Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
Discussion Questions, Chapters 1-10

Be sure that you identify any words or phrases that you don’t know the meaning of. Bring at least 5 with you to class for our discussion.

Chapter 1
1. What can a reader expect from a story told in first person point of view?
2. How is Huck characterized throughout the first chapter?
3. How is the topic of superstition presented in the story?

Chapter 2
4. In what ways is Huck different than the other boys in Tom Sawyer’s gang?

Chapter 3
5. Describe how Huck’s opinion of Tom changes as Chapter 3 develops.
6. Explain the significance of the woods to Huck’s life and what it represents in the novel.

Chapter 4
7. What is Huck’s reaction to the footprints? Why might he have this reaction, and why do you think Huck gives all of his money to Judge Thatcher?
8. How does this chapter depict Jim as Huck’s confidante? Why is this relationship successful?
9. Why does Huck trust the magic hairball’s advice more than Jim’s? What aspects of human nature is Twain highlighting here? Explain what events are foreshadowed in this “advice”.

Chapter 5
10. In Chapter 5, how does Twain express his skepticism toward men who claim to be “reformed” and those who push to “reform” others?

Chapter 6
11. Explain the irony of Pap’s holding Huck against his will. Consider what has taken place in previous chapters.
12. How does Twain begin to question the morality of slavery, especially in this chapter?

Chapter 7
13. After the disappointment of their last interaction, explain why Huck says: “I did wish Tom Sawyer was there; I knewed he would take an interest in this kind of business, and throw in the fancy touches. Nobody could spread himself like Tom Sawyer in such a thing as that.”

Chapter 8
14. What satire about religion does Huck offer in this chapter?
15. How is Jim portrayed as a stereotypical slave? How might Twain use this to prove a point about slavery/slaves?
Chapter 9
16. Explain the significance of the Mississippi Valley’s caves and caverns in the story thus far.
17. How does weather contrast with the mood of Jim and Huck at the start of Chapter 9?
18. How is Jim shown as a father-like figure to Huck at the end of the chapter, and how does this compare with Pap?

Chapter 10
19. How does Huck’s view of superstition evolve over the course of this chapter?
20. What does Huck’s dressing up as a girl say about him as a character?

Things to think about throughout these chapters but also to be aware of throughout the rest of the novel:
• Huck’s character
  o how many internal/external influences are there and how they affect
  o his internal and external conflicts
  o his attention to detail—notice the imagery and notice what Huck notices in his vivid descriptions of everything (the night, noises, isolation, slavery, people . . . )
• Is Tom a foil for Huck?
• How do we characterize Jim based on his dialogue and actions so far in the text?
• Keep up with the literary and biblical allusions and their significance: how many have we seen?
• How does humor function within the text?
• What are the various social commentaries Twain is offering? Where in the text?
• Remember that the notes weren’t just a way to pass time—you should be noticing all of the things that were in there.