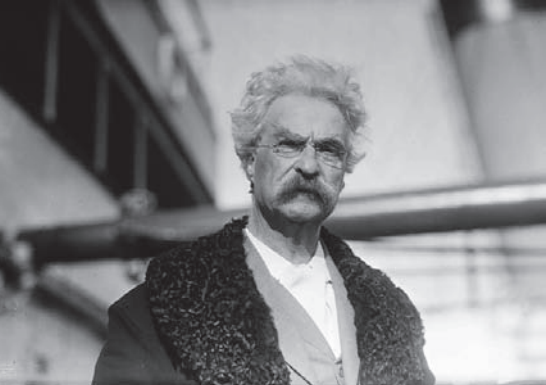




Meet Mark Twain

photo courtesy Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

Have you ever heard of a couple of boys named Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn? These two characters were brought to life in the late 1800s by author Mark Twain. In his famous books “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer” and “Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,” Twain gave readers of all ages a look at what life was like for kids living near the Mississippi River in the 19th century.

Mark Twain was born on Nov. 30, 1835. His 190th birthday is coming up this month. The Mini Page celebrates by learning more about Mark Twain and some of his best-loved writings.

Childhood and family

Mark Twain’s real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens. He was born in the town of Florida, Missouri, two months early, and he was sick for much of his early childhood.

Sam was the sixth of seven children born to John and Jane Clemens. However, only Sam, his older brother, Orion, and his older sister, Pamela, lived into adulthood.

The family moved to Hannibal, Missouri, on the banks of the Mississippi River, when Sam was 4.

For a little boy, the river was nothing but fun: Unusual people, chugging boats and



Samuel Clemens visits his boyhood home in Hannibal, Missouri.

tempting cargo to explore kept Sam and his friends busy. Many of the experiences he had as a child became stories in his books, including some of his real friends and family members.

Life as an adult

When he was 22, Sam became an **apprentice**, or beginner, river pilot. Two years later, he was a licensed pilot.

Sam guided boats up and down the Mississippi River until 1861, when the Civil War began. Both the North and the South wanted control of the river, so there was much fighting along the way. Riverboat traffic almost stopped.

In 1862, he moved to Virginia City, Nevada, to write for *The Territorial Enterprise*.

At this newspaper, Sam Clemens first used the name Mark Twain. He got the name from his riverboat days, when a marked rope helped pilots judge how deep the water was. “Twain” meant “two,” so “mark twain” meant two fathoms, or 12 feet.

Sam later wrote for *The San Francisco Call* and *The Sacramento Union* in California.

His writing **influenced**, or affected, people all over the world. He was known as a humorist, but most of his writing had serious themes, too.

Mini Fact:

Mark Twain was born the same year Halley’s Comet appeared in the sky. The year he died, it appeared again.



Mark Twain at age 31.

Twain Fact-a-Roonies

- “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer”

is filled with memorable characters — most based on Sam and his family and friends. For instance:

✓ Tom Sawyer was mostly Sam, with three other friends thrown in.

✓ Becky Thatcher was based on Laura Hawkins, who lived across the street from Sam. They were lifelong friends.

✓ Injun Joe was based on Joe Douglass, a half-Osage, half-African American man in Hannibal.

• Mark Twain did a lot of his writing in an **octagonal** (eight-sided) study at Quarry Farm in Elmira, New York. The farm was the home of his sister-in-law and her family.

• Even though Sam Clemens grew up in a slave-holding state, he grew to be strongly against racism. His book “Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,” published in 1885, is about a young white boy who helps a Black slave, Jim, escape by floating away on the river on a raft.



Tom Sawyer as shown in the first edition of the book.



photo courtesy Cindy Lovell, Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum

Resources



On the Web:

- marktwainmuseum.org
- pbs.org/kenburns/mark-twain/about-twain/

At the library:

- “River Boy: The Story of Mark Twain” by William Anderson

Try ‘n’ Find

Words that remind us of Mark Twain are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



ADVENTURE,
APPRENTICE, BOOKS,
CLEMENS, COMET, FINN,
HALLEY, HANNIBAL,
INFLUENCE, MARK,
MISSOURI, NEWSPAPER,
OCTAGONAL, RACISM,
RIVERBOAT, SAM,
SAWYER, TWAIN.

N N I F E C N E U L F N I T U
E S S L X I P L A B I N N A H
R A N C V K H N I A W T R V S
U W E N T X O A Q V F M A S K
T Y M A L G H A L L E Y O K O
N E E U A C R A C I S M S H O
E R L T O R E P A P S W E N B
V X C M E C I T N E R P P A F
D O E L R I V E R B O A T T Q
A T I R U O S S I M M A R K J



Cook’s Corner

Bravo for Bulgur

You’ll need:

- 1 cup bulgur
- 3/4 cup boiling water
- 3/4 cup boiling chicken broth
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

What to do:

1. Combine bulgur with boiling water and broth. Let bulgur stand for 40 minutes until liquid is absorbed. Stir in the raisins.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice and spices. Add to bulgur mixture and chill for 1 hour.
3. Remove from refrigerator, stir in pistachios and serve at room temperature. Makes 4 to 6 side servings.

- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped pistachios



* You’ll need an adult’s help with this recipe.

7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

1. house made of ice (5) _____
2. small stream (5) _____
3. famous sunken ship (7) _____
4. expensive, sparkly rock (7) _____
5. gas we need to breathe (6) _____
6. person attending school (7) _____
7. 12 o’clock a.m. (8) _____

OK	OXY	STU	MID
AMO	TITA	IG	DI
LOO	DENT	GEN	HT
NIG	ND	NIC	BRO

Answers: igloo, brook, diamond, oxygen, student, midnight.



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Mini Jokes



Tom: What do river otters do when they need cash?
Huck: They go to the river bank!

Eco Note



Every breath people take may carry the hidden danger of microplastics so small they can slip into the lungs and enter the bloodstream. A study published in the journal PLOS One estimates humans inhale up to 68,000 of these particles daily, mostly from the air inside homes and cars filled with plastics that break down into dust. Researchers warn that the health toll could be serious, with links to chronic lung inflammation, organ damage and even cancer. Because people spend most of their lives indoors, exposure is nearly constant, and car interiors can have by far the highest levels.

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For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles about new or favorite books.

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