

Name _____



True Voices

In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain uses dialect and regional language to make the story feel real. Dialect is the way people speak in different places. Twain wanted his characters to sound like real people from the South in the 1800s. By using different speech styles for different characters, Twain helps readers understand who they are, where they come from, and how they see the world.

Huck Finn, the main character, speaks in a simple, direct way. He does not use fancy words or proper grammar because he did not have much schooling. Instead, he says things like, "You don't know about me without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*." This makes Huck sound like a real boy who grew up along the Mississippi River, not someone reading from a textbook.

Jim, the runaway enslaved man, also speaks in a specific dialect. His speech shows the way many enslaved people spoke at the time. For example, he says, "I doan' want to go no fuder, but I reckon I got to." Twain wrote Jim's dialogue this way to make his voice unique and to show his background. Although Jim does not speak like people in books, he is wise and kind, teaching Huck many important lessons.

Other characters in the novel have different ways of speaking, too. The King and the Duke, two con men, use fancy words to trick people into believing they are important. Wealthy families, like the Grangerfords, speak in a more polished way, showing their higher social status. By writing each character's speech in a different way, Twain makes the novel feel more real and helps us understand the differences between people.

Twain's use of dialect adds meaning to the story. It helps us see that intelligence is not just about speaking "correctly." Huck and Jim, who do not use fancy language, are more honest and good-hearted than the so-called "respectable" people they meet. The way people speak in the novel helps show who they really are inside.

By using regional language, Twain makes *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* a powerful and realistic story. It transports readers to a different time and place, letting them hear the voices of the past as they really were.

