



Questions about *Life on the Mississippi*

Instructions:

Working with your group, review the following questions about *Life on the Mississippi* and formulate conclusions about the text. Your responses will be collected.

1. How old, in your perception, is the narrator? (Indicate an approximate year of age.) On what details are you basing your conjecture? Explain.
2. What about the river does the narrator find fascinating? (Avoid oversimplification; defend your analysis.)
3. What about the river does he find frustrating?
4. How does the narrator describe Mr. Bixby?
5. How and why does the narrator's feeling about the river change? Build your analysis with thoughtful detail.
6. Based on Twain's description of experiences on the river, would you want to venture down the Mississippi? Why or why not?
7. A Twain scholar has noted, in commenting on the assigned text, that the prose is "effortless, with the flash and sparkle of actual life." What do you think the scholar means?
8. If you agree with the statement above, construct a brief summary of what aspects of the text you would use to argue in support of the scholar's assertion. If you disagree, construct a counter-argument. In building your position, consider such aspects as structural pattern and details of the narrative, language, and tone quality(s).