

Lesson: Communication Arts, Grades 2-3

Topic: Themes



To Tell The Truth...

Introduction

By stepping into the shoes of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, students will decide whether or not they should tell the truth about the murder, or risk their lives at the hands of River Joe.

Learning Outcomes

Ohio Learning Outcomes

Identify stated and implied themes.

National Learning Outcomes

Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g. philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

Materials

- Handout A
- Handout B - Copy of Scene 2 for students to read.

Vocabulary

- Truth
- Integrity

Lesson

Orientation Activity

1. What does Truth mean? Brainstorm a definition with the class. Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn were in a sticky situation in when they had to decide whether or not to tell the truth about who committed the murder. Even though telling the truth is a good virtue, what might have prevented Tom and Huck from being honest?
2. Ask students to share a time when they have told the truth in a sticky situation.

Learning Activity

1. On Handout A, student groups should make a list of the pros and cons of telling the truth in general, as well as specifically for Tom and Huck.
2. Next, groups should make a list of instances when Tom and Huck did indeed tell the truth and instances when they didn't. What made the difference in their decision to tell the truth, or to tell a lie?
3. Ask for volunteers to act out the following scene in the play.

Evaluation and Follow-Up

Assessment Tools and Methods

Ask students:

- How is truth important in this scene?
- Do you think that Tom is lying to the other boys?
- Do you think what Tom does is wrong or is it okay? Why or why not?
- What options did Tom have instead of tricking the boys into painting the fence for him?
- Are there levels to telling the truth?
- What would you have done in this situation?
- Do Tom and Huck have integrity?

Student Product

Students will write a different version of Tom Sawyer in which Tom and Huck do not tell the truth about River Joe and the murder. How would the story be different? Would there be consequences?

Interdisciplinary Connections

Social Studies

Discuss how telling the truth is important in being a good citizen. What role does truth play in our government?

UUUScience

Discuss how truth is important in research. What is the difference between a hypothesis and the truth? Are researchers always truthful in their findings? Why or why not?

To Tell The Truth
Handout A - Group Discussion



Names

<u>Pros of Telling the Truth</u>	<u>Cons of Telling the Truth</u>

List any instance in the story where Tom and Huck told the truth.

When did Tom and Huck tell a lie?

What made the difference in their decision to tell the truth or to lie?

To Tell The Truth **Handout B – Scene 2**



Sid: Hi, Tom. Whatcha' doing?
Tom: Nothin'.
Alfred: Doesn't look like nothing. Looks like work.
Willie: Guess you don't have time to go swimming'.
Alfred: Have fun workin'!

The three boys laugh. Tom stops to think, and turns to them.

Tom: Actually, I wouldn't want to go swimming' today.
Willie: You wouldn't?
Tom: No, I'm having too much fun.
Sid: You are?
Tom: Maybe this is work and maybe it ain't. But I wouldn't trade it for nothin'.
Willie: Really?
Tom: Whitewashin' suits Tom Sawyer just fine. It's not every day you get to whitewash a fence, now is it?
Willie: I reckon not.
Tom: You guys go down to your swimming' hole. I've got better things to do.

Tom resumes painting, humming a happy tune. The boys watch him a few moments.

Willie: Hey, Tom. Don't suppose you'd let me whitewash a little?
Tom: Sorry, Willie. Aunt Polly's awful particular about this fence. It faces the street, don't you know.
Willie: Well, I could do a good job.
Sid: How 'bout I paint a little on the back side?
Alfred: I want a turn too!
Willie: I asked first!
Alfred: I can paint better.
Sid: Well, I can paint better than the both of you!
Willie: Gimme that brush!

The boys start fighting over the paint brush. Tom sneaks away.