

Lesson Plan for  
*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*  
**Concept: Allusions**  
Allusions: Keys to Understanding

Developed by: Catherine Smart Hannibal High School Hannibal, Missouri  
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**Suggested Grade Level:** High School

**Time Frame:** One Lesson 85 Minutes/Follow-up throughout novel study

**Objectives:**

- Students will identify *allusion* when seen in various writing forms
- Students will define *allusion* and how it works as figurative language
- Students will create examples of *allusion* of their own.
- Students will acknowledge the importance that the use and understanding of *allusions* plays in the world all around us: writing, reading, musical lyrics, ads, language comprehension

**State Standards:**

**Show-Me Standards State of Missouri: Communication Arts**

In Communication Arts, students in Missouri's public schools will acquire a solid foundation, which includes knowledge of and proficiency in:

- CA -2: reading and evaluating fiction, poetry, and drama.
- CA-5: comprehending and evaluating the content and artistic aspects of oral and visual presentations (such as story-telling, debates, lectures, and multi-media productions).
- CA-6: participating in formal and informal presentations and discussions of issues and ideas.

**Assessment/Evaluation:**

- Peruse all manner of written materials and pull allusions from them
- Check a favorite song lyric for allusions and discuss with class
- Discover the effectiveness of allusion in ad materials, comedy, etc.

**Language/Vocabulary:**

- Allusion
- Shorthand, chatspeak, jargon
- Figurative language

**Integrated Curriculum:** The use of allusions is commonplace throughout our language. As a result, understanding how and why they are used will be helpful in any aspect of education.

**Background Information:**

- Pre-test on allusions
- Definition, both formal and informal of allusion

**Materials:** Chapter 14, *Huckleberry Finn*; Bible, KJV 1 Kings 3:16-28, various handouts

**Technology Support:**

- Smartboard to demonstrate examples of allusion that students may discover and discuss
- Power Point Presentation: *Allusions: Keys to Understanding* (inserted at end of lesson as jpegs)

**Related Twain Quotes/Other Readings:****...only three examples of allusion out of many**

- “Often it does seem a pity that Noah and his party did not miss the boat.”
- “I came in with Halley's comet in 1835. It is coming again next year [1910], and I expect to go out with it. It will be the greatest disappointment of my life if I don't go out with Halley's comet. The Almighty has said, no doubt: Now here are these two unaccountable freaks; they came in together, they must go out together.”
- “I am different from Washington; I have a higher, grander standard of principle. Washington could not lie. I can lie, but I won't.”

## Lesson Plan Format

### A. Introduction:

1. Students will take a pre-test to introduce the idea of allusions (Handout 1)
2. Class wide discussion on what allusions were meaningful and which were not. Why did some succeed and others fail?
3. Leading to the conclusion and previous background or knowledge needed

### B. Lesson:

1. Various examples of allusion presented on the Smartboard including literature, advertisements, comedy, everyday conversation, movie clips, etc.
2. **Presentation of Power Point (attached as jpegs)**
  - a. Allusions all around us
  - b. How does Huck's understanding of the tale of King Solomon differ from Jim's?

### C. Closure

1. Students will be reminded that the gathering of future knowledge is vital to make sense of the world around them as allusions are found everywhere as seen by our discussion, the Smartboard examples, and finally the example Twain uses in Chapter 14.
2. Future experiences of all types will be deeply affected by whether or not each has the necessary background to make sense of the allusions used in the world around us. They shade experiences as to whether we "get it", find something amusing or not, how we are perceived by others (as educated or no), and finally, how much joy we obtain from the use of our own language.

### Scheduled Use of Time:

Time	Teacher Activity/Questions	Student Activity
30 minutes	Pretest Activity over Allusions	Listen, discuss, work with other students to make meaning of the allusions
15 minutes	SMARTBOARD Examples of Allusions that occur all around us	Informal discussion of items presented
30 minutes	Power Point Presentation	Listen and respond
10 minutes	Wrap Up/Determine Understanding of concept of Allusions	Student responses
Homework	Write 10 sentences with allusions	Individual work

**Possible Follow-Up Activities:** Reinforce throughout rest of school year the idea of allusions and their importance

**Pre-test**

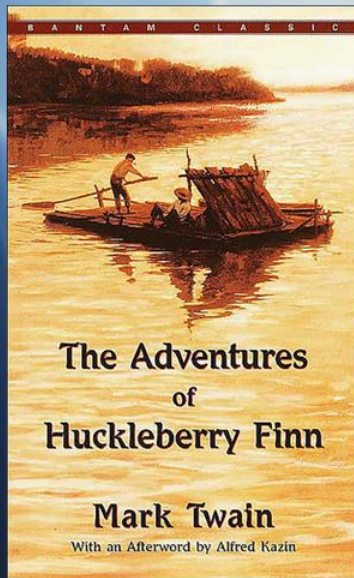
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Block \_\_\_\_\_

**You may work on this alone or with a partner. Read the sentence(s) below and provide an interpretation for each.**

1. He wasn't my type, except that he had the qualities of Midas.
2. He drove like a Kamikaze.
3. Meeting Joe was unreal; I think my Prince Charming has arrived.
4. Get off that roof! Who do you think you are, Spiderman?
5. Our home is a little utopia.
6. He draws well, but he is no Leonardo da Vinci.
7. That company claims to have internet at lightning speed.

8. He is no Hercules!
9. No matter how hard my mom tries, she is no June Cleaver.
10. After high school, my friends moved to California as if it were 1849.
11. Although past thirty, Jim still lived his life like he was Tom Sawyer.
12. They'd been friends longer than Bert and Ernie.
13. It's a giant challenge, so you'd best bring your slingshot.
14. Walter considers himself a real Romeo.
15. When it came to calculus, I had met my Waterloo.

Allusions:  
**Keys** to Understanding as  
Exemplified in  
*Huckleberry Finn*



Developed by:  
Mrs. Cathy Smart

## Introduction: Allusion

- Formal Definition: An allusion is a brief reference to a person, event, or place, real or fiction, or to a work of art. It could be a casual reference to a famous historical or literary figure or event. It is a type of figurative language.
- Informal Definition: a kind of shorthand used by language users to provide greater meaning for a situation.

## Examples of Allusion

An allusion references the image indirectly or contains symbolic meaning. "Prince Charming", and "Fairy Godmother" allude to perfect and magical people, while "happily ever after" alludes to eternal bliss.

--Scrooge Syndrome - (allusion on the rich, greedy and mean Ebenezer Scrooge from Charles Dickens' "Christmas Carol")

--The software included a Trojan Horse. (allusion on the Trojan horse from Greek mythology)

--Plan ahead - It was not raining when Noah built the Ark. (Richard Cushing) (allusion on the biblical Ark of Noah)

--to meet one's Waterloo - (allusion on Napoleon's defeat in the Battle of Waterloo)

--to wash one's hands of it - (allusion on Pontius Pilatus, who sentenced Jesus to death, but washed his hands afterwards to demonstrate that he was not to blame for it.)



*Huckleberry Finn*: Allusion as seen in Chapter 14

- Read Chapter 14 of *Huckleberry Finn*  
Take turns reading Chapter 14 together and discuss.  
Then compare to Chapter *Bible, KJV*  
1 Kings 3:16-28

## *Bible, KJV* 1 Kings 3:16-28

1KINGS 3:6 And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. 1KINGS 3:7 And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. 1KINGS 3:8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 1KINGS 3:9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

## Story of Solomon continued...

1KINGS 3:10 And the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. 1KINGS 3:11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; 1KINGS 3:12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. 1KINGS 3:13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honor: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. 1KINGS 3:14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

## And continued...

**1KINGS 3:15** And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants. **1KINGS 3:16** Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him. **1KINGS 3:17** And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. **1KINGS 3:18** And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. **1KINGS 3:19** And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it. **1KINGS 3:20** And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. **1KINGS 3:21** And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear. **1KINGS 3:22** And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king.

## And... finally

**1KINGS 3:23** Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living. **1KINGS 3:24** And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. **1KINGS 3:25** And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. **1KINGS 3:26** Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. **1KINGS 3:27** Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof. **1KINGS 3:28** And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.



## Compare Jim's Version of the Solomon Story to the Biblical version...

- When the two discuss King Solomon, Jim's practical but single-minded approach cannot convince Huck that Solomon "*warn't* no wise man nuther." Readers, however, are able to see that it is Huck, and not Jim, who misses the point. The real point, as Jim says, "is down fuder - it's down deeper." The statement foreshadows the debate of conscience that Huck undergoes later in the novel.

Unless we understand the allusion, we will  
not see that...

Jim is a more intelligent and sophisticated character than he appears on the surface. He shows up Huck many times and makes him mad and/or jealous (e.g., his reasoning on Solomon and the French in this chapter). He is complex and shows great insight and humanity.