

1. Mark Twain

Actually, his name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens and he was born on November 30th, 1835, so Happy 170th Birthday Sam! As one of the most important figures in American history, Mark Twain was both a brilliant writer and public speaker. His humanity and sense of humour earned him a place in the hearts of fans the world over. This week, we pay homage to the man and his work.

For more work on Mark Twain see page 117 of *Inside Out* Advanced.

Level:

Good intermediate and above

How to use the lesson:

1. Give each of your students a copy of Worksheet 1. Tell them they have two minutes to read the text and to guess the identity of the subject.
2. After two minutes, stop them and ask them to work in pairs to talk about who it is.
3. Once his (Mark Twain's) identity has been established, ask your students to look at the questions at the bottom of the page in pairs and discuss any answers they know. Check the questions in open class and accept all answers without saying if they are right or not.
4. Give one copy of Worksheet 2 to each student in the class and ask them to find the answers to the questions and then to check their answers in pairs.
5. Round off with an open class check.

Answers :

1. Mark Twain
2. Halley's Comet
3. (Choose from) printer, journalist, steamboat captain, miner
4. The Civil War (1861–65)
5. It was a boatman's call on the Mississippi
6. the Mississippi
7. (Most likely) *Huckleberry Finn*, *Tom Sawyer*, *The Prince and the Pauper* (see text for others)
8. *Huckleberry Finn*
9. (Choose from) France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy
10. Because he had lost his house and most of his money

2. Follow up

Tell your students that Mark Twain was also celebrated for his humorous quotations. Copy the quotations below and give them to your students. Ask them to work together to explain what each of them means and to decide which they like most.

1. "All you need is ignorance and confidence; then success is sure."
2. "Often it does seem a pity that Noah and his party did not miss the boat."
3. "It is better to keep your mouth shut and appear stupid than to open it and remove all doubt."
4. "The political and commercial morals of the United States are not merely food for laughter, they are an entire banquet."
5. "Let us endeavour so to live that when we come to die even the undertaker will be sorry."
6. "Every one is a moon, and has a dark side which he never shows to anybody."
7. "Man will do many things to get himself loved; he will do all things to get himself envied."
8. "Don't part with your illusions. When they are gone you may still exist, but you have ceased to live."

If you want more than these, check the website out below that will take you to loads of them.

3. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://salwen.com/mtquotes.html>

a selection of quotes

<http://www.twainquotes.com/>

quotes galore and much, much more

<http://www.marktwainhouse.org/>

take a tour of Mark Twain's house

<http://www.geocities.com/swaisman/>

lots of fascinating facts about the man, his family and his work

<http://users.telerama.com/~joseph/finn/finntitl.html>

read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* on the net