

Tom Sawyer Essay Prompts

Choose ONE of the following prompts to write your essay.

1. How does Twain portray childhood? What qualities does he attribute to children? Are these qualities positive or negative?
2. How would you characterize the story? Is it fantastical? Is it realistic? Is it both? Explain.
3. Discuss the relationship between adult society and child society in the text. Are they entirely different or incompatible? Or are the lines blurred? If you think they are portrayed as similar, explain how.
4. Some view Tom as a manipulative, troublesome kid who would be a nightmare to teachers and parents. Is Tom a good person? Explain.
5. Twain integrates meta references into his text. What do you think is the purpose and effect of these moments when Twain breaks the traditional narrative?
6. Twain uses dialect to demonstrate how Southerners of the time spoke. What do you think is the purpose and effect of these moments?
7. How does Twain portray the South? Is it a safe, fun place to live? Or is it a dark, dangerous place? Is it both? Explain.

Your essay should include the following:

- Keyhole intro and conclusion
- A FATt sentence
- A clear, strong, and unique thesis
- A clear and cohesive argument/claim beginning each body paragraph
- 6 pieces of textual evidence with proper MLA citations
- Unique and sophisticated analysis of textual evidence
- MLA Format