

The Debate:

The Essay



Over the course of the last month we've explored the world of Mark Twain's Mississippi river, a complex world full of danger, comedy, and heartache. Of course, rarely do we talk about that. Instead, since its publication in 1885 the novel has been a source of tremendous controversy as a result of its discussion of race.

Based upon your reading of the novel, our additional reading, and our classroom debate, please craft a 400 to 600 word essay in which you explain *your* perspective as it pertains to whether or not to teach this novel in the public school.

A successful essay will not simply repeat the views expressed in our readings, but will also incorporate your own perspectives and interpretations of the text.

As you express your views be sure to respond to one of the following prompts:

1. Is Twain's treatment of Jim fair, or is he little more than a caricature of a southern black man?
2. How does (or does) Huck's perceptions of Jim change over the novel?
3. Analyze the changes between Huck and Jim's relationship on the river and on the land.