

# Mark Twain: A Life Story to Tell Stories of Life

"Sometimes you gwyne to git hurt, en sometimes you gwyne to git sick; but every time you's gwyne to git well ag'in. Dey's two gals flyin' 'bout you in yo' life. one uv 'em's light en t'other one is dark. One is rich en t'other is po'."

~ Jim, *Mark Twain*

"POLITICIANS AND DIAPERS MUST BE CHANGED OFTEN, AND FOR THE SAME REASON."

~ *Mark Twain*

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## HISTORY & LIFE –

Born Samuel Langhorne Clemens on November 30, 1835, into a plagued era, death failed to discriminate as multiple of the Clemens children and their father succumbed to fatal bouts of illness. Clemens' life softened with the benefit of both hindsight and the transition from moment to memory as history whet young Clemens' appetite for fiction. Samuel eventually settled with the nom de plume "Mark Twain," meaning "two fathoms deep" or "safe water" in the Mississippi River culture. Mark Twain, was a historically instrumental author whose thematic novels and ingenious satire immensely influenced American culture and pioneered the development of Western Journalism.



Twain, Mark, 1835-1910 / Wikimedia Commons / Public Domain, ThoughtCo.

*Jim  
& Huck Finn*



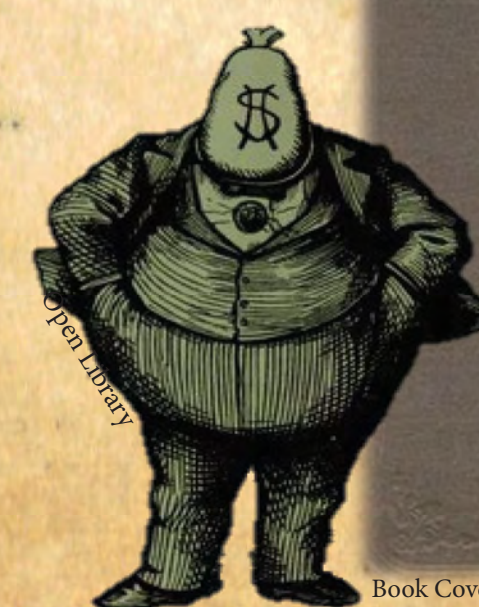
Art by E.W. Kemble in "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," 1884. Credit: The New York Times Culture Club/Getty Images

## THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN –

The nostalgic boyhood story of Huckleberry Finn follows the protagonist and Jim, an escaped slave, across the hostile Southern territory, revealing to the reader the cruel nature of slavery. Due to censorship bans in libraries and public schools, the book has been outcast because of racial expletives and outdated cultural references but remains a crucial symbol of opposition to racial oppression and highlights changes that needed to be made to a far too comfortable society (Reimann). Modern-day misinterpretation of the Huckleberry Finn novel is common because of the seemingly dehumanizing racial accuracy of the dialogue, but Twain's inclusion of this detail reinforced the truths evident in the story. "The shadings have not been done in a hap-hazard fashion, or by guesswork; but by pains-takingly, and with the trustworthy guidance and support of personal familiarity with these several forms of speech..." (Twain 1884, Huckleberry Finn, vii).

## THE GILDED AGE –

As the "Gilded Age" began, the concept of growing political corruption emerged as a direct result of entrepreneurial endeavors and abuse of the patronage system. Instead of attempting to balance the nation's prosperity, politicians engaged in ethically unsound alliances with the "Robber Barons," whose self-centered agendas accommodated legislators' needs for support in exchange for profitable legislation impositions. From his novel *The Gilded Age*, the time period was obviously a time of immense struggle fiscally and ethically. Twain's eponymous work demonstrates the governmental discrepancies through fictitious and satirized circumstances. The war was citizens' rights, and Twain's weapon of choice was a pen and paper. Even though ink took the place of blood on his hands, it was nonetheless a war, one worth fighting.



Book Cover for the first edition of *The Gilded Age* by Mark Twain / Wikipedia / Public Domain

*Using various thrilling adventures that captured the American audience's imagination, Twain successfully addressed the societal, political, and economic injustices prevalent in the late nineteenth century. Written into history as an unwitting participant until he dubbed himself "Mark Twain," Clemens picked up a pen and, reflecting his own life experiences, detailed human vices that were eventually overcome.*