

# Instructional Lesson Plan EXCERPT

## English Language Arts

**Grade: 7**

**Unit Title: The Weight of Words**

**Length: 1 week**

### Lesson Overview

Students will read several excerpts from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in order to analyze the author's use of phrases. Students will then mimic author's style for a new purpose to write narratives to describe a scene.

While the lesson is written for Week 4 in the unit, teachers can move this lesson easily throughout the unit to align with other grammar lessons being taught and/or the chapter focuses in class. All chapter references in the lesson were chosen for their use of phrases and clauses to describe a scene.

This lesson assumes students have a basic understanding of phrases and clauses. The primary objective in this lesson is that students now gain a deeper understanding of the function of phrases and clauses and how they impact the tone, mood, and description in a passage.

### Lesson Procedure

#### Pre-Assessment

- Hand out to students the Concept Attainment Chart. Review the instructions at the top of the page with the class.
- If the teacher chooses, each of these sentences could be put onto sentence strips and students told to separate the strips into two groups sharing similar qualities.
- Students should come to the conclusion that some of the items contain clauses – independent or dependent while the others are phrases.
- Teachers should utilize this activity to determine if further direct instruction on the difference between a phrase and a clause is needed.

#### Lesson Procedures:

##### Day One

1. Review the difference between a phrase and clause.
2. Class Analysis:
3. Distribute the passage describing Huck Finn from Chapter 6 to the class.
4. In pairs, have the students read the passage carefully and underline the clauses in each section of the text.
5. Focus the class on the sentence describing his dress.
6. Discuss the reason Mark Twain may have decided to string these clauses together. Lead students to the conclusion that it forces the reader to “see” Huck from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet in one motion. Discuss what would change for the reader if this description were to be broken apart.

##### Day Two

7. Open this class with a read aloud from Twain or another author using phrases and clauses for strong description. Review the concepts from the previous lesson in order to ensure students could complete the same analysis in small groups.
8. Group Activity:
9. Break the students into small groups.
10. Give each group a printed copy of selected passages from the text. These passages should be from sections of the novel students have already encountered. This will eliminate the need for students to also make meaning of the passage at the same time they are focusing on language. This is place a teacher could differentiate for learners. Choose passages to either remediate or enrich students. A teacher could also choose passages written by Mark Twain outside of the mentor text.
11. Student groups should first focus on the grammar in each selection. Have them color-code, circle/underline, etc. to note the use of phrases vs. clauses.
12. Then, have each group discuss the impact of the language choices Twain used in their given passage following the model of the Class Analysis. Students should record the group ideas on a white board or poster paper.
13. Teacher may choose to have each group present their findings to the class and lead the class in a discussion: What is the overall impact to the story or plot as a result of the language choices? Does the description endear the reader to a character? Does it force the reader to perceive a particular event in a certain light?

##### Day Three

14. Open class by asking students to free-write about some of the events in the novel they could relate to their own life. Have they been embarrassed in front of a large group? Have they had a potential boy/girl friend reject them? Can they think of an

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“adventure” they’ve had in the outdoors? Have they had a time when an adult/parent hurt their feelings or misjudged them? A time they wished they had apologized, but didn’t?

15. Introduce the Response to Reading Prompt to the class. If students are not yet familiar with the PARCC rubric, review each section with the students to ensure understanding.
16. Lead the students in a brainstorming activity.
17. Have them return to their free-write list of ideas and choose one event to work with in response to the prompt.
18. Next, have them sketch the event as a single image, snapshot moment in time.
19. Once students have their “snapshot” moment chosen and sketched, have them surround the image – or list at the bottom – phrases to describe the scene. Encourage students to use phrases only and focus on the specific words that would create an image in the reader’s mind.
20. Closure: Give students time at tables or in pairs to share their ideas and talk through the event. This may help students remember more details as they talk.

#### Day Four

21. Open the class with a free-write of an image from the Mississippi area at the time of Mark Twain. Have students write a list of phrases to describe what they see in the image.
22. Discuss the importance of specific words as students share their phrases. Point out non-specific words that may or may not create the same picture as the image itself.
23. Have students take out their prewriting from the day before.
24. Give students time to draft a response on notebook paper or on a computer as available.
25. Teachers should collect drafts to plan instruction for the next lesson.

#### Day Five

26. Students should now have a full draft of their response.
27. Revision Activity: Students could use colored pencils to highlight required elements on their drafts as the teacher directs.
28. Teachers could use this day to give a mini-lesson on an aspect of the student’s writing needing improvement.
29. Teachers could also choose to use this day to focus on the mood created by the student description.

#### Lesson Closure/Post-Assessment

Have students respond to the Unit’s Essential question:  
How does an author’s style affect perception and meaning of text?