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#### Example of Literary Analysis Development

*Let’s assume that most of us have read the Mark Twain classics as children. Who can forget the antics of Tom Sawyer, as he fooled his friends into doing his work, or as he “played” outlaw in dangerous ways? As children, it is very easy for us to pass Twain off as the writer of kids’ adventure books. Even as adults, it is very easy to see the comedy in his characters, and pass his works off as pure amusement. But to the true student of Mark Twain, there is a depth of social conscience, shadowed but not hidden under the guise of “fun”. In The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Twain’s satire speaks to the darker side of the American experience, even as he entertains us.*

**1. Concept(s) that you are going to explore (specific to the work you read):**

1. Twain has several characters who represent the worst prejudices and social weaknesses in our society
2. Twain creates settings which lend themselves to great satire about American society.

**2. How can I make this a *deeper,* more *thoughtful* exploration?** (historical context; social, political, economic contexts; ideology; use of literary elements, such as symbol, metaphor, genre, irony, point of view, characterization) **Explain here how you will use this with the concept(s) that you are going to explore:**

a. Twain has several characters who represent the worst prejudices and social weaknesses in our society: I will explore the economic, educational, and ideological attitudes (belief systems) of his characters.

1. Twain creates settings which lend themselves to great satire about American society: I will discuss and analyze the environments of the town and country settings, and their locations in the U.S. I will discuss and analyze local color, vocabulary, and gullibility issues exposed by Twain.

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***Literary Analysis Concepts***

What *is* a literary analysis paper?

1. It is **NOT** a response of **personal feelings** about a work.
2. It is **NOT** a **review** which discusses what is worth reading.
3. It is **NOT** a detail-by-detail **plot summary.**

It **IS** your ***thoughtful interpretation or understanding of certain aspects of a literary work.***

So, here are **some examples** of concepts that you could explore in **your analysis** of the work that you read. Pick a couple, or come up with ones of your own, and **write about them!**

**Theme:**

* **Is the author saying something about ambition or courage or greed or jealousy or happiness?**
* **Does it show what it’s like to experience racism, loneliness, etc?**
* **Is a statement being made about a specific historical even?**

**Characterization:**

* **How does the main character change from beginning to end?**
* **What forces or circumstances make a character change from beginning to end?**
* **What are some of the most revealing aspects of one of the characters?**
* **Does the main character have a confidant, someone he or she relies on?**

**Setting:**

* **What effect does the setting have on the characters?**
* **Has the setting increased your knowledge of a specific time and place?**
* **Is (or was, for its time) the setting new and thought-provoking?**

**Style:**

* **How does the writing – descriptive phrases, comparisons, etc. – create a main feeling or tone in the story?**
* **Is dialogue or description used effectively?**
* **Is there an important symbol that adds meaning to the selection?**
* **Has special attention been given to figures of speech, like metaphors, similes, or personification?**