

InsideOUT

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Denver Center
THEATRE 
KENT THOMPSON,
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **COMPANY**

THE ADVENTURES OF **TOM SAWYER**

Adapted for the stage by Laura Eason
Directed by Jane Page



2011/12
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InsideOUT

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Synopsis

An imaginative and mischievous boy, Tom Sawyer lives with his Aunt Polly and half-brother, Sid, in the Mississippi River town of St. Petersburg, Missouri. After playing hooky from school and going swimming with his friend, Huck Finn, Tom is punished by having to forfeit his day off – and whitewash a fence on Saturday. Through creativity and salesmanship, he gets others to do the work for him. The play is a series of vignettes featuring Tom and his friends; these scenes include family time with Aunt Polly, his romance with Becky Thatcher, the adventure in the graveyard and the sojourn on Jackson’s Island. But there is a darker story that grows in importance as the play progresses – Tom’s anxiety and guilt over a murder he witnessed and told no one about. ■

THE ADAPTER

LAURA EASON

Laura Eason is the author of more than 15 plays, both original work and adaptations. Her plays have been produced in theatres across the country including multiple productions at Steppenwolf and Lookingglass Theatres in Chicago, the Humana Festival, Baltimore Centerstage, Kansas City Rep, Hartford Stage, Women's Project and 59E59 in New York City, among others. Her work is published by Smith and Kraus Playscripts and Broadway Play Publishing. She has received Chicago's Jeff Award for New Work and Adaptation.

In New York she is an Affiliated Artist of the Obie-winning New Georges and an alumna of the Women's Project Playwrights Lab. For six years she was the Artistic Director of Lookingglass Theatre Company in Chicago where she is still an active Ensemble member. Lookingglass received the 2011 Regional Theatre Tony Award.

Laura is a graduate of the Performance Studies Department of Northwestern University. Originally from Chicago, she now lives in Brooklyn. ■

<http://web.me.com/lauraeason>

THE NOVELIST

MARK TWAIN

I have had a “call” to literature of a low order—i.e., humorous. It is nothing to be proud of, but it is my strongest suit – seriously scribbling to excite the laughter of God’s creatures.

—Mark Twain. Letter to Orion and Mary Clemens, Oct. 19, 1865.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens was born in 1835 in what he later called “the almost invisible village” of Florida, Missouri. At his birth Halley’s comet could be seen in the sky. When he was three the family moved to Hannibal, Missouri and this is where young Sam spent his childhood. His schooling was brief and irregular for, when his father died in 1847, it became necessary for each child to help out in this domestic crisis. Sam became apprenticed to a printer named Ament where he received board and clothes as wages.

In 1850 his brother Orion bought out a small paper in Hannibal and Sam joined on as a typesetter. *The Hannibal Journal* managed to survive and young Sam began to write for it, mostly burlesques of local characters and conditions. In 1853 Sam grew tired of the limitations of small town life and ventured to New York where a World’s Fair was in progress; there he found employment in the newspaper trade. After a brief stint in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., he set out for the West.

In 1856, Samuel planned to set out for South America, but he was sidetracked in New Orleans. He was so entranced by the city and the river he decided to become a pilot on a boat on the Mississippi River. He learned the 1200 miles of the river in record time and changed his name to “Mark Twain,” a river term used in making soundings.

When the Civil War began, Clemens signed up with the Confederacy but resigned after two weeks and went to Nevada with Orion. He tried his luck at professional mining in California but with little success. In the 1860s he was summoned by Joe Goodman, owner and editor of the *Virginia City Enterprise*, to become a local editor. With his job he began contributing hoaxes and articles about the state legislature and signed all these “Mark Twain.” In addition, he wrote stories critical of the police; officials made his life so difficult that he left for Calaveras County. There one night around the campfire, Twain heard the story of a jumping frog and subsequently wrote his short story, “The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County.” This brought Twain much attention if not much financial return.

In 1866 he joined *The Sacramento Union* and was sent to the

Sandwich Islands where he covered the survivors of a wrecked vessel. About this time he heard of a steamship excursion to the Mediterranean and desired to go. The San Francisco paper, *Alta California*, paid for his passage and, in return, he promised to write frequent letters for which he would be paid \$20 each. Quaker City was the steamer selected and Twain hurried to New York City where he also made a deal with the *New York Tribune* to write letters for which he would be paid. His communications “preached a new gospel of travel literature”—one with honesty, sincerity and ridicule to those things he considered shams.¹ While he was in Europe he wrote the book *Innocents Abroad* in 1868 and lectured frequently. When he returned to America, he found himself famous. The first thing he did was to journey to Elmira, NY where he proposed to Olivia Langdon. They were married in 1870 and she became his editor for the rest of her life.

Twain decided to settle down and built a house in Hartford in 1874. However, he did most of his writing in Elmira at the home of Olivia’s sister. Moneymaking schemes always tempted Twain and he lost fortunes in such ventures as a typesetting machine and unfortunate publishing enterprises with Charles L. Webster and Company. In the meantime he wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; *The Prince and the Pauper*; *Life on the Mississippi*; *Huckleberry Finn* and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*.

In 1895, after suffering severe financial losses, Twain set off on a lecture tour across the United States and Europe to recoup his losses and pay his creditors. He found he could live more economically in Europe. However, in 1904 the family returned to America, but not to Hartford where they had lost two children. Twain moved to New York City and lived happily there for three years. In 1903 Olivia’s health failed and the family went to Florence, Italy, for her benefit. In 1904 she died and was brought back to America and buried next to their daughter Susy in Elmira.

Twain returned to New York and vowed never to cross the ocean again. However, in 1907 he was conferred a doctor’s degree from Oxford University in England. He appreciated the full meaning of this honor: “recognition by the world’s foremost institution of learning of the achievements of one who had no learning of the institutional kind.”²

Twain was always a humorist, but there was wisdom under it. He was, in fact, a great teacher, moralist and philosopher. He died in 1910 with the reappearance of Halley’s comet. ■

1. mtwain.com

2. Ibid.

www.mtwain.com/_biography

Twain, Mark. *The Autobiography of Mark Twain*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010.

LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI

*The great Mississippi, the majestic, the magnificent Mississippi rolling its
mile-wide tide along, shining in the sun.*

—Mark Twain. *Life on the Mississippi*

The Mississippi River covers over 1.2 million square miles and includes tributary rivers from 33 states and two Canadian provinces. It begins as a tiny brook in Itaska, Minnesota and 2,300 miles later empties into the Gulf of Mexico. The Mississippi is a working river. An average of 175 million tons of freight are shipped each year on the upper Mississippi; 29 locks and dams on the upper river make that shipping possible, allowing for navigation from St. Louis, Missouri to St. Paul, Minnesota, 854 miles total.

Records of human habitation date back more than 5,000 years. Native Americans were the first to establish communities along the river, using it for canoe transportation, hunting and fishing. Ojibway Indians of northern Minnesota called it “Messipi” or Big River. European explorers who mapped all the channels described it as the “gathering of waters.”

Today the Mississippi is still a working river with countless barges moving down with the tide; they are efficient for moving bulk cargoes as one standard barge can carry 15 train cars or 58 truckloads of material. It is a river that has shaped our past and will continue to mold our future. ■

www.cgee.hamline.edu/rivers

www.themetropolitan.ca

HANNIBAL, MISSOURI

This small town on the banks of the Mississippi River was home to America's favorite fictional boys, Tom Sawyer and his friend Huckleberry Finn.

Hannibal is located in the northeastern corner of Missouri, north of St. Louis, the state's largest city, and across the river from Illinois. Older portions of the city are on a hill that goes down to the banks of the river and look much as they would have in Tom and Huck's day. Newer hotels, motels, restaurants and businesses can be found near US Highways 61 and 79.

Mark Twain and his books are not Hannibal's only claim to fame. Margaret Tobin, who grew up to survive the sinking of the Titanic and came to be known as "the unsinkable Molly Brown," also came from Hannibal.

Today Hannibal is one of Missouri's top tourism draws as those who enjoyed Twain's books come to see where he grew up and just where his adventures happened. Each year an annual celebration called National Tom Sawyer Days is held in Hannibal during the week of the Fourth of July. Tom Sawyer look-alikes and Huck Finn wannabees arrive from many parts of the country to enjoy the festivities, which include a fence painting contest. ■

www.associatedcontent.com/articles/40395/hannibal_missouri_home_of_mark_twain

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

*Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do.
Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do.*
—The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

In his essay, “*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer: Play Theory and the Critic’s Job of Work*” Sanford Pinsker writes that Twain’s vision “[was] an extended investigation into, and celebration of play.”¹ One of Tom’s defining characteristics is his talent to convert all work into play as dramatized in the whitewashing episode. Tom’s play can thwart figures of adult authority such as parents, preachers and teachers and turn them, momentarily, into fools. He turns everything into a kind of vacation and his adventures make St. Petersburg a more attractive place to live. Pinsker contends that *Tom Sawyer* is Twain’s re-imagining of his childhood.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, play is essential in child development in that it contributes to cognitive, physical, social and emotional well-being. Free play allows children to use their creativity and aids in developing imagination, dexterity, physical strength and cognitive and emotional growth. When play is child driven, “children practice decision making skills, move at their own pace, discover their own areas of interest and ultimately engage fully in the passion they wish to pursue.”² It is through play that children engage and interact with the world around them. ■

1. Pinsker in Scharnhorst, p. 221.
2. American Academy of Pediatrics.

American Academy of Pediatrics. “The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent Child Bonds.” www.pediatrics.org

Scharnhorst, Gary, ed. *Critical Essays on the Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. New York: G.K. Hall and Co., 1993.

Pinsker, Sanford. “*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer: Play Theory and the Critic’s Job of Work*.”

PUBLICATION AND ADAPTATIONS OF *THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER*

*Most of the adventures recorded in this book really occurred.
One or two were experiences of my own; the rest of those boys were school mates of mine.*
—Mark Twain, introduction to *Tom Sawyer*

The first publication of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was by Chatto and Windus in England, June 1876. Twain and other American authors frequently had their books initially published in England; otherwise it was impossible to obtain a copyright in the British Commonwealth. The American Publishing Company became the United States publisher later in 1876. The first US edition was sold by subscription only; book agents took orders for the book prior to publication and delivered it when published.

The story of Tom Sawyer has been filmed, animated or adapted for the stage many times, in many languages. Some of those adaptations include:

- A 1907 silent film version released by Paramount studios.
- A 1917 silent version directed by William Desmond Taylor, starring Jack Pickford as Tom.
- A 1938 film in Technicolor by the Selznick Studios. It starred Tommy Kelly as Tom and was directed by Norman Taurog.
- A 1947 Soviet Union version directed by Lazar Frenkel and Gleb Zatvornitsky.
- A 1960 US television serial.
- A 1968 French/German made-for-television miniseries.
- A 1969 Mexican film called “Las Aventuras de Juliancito.”
- A 1973 musical version with songs by Richard and Robert Sherman, starring Johnny Whitaker as Tom and young Jodie Foster as Becky Thatcher. A TV movie version was released that same year with Buddy Ebsen as Muff Potter.
- A 1980 Japanese animé TV series by Nippon Animation, part of the World Masterpiece Theatre; aired on HBO.
- A Soviet film (1981) directed by Stanislav Govorukhin.
- A 1984 Canadian claymation version produced by Hal Roach Studios.
- *Tom and Huck* (1995) a film starring Jonathan Taylor Thomas as Tom and Brad Renfro as Huck.
- A 1990 version directed by Paul Krasny starring Raphael Sbarge as Tom.

- A 1995 episode for the PBS *Wishbone* TV series “A Tail in Twain.”
- A 2000 animated adaptation, featuring the characters as anthropomorphic animals with an all-star voice cast including country singers Rhett Akins as Tom, Mark Wills, Lee Ann Womack, Waylon Jennings and Hank Williams, Jr. as well as Betty White as Aunt Polly.
- Tom Sawyer appears as a US Secret Service agent in the 2003 movie based on a comic book series, *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*.
- A 2010 mash-up called *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and The Undead*.
 - *We're from Missouri*, a musical stage adaptation of the book, with music, lyrics and book by Tom Boyd, was presented in 1956 by students at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. In 1960 Boyd's musical version (re-titled *Tom Sawyer*) was presented professionally at Theatre Royal Stratford East in London and subsequently toured provincial theatres in England.
 - In April, 2010, the adaptation by Laura Eason that is being produced by the Denver Center premiered at The Hartford Stage as part of a centennial observation of Twain's death. ■

www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Adventures_of_Tom_Sawyer.

THEMES IN *THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER*

The moral and social maturation of Tom is an important theme in *Tom Sawyer*. In the beginning of the play, Tom is engaged in and often organizes childish pranks and make-believe games. But as the play progresses, Tom’s “play” takes on more gravity.

Tom and Huck visit the graveyard to carry out a superstition, but instead witness a murder. Tom leads Joe Harper, Huck Finn and Becky Thatcher into increasingly dangerous situations. In these predicaments he must be concerned with the others’ safety—such as rescuing Becky from the cave and testifying at Muff Potter’s trial. These adventures give him a more mature outlook on his relationship to the community.

Another theme is the importance of friendship. Tom and Huck remain good friends even though the town looks upon Huck as a kind of social misfit. Tom’s care for Becky prompts him to take on her punishment for the loss of a book and to lead her safely from the cave.

An important theme for Twain is society’s hypocrisy. He criticizes the values and practices of the adult world in St. Petersburg. Mr. Dobbins and his “educational” methods allow the author to disapprove of grammar school education and to mock the false piety of all who attend church on Sunday. When Muff Potter is accused of Doc Robinson’s murder, the community’s tolerance turns to harshness. Twain also notes parental authority is not always balanced. Aunt Polly reproaches Tom for his actions, but never really restrains or punishes him. The community always criticizes Tom and Huck’s behavior, but seems downright indulgent when the boys are believed to be dead; the town will forgive them anything when they appear at their own funerals.

An important element for Twain was freedom, and in *Tom Sawyer* freedom comes through social exclusion. Figures like Huck Finn and Muff Potter are easily identified as outsiders, but are included in St. Petersburg’s aura of tolerance. Huck’s low social standing (he doesn’t go to school and his father is a drunk) is minimized by Twain because Huck has complete freedom. He can smoke, sleep outside and doesn’t have to bathe. But when Huck and Tom find treasure, Huck is welcomed into St. Petersburg society with open arms. Money is an important ingredient in social standing and Widow Douglas takes on the task of cleaning up Huck. In short, “the price of social inclusion is a loss of complete freedom.”¹ ■

1. sparknotes.com

www.sparknotes.com/lit/tomsawyer/themes

Scharnhorst, Gary, ed. *Critical Essays on the Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. New York: G. K. Hall and Co., 1993.

Hill, Hamlin L. “The Composition and Structure of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.”

PLACES IN THE PLAY

McDougal's Cave

Probably the most famous cave in Missouri is McDougal's Cave (also known as McDowell's Cave, or today the Mark Twain Cave). It was discovered in the winter of 1819 or 1820 by Jack Simms; the cave became well known during the 1840s when it was purchased by Dr. Joseph Nash McDowell who put a wooden door on it and locked it. This behavior invited local curiosity and it was soon discovered that the good doctor, in addition to his career as a surgeon, was very interested in experiments and research on cadavers. These methods extended to the preservation of bodies; one of his weirdest actions "involved suspending a copper and glass flask containing the body of his 14-year-old daughter in the cave."¹

The community was outraged and the fuss that ensued prompted the removal of the body. But the good doctor wasn't finished. He pursued the Confederate cause in the Civil War and stockpiled guns and ammunition at his medical college in St. Louis. Thus, rumors arose that McDowell was using the cave to stash munitions, but this story was never proven.

McDowell died in 1868, and the cave was purchased by the Stilwell and Fielder families. After *Tom Sawyer* was published in 1876, the cave became a popular tourist attraction; with the increasing number of visitors, John East started a cave guide service in 1886. The Mark Twain Cave became the first commercial cave in Missouri and it has been shown daily ever since—by lantern until 1939 and with electricity ever since. ■

1. members.socket.net
www.members.socket.net

Jackson's Island

Jackson's Island is near the Illinois shore. Federally owned, it is the same tangled jungle where Tom and Huck hung out and where Huck and Jim started their raft trip down the Mississippi. During Mark Twain's boyhood it was known as Glasscock's Island. It is still adventure ground for Hannibal's boys; on hot summer days they go there to boat, fish and swim naked from its muddy banks. ■

www.madeinatlantis.com

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Mark Twain wrote *Tom Sawyer* in Missouri in the 1840s. At the time, Missouri was the westernmost state in the Union. Presidents Polk and Tyler pursued policies to fulfill America’s so-called “manifest destiny,” which would expand the country to the Pacific Ocean. The war with Mexico resulted in the annexation of the Southwest. Thus, Texas became a state in 1845; California gained statehood in 1850.

Expansion continued to be a major theme of American society through the post-Civil War period. After the war ended, the US was larger, more powerful and richer than ever before. The country was becoming more industrialized; the transcontinental railroad was built and steamboats replaced rafts as water travel. From 1840 to 1855, about 3.5 million immigrants came to this country attracted by the promise of freedom and wealth. With this population explosion, the labor pool increased and the rise of labor unions began. This growth of industry, supported by the war and the demand for supplies, created enormous wealth for some Americans. Powerful businessmen such as Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller and J. P. Morgan built their companies into multimillion-dollar enterprises. Despite their philanthropic efforts, they became known as the “robber barons.” This materialistic excess and opulent life style gave a name to the era of 1870 to 1880—the Gilded Age.

However, not every American during this period was wealthy. Indeed, *Tom Sawyer*, published during the Gilded Age, represents a look back at a simpler, less industrialized time in America. ■

Napierkowski, Marie Rose and Stanley, Deborah A., eds. *Novels for Students Volume 6*. Detroit, MI: Gale Group, 1999.
McIntosh-Byrd, Tabitha. “Criticism.”

WHAT MAKES A CLASSIC?

Classic. A book that people praise and don't read.
—Mark Twain. *Following the Equator*

The *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is considered a classic; although not as profound as *Huckleberry Finn*, it is still recognized as a timeless idyll of boyhood. Charles A. Norton, author of *Writing Tom Sawyer*, says the book qualifies as a classic because of “the treatment of the subject matter, the uniqueness of the narrative, the strange and exciting details they offer the reader, the insight they present through the characters and situations and the mastery of language.”¹

The Literature Network Forum writes that to be a classic, a novel has to have many elements. These include:

Morality—a classic novel should assert something of value; giving attention to human problems and either praising or condemning certain points of view.

Effective language—the language used should be forceful and fresh, but not clichéd and must be suitable to the time.

Truthfulness—a good story should give us the feeling that what happened to the characters was inevitable; given the personalities and situations in which they are placed, the outcome could not be otherwise.

Universality—whenever it was written, the work should still hold meaning in today’s world and still hold that meaning in the future.

Timelessness—the novel should be of lasting interest. Whatever the author writes about, it should still be relevant today. ■

1. Norton, p. 145.

Norton, Charles A. *Writing Tom Sawyer*. London: McFarland and Co., 1993.

www.online--literature.com/forums/showthreads

www.classiclit.about.com/od/forbeginners/a/aa_whatisclass.htm

www.portfolioimprint.com/2011/04/what-makes-a-classic

TOM SAWYER'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL EDUCATION

*Training is everything. The peach was once a bitter almond;
cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education.*

—Mark Twain. *Pudd'nhead Wilson's Calendar*

The school day began early for the teacher who arrived before the students to bring in the coal or wood, start the fire and prepare for the day. Since all grade levels were taught in this one-room schoolhouse and supplies were limited, the teacher had to make lesson plans that covered kindergarten through eighth grade. At nine o'clock the teacher emerged and rang the bell, calling the students to class. Boys would line up on one side, girls on the other. Students would remain standing by their desks for opening exercises, which included the Lord's Prayer and patriotic poems.

Teachers required a strict standard of discipline. At all times students sat with both feet on the floor facing forward at their desks. Their hands were folded on the desk or in their laps. Students did not speak without raising their hands, receiving permission and then standing. Since education was taken seriously, lack of concentration and bad behavior were not accepted. Teachers used physical punishment freely; it involved being hit by a rod on the palm if students giggled, did not pay attention or recited poorly. Boys received stricter punishment in that the rod was applied to the shoulders or the back.

The main subjects taught were reading, writing and arithmetic. Children also learned obedience, courtesy, manners and respect. A typical school day in a one-room schoolhouse looked something like this:

9am - Opening exercises

9:15 - Attendance

9:20 - Reading

9:40 - Mental arithmetic

10:10 - Geography and mapping

10:35 - Recess

10:50 - Written arithmetic

11:15 - History and US Constitution

11:45 - Lunch and recess

1:30 pm - Reading

2 - Geography

2:30 - Grammar

3:15 - Blackboard exercises

3:30 - Class dismissed

Homework was seldom assigned because of the lack of books and paper. ■

www.harnhomestead.com

www.homesteadcongress.blogspot.com/2009/02/one-room-schoolhouse.html

www.classprojects.cornellcollege.edu/stewart/JohnsonCounty/schedule.html

www.schooltales.net/tomsawyer

CONNECT

A series of free discussions providing a catalyst for discussion, learning and appreciation of the productions

Perspectives - Denver Center Theatre Company's own "Creative Team" and community experts host interactive, topical discussions with attendees that provide a unique perspective on the production. This provides an in-depth connection that makes the stage experience even more rewarding.

Nov 11, 6pm, Jones Theatre

Theatre & Theology - In our continued partnership with Pastor Dan Bollman with the Rocky Mountain Evangelical Lutheran Synod and cast members, this discussion examines the relevant connections to the productions through a theological lens.

Nov 22, Post-show

Talkbacks - Perhaps the best way to fully appreciate a production is by engaging in a stimulating dialogue with your fellow audience members and the actors who bring it to life.

Nov 27, Post-show

Higher Education Advisory Discussions - Audience members gain scholarly insight into the productions through discussions, facilitated by faculty members from regional colleges and universities.

Dec 11, Post-show

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

PRE-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

1. What does having a code of ethics mean to you? Are they different than morals? Have you ever had trouble choosing between what you believe is the right thing to do and what you want to do? How did you decide? What if the right thing gets you into trouble?
2. Is *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* a “classic?” What defines a classic? Refer to the section in the study guide to help with the definition. Is there anything that you would add to the definition?
3. What would you do if you found buried treasure? Would you keep it or turn it in? What are the reasons behind your choice?

POST-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

1. If you read the novel by Mark Twain before attending the play, were there any favorite parts that were left out or changed? Do you think that helped or hindered the stage adaptation? Why do you think the playwright made those changes?
2. Twain wrote this story to comment on popular literature and its motif that good things happen to good people. What do think Twain’s point of view was?
3. What does Tom learn about himself and the other characters through his adventures?
4. What are the character similarities and differences between Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn?
5. What does Mark Twain believe to be “the great law of human action?” How is it demonstrated in the play?
6. Why do people believe in superstitions? What are some of the superstitions that Tom and Huck believe? Are there any superstitions that you believe?
7. How was the St. Petersburg school and its teacher portrayed in the play? How is Tom’s school different than your school? What are the similarities?
8. How do the townspeople regard Tom and Huck? Compare what the townspeople say about the boys before and then after they have drowned. What is Mark Twain illustrating about human behavior?
9. What are Tom and Huck’s initial reaction to Muff Porter going to jail? Why does it change? What would you have done if you were in Tom and Huck’s position?

10. Why does Huck warn Widow Douglas of danger? What does he fear will happen to him if someone finds out that he made the warning?
11. How do you feel about the ending of the story? Are there questions that are unanswered? Would you end it differently?
12. What do you think happens to Tom after the play is over? How do Tom's adventures as a child inform the adult he will become?

ACTIVITIES

Page to Stage: Adapting *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

Materials: Pen and paper

1. Start by picking a short excerpt from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain. After reading the excerpt, find some key themes and character choices that you can adapt into a monologue or scene for the stage
2. From the passage, change what happens on the written page into a script for a play. Pay close attention to the dialogue and the action in the passage.
3. After writing the first draft, cast the scene and have the students read the scenes that they have written.
4. Discuss the differences between the novel and scenes. What did the author's do to convey the characters and plot? Did they have to invent, delete, or change anything to communicate the story?
5. Raising the bar: After the first draft of the scene or monologue has been adapted, change the narrative voice. For example, if the scene of Muff Porter's trial was primarily told through Tom Sawyer's view, what changes would need to be made if the scene was told through Huckleberry Finn's voice? Or through Muff Porter's eyes? What changes would have to be made to clearly show that the events being described are from a different person.
6. Discuss how the scene may change when told through the different voice. Discuss the process of an adapter and how you chose to the best voice for your perspective?
7. After seeing the production, what did the adaptor, Laura Eason, modify to tell her version of Mark Twain's story? What were the differences between Eason's adaptation and the scenes that were written in class? Does a play adaptation limit the adapter's possibilities?

New Colorado Writing PG: Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes.

New Colorado Writing PG: Write with clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail.

New Colorado Drama and Theatre Arts PG: Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles.

“The Great Law of Human Action”: Fence Painting Machine

1. The first player enters the space and mimes the action of painting a fence. They will continue to do this action for an extended amount of time so make sure that it is a simple action.
2. The next players will continue to build upon the scene adding other necessary actions of painting a fence including pouring paint, the difference of using a brush, a roller, or a sprayer, etc.
3. When the group of players are portraying the actions of white-washing the fence, have them change the actions to show that they are at work. Then, have the group change to show they are at play.
4. Discuss what the players did with their bodies or voices to portray the difference between work and play. Discuss the quote, “*Work* consists of whatever a body is obliged to do, and *Play* consists of whatever a body is obliged not to do.”

New Colorado Drama and Theatre Arts PG: Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles.

Status Card Game

Materials needed: Deck of cards

1. Choose five students and have them stand in a line in front of the class. Without looking at the card, each student receives a card that they are to hold against their forehead with the ranking visible to the other players. Explain that the cards’ ranking is equal to the student’s status in relation to the other students. For example, a student with a queen would have high status, but a king or an ace would have more and a two would have the least amount of status.
2. Students must determine their status in relation to the other students through an improvised event or gathering (a party, dance, line to get into a movie, etc). Because the students are not able to see their own card, they must interact with everyone else to determine their status based on how they are treated. They must change their behavior as they discover their status.
3. After the exploration, have the students line-up in the order where they think their card would place them from the highest to the lowest status. Ask each of them why they think they are that number. What lead them to believe that? Then have them look at their card to see how close they were.
4. Discuss the activity: How close was the improvisation to real life? Did the rest of the class think they were successful in portraying their status? Was it easier to play high or low status? How do you play middle status? When have you felt like an ace and when have you felt like a two in real life? Does our status change depending on where we are or whom we are with? Why?

4. Discuss the play: Who are the characters in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* that have more status than others? How do the characters interact and display that they have more or less status than the other characters? Which characters use status for their gain?

New Colorado Social Science PG: Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens.

New Colorado Drama and Theatre Arts PG: Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles.