



# The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Author  
Mark Twain

Year Published  
1884

Original Language  
English

## THEMES

### Escape from Society's Rules

Set around 1840, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* tells the story of a boy's journey along the Mississippi River with a runaway slave. The novel is both a coming-of-age tale and an insightful social commentary. Huck comes to realize society is not as civilized as it claims to be—especially in its treatment of black people.

#### Cruelty

Slaveholders abuse enslaved people, while Huck's father abuses him.

#### Racism

Many white Southerners view black people as inferior.

#### Hypocrisy

Even people who are supposedly "civilized" engage in foolish feuds.

#### Maturation

Huck matures through discussions with Jim and interactions with others.

## Main Characters

## Symbols

Friendship

Father



**Pap**

Cruel drunk; beats and hinders his son



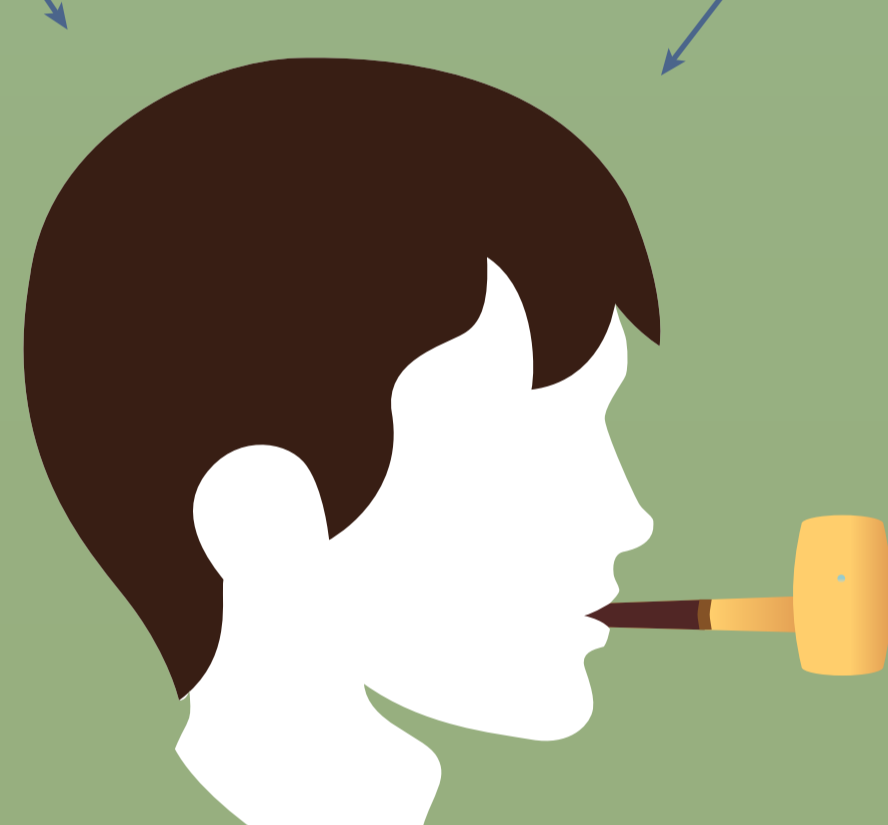
**Tom Sawyer**

Teenager; loves adventure



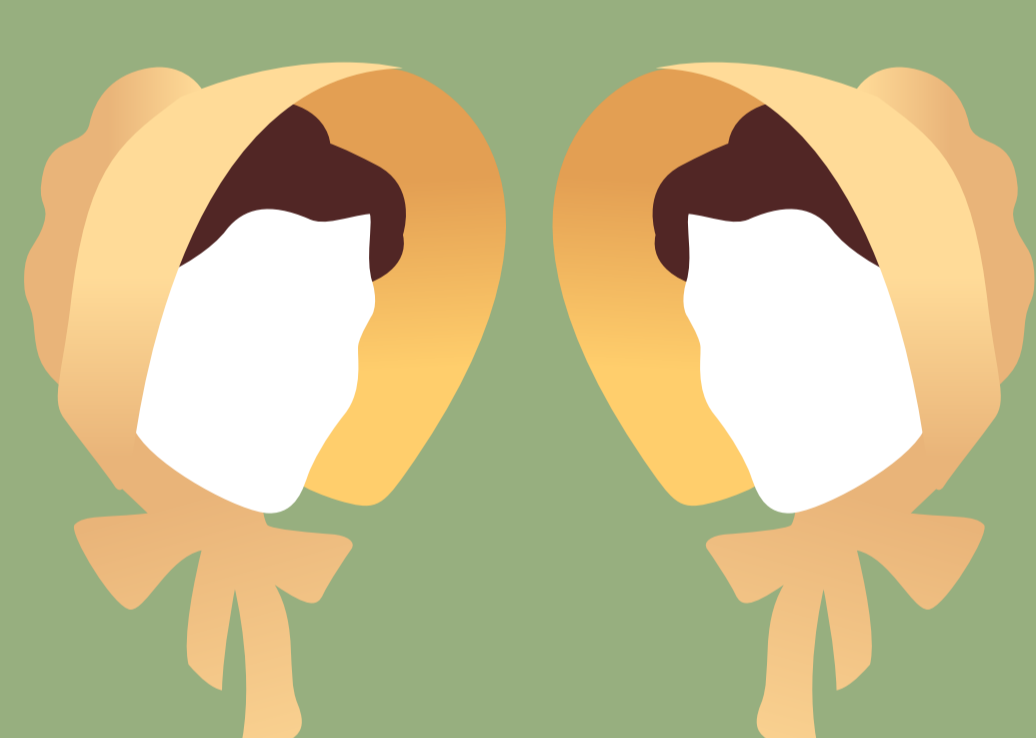
**Jim**

Runaway slave; travels with Huck



**Huck Finn**

Teenager; escapes abusive father



**Widow Douglas & Miss Watson**

Elderly sisters; try to civilize Huck



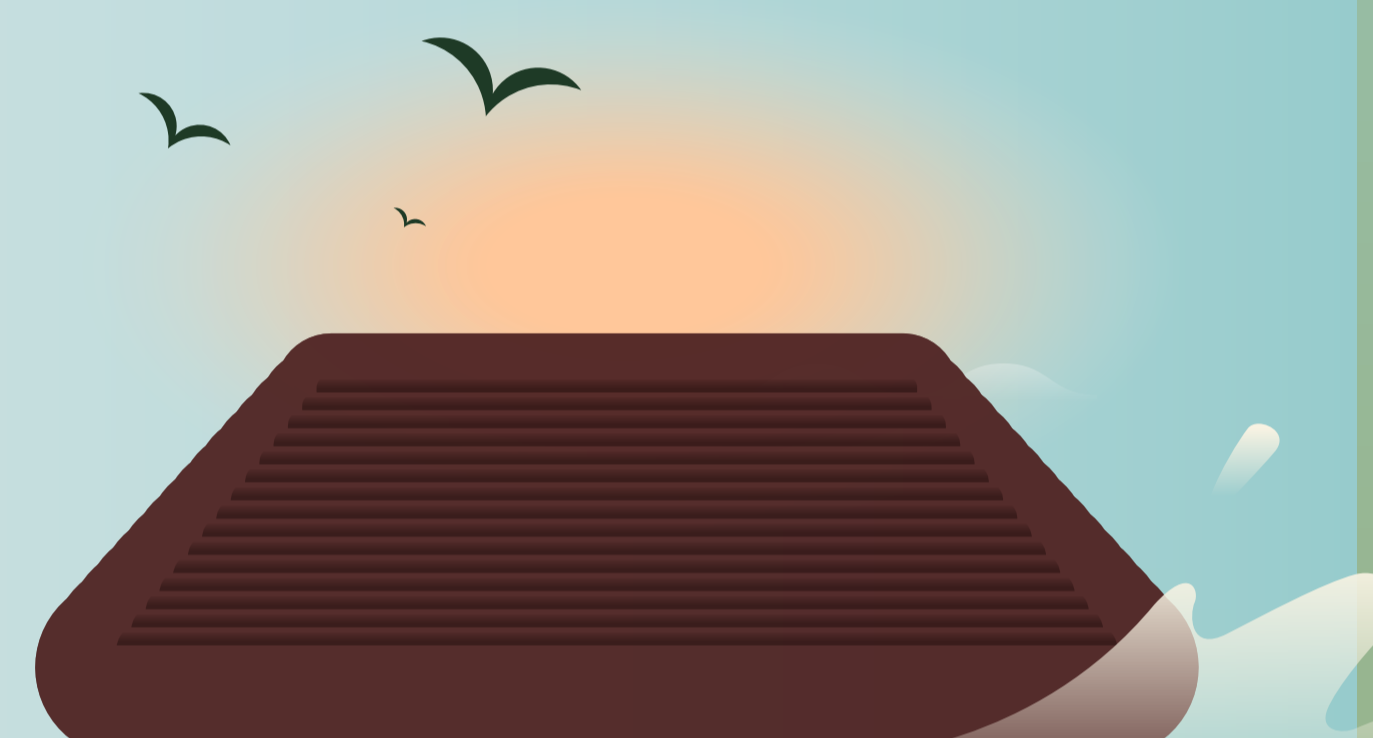
**The Duke & The King**

Con men and companions; only care about themselves



**Grangerfords & Shepherdsons**

Aristocratic families; sworn enemies



**The Raft**

Symbolizes freedom from the rules of society



**Mississippi River**

Represents personal responsibility and freedom from cruelty



**Jim**

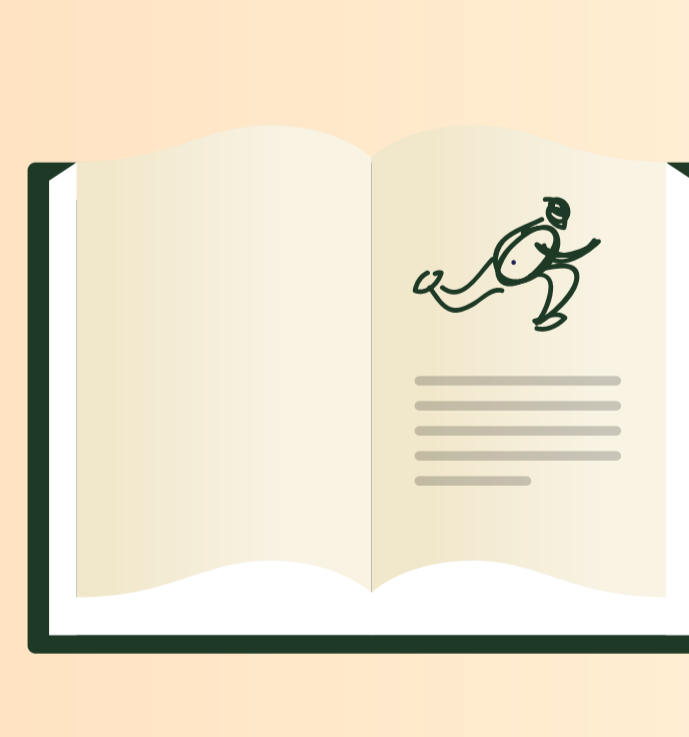
Embodies slavery as the only black person featured in the book

## The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by the Numbers



~7

Years between Twain starting the book and sending it to print



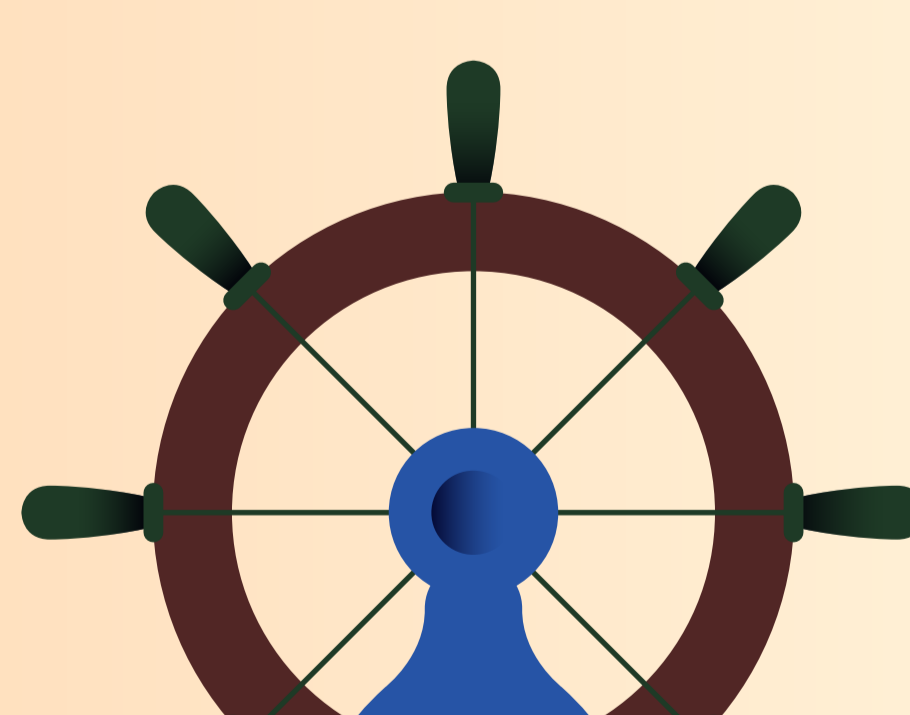
174

Illustrations in the original publication of *Huckleberry Finn*



>20M

Copies of *Huckleberry Finn* sold



1859

Year Twain received his steamboat pilot's license

## Author



**MARK TWAIN**  
1835–1910

Twain, whose real name was Samuel Clemens, is called the father of American literature. Before becoming a novelist, he was a printer's apprentice, steamboat pilot, and journalist. His time on steamboats influenced the themes and settings of his satirical and irreverent writing, including novels *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer*.

**T**hat is just the way with some people. They get down on a thing when they don't know nothing about it.

Huck Finn, Chapter 1

