

Name _____



Flawed Lessons

In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain explores how education and religion often fail to teach people what is truly right and wrong. Huck, the main character, grows up in a society that claims to be civilized, but he quickly realizes that many of the people around him do not practice what they preach. Through Huck's journey, Twain shows that learning from real experiences is more important than blindly following lessons from school or church.

Huck's formal education is very limited. He attends school for a short time, but he does not enjoy it. His teacher, Miss Watson, and the Widow Douglas try to teach him to read, write, and behave "properly." However, their lessons do not prepare him for real-life situations. Huck is taught to follow rules without questioning them, even if they seem unfair. He realizes that school does not help him make the tough moral choices he faces on his journey.

Religion is also presented as flawed in the novel. Many religious people, like Miss Watson, talk about kindness and goodness but do not act that way. Miss Watson, who teaches Huck about heaven and hell, owns an enslaved man, Jim, and plans to sell him. This shows the contradiction in her beliefs—she claims to be a good Christian but does not treat others fairly. Huck struggles with religion because he is told that helping Jim escape is a sin, even though he knows in his heart that Jim deserves freedom. In the end, Huck chooses to follow his conscience rather than the religious rules he has been taught.

Another example of the failure of religion is the Grangerford and Shepherdson families. These two wealthy families go to church every Sunday and listen to sermons about love and forgiveness. Yet, they continue a deadly feud, killing each other over a disagreement no one even remembers. This shows how people can claim to follow religious values while acting in ways that go against them.

Throughout the novel, Huck learns that true morality does not come from school or church—it comes from thinking for himself. He realizes that education and religion do not always make people kind or fair. Twain uses Huck's experiences to show that actions matter more than words and that doing the right thing is not always the same as following the rules.