious pomp and circumstance—for he was personating the Big Missouri, and considered himself to be drawing nine feet of water. He was boat and captain and engine-bells combined, so he had to imagine himself standing on his own hurricane-deck giving the orders and executing them:</p>	<p><i>peacefully</i></p> <p><i>acting like or imitating</i></p>
<p>“Stop her, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling!” The headway ran almost out, and he drew up slowly toward the sidewalk. “Ship up to back! Ting-a-ling-ling!” His arms straightened and stiffened down his sides.</p>	
<p>“Set her back on the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow! ch-chow-wow! Chow!” His right hand, meantime, describing stately circles—for it was representing a forty-foot wheel.</p>	
<p>“Let her go back on the labboard! Ting-a-lingling! Chow-ch-chow-chow!” The left hand began to describe circles. “Stop the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Stop the labboard! Come ahead on the stabboard! Stop her! Let your outside turn over slow! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow-ow-ow! Get out that head-line! LIVELY now! Come—out with your spring-line—what’re you about there! Take a turn round that stump with the bight of it! Stand by that stage, now—let her go! Done with the engines, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling! SH’T! S’H’T! SH’T!” (trying the gauge-cocks).”</p>	

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<p>Tom went on whitewashing—paid no attention to the steamboat. Ben stared a moment and then said: “Hi-YI! YOU’RE up a stump, ain’t you!”</p> <p>No answer. Tom surveyed his last touch with the eye of an artist, then he gave his brush another gentle sweep and surveyed the result, as before. Ben ranged up alongside of him. Tom’s mouth watered for the apple, but he stuck to his work.</p> <p>Ben said: “Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?”</p> <p>Tom wheeled suddenly and said: “Why, it’s you, Ben! I warn’t noticing.”</p> <p>“Say—I’m going in a-swimming, I am. Don’t you wish you could? But of course you’d druther WORK—wouldn’t you? Course you would!”</p> <p>Tom <u>contemplated</u> the boy a bit, and said: “What do you call work?”</p> <p>“Why, ain’t THAT work?”</p> <p>Tom resumed his whitewashing, and answered carelessly: “Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain’t. All I know, is it suits Tom Sawyer.”</p> <p>“Oh come, now, you don’t mean to let on that you LIKE it?”</p> <p>The brush continued to move.</p> <p>“Like it? Well, I don’t see why I oughtn’t to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?” That put the thing in a new light. Ben stopped nibbling his apple. Tom swept his brush daintily back and forth—stepped back to note the effect—added a touch here and there—criticized the effect again—Ben watching every move and getting more and more interested, more and more absorbed. Presently he said:</p> <p>“Say, Tom, let ME whitewash a little.”</p> <p>Tom considered, was about to consent; but he altered his mind:</p> <p>“No—no—I reckon it wouldn’t hardly do, Ben. You see, Aunt Polly’s awful particular about this fence—right here on the street, you know—but if it was the back fence I wouldn’t</p>	<p><i>studied carefully</i></p>

Exemplar Text	Vocabulary
<p>mind and SHE wouldn't. Yes, she's awful particular about this fence; it's got to be done very careful; I reckon there ain't one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand, that can do it the way it's got to be done."</p> <p>"No—is that so? Oh come now—lemme just try. Only just a little—I'd let YOU, if you was me, Tom."</p> <p>"Ben, I'd like to, honest injun; but Aunt Polly—well, Jim wanted to do it, but she wouldn't let him; Sid wanted to do it, and she wouldn't let Sid. Now don't you see how I'm fixed? If you was to tackle this fence and anything was to happen to it—" "Oh, shucks, I'll be just as careful. Now lemme try. Say—I'll give you the core of my apple."</p> <p>"Well, here—No, Ben, now don't. I'm afeard—"</p> <p>"I'll give you ALL of it!"</p> <p>Tom gave up the brush with reluctance in his face, but <u>alacrity</u> in his heart. And while the late steamer Big Missouri worked and sweated in the sun, the retired artist sat on a barrel in the shade close by, dangled his legs, munched his apple, and planned the slaughter of more innocents. There was no lack of material; boys happened along every little while; they came to jeer, but remained to whitewash. By the time Ben was <u>fagged out</u>, Tom had traded the next chance to Billy Fisher for a kite, in good repair; and when he played out, Johnny Miller bought in for a dead rat and a string to swing it with—and so on, and so on, hour after hour. And when the middle of the afternoon came, from being a poor poverty-stricken boy in the morning, Tom was literally rolling in wealth. He had besides the things before mentioned, twelve marbles, part of a jew's-harp, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a spool cannon, a key that wouldn't unlock anything, a fragment of chalk, a glass stopper of a decanter, a tin soldier, a couple of tadpoles, six fire-crackers, a kitten with only one eye, a brass doorknob, a dog-collar—but no dog—the handle of a knife, four pieces of orange-peel, and a dilapidated old window sash.</p> <p>He had had a nice, good, idle time all the while—plenty of company—and the fence had three coats of whitewash on it! If he hadn't run out of whitewash he would have bankrupted every boy in the village.</p> <p>Tom said to himself that it was not such a hollow world, after all. He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy <u>covet</u> a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to <u>attain</u>. If he had been</p>	<p><i>speedy eagerness</i></p> <p><i>exhausted</i></p> <p><i>desire</i> <i>get</i></p>

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<p>a great and wise philosopher, like the writer of this book, he would now have comprehended that Work consists of whatever a body is OBLIGED to do, and that Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do. And this would help him to understand why constructing artificial flowers or performing on a tread-mill is work, while rolling ten-pins or climbing Mont Blanc is only amusement. There are wealthy gentlemen in England who drive four-horse passenger-coaches twenty or thirty miles on a daily line, in the summer, because the privilege costs them considerable money; but if they were offered wages for the service, that would turn it into work and then they would resign.</p> <p>The boy mused awhile over the substantial change which had taken place in his worldly circumstances, and then wended toward headquarters to report.</p>	

Day One: Instructional Exemplar for Twain's *Tom Sawyer*

Summary of Activities

1. The teacher introduces the day's passage with minimal commentary and students read it independently.
2. The teacher or a skillful student then reads the passage out loud to the class as students follow along in the text.
3. The teacher asks the class to discuss text-dependent questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate.
4. For homework, the teacher asks students to write a narrative exploration of the same moral lesson extracted from the close reading.

Text under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students
<p>But Tom's energy did not last. He began to think of the fun he had planned for this day, and his sorrows multiplied. Soon the free boys would come tripping along on all sorts of delicious expeditions, and they would make a world of fun of him for having to work—the very thought of it burnt him like fire. He got out his worldly wealth and examined it—bits of toys, marbles, and trash; enough to buy an exchange of WORK, maybe, but not half enough to buy so much as half an hour of pure freedom. So he returned his straitened means to his pocket, and gave up the idea of trying to buy the boys. At this dark and hopeless moment an inspiration burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration...</p> <p>[read entire text]</p> <p>... The boy mused awhile over the substantial change which had taken place in his worldly circumstances, and then wended toward headquarters to report.</p>	<p>1. Introduce the text and students read independently</p> <p>Other than giving the brief definitions offered to words students would likely not be able to define from context (underlined in the text), avoid giving any background context or instructional guidance at the outset of the lesson while students are reading the text silently. This close reading approach forces students to rely exclusively on the text, and levels the playing field for all students as they seek to comprehend Twain's text. It is critical to cultivating independence and creating a culture of close reading that students initially grapple with rich texts like Twain's prose without the aid of prefatory material, extensive notes, or even teacher explanations.</p> <p>2. Read the text out loud as students follow along</p> <p>Asking students to listen to Twain's <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> exposes students a second time to the rhythms and meaning of his language before they begin their own close reading of the text. Speaking clearly and carefully will allow students to follow the shape of Twain's story, and reading out loud with students following along improves fluency while offering all students access to this complex text. Accurate and skillful modeling of the reading provides students who may be dysfluent with accurate pronunciations and syntactic patterns of English.</p>

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<p>But Tom’s energy did not last. He began to think of the fun he had planned for this day, and his sorrows multiplied. Soon the free boys would come tripping along on all sorts of delicious expeditions, and they would make a world of fun of him for having to work—the very thought of it burnt him like fire. He got out his worldly wealth and examined it—bits of toys, marbles, and trash; enough to buy an exchange of WORK, maybe, but not half enough to buy so much as half an hour of pure freedom. So he returned his <u>straitened</u> means to his pocket, and gave up the idea of trying to buy the boys. At this dark and hopeless moment an inspiration burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration.</p> <p>He took up his brush and went <u>tranquilly</u> to work. Ben Rogers hove in sight presently—the very boy, of all boys, whose ridicule he had been dreading. Ben’s gait was the hop-skip-and-jump—proof enough that his heart was light and his anticipations high. He was eating an apple, and giving a long, melodious whoop, at intervals, followed by a deep-toned ding-dong-dong, ding-dong-dong, for he was <u>personating</u> a steamboat. As he drew near, he slackened speed, took the middle of the street, leaned far over to starboard and rounded to ponderously and with laborious pomp and circumstance—for he was personating the Big Missouri, and considered himself to be drawing nine feet of water. He was boat and captain and engine-bells combined, so he had to imagine himself standing on his own hurricane-deck giving the orders and executing them:</p>	<p><i>sharply limited</i></p> <p><i>peacefully</i></p> <p><i>acting like or imitating</i></p>	<p>3. Ask the class to answer a set of text-dependent guided questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate.</p> <p>As students move through these questions, be sure to check for and reinforce their understanding of academic vocabulary in the corresponding text (which will be boldfaced the first time it appears in the text). At times the questions may focus on academic vocabulary.</p> <p>(Q1) Describe Tom’s state of mind prior to his inspiration.</p> <p>Tom Sawyer is a high-spirited boy who was looking forward to a fun day he had planned, but unfortunately he has to work. This realization “burnt him like fire” and he contemplates trying to buy his way out of his labors, only to realize that he doesn’t possess the financial wherewithal to do so—driving him further into a “dark and hopeless” mood.</p> <p>(Q2) Why was Ben Rogers whooping melodiously? What is occurring in this selection?</p> <p>Unlike Tom, Ben’s “heart was light” in anticipation of the fun he would have this day. His carefree attitude is reflected in his impersonation of a steamboat, captain, and even the bells of the engine.</p> <p>Sidebar: Video of a Steamboat</p> <p>If students are unfamiliar with a steamboat, teachers can show them the following video of a modern-day steamboat on the Mississippi River:</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDYSdoYEna0</p>

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<p>“Stop her, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling!” The headway ran almost out, and he drew up slowly toward the sidewalk. “Ship up to back! Ting-a-ling-ling!” His arms straightened and stiffened down his sides.</p> <p>“Set her back on the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow! ch-chow-wow! Chow!” His right hand, meantime, describing stately circles—for it was representing a forty-foot wheel.</p> <p>“Let her go back on the labboard! Ting-a-lingling! Chow-ch-chow-chow!” The left hand began to describe circles. “Stop the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Stop the labboard! Come ahead on the stabboard! Stop her! Let your outside turn over slow! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow-ow-ow! Get out that head-line! LIVELY now! Come—out with your spring-line—what’re you about there! Take a turn round that stump with the bight of it! Stand by that stage, now—let her go! Done with the engines, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling! SH’T! S’H’T! SH’T!” (trying the gauge-cocks).</p> <p>Tom went on whitewashing—paid no attention to the steamboat. Ben stared a moment and then said: “Hi-YI! YOU’RE up a stump, ain’t you!”</p> <p>No answer. Tom surveyed his last touch with the eye of an artist, then he gave his brush another gentle sweep and surveyed the result, as before. Ben ranged up alongside of him. Tom’s mouth watered for the apple, but he stuck to his work.</p> <p>Ben said: “Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?”</p> <p>Tom wheeled suddenly and said: “Why, it’s you, Ben! I warn’t noticing.”</p> <p>“Say—I’m going in a-swimming, I am. Don’t you wish you could? But of course you’d druther WORK—wouldn’t you? Course you would!”</p> <p>Tom <u>contemplated</u> the boy a bit, and said: “What do you call work?”</p> <p>“Why, ain’t THAT work?”</p> <p>Tom resumed his whitewashing, and answered carelessly: “Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain’t. All I know, is it suits Tom Sawyer.”</p>	<p>Ask students in groups of three to read and act out the passage—one as Tom, one as Ben, and one as the narrator.</p> <p>Asking students to act out this portion of the text engages them in the sights and sounds of Twain’s world and makes them deliberately engage the text. Students should be given wide latitude to interpret both the tone of the dialogue as well as staging the action. Teachers should circulate to check for comprehension and if time permits ask particularly creative groups to present all or a portion of the text to the entire class.</p> <p>(Q3) Why is Ben moving his arms and his hands in the manner he is?</p> <p>This is a logical question to ask as a follow up to the earlier reading and re-enactment of the scene, capturing the manner in which he is imitating a paddlewheel and motion of the steamboat.</p> <p>(Q4) Is Tom’s surprise genuine?</p> <p>This is a good question to ask to determine close reading comprehension. There is ample evidence that Tom is well aware of Ben’s presence (“paid no attention to the steamboat”; “Tom’s mouth watered for the apple”) but is feigning surprise (“Why, it’s you, Ben! I warn’t noticing”).</p>

*studied
carefully*

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<p>“Oh come, now, you don’t mean to let on that you LIKE it?”</p> <p>The brush continued to move.</p> <p>“Like it? Well, I don’t see why I oughtn’t to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?” That put the thing in a new light. Ben stopped nibbling his apple. Tom swept his brush daintily back and forth—stepped back to note the effect—added a touch here and there—criticized the effect again—Ben watching every move and getting more and more interested, more and more absorbed. Presently he said:</p> <p>“Say, Tom, let ME whitewash a little.”</p> <p>Tom considered, was about to consent; but he altered his mind:</p> <p>“No—no—I reckon it wouldn’t hardly do, Ben. You see, Aunt Polly’s awful particular about this fence—right here on the street, you know—but if it was the back fence I wouldn’t mind and SHE wouldn’t. Yes, she’s awful particular about this fence; it’s got to be done very careful; I reckon there ain’t one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand, that can do it the way it’s got to be done.”</p> <p>“No—is that so? Oh come now—lemme just try. Only just a little—I’d let YOU, if you was me, Tom.”</p> <p>“Ben, I’d like to, honest injun; but Aunt Polly—well, Jim wanted to do it, but she wouldn’t let him; Sid wanted to do it, and she wouldn’t let Sid. Now don’t you see how I’m fixed? If you was to tackle this fence and anything was to happen to it—” “Oh, shucks, I’ll be just as careful. Now lemme try. Say—I’ll give you the core of my apple.”</p> <p>“Well, here—No, Ben, now don’t. I’m afeard—”</p> <p>“I’ll give you ALL of it!”</p>	<p>Reconfigure students into new groups of three to read and act out this passage—one as Tom, one as Ben, and one as the narrator.</p> <p>Like before, asking students to act out this portion of the text makes them deliberately engage the text while forcing them to deliberate on how to speak and deliver Twain’s dialogue. Teachers can create a competition amongst groups for the most dramatic reading, the funniest reading, the reading that is most faithful to the text and Twain’s intentions, etc.</p> <p>(Q5) List at least four of the ways Twain has used so far to describe Tom painting the fence. What impact do these descriptions have on Ben’s attitude towards painting?</p> <p>Swept brush “daintily,” “surveyed with the eye of an artist,” “Went tranquilly to work,” “put a touch here and there,” “criticized the effect again. The fact that Tom Sawyer continues to paint the fence is crucial for creating the illusion that the task is genuinely attractive. Twain draws attention to the task through his myriad descriptions of the activity. Tom’s absorption in the task ultimately leads Ben to ask if he can participate.</p> <p>(Q6) Why does Tom hesitate to allow Ben to paint the fence? How are his sentences constructed to reflect that hesitation? What effect do Tom’s hesitations have on Ben?</p> <p>This is another good comprehension question to test to see if students truly understand Tom’s hesitation as not genuine but rather designed to stoke Ben’s interest. Ben’s willingness by the end to give up his apple to Tom for the privilege of painting the fence shows just how much his attitude has changed from the beginning of the text.</p>

Text under Discussion		Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students
<p>Tom gave up the brush with reluctance in his face, but alacrity in his heart. And while the late steamer Big Missouri worked and sweated in the sun, the retired artist sat on a barrel in the shade close by, dangled his legs, munched his apple, and planned the slaughter of more innocents. There was no lack of material; boys happened along every little while; they came to jeer, but remained to whitewash. By the time Ben was <u>fagged out</u>, Tom had traded the next chance to Billy Fisher for a kite, in good repair; and when he played out, Johnny Miller bought in for a dead rat and a string to swing it with—and so on, and so on, hour after hour. And when the middle of the afternoon came, from being a poor poverty-stricken boy in the morning, Tom was literally rolling in wealth. He had besides the things before mentioned, twelve marbles, part of a jew's-harp, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a spool cannon, a key that wouldn't unlock anything, a fragment of chalk, a glass stopper of a decanter, a tin soldier, a couple of tadpoles, six fire-crackers, a kitten with only one eye, a brass doorknob, a dog-collar—but no dog—the handle of a knife, four pieces of orange-peel, and a dilapidated old window sash.</p> <p>He had had a nice, good, idle time all the while—plenty of company—and the fence had three coats of whitewash on it! If he hadn't run out of whitewash he would have bankrupted every boy in the village.</p> <p>Tom said to himself that it was not such a hollow world, after all. He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy <u>covet</u> a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to <u>attain</u>. If he had been a great and wise philosopher, like the writer of this book, he would now have comprehended that Work consists of whatever a body is OBLIGED to do, and that Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do. And this would help him to understand why constructing artificial flowers or performing on a tread-mill is work, while rolling ten-pins or climbing Mont Blanc is only amusement. There are wealthy gentlemen in England who drive four-horse passenger-coaches twenty or thirty miles on a daily line, in the summer, because the privilege costs them considerable money; but if they were offered wages for the service, that would turn it into work and then they would resign.</p> <p>The boy mused awhile over the substantial change which had taken place in his worldly circumstances, and then wended toward headquarters to report.</p>	<p><i>speedy eagerness</i></p> <p><i>exhausted</i></p> <p><i>desire get</i></p>	<p>(Q7) Translate the first two sentences of this paragraph into your own words.</p> <p>These sentences sum up Tom's state of mind and are an excellent way to test comprehension. Teachers can circulate around the room and perform “over-the-shoulder” conferences to confirm or clarify student understanding of the sentence as reflecting the discrepancy between Tom's public face and the desires of his private heart. Teachers should make sure students notice and wrestle with the classic phrase “and planned the slaughter of more innocents” since many students will be thrown by this.</p> <p>(Q8) Put the “great law of human action” and the difference between “work” and “play” into your own words.</p> <p>Insisting that students paraphrase Twain at this point serves the purpose of solidifying their understanding of the moral Tom extracts from his experience—one Twain wanted his readers to appreciate as well. Asking them to paraphrase Twain also tests their ability to communicate their understanding of the text fluently in writing. Teachers should circulate and perform “over the shoulder” conferences with students to check comprehension and offer commentary that could lead to on the spot revision of their “translation” of Tom's insight into human nature.</p>

Narrative Writing Assignment: Directions for Teachers and Students/Guidance for Teachers

For homework, choose one of the following prompts to complete:

- Construct a narrative that teaches the same lesson(s) that Tom learns at the end of the passage. Incorporate both the voice of a narrator and dialogue in your story.
- Write a parody of the scene by changing the characters and work being done to reflect a modern dilemma.

During the next class period the stories could be peer reviewed, shared as public speaking opportunities, and/or revised.

Teachers should resist the inclination to provide possible scenarios to explore until after the students have been given a moment to explore possibilities of their own choosing. If students remain stuck, some scenarios that can be suggested include the following:

- Getting friends to do their homework
- Having to do household chores
- Being asked to wash their parents' car on a Saturday morning

Teachers should check for an appropriate balance of the narrator's voice and dialogue, and examine the scenario closely to see if the lesson emerges naturally from the situation selected. Students should also be encouraged to use dialect in their writing (much like Twain employs Southern idiom and vernacular) and select words that reflect their contemporary understanding.

Day Two: Mini-assessment for the excerpt from *Tom Sawyer*, “Whitewashing the Fence” -

Teacher Directions for Mini-Assessment

Summary of Activities –Student Mini-Assessment

- Teacher provides students with a flexible amount of time to take the assessment that allows for close re-reading of the text within a class period. Although it may take students less than a single class period to complete the assignment, make sure to give all students enough time to engage in close reading, and be sure to accommodate those that need additional time.
- Teacher has option to grade and/or discuss answers as a class

Optional: Teacher reads the following directions

Today you will reread the passage we’ve been studying in class, an excerpt from *Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain. You will then answer eight questions. I will be happy to answer questions about the directions, but I will not help you with the answers to any questions.

You may begin now, and take the time that you need to read the text closely. (Students independently read “Whitewashing the Fence” and the following questions.)

Student mini-assessment:

Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

Twain, Mark. "Whitewashing the Fence" from *Tom Sawyer*

1 But Tom's energy did not last. He began to think of the fun he had planned for this day, and his sorrows multiplied. Soon the free boys would come tripping along on all sorts of delicious expeditions, and they would make a world of fun of him for having to work—the very thought of it burnt him like fire. He got out his worldly wealth and examined it—bits of toys, marbles, and trash; enough to buy an exchange of WORK, maybe, but not half enough to buy so much as half an hour of pure freedom. So he returned his straitened means to his pocket, and gave up the idea of trying to buy the boys. At this dark and hopeless moment an inspiration burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration.

2 He took up his brush and went tranquilly to work. Ben Rogers hove in sight presently—the very boy, of all boys, whose ridicule he had been dreading. Ben's gait was the hop-skip-and-jump—proof enough that his heart was light and his anticipations high. He was eating an apple, and giving a long, melodious whoop, at intervals, followed by a deep-toned ding-dong-dong, ding-dong-dong, for he was personating a steamboat. As he drew near, he slackened speed, took the middle of the street, leaned far over to starboard and rounded to ponderously and with laborious pomp and circumstance—for he was personating the Big Missouri, and considered himself to be drawing nine feet of water. He was boat and captain and engine-bells combined, so he had to imagine himself standing on his own hurricane-deck giving the orders and executing them:

3 "Stop her, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling!" The headway ran almost out, and he drew up slowly toward the sidewalk. "Ship up to back! Ting-a-ling-ling!" His arms straightened and stiffened down his sides.

4 "Set her back on the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow! ch-chow-wow! Chow!" His right hand, meantime, describing stately circles—for it was representing a forty-foot wheel.

5 "Let her go back on the labboard! Ting-a-lingling! Chow-ch-chow-chow!" The left hand began to describe circles. "Stop the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Stop the labboard! Come ahead on the stabboard! Stop her! Let your outside turn over slow! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow-ow-ow! Get out that head-line! LIVELY now! Come—out with your spring-line—what're you about there! Take a turn round that stump with the bight of it! Stand by that stage, now—let her go! Done with the engines, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling! SH'T! S'H'T! SH'T!" (trying the gauge-cocks)."

6 Tom went on whitewashing—paid no attention to the steamboat. Ben stared a moment and then said: "Hi-YI! YOU'RE up a stump, ain't you!"

7 No answer. Tom surveyed his last touch with the eye of an artist, then he gave his brush another gentle sweep and surveyed the result, as before. Ben ranged up alongside of him. Tom's mouth watered for the apple, but he stuck to his work.

8 Ben said: "Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?"

9 Tom wheeled suddenly and said: "Why, it's you, Ben! I warn't noticing."

10 "Say—I'm going in a-swimming, I am. Don't you wish you could? But of course you'd druther WORK—wouldn't you? Course you would!"

11 Tom contemplated the boy a bit, and said: "What do you call work?"

12 “Why, ain’t THAT work?”

13 Tom resumed his whitewashing, and answered carelessly: “Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain’t. All I know, is it suits Tom Sawyer.”

14 “Oh come, now, you don’t mean to let on that you LIKE it?”

15 The brush continued to move.

16 “Like it? Well, I don’t see why I oughtn’t to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?” That put the thing in a new light. Ben stopped nibbling his apple. Tom swept his brush daintily back and forth—stepped back to note the effect—added a touch here and there—criticized the effect again—Ben watching every move and getting more and more interested, more and more absorbed. Presently he said:

17 “Say, Tom, let ME whitewash a little.”

18 Tom considered, was about to consent; but he altered his mind:

19 “No—no—I reckon it wouldn’t hardly do, Ben. You see, Aunt Polly’s awful particular about this fence—right here on the street, you know—but if it was the back fence I wouldn’t mind and SHE wouldn’t. Yes, she’s awful particular about this fence; it’s got to be done very careful; I reckon there ain’t one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand, that can do it the way it’s got to be done.”

20 “No—is that so? Oh come now—lemme just try. Only just a little—I’d let YOU, if you was me, Tom.”

21 “Ben, I’d like to, honest injun; but Aunt Polly—well, Jim wanted to do it, but she wouldn’t let him; Sid wanted to do it, and she wouldn’t let Sid. Now don’t you see how I’m fixed? If you was to tackle this fence and anything was to happen to it—”

22 “Oh, shucks, I’ll be just as careful. Now lemme try. Say—I’ll give you the core of my apple.”

23 “Well, here—No, Ben, now don’t. I’m afeard—”

24 “I’ll give you ALL of it!”

25 Tom gave up the brush with reluctance in his face, but alacrity in his heart. And while the late steamer Big Missouri worked and sweated in the sun, the retired artist sat on a barrel in the shade close by, dangled his legs, munched his apple, and planned the slaughter of more innocents. There was no lack of material; boys happened along every little while; they came to jeer, but remained to whitewash. By the time Ben was fagged out, Tom had traded the next chance to Billy Fisher for a kite, in good repair; and when he played out, Johnny Miller bought in for a dead rat and a string to swing it with—and so on, and so on, hour after hour. And when the middle of the afternoon came, from being a poor poverty-stricken boy in the morning, Tom was literally rolling in wealth. He had besides the things before mentioned, twelve marbles, part of a jew’s-harp, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a spool cannon, a key that wouldn’t unlock anything, a fragment of chalk, a glass stopper of a decanter, a tin soldier, a couple of tadpoles, six fire-crackers, a kitten with only one eye, a brass doorknob, a dog-collar—but no dog—the handle of a knife, four pieces of orange-peel, and a dilapidated old window sash.

26 He had had a nice, good, idle time all the while—plenty of company—and the fence had three coats of whitewash on it! If he hadn't run out of whitewash he would have bankrupted every boy in the village.

27 Tom said to himself that it was not such a hollow world, after all. He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain. If he had been a great and wise philosopher, like the writer of this book, he would now have comprehended that Work consists of whatever a body is OBLIGED to do, and that Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do. And this would help him to understand why constructing artificial flowers or performing on a tread-mill is work, while rolling ten-pins or climbing Mont Blanc is only amusement. There are wealthy gentlemen in England who drive four-horse passenger-coaches twenty or thirty miles on a daily line, in the summer, because the privilege costs them considerable money; but if they were offered wages for the service, that would turn it into work and then they would resign.

28 The boy mused awhile over the substantial change which had taken place in his worldly circumstances, and then wended toward headquarters to report.

QUESTIONS

1. Tom's "great, magnificent inspiration" in paragraph 1 is important to developing the plot of the story. What is Tom's inspiration?

- A He develops a plan for tricking the other boys into doing most of his work.
- B He decides to bribe the boys with his "worldly wealth" in order to get the boys to paint the fence.
- C He thinks of ways to make himself enjoy the task of painting the fence.
- D He focuses on the exciting things around him to distract himself from his work.
- E He asks his friends to help him so they can all go swimming together.

2. In "Whitewashing the Fence," the author writes Tom and Ben's dialogue using dialect, a special variety of language that includes misspelling and informal words, to

- A build suspense about what will happen next.
- B help establish the rural nature of the setting.
- C establish a conflict between Tom and Ben.
- D help characterize Tom and Ben as ignorant.
- E make a point about human nature.

3. In paragraph 1, the author uses phrases like "free boys," "delicious expeditions," and "pure freedom" to suggest that

- A Tom resents his aunt for making him work.
- B Tom believes he should not be made to do chores.
- C Tom is tired from working so hard on the fence.
- D Tom highly values time spent having fun.*
- E Tom thinks the task of painting the fence is enjoyable.

4. The following question has two parts. Answer part A and then answer part B.

Part A: How do paragraphs 2 through 6, in which Ben pretends to be a steamboat, contribute to the development of the passage?

- A They emphasize the many distractions Tom faces.
- B They hint at Tom's plan for getting his work done.
- C They highlight the friendship between Tom and Ben.
- D They foreshadow the fact Ben will soon be working.
- E They characterize Ben as someone who likes to show off.

Part B: What event in the passage results from the answer to Part A?

- A Tom focuses on painting the fence instead of choosing to play.
- B Tom tells his friend why he likes whitewashing.
- C Tom tricks Ben into choosing to whitewash the fence instead of playing.
- D Tom gets many boys to paint the fence.

5. The following question has two parts. Answer part A and then answer part B.

Part A: Which two statements best express the reasons for Tom's success in getting the other boys to do his work for him?

- A Tom has the ability to keep his true feelings hidden.
- B Tom is popular with others and a natural leader.
- C Tom accepts that some situations are beyond his control.
- D Tom dislikes thinking people will make fun of him.
- E Tom understands how to make people feel envious.
- F Tom values objects that other people might view as junk.

Part B: Which excerpt from the passage provides the best evidence for the answers to Part A?

- A Soon the free boys would come tripping along on all sorts of delicious expeditions, and they would make a world of fun of him for having to work—the very thought of it burnt him like fire.
- B He got out his worldly wealth and examined it—bits of toys, marbles, and trash; enough to buy an exchange of WORK, maybe, but not half enough to buy so much as half an hour of pure freedom.
- C “Like it? Well, I don't see why I oughtn't to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?” That put the thing in a new light.
- D And when the middle of the afternoon came, from being a poor poverty-stricken boy in the morning, Tom was literally rolling in wealth.
- E He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain.

6. To convince Ben that Ben should want to whitewash the fence, Tom shows Ben that whitewashing is a rewarding experience and requires special skill. In the boxes below, write the number for one paragraph in which Tom conveys each idea about whitewashing.

Whitewashing is a rewarding experience.

Whitewashing requires special skill.

7. The following question has two parts. Answer part A and then answer part B.

Part A: Which statement best expresses the main theme of “Whitewashing the Fence”?

- A Friends make sacrifices to help each other.
- B People often value things that seem hard to get.
- C Work can be enjoyable if one has the right attitude.
- D Time is more precious than money or material goods.

Part B: Which lines from the passage does the author provide to best illustrate this theme?

- A Tom surveyed his last touch with the eye of an artist, then he gave his brush another gentle sweep and surveyed the result, as before.
- B “Say—I’m going in a-swimming, I am. Don’t you wish you could? But of course you’d druther WORK—wouldn’t you? Course you would!”
- C He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain.
- D He had besides the things before mentioned, twelve marbles, part of a jew’s-harp, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a spool cannon, a key that wouldn’t unlock anything, a fragment of chalk, a glass stopper of a decanter, a tin soldier, a couple of tadpoles, six fire-crackers, a kitten with only one eye, a brass doorknob, a dog-collar—but no dog—the handle of a knife, four pieces of orange-peel, and a dilapidated old window sash.

Teacher Guide to the Mini-Assessment

Annotations of the Questions for Teachers

Question Number	Correct Answer(s)	Standards	Rationales for Answer Options
1	A	RL.7.3, RL.7.1	<p>Option A: This is the correct answer. Tom’s inspiration is that he develops a plan for tricking the other boys into doing most of his work by making the work seem like a privilege instead of a chore.</p> <p>Option B: Tom’s plan involves tricking the boys into doing his work. The text is explicit that he doesn’t have enough “worldly wealth” to bribe them.</p> <p>Option C: Although Tom pretends to enjoy the work, he does so only as part of his plot to trick the other boys.</p> <p>Option D: Although Tom notices the things around him, he isn’t trying to distract himself from his work.</p> <p>Option E: Although Tom would love to go swimming, he doesn’t ask his friends to help him, as he knows he can’t tempt them as swimming does.</p>
2	B	RL.7.3, RL.7.1	<p>Option A: The dialect in the dialogue is not meant build suspense; what is important is what is being said rather than how it is stated.</p> <p>Option B: This is a correct answer. The dialect, which portrays the boys as lacking formal education in standard English, helps establish the rural setting.</p> <p>Option C: Although the dialogue itself helps establish the conflict between Tom and Ben, the dialect used doesn’t aid in this regard.</p> <p>Option D: Although Ben is easily tricked and could be thought of as slow, Tom is actually very bright in that he is able to manipulate the other boys. Dialect in this story is used to establish the rural setting.</p> <p>Option E: Although the story itself makes a point about human nature, the dialect used in the story is inconsequential to this point.</p>

3	D	RL.7.4, RL.7.1	<p>Option A: Although Tom is unhappy that he must work, there is no evidence that he resents his aunt for making him.</p> <p>Option B: Although Tom does not like his chore of painting the fence, there is no evidence that Tom believes he should not be made to do chores.</p> <p>Option C: Although Tom is obviously tired (“his energy did not last”), the author does not use the phrases in the question to suggest that state.</p> <p>Option D: This is the correct answer. The author uses these terms to show that Tom thinks highly of free time, viewing it as “delicious” and “pure freedom”, and those that get to enjoy the time as “free boys.”</p> <p>Option E: The tested terms do not describe Tom’s feelings about painting the fence, but rather his feelings about not having to paint the fence and getting to play instead.</p>
4 Part A	E	RL.7.5, RL.7.1	<p>Option A: Although Ben captures Tom’s attention, the paragraphs are not meant to show that Tom is distracted. Rather, it shows that Ben likes to show off and characterizes him as someone that likes to show off, which makes him eligible for Tom’s later manipulation.</p> <p>Option B: Although paragraphs 2 through 6 make Tom jealous of Ben’s freedom, they do not hint at his eventual plan for getting Tom’s work done.</p> <p>Option C: Although the paragraphs establish that Tom and Ben know each other, they are established more as rivals than friends.</p> <p>Option D: Although Ben eventually ends up working, these paragraphs do not foreshadow that fact.</p> <p>Option E: This is the correct answer. Paragraphs 2 through 6 make it clear that Ben likes to show off, creating jealousy in Tom and eventually causing Tom to create the plan of playing off Ben’s attitude to trick him to the job of painting the fence.</p>
4 Part B	C		<p>Option A: This answer is incorrect, as Tom was already focused on the fence prior to paragraphs 2 through 6.</p> <p>Option B: Although Tom does tell his friend why he likes whitewashing, this event is not a result of Tom learning that Ben likes to show off.</p> <p>Option C: This is the correct answer. Tom realizes that he needs to play on Ben’s showing off to make him think that painting the fence will give him even more opportunity to show off and that painting the fence is more fun than pretending to be a steamboat.</p> <p>Option D: Although Tom does get many boys to paint the fence, this event is not a result of</p>

			Ben's showing off, but rather a result of Tom's success in getting Ben to paint the fence and also give up treasured items.
5 Part A	A, E	RL.7.3, RL.7.1	<p>Option A: This is a correct answer. Tom is able to manipulate the feelings of the other boys to get them to do his work for him because he can hide the fact that he does not like painting the fence.</p> <p>Option B: Although Tom might be seen as a natural leader because of his ability to get people to follow, there is no evidence in the text that he is popular with the other boys or that this popularity enables him to have an impact on them.</p> <p>Option C: Tom actually seems to imply by his actions that he <i>does not ever</i> accept that some situations are beyond his control.</p> <p>Option D: Although the thought of others making fun of him "burnt him like fire," this fact does not explain why Tom is able to convince the boys to paint the fence.</p> <p>Option E: This is a correct answer. By playing on the emotions of others and making them think that painting the fence is a privilege, Tom shows that he understands how to make people feel envious.</p> <p>Option F: Although it is true that Tom values objects that others might view as junk, this fact does not explain his success in getting the other boys to work for him.</p>
5 Part B	C		<p>Option A: This distractor serves as a plausible link to Part A, option D. Although Tom very much dislikes the idea of others making fun of him, this fact does not express the reasons Tom is able to get the other boys to do his work.</p> <p>Option B: This distractor serves as a plausible link to Part A, option F. Although it is clear that Tom values his "worldly wealth," this fact does not explain how he is able to get the other boys to paint the fence</p> <p>Option C: This is a correct answer. This excerpt from the passage shows that Tom is masterful at being able to manipulate the feelings of the other boys by making the painting of the fence seem like a great opportunity instead of work.</p> <p>Option D: This distractor serves as a plausible link to Part A, option B. As a result of Tom's ability to manipulate the boys' thinking, he is able to change his feelings about his circumstances, but this fact is more of a result of his trickiness than of any type of popularity he has in the crowd.</p> <p>Option E: This distractor serves as a plausible link to Part A, option C. While Tom didn't set out</p>

			thinking he could control the situation, he quickly discovered “a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain.” This fact didn’t enable Tom to manipulate the boys, as he discovered this “without knowing it” and therefore by accident, but rather it was the lesson he learned from the experience.
6	<p><i>Whitewashing is a rewarding experience.</i></p> <div> <p>Paragraph 13 (Tom resumed his whitewashing, and answered carelessly...etc.)</p> <p>or</p> <p>Paragraph 16 (“Like it? Well, I don’t see why I oughtn’t to like it...etc.)</p> </div> <p><i>Whitewashing requires skill.</i></p> <div> <p>Paragraph 19 (“No—No—I reckon it wouldn’t hardly do, Ben...etc.)</p> <p>or</p> <p>Paragraph 21 (“Ben, I’d like to, honest injun; but Aunt Polly—well, Jim wanted to do</p> </div>	RL.7.3, RL.7.1	<p>Whitewashing is a rewarding experience: Paragraphs 13 and 16 both provide evidence for how Tom conveys to Ben that whitewashing the fence is a rewarding experience that should not be passed up.</p> <p>Whitewashing requires skill: Paragraphs 19 and 21 both provide evidence that Tom is trying to convince Ben that not just anyone has the right skills to whitewash the fence properly.</p>

	it...etc.)		
7 Part A	B	RL.7.2, RL.7.1	<p>Option A: Although Tom’s friends sacrifice play time to paint the fence, they don’t do so to help Tom but rather to “have the privilege” of painting.</p> <p>Option B: This is the correct answer. The theme of this story is that people often value things that seem hard to get. Tom uses this concept to trick the boys into doing his work.</p> <p>Option C: Although Tom makes the work seem enjoyable, he does not really think that. He only acts like it is fun in order to trick his friends.</p> <p>Option D: Although time seems precious to Tom in that he’d rather spend time playing than working, he also values the trinkets he receives, showing that he appreciates material goods as well.</p>
7 Part B	C		<p>Option A: This distractor plausibly links to Part A, option C. Tom “surveyed his last touch with the eye of an artist, then he gave his brush another gentle sweep and surveyed the result, as before” to make it appear that he is truly enjoying his work so the other boys would wish to take over the job.</p> <p>Option B: This distractor plausibly links to Part A, option A. Ben implies sarcastically that swimming instead of working would be a sacrifice as he teases Tom about having to paint the fence.</p> <p>Option C: This is the correct answer. The “great truth” is that people want what they can’t have.</p> <p>Option D: This distractor plausibly links to Part A, option D. The items listed here are all things Tom collected from the other boys as they paid him for the chance to do his work. Tom thinks of these items as improving his “worldly circumstances,” showing he treasured material objects as well as time well spent.</p>

APPENDIX A:

Standards Addressed: The following Common Core State Standards are the focus of this exemplar:

RL.7.1	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RL.7.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL.7.3	Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).
RL.7.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.
RL.7.5	Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.
RL.7.6	Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.
W.7.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
W.7.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
SL.7.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 7 topics, texts, and issues</i> , building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
L.7.3.a*	Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.
L.7.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grade 7 reading and content</i> , choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
L.7.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
L.7.6	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Appendix B: Information for Teachers About Text Complexity

Regular practice with complex texts is necessary to prepare students for college and career readiness. Appendix A and the Supplement to Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity in the CCSS lay out a research-based process for selecting complex texts. According to Appendix A of the CCSS, the first step in selecting grade-level appropriate texts is to place a text within a grade-band according to a quantitative text complexity score. Accordingly, this excerpt from *Tom Sawyer* has been placed at a grade 7 level of complexity. The reasoning behind this decision is explained below.

The quantitative data for the excerpt from *Tom Sawyer* is below:

<i>Whitewashing</i>	Quantitative Measure #1	Quantitative Measure #2
	Flesch-Kincaid: 4.9 (crosses end of 2/3 to lower end of 4/5 grade band)	Lexile: 810 (crosses end of 2/3 to lower end of 4/5 grade band)

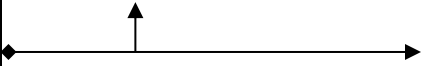
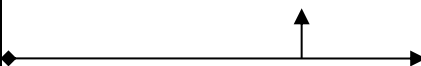
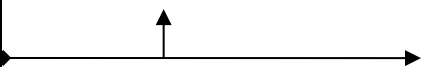


After gathering the quantitative measures, the next step is to place the quantitative scores in the Conversion Table found in the Supplement to Appendix A (www.corestandards.org/resources) and determine the grade **band** of the text. Note: Literary text sometimes rates lower than one would expect for readability indices. Please consider this as you view the ratings below.

Figure 1: Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges from Multiple Measures⁷

Common Core Band	ATOS	Degrees of Reading Power®	Flesch-Kincaid ⁸	The Lexile Framework®	Reading Maturity	SourceRater
2 nd – 3 rd	2.75 – 5.14	42 – 54	1.98 – 5.34	420 – 820	3.53 – 6.13	0.05 – 2.48
4 th – 5 th	4.97 – 7.03	52 – 60	4.51 – 7.73	740 – 1010	5.42 – 7.92	0.84 – 5.75
6 th – 8 th	7.00 – 9.98	57 – 67	6.51 – 10.34	925 – 1185	7.04 – 9.57	4.11 – 10.66
9 th – 10 th	9.67 – 12.01	62 – 72	8.32 – 12.12	1050 – 1335	8.41 – 10.81	9.02 – 13.93
11 th – CCR	11.20 – 14.10	67 – 74	10.34 – 14.2	1185 – 1385	9.57 – 12.00	12.30 – 14.50

To find the grade **level** of the text within the designated grade band, engage in a systematic analysis of the characteristics of the text. The characteristics that should be analyzed during a qualitative analysis can be found in Appendix A of the CCSS. (www.corestandards.org)

Sample Qualitative Analysis of the excerpt from “Tom Sawyer”:

Category	Notes and comments on text, support for placement in this band	Where to place within the band?					
		early 6 – mid 6	end 6- early 7	mid- end 7	early – mid 8	end 8	NOT suited to band
Structure (both story structure or form of piece):	The narrative structure of this text is chronological, detailing one event and how Tom manipulates others to do his work.						
Language Clarity and Conventions	The language and conventions used in this passage are highly complex. The vocabulary is challenging and sophisticated, and the sentences tend to be very long throughout most of the text.						
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)	There are really no heavy demands on prior knowledge. It’s pretty clear in the text that the fence is wooden and the story takes place in the past. The boys’ “culture” mirrors modern friendships and relationships.						
Levels of Meaning/ Purpose	The purpose and level of meaning is singular in that Twain uses the event to illustrate a basic component of human nature: we always want what we don’t have. Because Twain directly states this theme at the end of the story, it is accessible to all readers.						
Overall placement: Grade 7	Despite the quantitative data, this is a text appropriate for use in grade 7. Reasons for this include the language and conventions, coupled with the sophisticated use of plot. Additionally, some of the words may be inaccessible for students unused to dealing with archaic language and complex sentences.						

Additional resources for assessment and CCSS implementation

Close reading exemplar lesson to precede these end-of-lesson assessment questions:

<http://www.achievethecore.org/steal-these-tools/close-reading-exemplars>

Shift 1 - Complexity: *Regular practice with complex text and its academic language*

- See Appendix B for examples of informational and literary complex texts http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf
- See the Text Complexity Collection on www.achievethecore.org

Shift 2 – Evidence: *Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational*

- See Close Reading Exemplars for ways to engage students in close reading on <http://www.achievethecore.org/steal-these-tools/close-reading-exemplars>
- See the Basal Alignment Project for examples of text-dependent questions <http://www.achievethecore.org/basal-alignment-project>

Shift 3 – Knowledge: *Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction*

- See Appendix B for examples of informational and literary complex texts http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf