

# the acting company

classics for our time

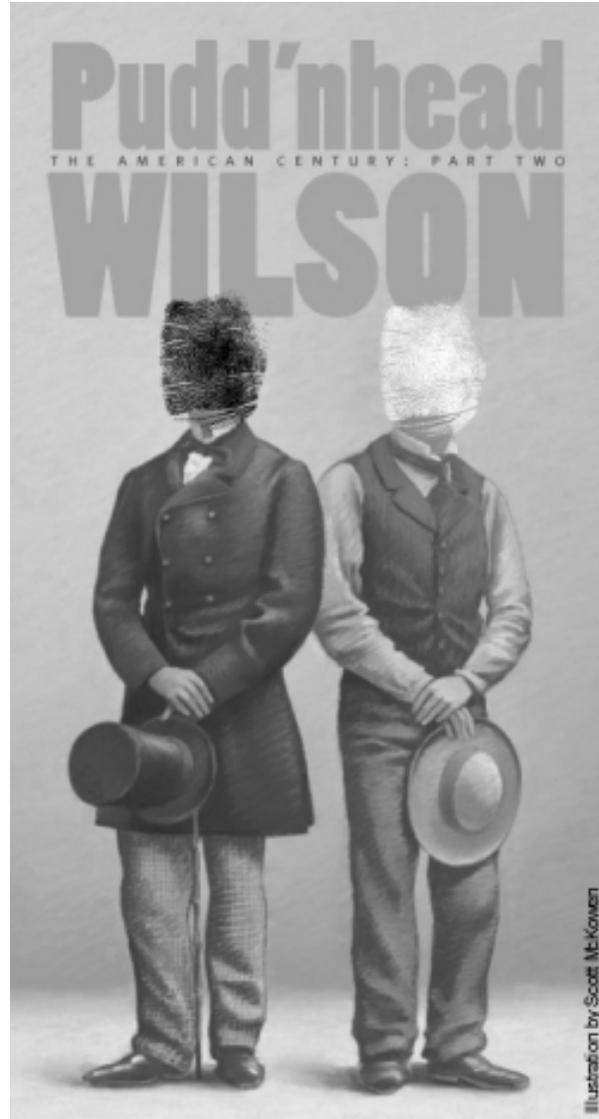
**Margot Harley**  
Co-Founder and Producing Director

## ***Pudd'nhead Wilson***

Adapted by **Charles Smith**  
From the Novel by  
**Mark Twain**

Directed by **Walter Dallas**

Teacher Resource Guide  
by **Paul Michael Fontana**



**It is strongly suggested that students read at least some of  
Mark Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson*  
before seeing the performance if possible.**

# Section 1: Introduction

## A Whisper to the Teacher

Thanks for taking some of your classroom time to work on *Pudd'nhead Wilson*! This play is a powerful exploration of race and identity in America today, set in the 1850's. Although your students will enjoy the play without preparation, the experience can be deepened by some pre- and post-performance classroom work.

The exercises in this guide are intended to help you and your students get the most out of the performance. Please do not feel that you need to do everything in this guide! They provide a wide variety of drama-based teaching techniques that you can use as they are presented or you can adapt for your class or for other pieces of literature. You can experiment with them and add the ones that work for you to your "bag of tricks."

The education programs of The Acting Company are intended to mirror the mission of the company itself: to celebrate language, to deepen creative exploration, to go places where theater isn't always available. We try to use the same skills in our outreach programs that actors use in the preparation of a role. Many of the exercises here are adaptations of rehearsal "games" and techniques.

In addition to the Teacher Resource Guides for our performances, the Education Department provides week-long artist-in-residence experiences called **Literacy Through Theater**, an introductory Shakespeare workshop for young theatergoers called **Bob Hope Student Workshop Series**, Actor-driven **Workshops and Master Classes**, post-performance **Question and Answer Sessions**, teacher training workshops called **Partners in Education**, and a variety of specially-designed outreach programs for high school students, college students, and adults.

If you need more information on any of these programs, please call Stephen Alemán of the Education Department at 212-944-5517 or e-mail him at [saleman@TheActingCompany.org](mailto:saleman@TheActingCompany.org).

We wish to be of service to you and your students. Please contact us if there is anything we can do for you.

Enjoy the Show!

Paul Michael Fontana  
Director of Education  
The Acting Company

## Section 2: Getting to Know Mark Twain

### Overall Objective:

- The students will gain knowledge about novelist Mark Twain and his creation *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.

**There are three infallible ways of pleasing an author, and the three form a rising scale of compliment:**

- **One, to tell him you have read one of his books.**
- **Two, to tell him you have read all of his books.**
- **Three, to ask him to let you read the manuscript of his forthcoming book.**

**Number One admits you to his respect, Number Two admits you to his admiration; Number Three carries you clear into his heart.**

**Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson***

## Biography

### Objective:

- The students will know the facts of the life and career of Mark Twain.

**Mark Twain** was the pseudonym of American humorist, journalist, and author **Samuel Langhorne Clemens** (1835-1910). Clemens is best known for his humorous stories of American frontier life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* are his most famous works, marked, as are his most typical humorous sketches, by strength, high-spirited exaggeration, and native colloquial idiom.

Clemens was born in Hannibal, Missouri and, in his early youth, held a number of odd jobs, working as a printer and as apprentice to a pilot on a steamboat on the Mississippi River. His pseudonym had its origin in this latter job, "mark twain," meaning "two fathoms deep," being a phrase used in determining the depth of the river for the river boats. At the time of the Civil War, he went to Nevada and California, where he met American novelists Artemus Ward and Bret Harte, worked on frontier newspapers, and first attracted attention by his writing. He soon became extremely popular, and was also praised by serious critics of the day. After 1894, when he suffered a financial failure, his work began to show a pessimistic, misanthropic quality. Some critics, notably Van Wyck Brooks in *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*, have attributed this to the frustration of Twain's genuine creative talents by the conservative, Puritanical influence of his wife, Olivia Langdon, and her friends. The author himself directed that some of his works be published only after his death, feeling that they were too pessimistic for the public of his own lifetime.

from Benét's *The Reader's Encyclopedia*

## Biographically-based Writing

### Objective:

- The students will reflect on the autobiographical nature of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.

**Exercise:** Each of us knows many stories. In writing his works, Twain created stories based on people he knew or saw or on plots he had heard. He also wanted to make people think about social issues that were going on in America as he was writing. Which types of stories are the students' favorites? Ask them to choose one story that they have read and write a one-page paper telling why it would make a good play or film. In a discussion after the assignment, ask the class to assess what makes a good story and what makes a good performance piece. What elements from their list are in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*?

**Exercise:** *Pudd'nhead Wilson* is a play about, among other things, life in a small Southern city before the end of slavery. After seeing the play, have your students write (either for homework or as an in-class assignment) a fictional letter, dated 1894, from one townspeople of Hannibal, Missouri to another. In the letter, the townspeople reflects on Twain's depiction of pre-Civil War life in "Dawson's Landing" (AKA Hannibal, MO). Would they think it was a fair assessment of the people in their town in the 1850's?

**Exercise:** In a class discussion, ask the students how authors use incidents, locations, and people from their own lives as subjects for their writing.

**Exercise:** Ask the students to write a short fictionalized description of one adult or one place from their childhood.

## Research: 1855 – life in Missouri

### **Objective:**

- The students will use technology to uncover information about the Missouri of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.

**Exercise:** Divide the class into three teams. Each team will explore one aspect of life in rural Missouri around 1855, the time *Pudd'nhead Wilson* is set. One team will look only at economy, one at immigration, and the last at farming. The teams should focus their research on the myriad Internet sources that deal with the Missouri's history. The research will be presented in an oral presentation, which must include some visual aids. If there is access to technology in the classroom, this assignment may be used as classwork.

## On Censorship / Book Banning

### **Objective:**

- The students will write about censorship.

**Facts:** Mark Twain was outspoken in his condemnation of Banning Books from libraries. His *Huckleberry Finn* was first banned when it was published in 1885. Officials at the Concord Public Library thought it "rough, coarse and inelegant." Several years ago, the Pennsylvania NAACP announced a campaign to remove *Huckleberry Finn* from the state's school reading lists. The irony is that this book, originally criticized for showing slaves in a favorable manner, is now lambasted for its "racist tone."

**Exercise:** After seeing the play *Pudd'nhead Wilson* ask the students to brainstorm a list of people who might want the novel *Pudd'nhead Wilson* banned from a Public Library (e.g.: the KKK). Have each student write a letter in defense of the novel.

NOTE: Every year in September, the American Library Association sponsors Banned Books Week in which they "Celebrate Your Freedom to Read." They have great classroom (and school Library) resources available. Contact them at [www.ala.org/bbooks](http://www.ala.org/bbooks).

**Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear - not absence of fear. Except a creature be part coward it is not a compliment to say it is brave, it is merely a loose misapplication of the word. Consider the flea! - incomparably the bravest of all the creatures of God, if ignorance of fear were courage. Whether you are asleep or awake he will attack you, caring nothing for the fact that in bulk and strength you are to him as are the massed armies of the earth to a sucking child; he lives both day and night and all days and nights in the very lap of peril and the immediate presence of death, and yet is no more afraid than is the man who walks the streets of a city that was threatened by an earthquake ten centuries before. When we speak of Clive, Nelson and Putnam as men who "didn't know what fear was," we ought always to add the flea - and put him at the head of the procession.**

**Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson***

## Section 3: The Story

**Overall Objective:** The students will have an introduction to the world of Mark Twain's novel, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* and the play based upon it by Charles Smith.

### Brainstorm from the Title: Twain's Novel

**Objective:**

- The students will explore the title of Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson*
- The students will make inferences from the title of the novel.

**Facts:** Twain's novel *Pudd'nhead Wilson* was written in 1895, adapted from an earlier unpublished short story of his entitled "Those Extraordinary Twins."

**Exercise:** Have the students brainstorm a list of the types of characters, situations, emotions, themes, locations, and images they think might be included in a play called *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Write the list on newsprint. Post it before seeing *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.

### Discussion: Judging a Book by its Cover

**Objective:**

- The students will discuss their expectations of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* from looking at the words and images on the cover of the novel (or the poster art for the play).
- The students will discuss the choices made by publishers and executives to put the images and words on the cover.

**Exercise:** Bring in several different editions of the novel *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Ask the students to look at the covers.

Ask them to share with the class images on the covers. What function do those images have? Note too the colors on the cover. What do the colors mean and why were they chosen? Do these images help sell this edition?

What words did the publishers choose to put on the cover? In what font is the title of the novel? What other words or phrases are on the cover? Do these words and phrases help sell this edition? Are you more likely to buy a book or magazine based on images or words? Are there images and words on the back cover?

Why did Twain choose this title? Share with the class the titles of the short story that served as the core of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Did he feel the title would help sell copies of the novel? What is a "Pudd'nhead," anyway?

**Post-Performance follow up:** Ask the students to create a poster or book cover for *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. They can cut images out of magazines and newspapers or draw them. What words will they include and why?

**A Classic: A book which people praise and don't read.**

**Mark Twain**

## Basic Plot Synopsis

### **Synopsis of the play *Pudd'nhead Wilson* by Charles Smith**

*Pudd'nhead Wilson* is the pre-Civil War story of the two sons of Judge Driscoll, the chief citizen of Dawson's Landing, Missouri. One of those sons - Tom - is his legal heir and the child of his wife. The other, Chambers, is his child by his house slave, Roxy. After the Judge's wife dies, Roxy is left in charge of both infant children, who are close enough in features and coloring to be twins. When Roxy is threatened with being sold "down the river" and away from her son, she decides to switch the babies in their cradles.

The two boys grow up with each other's identities – the slave Chambers as the rich ne'er-do-well Tom Driscoll, and the real heir, Tom, as the slave Chambers. Roxy reveals the switch to her son, the usurping Tom, who reacts with disbelief, but later begins to question all aspects of his personality and identity.

The arrival of flamboyant Italian twins wakes the town's prejudices and hypocrisies. When crimes begin to occur, including a violent murder, the lawyer David "Pudd'nhead" Wilson uses his deductive skills to investigate them. His investigations, and his interest in the new science of fingerprinting, lead to the courtroom revelation of Roxy's switch. The townspeople feel that justice has been served, but can there be justice in a society where slavery exists?

## Mapping: Missouri

### **Objectives**

- The students will examine a map of the Southern United States
- The students will explore choices made by an author

**Exercise:** Is Dawson's Landing, Missouri a real place or a fictional one? How about St. Louis, Missouri? Buffalo, New York? Help the students to locate these cities on a modern map of United States. Point out Hannibal, Missouri, where Twain grew up. Twain was very familiar with life in the river towns of Missouri. Through the descriptions in the novel, he paints a vivid picture of the growing city where the story takes place?

Brainstorm with the students, from the synopsis above, if Twain could have set the story in another location. Could this story be set in Afghanistan? How about the outback of Australia? Could it be set in a big city?

**Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn't.**

**Mark Twain**

## The Characters in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

### **Objective**

- The students will be familiar with the characters in the play.
- The students will make assumptions about characters based on their names.

Please copy the following page for the class – another copy is found in the reproducibles section of this guide.

**Exercise:** Approaching it as if we have never heard anything about these characters, discuss what each of the names makes us feel about them. What consonants are featured in their names? What vowels? Ask the students to play with ways of saying the names. Is it helpful to know the national heritage of each character?

**“If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principle difference between a dog and a man.”**

**Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson***

## Characters in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Character Name: PUDD'NHEAD WILSON	Played by a: White male
NANCY	African-American female
JUDGE PERCY DRISCOLL	White male
JUDGE HOWARD	White male
TOM	African-American male in his 20's
CHAMBERS	White male in his 20's
CECIL	White male
LUIGI	African-American male
ANGELO	White male
ROXY	African-American female
ROWENA	White female
JIM	African-American male
JOE	African-American male
LOU	White male
MAN ONE	White male
MAN TWO	White male
MAN THREE	White male

# Themes

## Objective:

- The students will look for an underlying theme in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*
- The students will discuss themes in literature

**Exercise:** A careful study of some individual lines from the play may spark a discussion of some themes that might occur in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. The following lines from the play may be presented to the class before attending the performance.

As a writing assignment, you may ask each student to choose a line from the list and compose a short essay in response to it.

### Selected Quotes from *Pudd'nhead Wilson* by Charles Smith

1. I am a ghost. A spirit sent from the past who has returned to make your life a living hell.
2. There's a huge difference between fathering and being a father.
3. A man's own hand keeping a record of the deepest and fatalist secrets of his life.
4. You may be looking at them but you don't actually see them. All you can see is what you think they are.
5. It's like a bag of gold that's turned to dirt and ashes before my very eyes.
6. En does you know anything that a mother won't do for her chile.
7. The blood running through these veins is centuries old.
8. Dat fire gonna stay right whar it belong jes as long as we stay whar we belong.
9. You belong to him jes like that dollar belong to him. So, if you pick up dat dollar en put it in yo pocket, what he done lost?
10. The only law you can count on is the law of chance and the law of fortune.
11. You know, I wish I owned half that dog.
12. You can set me free... you can make me rich... but you can't make me white.
13. If he ain't a pudd'nhead, then I ain't no judge.
14. There's no such thing as justice.
15. I've gone over every ridge, loop, and spiral of every hand and fingerprint.
16. And now, when you look at me, what do you see? A slave? A prince?
17. You're willing to be sold into slavery to save me?

As the students see The Acting Company's production of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, ask them to find deeper meaning in the play. What are some of the themes that the students see in the play? Can a piece of art or literature have different meanings to different observers?

You may wish to go back to the selected lines above and review them with the class after seeing the performance. They also may help you assess the student memory of seeing the play.

**Key to quotes:**

1. Tom, 2. Driscoll, 3. Tom, 4. Howard, 5. Tom, 6. Roxy, 7. Tom, 8. Nancy, 9. Roxy, 10. Luigi, 11. Wilson, 12. Chambers, 13. Man One, 14. Tom, 15. Wilson, 16. Luigi, 17. Tom

**In the first place, God made idiots. This was for practice. Then He made School Boards.**

**Mark Twain**

## Text Analysis: A Stolen Life

**Objective:**

- The students will interpret a passage from *Pudd'nhead Wilson*
- The students will explore the concept of freedom

**Facts:** One of the most stirring passages in the play *Pudd'nhead Wilson* is spoken by the slave Roxy. She reflects on the injustice of slavery as an institution that allows a person's life to be stolen away from him.

**Exercise:** Have the students, working in pairs, examine and interpret the following passage. What is the tone of the speech? Is it addressed to another character or is it a soliloquy? What is the speaker doing as she speaks? Is the speaker still or in motion? What choices might the actor and director make based on the text?

**ROXY**

Dey ain't gwine hardly miss tree hundred dollars werth of gold and jewels. En what's wrong with dat? Ain't de white folks done stole from us all our lives? Ain't dey stole my labor, werkin' me from can to can't without paying me a howyado or thank you? Ain't dey stole our chullins, rippin' babes frum dere muther's tits and selling dem babies like ya sell a cow or a chicken? Dey stole frum me everything Ah had to steal, en heah Ah is now, broke down and can't werk, alls Ah's axing fur is a lil money to buy some food en ta keep a place to roos' dat ain't haunted. If you gots to steal frum de white folks what stole frum us to give me dat, Ah don't ker. You unnerstand me?

Charles Smith, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

After seeing the play, discuss with the students how Director Walter Dallas and actor Roslyn Ruff staged the speech.

## Tableaux: Exploration of the Text

**Objective:**

- The students will do a close reading of a passage in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.
- The students will create a movement piece based on a text from the novel.
- The students will identify elements of the theatrical performance that helped create the world of the play.

**Exercise:** In the play *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, many of the ideas in the text are illustrated through staging. Ask the students, in 8 small groups, to create 3 images to go along with one of the numbered lines of the passage from the novel *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Give them two minutes to come up with a set of tableaux (frozen images) to illustrate their quote. When everyone has completed the process, read (or have a volunteer read) the entire piece and have the students show their tableaux as their verse is read.

The scene of this chronicle is the town of Dawson's Landing, on the Missouri side of the Mississippi, half a day's journey, per steamboat, below St. Louis.

1. In 1830 it was a snug collection of modest one- and two- story frame dwellings, whose whitewashed exteriors were almost concealed from sight by climbing tangles of rose vines, honeysuckles, and morning glories.
2. Each of these pretty homes had a garden in front, fenced with white palings and opulently stocked with hollyhocks, marigolds, touch-me-nots, prince's-feathers, and other old-fashioned flowers.
3. When there was room on the ledge outside of the flowerpots and flower-boxes for a cat, the cat was there -- in sunny weather -- stretched at full length, asleep and blissful, with her furry belly to the sun and a paw curved over her nose.
4. Then that house was complete, and its contentment and peace were made manifest to the world by this symbol, whose testimony is infallible.
5. The town's front was washed by the clear waters of the great river. Steamboats passed up and down every hour or so.
6. Dawson's Landing was a slaveholding town, with a rich, slave-worked grain and pork country back of it.
7. The town was sleepy and comfortable and contented.
8. It was fifty years old, and was growing slowly – very slowly, in fact, but still it was growing.

Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

After seeing the performance, ask the students to identify theatrical elements that created the atmosphere described in the passage above. Was it established through dialogue? The set? The actions of the cast?

## Descriptions

### **Objective:**

- The students will do a close reading of a description from *Pudd'nhead Wilson*
- The students will create a scene or tableau based on a description
- The students will analyze how the actors use other characters' descriptions in making choices about a character

Every now and then, after Tom went to bed, he had sudden wakings out of his sleep, and his first thought was, "Oh, joy, it was all a dream!" Then he laid himself heavily down again, with a groan and the muttered words, "A nigger! I am a nigger! Oh, I wish I was dead!"

Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Set down, you lil snot-nosed pup. Does you think you kin skyer me? It ain't in you, nor de likes of you. Ah reckon you'd shoot me in de back, maybe, if you got a chance, for dat's jist yo' style. See? Ah knows you, throo en throo. Oh, bless yo' soul, if you puts yo' mother up for as big a fool as you is, you's pow'ful mistaken, Ah kin tell you! Ah said set down!

Roxy, Charles Smith, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

When he [Tom] got to be old enough to begin to toddle about and say broken words and get an idea of what his hands were for, he was a more consummate pest than ever. Roxy got no rest while he was awake. He would call for anything and everything he saw, simply saying, "Awnt it!" (want it), which was a command. When it was brought, he said in a frenzy, and motioning it away with his hands, "Don't awnt it! don't awnt it!" and the moment it was gone he set up frantic yells of "Awnt it! awnt it!" and Roxy had to give wings to her heels to get that thing back to him again before he could get time to carry out his intention of going into convulsions about it.

Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

It was like I was wrestling with a demon, Mammy. And that demon was all the bad things in me, all of my bad thoughts, that demon gave me a capacity for cruelty. And I never understood it before, I never understood where it came from. But now I do, Mammy, now I understand. It's my inheritance, Mammy. It's what my father has passed onto me. My daddy was a slave owner as was his daddy and his daddy and his daddy before him. The white blood in my veins has been debased by five generations of slave owning. That's five generations of brutality. Five generations of cruelty, of irresponsible power and abuse. All of it, poured all into me, into my veins. And I tried to fight against it, Mammy. I did everything I could.

Tom Driscoll, Charles Smith, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

**Exercise:** Ask the students to read descriptions of Tom from the play and the novel *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Divide the class into four groups. Assign each group one of the descriptions. Each group will dramatize their description. The dramatization may be in a series of tableaux, a single tableau, a silent scene, or another theatrical form. Allow 20 minutes for the groups to rehearse their dramatization. Provide dictionaries for the groups who may need to look up words. Give a "one minute" warning and ask them to do a "final dress rehearsal" before they have to present the piece to the other groups.

If a description comes from an unreliable speaker, the audience can draw conclusions about the speaker, the person or thing described, and the relationship between them. In *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Twain writes from an omniscient point of view. Sometimes authors write from the point of view of a

single character, whose understanding of the world is based on their specific experience of emotional state.

Actors in a play must use descriptions by other characters to help create the character they are playing. Jimonn Cole, who plays Tom, used these descriptions in making choices about his character. He also took into account that the speakers may be exaggerating, lying, confused, or otherwise wrong about their character.

## Writing: Journal Entry

### **Objective:**

- The students will do a close reading of a passage from *Pudd'nhead Wilson*
- The students will write, as the character Angelo, an entry from his journal

**Exercise:** In *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Count Angelo tells the people of Dawson's Landing about the twists of fortune that took him and his twin brother Luigi from being Italian nobility to performing as members of a traveling sideshow in Germany. Using his description below, ask the students to write, for homework, a short diary entry from Angelo's journal explaining his reactions to and a fuller description of one of these experiences. Remind them that Angelo and Luigi were just boys when these events took place.

"Our parents were well to do, there in Italy, and we were their only child. We were of the old Florentine nobility and when the war broke out, my father was on the losing side and had to fly for his life."

"Our father survived his misfortunes only a month, our mother soon followed him, and we were alone in the world. My brother and I were ten years old, and well educated for that age, very studious, very fond of our books.... Also, we were marvelous musical prodigies – if you will allow me to say it, it being only the truth."

"Our parents could have made themselves comfortable by exhibiting us as a show, and they had many and large offers; but the thought revolted their pride, and they said they would starve and die first. But what they wouldn't consent to do, we had to do without the formality of consent. We were seized for the debts occasioned by their illness and their funerals, and placed among the attractions of a cheap museum in Berlin to earn the liquidation money. It took us two years to get out of that slavery. We traveled all about Germany, receiving no wages, and not even our keep. We had to be exhibited for nothing, and beg our bread.

When we escaped from that slavery at twelve years of age, we were in some respects men. Experience had taught us some valuable things; among others, how to take care of ourselves."

*Angelo Cappello, Mark Twain, Pudd'nhead Wilson*

**Exercise:** You may wish to have students write (or improvise in pairs) a dialogue based on Angelo and Luigi's experiences.

## Section 3: Our History

### Overall Objective:

- The students will unravel some of the historical elements of the play and relate them to their own experiences.

**NOTE:** Some of the inspiration for this section came from the outstanding *Facing History and Ourselves* website: [www.facinghistory.org](http://www.facinghistory.org)

## Our History of Slavery

### Objective:

- The students will discuss the idea that one is responsible for the sins of one's predecessors.
- The students will write a dialogue about the history of slavery in America.

**FACTS:** In 1997, U.S. Representative Tony Hall suggested that the United States apologize for slavery. President Clinton expressed interest in the idea. In The New York Times, Brent Staples discussed the controversy that followed:

Bill Clinton has earned a boatload of scorn since suggesting that he might apologize for slavery, as some in Congress have suggested. Critics from both left and right argue that such an apology would be trivializing, empty, arrogant and racially divisive. The dominant view, is ... that there is essentially nothing to discuss since the Civil War closed the issue and the slavers and enslaved are long since dead. But all the noise suggests that the issue is very much alive.

**Exercise:** Ask the students to define the word sin? Are we responsible for the sins of our ancestors? To what extent are we accountable for those sins? To what extent are nations responsible for misdeeds that took place long ago? Should the nation apologize for slavery? What purpose would the apology serve? To what extent would it lead to healing? Or are there acts that are unforgivable? If so, how do we individually and collectively come to terms with those acts, the damage they have done, and our part in that damage?

**Exercise:** After the discussion, ask the students to each create a dialogue between two advisors to President Clinton, one for apologizing, the other against. Each advisor must give three reasons to back up his position.

**The very ink with which all history is written is merely fluid prejudice.**

**Mark Twain**

## Ownership

### Objective:

- The students will identify times in their lives when they have felt owned and when they have felt free.

**Exercise:** In slavery, as presented in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, two people enter into an understanding that one is the owner and the other is the master. How that

understanding is reached is another issue. Sometimes, people today still feel like they do not belong to themselves, especially young people. In a classroom discussion, ask the students to think of times when they have felt they had ownership of themselves and times when they felt owned. The “owner” might be a parent, a teacher, a boyfriend/girlfriend, or a little annoying sibling.

Ask them to relate the feeling of being owned, not just the circumstances. Toward the end of the discussion, try to make a connection with the feeling of *literally* being owned that the American slaves of the pre-Civil War era.

## Slave Narratives

### **Objective:**

- The students will read primary source material, an oral history.
- The students will write a short essay as a response.

"Fact is, I don't really know my right age, but I was born in slavery times, and I was big enough to work when freedom come. I come from Paris, Tennessee, where I was born and lived in the home of Benjamin Brown and he's wife Grace."

"Master Brown owned my mother and lots of slaves, but when the war broke out, and they all thought they would lose all their slaves when freedom came, why, they done just packed them off down to Mississippi and sold them. Some of the slaves got away to war before they could get a chance to sell them."

"I remember my mother saying she ain't never going to see me again, and she didn't."

1941 interview with Virginia Washington, Ex-Slave, Age estimated at 90.

**Exercise:** Read the passage from the Virginia Washington oral history to the class. Ask each student to write a personal response to it. The students may write about their feelings about the story if they choose. How does it relate to being owned as discussed above?

**NOTE:** A great resource for primary source material on slavery is the Library of Congress. During the depression, the WPA sent interviewers to take oral histories of former slaves, like the one above. The transcripts of those oral histories are easily found at the Library of Congress website: [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)

## Our History of Racism

### **Objective:**

- The students will read a poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar.
- The students will relate it to race in Twain's time and in our own time.

**Exercise:** Read the poem to the students, or ask a capable student to read it. Discuss hiding behind a “mask,” the survival mechanism being used in the poem. Did African-Americans hide behind a mask in the time in which the story *Pudd'nhead Wilson* takes place? Did they in Dunbar's (a contemporary of Twain)

time? Do some African-Americans still feel they need to hide their race behind a “mask?” What were the masks used in slave times? What are the masks now? Are there other groups who hide behind masks today? What are they hiding from?

### **We Wear the Mask**

We wear the mask that grins and lies,  
It hides our cheek and shades our eyes.  
This debt we pay to human guile  
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,  
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should that world be otherwise,  
In counting all our tears and sighs?

Nay, let them only see us, while  
We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries  
To Thee from tortured souls arise.  
We sing, but oh, the clay is vile  
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;  
But let the world dream otherwise,  
We wear the mask.

Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)

**Exercise:** You may wish to ask your students to write poems, perhaps mirroring Dunbar’s, in which they discuss the masks they and their contemporaries wear.

**There is no character, however good and fine, but it can be destroyed by ridicule.**  
**Mark Twain, *Pudd’nhead Wilson***

**NOTE:** The *Educators for Social Responsibility* website has ideas for countering racism and oppression. They recently added ideas for dealing with bias against Arab American, Muslim and South Asian Students. Their site is full of suggestions and lesson plans for creating a socially responsible classroom. Their site is [www.esrmetro.org](http://www.esrmetro.org).

Also, *The National Campaign Against Youth Violence* website has information for dealing with youth violence on a school and community basis. They can be found at [www.noviolence.net](http://www.noviolence.net)

## Section 4: Two Words that Wound

### Overall Objective:

- The students will develop a better understanding of pejorative language so they can avoid using it themselves
- The students will recognize that words have both denotative and connotative meanings

NOTE: The play Pudd'nhead Wilson like the novel that is its source, makes free use of the word "nigger." Teachers should prepare their students in whatever way they see fit.

## Nigger

### Objective:

- The students will explore the power of words like "nigger."
- The students will recognize that words have both denotative and connotative meanings.

**Exercise:** In a careful discussion with the students, bring up the word "nigger." Is it a "bad" word? Is it a powerful word? What does it mean? Are there several connotations to the word? Is it an insult? Is it ever a term of endearment? Does it depend on who is saying it? Does it matter to whom it is said? You may want to share this article with your students.

The 1997 edition of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary aroused much controversy when, in the opinion of some African-American activists, it made "nigger" the equivalent of black person. The 1997 Merriam-Webster defines the word "nigger" as "a black person -- usually taken to be offensive." After the definition, the dictionary describes the word as "perhaps the most offensive and inflammatory racial slur in English." The definition upset Kathryn Williams, Curator of the Museum of Afrikan American History in Flint, MI.

Thanks to the efforts of Williams and others, a task force of "experts" was assembled by Merriam-Webster to review definitions of "nigger" and other offensive words. They recommended a revision of 190 definitions. The dictionary "opted to more strongly emphasize the offensive nature of those words" by placing a notation next to the definitions indicating that they are regarded as slurs.

The company refused to completely change the definition "because it's part of our lingo," Williams said. "Our children use it, the rappers use it ... black people use it more than anyone."

from HYPE, an e-zine monitoring the black image in the media  
[www.afrikan.net/hype](http://www.afrikan.net/hype)

**NOTE:** Gloria Naylor's essay "Mommy, What Does 'Nigger' Mean?" explains the various contexts African-Americans have for using "nigger." You might want to share it with your students.

## Pudd'nhead

### **Objective:**

- The students will use a word using several different intentions.
- The students will read a passage from the novel *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.

Exercise: Write the word "pudd'nhead" on the board. Ask the students get into groups of two and have each pair stand facing one another. Explain that the word on the board is a neutral word and that they are going to supply it with emotional intention. Have the partners say the word to one another, neutrally, without emotion.

Feed them, one by one, with intentions for the word "pudd'nhead", and ask them to say it to their partner using the suggested intention. Here are some:

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| A term of affection for a baby | The name of the killer in a horror film |
| The name of a superhero        | A formal title                          |
| A grave insult                 | An inside joke between friends          |
| A pet name                     | A compliment for a pudding chef         |
| A tease for little kids        | An ethnic slur                          |
- Are there other intentions you/they might think of?

Debrief the experience with the students.

**Exercise:** Read the passage below to your students.

He had just made the acquaintance of a group of citizens when an invisible dog began to yelp and snarl and howl and make himself very comprehensively disagreeable, whereupon young Wilson said, much as one who is thinking aloud:

"I wish I owned half of that dog."

"Why?" somebody asked.

"Because I would kill my half."

The group searched his face with curiosity, with anxiety even, but found no light there, no expression that they could read. They fell away from him as from something uncanny, and went into privacy to discuss him.

One said: "Pears to be a fool."

"Pears?" said another. "Is, I reckon you better say."

"Said he wished he owned half of the dog, the idiot," said a third. "What did he reckon would become of the other half if he killed his half? Do you reckon he thought it would live?"

"Why, he must have thought it, unless he IS the downrightest fool in the world; because if he hadn't thought it, he would have wanted to own the whole dog, knowing that if he killed his half and the other half died, he would be responsible for that half just the same as if he had killed that half instead of his own. Don't it look that way to you, gents?"

"Yes, it does. If he owned one half of the general dog, it would be so; if he owned one end of the dog and another person owned the other end, it would be so, just the same; particularly in the first case, because if you kill one half of a general dog, there ain't any man that can tell whose half it was; but if he owned one end of the dog, maybe he could kill his end of it and--"

"No, he couldn't either; he couldn't and not be responsible if the other end died, which it would. In my opinion that man ain't in his right mind.

"In my opinion he hain't got any mind."

No. 3 said: "Well, he's a lummoX, anyway."

That's what he is," said No. 4. "He's a labrick--just a Simon-pure labrick, if there was one."

"Yes, sir, he's a dam fool. That's the way I put him up," said No. 5. "Anybody can think different that wants to, but those are my sentiments."

"I'm with you, gentlemen," said No. 6. "Perfect jackass--yes, and it ain't going too far to say he is a pudd'nhead. If he ain't a pudd'nhead, I ain't no judge, that's all."

Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

When you have finished, ask them to discuss whether the name "pudd'nhead" was justified. Was Wilson's comment about owning "half that dog" a wise or foolish thing to say? Why did the townspeople think it was foolish? Ask them, "Are there times when people just don't 'get' you?"

## Section 5: Identity

### Overall Objective:

- The students will explore issues of identity
- The students will analyze the difference between inner truth and public perception

## Mirror and Window

### Overall Objective:

- The students will explore the inward and external life of a character.
- The students will use a graphic organizer to look at a piece of literature.

**Exercise:** After seeing the performance of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, ask the students to identify aspects of the character of Tom that he saw in himself and aspects that others saw in him. Choose one moment of the play, perhaps when he found out that Roxy was his mother. Using the mirror and window reproducible on page 39 of this guide, ask the students to fill in the Tom he sees in the mirror frame, and the Tom others see in the window frame. The mirror can be used for Tom's first-person reflection, self-analysis, and self-evaluation. The window is for external, third-person images of the character. Share responses verbally, or by posting them in the classroom.

**Man is the Only Animal that Blushes. Or needs to.**

**Mark Twain**

## Virginia Reel: Your Family, Your Self

### Objective:

- The students will answer questions about themselves and their family
- The students will draw conclusions about family identity and individual identity

**Exercise:** In the play, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, there is a lot of emphasis placed on heredity. Tom Driscoll claims that he is "a Driscoll, descendant of a long line of Driscolls." Both he and Chambers speak of Roxy as "the only Mammy I've ever known." To explore the relationship between family and identity, ask the students to form two parallel lines, facing one another, each person across from a partner. This exercise is patterned after a southern dance called the "Virginia Reel." You are going to ask a series of questions. After each question, one line will move one person to its right and the other line will stay stationary. If there is an uneven number, just put the extra person in the line that moves. After each question is asked, the students should answer it quickly and honestly to their partner. Here are some questions. You may wish to develop specific questions based on your student population.

### Some questions:

Where were you born?

Where were your grandparents born?

To what ethnic or cultural group do you feel you belong? (Are you Irish? Serb?)

What is your favorite food to eat at home?  
Do you have any special holiday customs that come from your cultural heritage?  
What is the origin of your last name?  
Would you be the same person if you grew up and lived in France?  
Would you be the same person if your family moved here from France?  
Have you lived in other cities/towns?  
What is the farthest you have traveled from here?  
How does your cultural heritage help you?  
How does your cultural heritage hinder you?  
Is your family religious?  
Are you religious?  
Would you be the same religion if you had a different family?  
Do you eat any special foods that come from your cultural heritage?  
Does your family heritage have any impact on who you are?

## Bio-Poem: Others' Identity

### **Objective:**

- The students will write a bio-poem about another person.
- The students will analyze the differences in perception that people have about one another.

**Exercise:** Choose a picture of an interesting individual from a magazine or newspaper. Cut it out, removing as much text as possible. Pass it around, be sure all the students have seen it. Ask them to imagine who the person is. Give plenty of time before passing out the bio-poem form found on page 42 of this guide.

When the writing is complete, ask volunteers to share their poetry. When a few people have read theirs, compare the differences and similarities in their perception of the person in the picture.

**Let us endeavor so to live that when we come to die even the undertaker will be sorry.**

**Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson***

## Section 6: The Theater

**Overall Objective:** The students will have a stronger understanding of the art of the Theatre.

**Let us not be too particular. It is better to have old second-hand diamonds than none at all.**

**Mark Twain**

### Brainstorm: Creating a Theatrical Production

**Objective:**

- The students will identify careers in the theater.
- The students will know the collaborative nature of theater.

**Exercise:** Ask the students to name some of the people who work to put a theatrical production like *Pudd'nhead Wilson* on stage. Write their answers on the board. As the brainstorm continues, present information about the various professions.

**Producer or Producing Organization**

The producers raise the money needed to produce the play - the money allows the Creative Team to build its vision of the play. Producers oversee all aspects of the production and make sure that the play sticks to their artistic standards. They often put together the package of Script, Director, Designers, and Cast. **The Acting Company** is a not-for-profit organization, which means that money to produce the plays comes from fund-raising through grants and donations rather than from investors.

**The Playwright**

A "wright" is a type of artisan who makes things that people can use. A wheelwright makes wheels. A playwright makes plays. Plays are of use to other artists - Actors, Directors, Designers - who use the script to make their own artistic statement.

Mark Twain wrote the novel *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Charles Smith created a new piece of art based on that novel when he wrote the play.

**The Composer**

In *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, there is instrumental and vocal music. The music serves the story. Some of the music is traditional and some was composed specifically for this production. The composer works with the playwright to create music to enhance the play by helping to create the mood and to further the plot.

**The Director**

After reading the playwright's script, the director decides on an overall vision for the production. The director meets with the Creative Team to assemble a unified look for the sets, costumes, lighting, and other elements. The director oversees the actors in rehearsal, often with the help of Assistant Directors and Stage Managers.

### **The Actor**

The Cast is the group of men, women, and children who perform the play. Many people call all the performers “actors” (instead of “actors” and “actresses”), since this is the professional term that applies to people of both genders. The members of the cast may be seasoned actors or new to the stage. They may have trained at different theater schools that teach acting in various ways. They draw on their own experiences and understanding of life to create believable characters.

Actors usually audition for the parts they play. This means that they had to work on the part and read, sing, or dance for the director and producers before they were given the role. All of the actors had to memorize their lines and attend many rehearsals, including some with costumes and props, before opening night.

### **The Voice and Dialect Coach**

The dialects of the various southern communities in *Puddinhead Wilson* are very complex. Often a Voice Coach acts as an advisor to the actors and director on the play. She is an expert on the text, the meanings and nuances of the words, and their pronunciation. She can assist the actors with the verse. She is an expert in the period language of the script and helps the actors approach the text from a unified angle.

### **The Costume Designer**

Costumes in a play must help the actors as they create the characters. The costumes should not restrict the movement of the performers. The costume designer and her staff work within the vision of the director for each character. They choose colors and styles to help the audience better understand the characters. They do historical research to make the time period of the play come to life.

### **The Set Designer and Lighting Designer**

The play needs an environment in which to take place. The set can be a literal world, with many objects (“props”) and lots of furniture. It can be a suggestion of reality with minimal actual components. The lights add to the environment of the play and enhance the mood that the other designers, the actors, the playwright, the composer, and the director have created. For The Acting Company productions, the set must be easy to assemble and disassemble and must be portable. The lighting design must be able to be recreated in each venue.

### **The Staff and The Crew**

The theatre staff - house manager, ushers, box office people, and others - assist the audience in many ways and support each performance. Backstage the Stage Managers and the running crew run the lighting equipment, move the scenery, and make sure the technical aspects of the performance are perfect. In the office, Marketing people work to make sure people know about the performances and the Development staff makes sure the producers have money to put on the play.

# Costumes from the 1850's

## Objective:

- The students will evaluate the use of period's styles in **The Acting Company's** production of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

**Exercise:** After the performance, discuss the costumes in the show with the students. Did the 1850's styles enhance *Pudd'nhead Wilson*? Which character had the most interesting costume? Who had the best shoes? Did each group have a unique clothing style? How did costumes help the audience differentiate between two characters played by the same actor? Could the play have been performed in modern dress? Would that have changed the play? Were there any characters whose costumes mirrored modern styles?

# Casting

## Objective:

- The students will create a cast list for a movie of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Charles Smith, the playwright of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, has chosen to have Tom and Chambers played by actors of different races, although the novel describes them both as white-looking and fair haired. The characters on stage see them both as Caucasians, but the audience sees one as African-American and one as White. In the novel Roxy, too, is Caucasian-looking, but she is played by an African-American actress in the play.

**Exercise:** Ask the students, "If you were casting a movie of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, what stars would you get to be in it?" Ask each to work independently and cast Roxy, Tom, and Chambers. Are there any actual sets of brothers that might be appropriate? Remind them that most of the characters age almost 20 years as the story of the play unfolds.

**Discussion:** Should these three characters be played by white-looking actors? What could the playwright be trying to say about race by having them cast as described above?

# Types of Theater Buildings

## Objective:

- The students will be able to identify different types of theatres.
- The students will weigh the benefits of each type of performance space.

**Discussion:** In which types of theaters have the students seen plays, concerts, or other live performances? In what type of theatre was **The Acting Company's** production of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* performed? What might be the benefits of each type of performance space? What might be the drawbacks of each?

## Facts:

Three different types of performance space are most common in the theatre:

- **The Proscenium Stage** is the most common. The play is performed within a

frame. The frame is called a proscenium arch; the audience looks through this frame as if the performance was a picture.

- **The Thrust Stage** extends into the audience. Spectators sit on three sides.
- **Theatre-in-the-Round** has the audience sitting all around the stage. The action takes place on a platform in the center of the room. Another name for a Theatre-in-the-Round is an Arena Stage because it is similar to a sports arena.

## Word Power: Roxy's Reflection

### Objectives:

- The students will do a close reading of a speech from *Pudd'nhead Wilson*
- The students will evaluate the individual words in the speech
- The students will create a rhythmic version of the speech

**Exercise:** Provide each student with the passage from the play *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Ask 11 students to each take one of the lines. Standing in a circle, closed against the rest of the class, ask them to read their lines in order. They should do it a second time, faster. Now, ask them to choose one word from their line that they feel is most important. It's all right for two people end up with the same word – line 1 and line 6 may both choose “winter.” The third read-through should be just the words deemed most important in each line. A fourth time should be the same only faster.

1. We gwine jump in de river, wade on over to de udder side, den troubles o' dis worl' is all over.
2. Dey don't sell po' niggers down de river over yonder.
3. Ah'm gwine dress you up real nice.
4. Ah'm gwine put you in Marster Tom's shirt so dat when de angels in heaven see you, dey gwine admire you jes' as much as all de other angels in heaven.
5. Why de Lord makes dings de way dey is?
6. Why he give one baby nothing and de other baby everything?
7. An ought's an ought, a figure's a figure, all fer the white man, none fer the nigger.
8. Dat's what I always say.
9. Pretty as you is, nobody be able to tell you apart.
10. Now who would b'lieve clo'es could do de like o' dat?
11. Dog my cats if it ain't all Ah kin do to tell t' other fum which

Roxy, Charles Smith, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Finally, they can do it once, in a line facing the other students. In a discussion following the exercise, both the 11 participants and the other students can talk about the passage and the exercise.

## Why Theater?

### Objective:

- The students will explore the importance of theater.

**Exercise:** Give each student a copy of the following quote from George Cram Cook (1873 –1924), founder of New York’s Provincetown Playhouse (artistic home of Eugene O’Neill). Ask each student to identify the two reasons Cook gives for the importance of theater, especially in time of crisis. Are they important and relevant today? Are there other reasons?

Ask the students to write a paragraph or two, based on the passage, in which they explore the importance of Theater (or the Arts in general) in post-September 11 America. Have volunteers share them with the class.

After seeing the performance, ask the students which reason (as a means of escape or as a gateway for imagination) does *Pudd’nhead Wilson* provide? Or does it do something else? Can theater provide different things for different people? Can it provide many things for an individual?

Still trembling from the World Trade Center disaster, we found the following 1918 quote to be relevant, moving, and insightful 83 years later.

“Seven of the Provincetown Players are in the army or working for it in France and more are going. Not lightheartedly now, when civilization itself is threatened with destruction, we who remain have determined to go on next season with the work of our little theatre. It is often said that theatrical entertainment in general is socially justified in this dark time as a means of **relaxing the strain of reality**, and thus helping to keep us sane. This may be true, but if more were not true - if we felt no deeper value in dramatic art than entertainment, we would hardly have the heart for it now. One faculty, we know, is going to be of vast importance to the half-destroyed world - indispensable for its rebuilding - the faculty of creative imagination. That spark of it, which has given this group of ours such life and meaning as we have, is not so insignificant that we should now let it die. The social justification, which we feel to be valid now for makers and players of plays, is that they shall help **keep alive in the world the light of imagination**. Without it, the wreck of the world that was cannot be cleared away and the new world shaped.”

George Cram Cook, founder of New York’s Provincetown Playhouse, 1918

# Theatre Etiquette

Objective:

- The students will know standard rules of behavior in the theatre.

Note: This exercise is intended to be used before seeing *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.

To make the theatre-going experience more enjoyable for everyone, a code of behavior has been established. When attending theatrical performances, remember these simple rules of conduct.

- ❖ Be on time for the performance.
- ❖ Eat and drink only in the theatre lobby.
- ❖ Turn off all cellular phones and pagers.
- ❖ Talk before and after the performance or during the intermissions only. Remember that the people near you and on stage can hear you.
- ❖ Appropriate responses to the performances, such as laughing and applauding, are appreciated.
- ❖ Act with maturity during romantic scenes.
- ❖ Keep your feet off chairs around you.
- ❖ Personal hygiene (e.g., combing hair, applying make-up, etc.) should be attended to in the restrooms.
- ❖ Once you are seated and the play has begun, stay in your seat. If you see empty seats ahead of you, ask the usher during the intermission if you can move to them.
- ❖ Never leave before the curtain call. After the final curtain, relax and take your time leaving.
- ❖ Open your eyes, ears, and mind to the entire theatrical experience!

## Prepare for Q & A Session

### Objective:

- The students will create questions for the post-performance Q & A session

**Exercise:** To make the post-performance Question and Answer session more beneficial to everyone, the students might create a few questions before the performance. Ask the students to think what questions do they might want to ask the actors in the play? Here are some starter questions:

Are there questions about the **theater** as an art form? Does it require training? Where did the actors train? Can a person make a living in the theater? What careers are there in the theater? Are any of the students aspiring actors? Are they seeking advice?

Are there questions about **traveling** the country? Have the actors seen a lot of the United States? What is the bus like? How many hours do they spend on the bus? Does everybody get along?

What about life in **New York City**? How long have the actors lived there? And where are they from originally? (Have any of the students ever been in NYC?) How has New York City survived the September 11<sup>th</sup> Tragedy? What is the best part of living in New York? What is the worst?

What about ***Pudd'nhead Wilson***, the play? How has it been received in places across the country? What is the best part about working on this play? What have been its drawbacks? Is it different working on a new play than working on Shakespeare? What do the actors think the themes of the play are?

NOTE: If there are questions that your students have after the company departs, feel free to contact the Education Department of The Acting Company, and we will get an answer for you!

## Section 7: What to Do After You See This Play

Please encourage your students to reflect on the play in some of the following ways. We would love to have copies some of the writings or artwork your students create: **The Acting Company, Box 898, New York, NY 10108 or fax 212-944-5524**

### Write

- Write a play or scene in response to the play.
- Improvise a scene with a partner and then write it down.
- Write a soliloquy for one of the characters in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.
- Write a scene for two of the characters in the play that you think we should have seen but that was not in Charles Smith's play. For example, a scene between Roxy and Judge Driscoll, the father of her son.
- Write an epilogue. For example, what happens to Chambers and Tom after the story ends?
- Write a review of our production.
- Write an analysis of the poster for this production.
- Write a theatrical adaptation of another piece of literature, perhaps a short story.

### Draw

- Draw the world of Dawson's Landing, MO.
- Draw images from the production.
- Draw figures re-created from old photographs.
- Draw a world with oppression and a world without oppression.
- Draw a poster for our production.
- Create a collage of images from magazines in response to the play.

### Read and Research more

**Check out some of the following Web Addresses:**

**Complete Text of the Novel:** [www.americanliterature.com/PW/PWD.HTML](http://www.americanliterature.com/PW/PWD.HTML)

**Pudd'nhead Wilson homepage:** [etext.lib.virginia.edu/railton/wilson/pwhompg.html](http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/railton/wilson/pwhompg.html)

**Pudd'nhead Wilson's Calendar:** [etext.lib.virginia.edu/railton/wilson/calendar.html](http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/railton/wilson/calendar.html)

**SparkNotes on the Novel:** [www.sparknotes.com/lit/puddnhead/](http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/puddnhead/)

**Twain Web:** [www.yorku.ca/twainweb/](http://www.yorku.ca/twainweb/)

**National Council of Teachers of English:** <http://www.ncte.org/>

### **More Resources:**

Fishkin, Shelley Fisher. *Was Huck Black?: Mark Twain and African-American Voices*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Gillman, Susan, and Forrest G. Robinson, eds. *Mark Twain's Pudd'nhead Wilson: Race, Conflict, and Culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990.

Kaplan, Justin. *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain: A Biography*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966.

Knoper, Randall. *Acting Naturally: Mark Twain in the Culture of Performance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Rowe, Katherine. *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. New York: Signet Classic, 1964 (1884).

Twain, Mark. *Life on the Mississippi*. New York: Signet Classic, 1964 (1883).

Twain, Mark. *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson and the Comedy of Those Extraordinary Twins*. New York: Signet Classic, 1964 (1893).

### **Mark Twain Bibliography**

His works include *The Adventures of Thomas Jefferson Snodgrass* (1856); *The Celebrated lumping Frog of Calaveras County* (1865), his first work to attract attention, reissued in *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, And Other Sketches* (1867); *The Innocents Abroad* (1869); *Roughing It* (1872); *The Gilded Age* (1873), a novel written with Charles Dudley Warner; *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), with its sequel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) the most famous of Twain's books; *A Tramp Abroad* (1880), an account of European travel; *Life on the Mississippi* (1883); *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882); *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889); *The American Claimant* (1890); *Tom Sawyer Abroad* (1894) and *Tom Sawyer, Detective* (1896), late sequels to the earlier Sawyer books; *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896); *Following the Equator* (1897), an account of a lecture tour of the world; *The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg* (1899); *What Is Man?* (1906); *Christian Science* (1907); *Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven* (1909); *The Mysterious Stranger* (1916); *Mark Twain's Letters* 1917); and *Mark Twain's Autobiography* (1924) and our novel *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894).

from Benét's *The Reader's Encyclopæia*

## Section 8: The Acting Company

The Acting Company, America's only nationally-touring classical repertory theater, was founded in 1972 by current Producing Director Margot Harley and the late John Houseman with a unique mission:

- + By touring smaller cities, towns and rural communities of America, the Company reaches thousands of people who have few opportunities to experience live professional theater.
- + By presenting superior productions of classic and contemporary plays, the Company builds a discerning national audience for theater, helping preserve and extend our cultural heritage.
- + By providing continuing opportunities for gifted and highly-trained young actors to practice their craft in a rich repertoire for diverse audiences, the Company nurtures the growth and development of generations of theater artists.
- + By commissioning and premiering important new works by America's foremost playwrights, the Company fosters a theater tradition in which story-telling, language and the presence of the actor are primary.
- + By making the language of the theater accessible in performance, special classes and other educational outreach activities, the Company inspires students of all ages and helps them excel in every field of study.

The Acting Company has been fulfilling this singular mission since it was formed out of the first graduating class of the Juilliard School's Drama Division in 1972. Since then, it has traveled over 500,000 miles through 48 states and nine other countries, performing a repertoire of 77 plays for more than 2 million people.

**When angry, count four; when very angry, swear.**

**Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson***

### Trace Our Tour

If The students want to follow the tour as it progresses across the United States, they can read the Tour Journal (on our website) and see pictures of the places we visit. You can check in with us every day, check the itinerary, and see where we are on the map.

We Want to Hear from YOU and your STUDENTS!

### By Mail

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### Internships

Please submit a letter of interest and your resume along with two references to the Intern Coordinator at the address above. You can call or check the website for more information.

## Section 8: Cast List and Information

### THE ACTING COMPANY

*In*

## PUDD'NHEAD WILSON

Adapted by **Charles Smith**  
From the novel by **Mark Twain**

*Directed by*  
**Walter Dallas**

*Set Design by* Juliana von Haubrich  
*Costume Design by* Andre Harrington  
*Lighting Design by* Dennis Parichy  
*Music Composition and Sound Design by* Obadiah Eaves  
*Hair and Wig Design* Anita Ragonovich  
*Dialect Coach* Sarah Felder  
*Fight Direction by* Felix Ivanov  
*Casting by* Cindi Rush, C.S.A.  
*Dramaturg* Douglas Langworthy  
*Musical Direction/Piano Recording by* Linda Twine

*Production Manager* Bonnie J. Baggesen  
*Production Stage Manager* Cole P. Bonenberger  
*Assistant Stage Manager* Janice Brandine

*Staff Repertory Director* Gregory Lamont Allen

### CAST

*(in alphabetical order)*

Chambers .....Michael Abbott, Jr.  
Company .....Spencer Aste  
Luigi / Joe .....Brian D. Coats  
Howard .....Bryan Cogman  
Tom .....Jimonn Cole  
Cecil .....Christian Conn  
Judge Driscoll .....Michael Lluberes  
Company .....Katherine Puma  
Angelo / Lou .....Thom Rivera  
Roxy .....Roslyn Ruff  
Rowena .....Jordan Simmons  
Nancy .....Christen Simon  
Pudd'nhead .....Nick Toren

*Pudd'nhead Wilson is set in the fictional town of Dawson's Landing, Missouri, from the late 1830's to 1855.*

## Appendix: Reproducibles

### Characters in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

PUDD'NHEAD WILSON	40 years old White male
NANCY	African-American female
JUDGE PERCY DRISCOLL	50 year old White male
JUDGE HOWARD	50 year old white male
TOM	African-American male in his 20's
CHAMBERS	White male in his 20's
CECIL	White male
LUIGI	African-American male
ANGELO	White male
ROXY	African-American female in her 40's
ROWENA	White female in her 20's
JIM	African-American male
JOE	African-American male
LOU	White male
MAN ONE	White male
MAN TWO	White male
MAN THREE	White male

Reproducible for  
**The Characters in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, page 8-9**

Selected Quotes from *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

1. I am a ghost. A spirit sent from the past who has returned to make your life a living hell.
2. There's a huge difference between fathering and being a father.
3. A man's own hand keeping a record of the deepest and fatalist secrets of his life.
4. You may be looking at them but you don't actually see them. All you can see is what you think they are.
5. It's like a bag of gold that's turned to dirt and ashes before my very eyes.
6. En does you know anything that a mother won't do for her chile.
7. The blood running through these veins is centuries old.
8. Dat fire gonna stay right whar it belong jes as long as we stay whar we belong.
9. You belong to him jes like that dollar belong to him. So, if you pick up dat dollar en put it in yo pocket, what he done lost?
10. The only law you can count on is the law of chance and the law of fortune.
11. You know, I wish I owned half that dog.
12. You can set me free... you can make me rich... but you can't make me white.
13. If he ain't a pudd'nhead, then I ain't no judge.
14. There's no such thing as justice.
15. I've gone over every ridge, loop, and spiral of every hand and fingerprint.
16. And now, when you look at me, what do you see? A slave? A prince?
17. You're willing to be sold into slavery to save me?

The scene of this chronicle is the town of Dawson's Landing, on the Missouri side of the Mississippi, half a day's journey, per steamboat, below St. Louis.

1. In 1830 it was a snug collection of modest one- and two- story frame dwellings, whose whitewashed exteriors were almost concealed from sight by climbing tangles of rose vines, honeysuckles, and morning glories.
2. Each of these pretty homes had a garden in front fenced with white palings and opulently stocked with hollyhocks, marigolds, touch-me-nots, prince's-feathers, and other old-fashioned flowers.
3. When there was room on the ledge outside of the flowerpots and flower-boxes for a cat, the cat was there -- in sunny weather -- stretched at full length, asleep and blissful, with her furry belly to the sun and a paw curved over her nose.
4. Then that house was complete, and its contentment and peace were made manifest to the world by this symbol, whose testimony is infallible.
5. The town's front was washed by the clear waters of the great river. Steamboats passed up and down every hour or so.
6. Dawson's Landing was a slaveholding town, with a rich, slave-worked grain and pork country back of it.
7. The town was sleepy and comfortable and contented.
8. It was fifty years old, and was growing slowly – very slowly, in fact, but still it was growing.

Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Reproducible for  
**Tableaux: Exploration of the Text**, pages 11-12

Every now and then, after Tom went to bed, he had sudden wakings out of his sleep, and his first thought was, "Oh, joy, it was all a dream!" Then he laid himself heavily down again, with a groan and the muttered words, "A nigger! I am a nigger! Oh, I wish I was dead!"

Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Set down, you lil snot-nosed pup. Does you think you kin skyer me? It ain't in you, nor de likes of you. Ah reckon you'd shoot me in de back, maybe, if you got a chance, for dat's jist yo' style. See? Ah knows you, throo en throo. Oh, bless yo' soul, if you puts yo' mother up for as big a fool as you is, you's pow'ful mistaken, Ah kin tell you! Ah said set down!

Roxy, Charles Smith, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

When he [Tom] got to be old enough to begin to toddle about and say broken words and get an idea of what his hands were for, he was a more consummate pest than ever. Roxy got no rest while he was awake. He would call for anything and everything he saw, simply saying, "Awnt it!" (want it), which was a command. When it was brought, he said in a frenzy, and motioning it away with his hands, "Don't awnt it! don't awnt it!" and the moment it was gone he set up frantic yells of "Awnt it! awnt it!" and Roxy had to give wings to her heels to get that thing back to him again before he could get time to carry out his intention of going into convulsions about it.

Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

It was like I was wrestling with a demon, Mammy. And that demon was all the bad things in me, all of my bad thoughts, that demon gave me a capacity for cruelty. And I never understood it before, I never understood where it came from. But now I do, Mammy, now I understand. It's my inheritance, Mammy. It's what my father has passed onto me. My daddy was a slave owner as was his daddy and his daddy and his daddy before him. The white blood in my veins has been debased by five generations of slave owning. That's five generations of brutality. Five generations of cruelty, of irresponsible power and abuse. All of it, poured all into me, into my veins. And I tried to fight against it, Mammy. I did everything I could.

Tom Driscoll, Charles Smith, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Reproducible for  
**Descriptions**, pages 12-13

"Our parents were well to do, there in Italy, and we were their only child. We were of the old Florentine nobility and when the war broke out, my father was on the losing side and had to fly for his life."

"Our father survived his misfortunes only a month, our mother soon followed him, and we were alone in the world. My brother and I were ten years old, and well educated for that age, very studious, very fond of our books.... Also, we were marvelous musical prodigies – if you will allow me to say it, it being only the truth."

"Our parents could have made themselves comfortable by exhibiting us as a show, and they had many and large offers; but the thought revolted their pride, and they said they would starve and die first. But what they wouldn't consent to do, we had to do without the formality of consent. We were seized for the debts occasioned by their illness and their funerals, and placed among the attractions of a cheap museum in Berlin to earn the liquidation money. It took us two years to get out of that slavery. We traveled all about Germany, receiving no wages, and not even our keep. We had to be exhibited for nothing, and beg our bread.

When we escaped from that slavery at twelve years of age, we were in some respects men. Experience had taught us some valuable things; among others, how to take care of ourselves."

*Angelo Cappello, Mark Twain, Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Reproducible for  
**Writing: Journal Entry**, pages 14

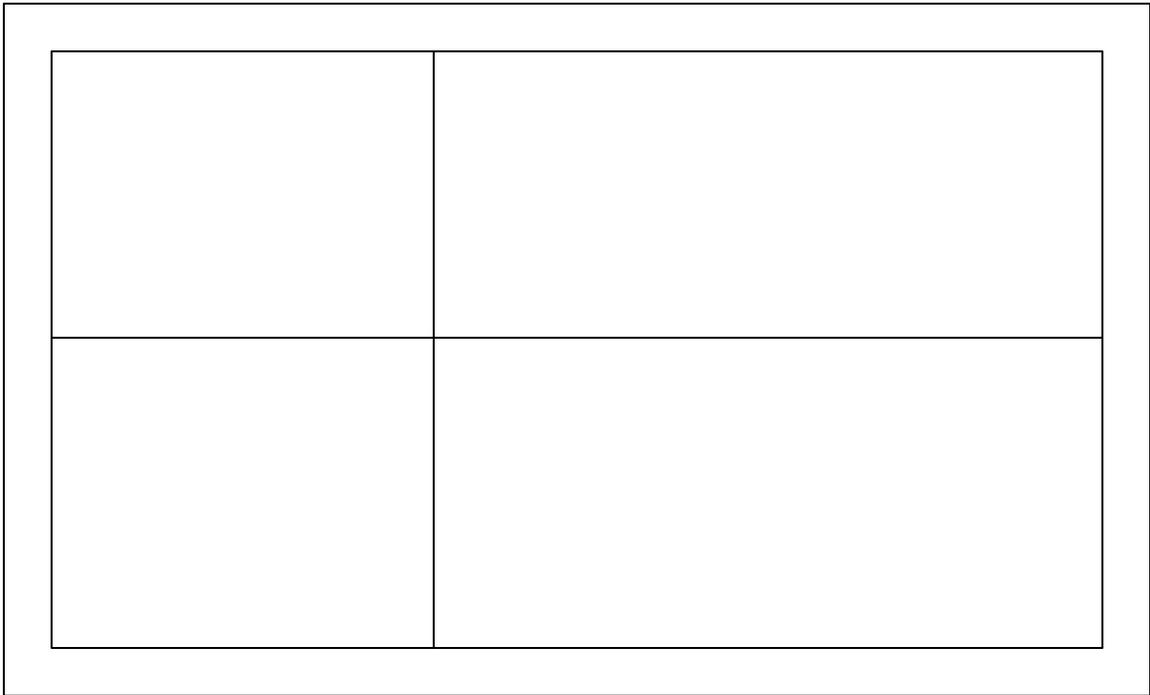
ROXY

Dey ain't gwine hardly miss tree hundred dollars werth of gold and jewels. En what's wrong with dat? Ain't de white folks done stole from us all our lives? Ain't dey stole my labor, werkin' me from can to can't without paying me a howyado or thank you? Ain't dey stole our chullins, rippin' babes frum dere muther's tits and selling dem babies like ya sell a cow or a chicken? Dey stole frum me everything Ah had to steal, en heah Ah is now, broke down and can't werk, alls Ah's axing fur is a lil money to buy some food en ta keep a place to roos' dat ain't haunted. If you gots to steal frum de white folks what stole frum us to give me dat, Ah don't ker. You unnerstand me?

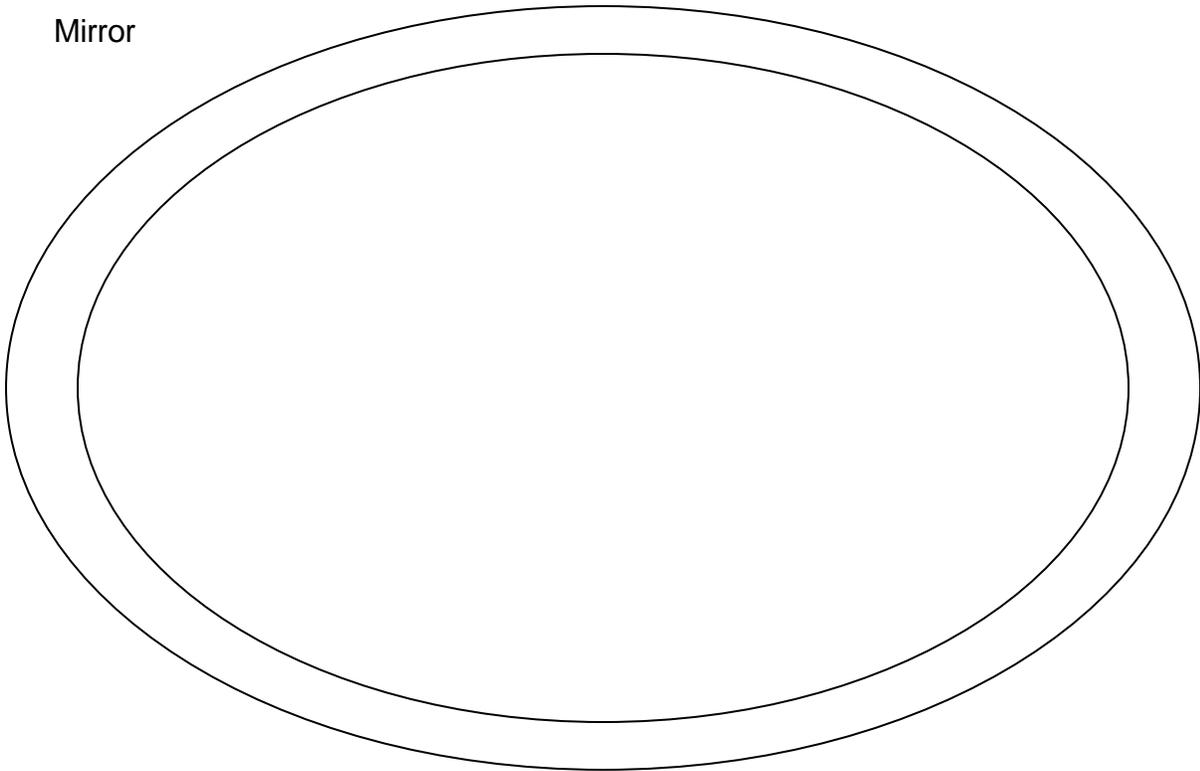
*Charles Smith, Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Reproducible for  
**Text Analysis: A Stolen Life**, page 11

Window



Mirror



Reproducible for  
**Mirror and Window**, page 20

Bio-Poem Format

Line 1: First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Line 2: Four Traits that describe the character

\_\_\_\_\_

Line 3: Relative (or mother, sister, husband, cousin, etc.) of:

\_\_\_\_\_

Line 4: Who loves (list three things or people)

\_\_\_\_\_

Line 5: Who feels (three items)

\_\_\_\_\_

Line 6: Who needs (three items)

\_\_\_\_\_

Line 7: Who fears (three items)

\_\_\_\_\_

Line 8: Who gives (three items)

\_\_\_\_\_

Line 9: Who would / would not like to see (three items)

\_\_\_\_\_

Line 10: Resident of \_\_\_\_\_

Line 11: Last name \_\_\_\_\_

Reproducible for  
**Bio-Poem**, page 22

Still trembling from the World Trade Center disaster, we found the following 1918 quote to be relevant, moving, and insightful 83 years later.

“Seven of the Provincetown Players are in the army or working for it in France and more are going. Not lightheartedly now, when civilization itself is threatened with destruction, we who remain have determined to go on next season with the work of our little theatre. It is often said that theatrical entertainment in general is socially justified in this dark time as a means of relaxing the strain of reality, and thus helping to keep us sane. This may be true, but if more were not true – if we felt no deeper value in dramatic art than entertainment – we would hardly have the heart for it now. One faculty, we know, is going to be of vast importance to the half-destroyed world – indispensable for its rebuilding – the faculty of creative imagination. That spark of it, which has given this group of ours such life and meaning as we have, is not so insignificant that we should now let it die. The social justification, which we feel to be valid now for makers and players of plays, is that they shall help keep alive in the world the light of imagination. Without it, the wreck of the world that was cannot be cleared away and the new world shaped.”

George Cram Cook,  
founder of New York’s Provincetown Playhouse, 1918

Reproducible for  
**Why Theater?**, page 27