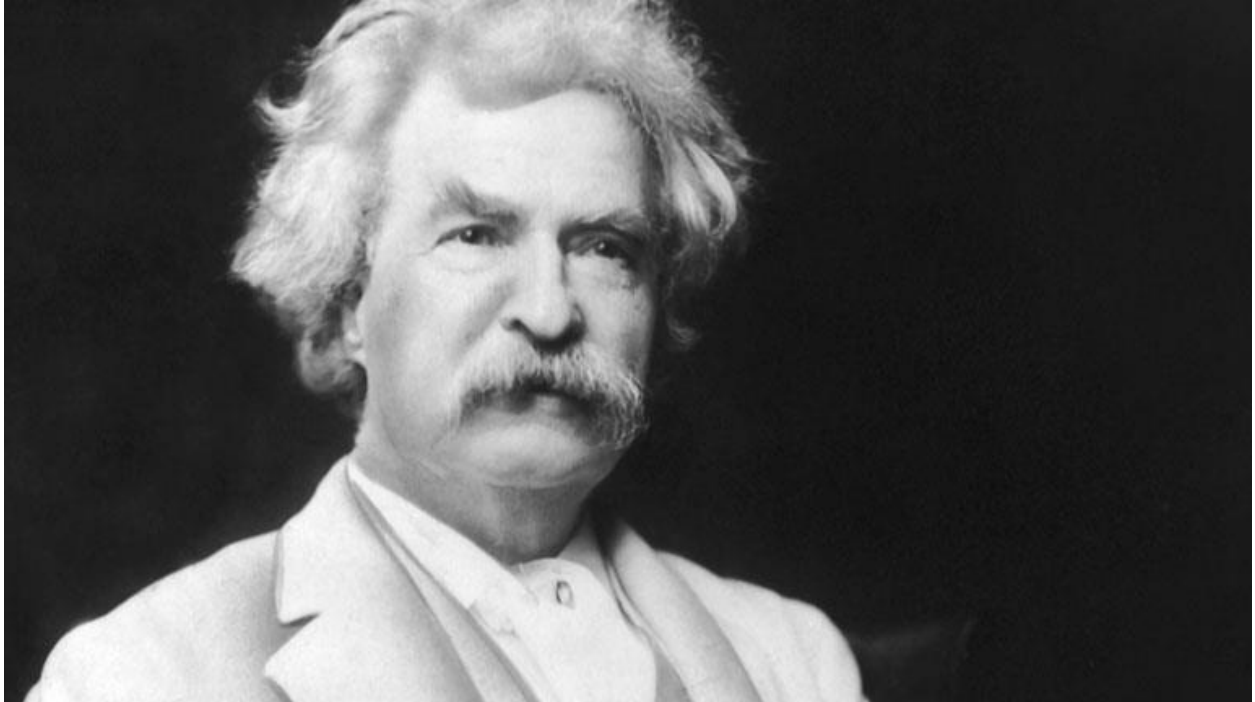


Name \_\_\_\_\_

Read the article and then answer the following questions.

# Mark Twain



**Synopsis:** Samuel L. Clemens was born on November 30, 1835, in Florida, Missouri. He is better known as Mark Twain, which is the name he used to write his books. He was the author of two of the most famous books ever written in America. They are "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" and "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." He was also a riverboat pilot, reporter, businessman and inventor. Twain died on April 21, 1910, in Redding, Connecticut.

## Early Life

Mark Twain wrote grand tales about his fictional characters Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn and their adventures living near the Mississippi River. He wrote with humor, liveliness and honesty. He became the most famous author of his time and is still considered among the best today.

Born with the name Samuel Langhorne Clemens on November 30, 1835, in Florida, Missouri, he didn't use his Mark Twain name until much later. The red-headed boy's parents were John and Jane Clemens. When he was 4 years old, his family moved to Hannibal, Missouri, on the Mississippi River. The town inspired the setting in several of his books.

## **Life In Hannibal**

His father died in 1847, leaving the family very poor. Sam left school when he was 12 years old to go to work. When he was 15, he got a job as a printer, writer and editor.

In 1857, he began learning to pilot, or steer, a steamboat on the Mississippi River. It was an exciting job that paid well. His career ended in 1861 when the Civil War between the North and the South started. He joined the Southern Confederate Army but didn't serve long.

## **Heading West**

In July 1861, he climbed on a stagecoach and went to Nevada and California. At first, he tried to make a living by looking for silver and gold. But by the middle of 1862, he was broke and needed a different job.

That September, he went to work for a newspaper. He wrote under the pen name Mark Twain, which is steamboat slang for 12 feet of water.

Twain became one of the best-known storytellers in the West. His style was friendly and funny. He liked to make fun of people who thought they were important. He got a big break in 1865. A story about life in a mining camp called "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog" was printed in newspapers and magazines around the country.

He was 34 years old and was one of the most popular and famous writers in America.

## **Family And Career**

Twain's greatest wish was to get rich. In 1870, he married Olivia Langdon, the daughter of a wealthy New York coal merchant. The couple settled in Buffalo, New York, and had four children.

"The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" was published in 1876. Soon after, he began writing a follow-up book called "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." "Huck Finn" was finally finished in 1884.

His other books included "The Prince and the Pauper," "Life on the Mississippi" and "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court." He was the first writer in America to use everyday language to create great literature.

Meanwhile, Twain tried his hand at different businesses. They all failed, and he never achieved the wealth he wanted.

## Later Years

Twain's last 15 years were filled with public honors. He was one of the biggest celebrities in the world.

But those years also brought sadness. Three of his children died, and Twain did not get along with the daughter who was his only remaining living child. In 1904, his wife died after a long illness.

Twain became bitter. He could be rude and selfish to friends and family. He continued writing, but did not finish most of his projects. His memory was bad, and he became angry. He spent much of his time smoking cigars, reading in bed and playing pool and cards.

Twain died on April 21, 1910, at his home in Redding, Connecticut. He was 74 years old.

## Answer the following Questions:

1. Based on the information in the article, which of the following statements is TRUE?

- a. Twain used the name of one of the cities where he worked as his pen name.
- b. Twain was happy late in life and enjoyed the company of family and friends.
- c. Twain used the places where he lived as inspiration for his writing.
- d. Twain was able to write and travel a lot because he had wealthy parents.

2. Select the sentence from the section "Heading West" that shows why people thought Twain's writing was funny.

- a. He wrote under the pen name Mark Twain, which is steamboat slang for 12 feet of water.
- b. Twain became one of the best-known storytellers in the West.
- c. He liked to make fun of people who thought they were important.
- d. He got a big break in 1865.

