

ESL EASY READ

EASY ENGLISH READERS

LEVEL
A1

Tom Sawyer, Detective

Mark Twain

READING LEVEL
A1

ORIGINAL ENGLISH

ENGLISH GLOSSARY
A1

CULTURAL NOTES
A1

Tom Sawyer, Detective

ENGLISH EDITION

LEARN · READ · UNDERSTAND · PROGRESS

→ FROM A1 TO THE ORIGINAL ←

READ WITH CONFIDENCE · GROW WITH EVERY BOOK

Introduction

Tom Sawyer, Detective

Read the A1 text first. It tells the story in simple English.

You can also read the original text. The links take you to the same part of the story.

Select a word to open a note. The word notes and culture notes use simple English.

This book is in English. It has no translations.

ESL Easy Read

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Tom Sawyer, Detective — Mark Twain

A1 Books — ESL Easy Read. General English edition.

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A1 English

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A1 English

Tom Sawyer, Detective

Tom Sawyer, Detective · Volume

A1 English

1. A letter for Tom

My name is Huck Finn. Tom Sawyer is my friend. Tom likes adventures. I like them too. But sometimes Tom has very strange ideas.

One day, a letter came for his Aunt Polly. It was from Aunt Sally in Arkansas. She wanted Tom and me to visit her family.

We wanted to go at once. But Tom had a plan. He looked unhappy. “I don't want to go,” he said.

Aunt Polly was angry. “You will go!” she said. That was Tom's plan. Now she could not easily change her mind.

There was trouble at Aunt Sally's farm. Her husband was Uncle Silas. He was a kind man. He worked on the farm. He also spoke in the little church.

They had a daughter called Benny. She was very young. A rich man wanted to marry her. His name was Brace Dunlap. He was much older than Benny. She did not want to marry him.

Uncle Silas said no to Brace. After that, Brace was angry with the family. He was rich and powerful. Uncle Silas was afraid of him.

So Uncle Silas gave work to Brace's brother, Jubiter. The family had little money. But they paid Jubiter to work on the farm.

Jubiter was lazy. He also said unkind things to Uncle Silas. The old man became angry. People heard their arguments. Soon they spoke badly about Uncle Silas.

Jubiter had a twin brother called Jake. The two men looked the same. Jake was a thief. He ran away from prison years before. People thought he was dead.

Jubiter had long brown hair. He had no beard. He also had a large brown mark above his left knee. Four little marks were near it. People called it a planet with four moons.

Tom and I did not know much about the trouble. We were happy to take the boat down the river. We thought about our next adventure.

Chapter I. AN INVITATION FOR TOM AND HUCK

A1 English

2. A man on the boat

The boat moved down the Mississippi River. We stopped many times. There were problems with the boat. The journey was slow.

A man had the room next to ours. His name on the boat was Phillips. He stayed in his room. He ate there too. And he never took off his boots.

Tom wanted to know why. We carried food to the man's room. Then we saw his face.

“Jubiter Dunlap!” I thought. But it was not Jubiter. It was his twin brother, Jake.

Jake was frightened. Two bad men were on the boat. They wanted to find him. He asked us to keep his name secret.

We promised to help. Jake wanted to go home. But he did not want people to know him there.

He showed us some strange clothes. He also had blue glasses, a false beard, and a tall hat. These things could change his face and body.

“I'll cut my hair short,” he said. “Then nobody will know me.”

Tom thought about it. “But people know your brother's voice,” he said. “Your voice is like his.”

Jake needed another part to his plan. He could pretend he could not hear. He could pretend he could not speak. Then nobody would hear his voice.

Tom liked this plan very much. There was a secret. There were dangerous men. There was a man in strange clothes. It was a real adventure.

I looked at Jake's boots. Why did he keep them on? Soon we learned the answer.

Chapter II. JAKE DUNLAP

Original English B2

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Tom Sawyer, Detective

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Volume

By Mark Twain

1896

Tom Sawyer, Detective

Original English B2

Chapter I. AN INVITATION FOR TOM AND HUCK

WELL, it was the next spring after me and Tom Sawyer set our old nigger Jim free, the time he was chained up for a runaway slave down there on Tom's uncle Silas's farm in Arkansaw. The frost was working out of the ground, and out of the air, too, and it was getting closer and closer onto barefoot time every day; and next it would be marble time, and next mumbletypeg, and next tops and hoops, and next kites, and then right away it would be summer and going in a-swimming. It just makes a boy homesick to look ahead like that and see how far off summer is. Yes, and it sets him to sighing and saddening around, and there's something the matter with him, he don't know what. But anyway, he gets out by himself and mopes and thinks; and mostly he hunts for a lonesome place high up on the hill in the edge of the woods, and sets there and looks away off on the big Mississippi down there a-reaching miles and miles around the points where the timber looks smoky and dim it's so far off and still, and everything's so solemn it seems like everybody you've loved is dead and gone, and you 'most wish you was dead and gone too, and done with it all.

Don't you know what that is? It's spring fever. That is what the name of it is. And when you've got it, you want—oh, you don't quite know what it is you DO want, but it just fairly makes your heart ache, you want it so! It seems to you that mainly what you want is to get away; get away from the same old tedious things you're so used to seeing and so tired of, and set something new. That is the idea; you want to go and be a wanderer; you want to go wandering far away to strange countries where everything is mysterious and wonderful and romantic. And if you can't do that, you'll put up with considerable less; you'll go anywhere you CAN go, just so as to get away, and be thankful of the chance, too.

Well, me and Tom Sawyer had the spring fever, and had it bad, too; but it warn't any use to think about Tom trying to get away, because, as he said, his Aunt Polly wouldn't let him quit school and go traipsing off somers wasting time; so we was pretty blue. We was setting on the front steps one day about sundown talking this way, when out comes his aunt Polly with a letter in her hand and says:

"Tom, I reckon you've got to pack up and go down to Arkansaw—your aunt Sally wants you."

I 'most jumped out of my skin for joy. I reckoned Tom would fly at his aunt and hug her head off; but if you believe me he set there like a rock, and never said a word. It made me fit to cry to see him act so foolish, with such a noble chance as this opening up. Why, we might lose it if he didn't speak up and show he was thankful and grateful. But he set there and studied and studied till I was that distressed I didn't know what to do; then he says, very ca'm, and I could a shot him for it:

"Well," he says, "I'm right down sorry, Aunt Polly, but I reckon I got to be excused—for the present."

His aunt Polly was knocked so stupid and so mad at the cold impudence of it that she couldn't say a word for as much as a half a minute, and this gave me a chance to nudge Tom and whisper:

"Ain't you got any sense? Sp'iling such a noble chance as this and throwing it away?"

But he warn't disturbed. He mumbled back:

"Huck Finn, do you want me to let her SEE how bad I want to go? Why, she'd begin to doubt, right away, and imagine a lot of sicknesses and dangers and objections, and first you know she'd take it all back. You lemme alone; I reckon I know how to work her."

Now I never would 'a' thought of that. But he was right. Tom Sawyer was always right—the levelest head I ever see, and always AT himself and ready for anything you might spring on him. By this time his aunt Polly was all straight again, and she let fly. She says:

"You'll be excused! YOU will! Well, I never heard the like of it in all my days! The idea of you talking like that to ME! Now take yourself off and pack your traps; and if I hear another word out of you about what you'll be excused from and what you won't, I lay I'LL excuse you—with a hickory!"

She hit his head a thump with her thimble as we dodged by, and he let on to be whimpering as we struck for the stairs. Up in his room he hugged me, he was so out of his head for gladness because he was going traveling. And he says:

"Before we get away she'll wish she hadn't let me go, but she won't know any way to get around it now. After what she's said, her pride won't let her take it back."

Tom was packed in ten minutes, all except what his aunt and Mary would finish up for him; then we waited ten more for her to get cooled down and sweet and gentle again; for Tom said it took her ten minutes to unruffle in times when half of her feathers was up, but twenty when they was all up, and this was one of the times when they was all up. Then we went down, being in a sweat to know what the letter said.

She was setting there in a brown study, with it laying in her lap. We set down, and she says:

"They're in considerable trouble down there, and they think you and Huck'll be a kind of diversion for them—'comfort,' they say. Much of that they'll get out of you and Huck Finn, I reckon. There's a neighbor named Brace Dunlap that's been wanting to marry their Benny for three months, and at last they told him point blank and once for all, he COULDN'T; so he has soured on them, and they're worried about it. I reckon he's somebody they think they better be on the good side of, for they've tried to please him by hiring his no-account brother to help on the farm when they can't hardly afford it, and don't want him around anyhow. Who are the Dunlaps?"

"They live about a mile from Uncle Silas's place, Aunt Polly—all the farmers live about a mile apart down there—and Brace Dunlap is a long sight richer than any of the others, and owns a whole grist of niggers. He's a widower, thirty-six years old, without any children, and is proud of his money and overbearing, and everybody is a little afraid of him. I judge he thought he could have any girl he wanted, just for the asking, and it must have set him back a good deal when he found he couldn't get Benny. Why, Benny's only half as old as he is, and just as sweet and lovely as—well, you've seen her. Poor old Uncle Silas—why, it's pitiful, him trying to curry favor that way—so hard pushed and poor, and yet hiring that useless Jubiter Dunlap to please his ornery brother."

"What a name—Jubiter! Where'd he get it?"

"It's only just a nickname. I reckon they've forgot his real name long before this. He's twenty-seven, now, and has had it ever since the first time he ever went in swimming. The school teacher seen a round brown mole the size of a dime on his left leg above his knee, and four little bits of moles around it, when he was naked, and he said it minded him of Jubiter and his moons; and the children thought it was funny, and so they got to calling him Jubiter, and he's Jubiter yet. He's tall, and lazy, and sly, and sneaky, and ruther cowardly, too, but kind of good-natured, and wears long brown hair and no beard, and hasn't got a cent, and Brace boards him for nothing, and gives him his old clothes to wear, and despises him. Jubiter is a twin."

"What's t'other twin like?"

"Just exactly like Jubiter—so they say; used to was, anyway, but he hain't been seen for seven years. He got to robbing when he was nineteen or twenty, and they jailed him; but he broke jail and got away—up North here, somers. They used to hear about him robbing and burglaring now and then, but that was years ago. He's dead, now. At least that's what they say. They don't hear about him any more."

"What was his name?"

"Jake."

There wasn't anything more said for a considerable while; the old lady was thinking. At last she says:

"The thing that is mostly worrying your aunt Sally is the tempers that that man Jubiter gets your uncle into."

Tom was astonished, and so was I. Tom says:

"Tempers? Uncle Silas? Land, you must be joking! I didn't know he HAD any temper."

"Works him up into perfect rages, your aunt Sally says; says he acts as if he would really hit the man, sometimes."

"Aunt Polly, it beats anything I ever heard of. Why, he's just as gentle as mush."

"Well, she's worried, anyway. Says your uncle Silas is like a changed man, on account of all this quarreling. And the neighbors talk about it, and lay all the blame on your uncle, of course, because he's a preacher and hain't got any business to quarrel. Your aunt Sally says he hates to go into the pulpit he's so ashamed; and the people have begun to cool toward him, and he ain't as popular now as he used to was."

"Well, ain't it strange? Why, Aunt Polly, he was always so good and kind and moony and absent-minded and chuckle-headed and lovable—why, he was just an angel! What CAN be the matter of him, do you reckon?"

1. A letter for Tom

Original English B2

Chapter II. JAKE DUNLAP

WE had powerful good luck; because we got a chance in a stern-wheeler from away North which was bound for one of them bayous or one-horse rivers away down Louisiana way, and so we could go all the way down the Upper Mississippi and all the way down the Lower Mississippi to that farm in Arkansaw without having to change steamboats at St. Louis; not so very much short of a thousand miles at one pull.

A pretty lonesome boat; there warn't but few passengers, and all old folks, that set around, wide apart, dozing, and was very quiet. We was four days getting out of the "upper river," because we got aground so much. But it warn't dull—couldn't be for boys that was traveling, of course.

From the very start me and Tom allowed that there was somebody sick in the stateroom next to ourn, because the meals was always toted in there by the waiters. By and by we asked about it—Tom did and the waiter said it was a man, but he didn't look sick.

"Well, but AIN'T he sick?"

"I don't know; maybe he is, but 'pears to me he's just letting on."

"What makes you think that?"

"Because if he was sick he would pull his clothes off SOME time or other—don't you reckon he would? Well, this one don't. At least he don't ever pull off his boots, anyway."

"The mischief he don't! Not even when he goes to bed?"

"No."

It was always nuts for Tom Sawyer—a mystery was. If you'd lay out a mystery and a pie before me and him, you wouldn't have to say take your choice; it was a thing that would regulate itself. Because in my nature I have always run to pie, whilst in his nature he has always run to mystery. People are made different. And it is the best way. Tom says to the waiter:

"What's the man's name?"

"Phillips."

"Where'd he come aboard?"

"I think he got aboard at Elexandria, up on the Iowa line."

"What do you reckon he's a-playing?"

"I hain't any notion—I never thought of it."

I says to myself, here's another one that runs to pie.

"Anything peculiar about him?—the way he acts or talks?"

"No—nothing, except he seems so scary, and keeps his doors locked night and day both, and when you knock he won't let you in till he opens the door a crack and sees who it is."

"By jimminy, it's int'resting! I'd like to get a look at him. Say—the next time you're going in there, don't you reckon you could spread the door and—"

"No, indeedy! He's always behind it. He would block that game."

Tom studied over it, and then he says:

"Looky here. You lend me your apern and let me take him his breakfast in the morning. I'll give you a quarter."

The boy was plenty willing enough, if the head steward wouldn't mind. Tom says that's all right, he reckoned he could fix it with the head steward; and he done it. He fixed it so as we could both go in with aperns on and toting vittles.

He didn't sleep much, he was in such a sweat to get in there and find out the mystery about Phillips; and moreover he done a lot of guessing about it all night, which warn't no use, for if you are going to find out the facts of a thing, what's the sense in guessing out what ain't the facts and wasting ammunition? I didn't lose no sleep. I wouldn't give a dern to know what's the matter of Phillips, I says to myself.

Well, in the morning we put on the aperns and got a couple of trays of truck, and Tom he knocked on the door. The man opened it a crack, and then he let us in and shut it quick. By Jackson, when we got a sight of him, we 'most dropped the trays! and Tom says:

"Why, Jubiter Dunlap, where'd YOU come from?"

Well, the man was astonished, of course; and first off he looked like he didn't know whether to be scared, or glad, or both, or which, but finally he settled down to being glad; and then his color come back, though at first his face had turned pretty white. So we got to talking together while he et his breakfast. And he says:

"But I aint Jubiter Dunlap. I'd just as soon tell you who I am, though, if you'll swear to keep mum, for I ain't no Phillips, either."

Tom says:

"We'll keep mum, but there ain't any need to tell who you are if you ain't Jubiter Dunlap."

"Why?"

"Because if you ain't him you're t'other twin, Jake. You're the spit'n image of Jubiter."

"Well, I'm Jake. But looky here, how do you come to know us Dunlaps?"

Tom told about the adventures we'd had down there at his uncle Silas's last summer, and when he see that there warn't anything about his folks—or him either, for that matter—that we didn't know, he opened out and talked perfectly free and candid. He never made any bones about his own case; said he'd been a hard lot, was a hard lot yet, and reckoned he'd be a hard lot plumb to the end. He said of course it was a dangerous life, and—He give a kind of gasp, and set his head like a person that's listening. We didn't say anything, and so it was very still for a second or so, and there warn't no sounds but the screaking of the woodwork and the chug-chugging of the machinery down below.

Then we got him comfortable again, telling him about his people, and how Brace's wife had been dead three years, and Brace wanted to marry Benny and she shook him, and Jubiter was working for Uncle Silas, and him and Uncle Silas quarreling all the time—and

then he let go and laughed.

"Land!" he says, "it's like old times to hear all this tittle-tattle, and does me good. It's been seven years and more since I heard any. How do they talk about me these days?"

"Who?"

"The farmers—and the family."

"Why, they don't talk about you at all—at least only just a mention, once in a long time."

"The nation!" he says, surprised; "why is that?"

"Because they think you are dead long ago."

"No! Are you speaking true?—honor bright, now." He jumped up, excited.

"Honor bright. There ain't anybody thinks you are alive."

"Then I'm saved, I'm saved, sure! I'll go home. They'll hide me and save my life. You keep mum. Swear you'll keep mum—swear you'll never, never tell on me. Oh, boys, be good to a poor devil that's being hunted day and night, and dasn't show his face! I've never done you any harm; I'll never do you any, as God is in the heavens; swear you'll be good to me and help me save my life."

We'd a swore it if he'd been a dog; and so we done it. Well, he couldn't love us enough for it or be grateful enough, poor cuss; it was all he could do to keep from hugging us.

We talked along, and he got out a little hand-bag and begun to open it, and told us to turn our backs. We done it, and when he told us to turn again he was perfectly different to what he was before. He had on blue goggles and the naturalest-looking long brown whiskers and mustashes you ever see. His own mother wouldn't 'a' knowed him. He asked us if he looked like his brother Jubiter, now.

"No," Tom said; "there ain't anything left that's like him except the long hair."

"All right, I'll get that cropped close to my head before I get there; then him and Brace will keep my secret, and I'll live with them as being a stranger, and the neighbors won't ever guess me out. What do you think?"

Tom he studied awhile, then he says:

"Well, of course me and Huck are going to keep mum there, but if you don't keep mum yourself there's going to be a little bit of a risk—it ain't much, maybe, but it's a little. I mean, if you talk, won't people notice that your voice is just like Jubiter's; and mightn't it make them think of the twin they reckoned was dead, but maybe after all was hid all this time under another name?"

"By George," he says, "you're a sharp one! You're perfectly right. I've got to play deef and dumb when there's a neighbor around. If I'd a struck for home and forgot that little detail —However, I wasn't striking for home. I was breaking for any place where I could get away from these fellows that are after me; then I was going to put on this disguise and get some different clothes, and—"

He jumped for the outside door and laid his ear against it and listened, pale and kind of panting. Presently he whispers:

"Sounded like cocking a gun! Lord, what a life to lead!"

Then he sunk down in a chair all limp and sick like, and wiped the sweat off of his face.

2. A man on the boat

Original English B2

Chapter III. A DIAMOND ROBBERY

FROM that time out, we was with him 'most all the time, and one or t'other of us slept in his upper berth. He said he had been so lonesome, and it was such a comfort to him to have company, and somebody to talk to in his troubles. We was in a sweat to find out what his secret was, but Tom said the best way was not to seem anxious, then likely he would drop into it himself in one of his talks, but if we got to asking questions he would get suspicious and shet up his shell. It turned out just so. It warn't no trouble to see that he WANTED to talk about it, but always along at first he would scare away from it when he got on the very edge of it, and go to talking about something else. The way it come about was this: He got to asking us, kind of indifferent like, about the passengers down on deck. We told him about them. But he warn't satisfied; we warn't particular enough. He told us to describe them better. Tom done it. At last, when Tom was describing one of the roughest and raggedest ones, he gave a shiver and a gasp and says:

A1 English reading

A1 Glossary

Contents

- adventure
- beard
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- journey
- knee
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- pretend
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A1 Glossary

Glossary index

adventure

English A1

An exciting time when new or strange things happen.

/ədˈventʃə/

Example: Tom and I did not know much about the trouble. We were happy to take the boat down the river. We thought about our next adventure.

A1 English: #14

beard

English A1

Hair on the lower part of a man's face.

/bɪəd/

Example: Jubiter had long brown hair. He had no beard. He also had a large brown mark above his left knee. Four little marks were near it. People called it a planet with four moons.

A1 English: #13

Original English: #24

false

English A1

Not real or not true.

/fɔːls/

Example: He showed us some strange clothes. He also had blue glasses, a false beard, and a tall hat. These things could change his face and body.

A1 English: #22

frightened

English A1

Afraid: you think something bad can happen.

/'fraɪtənd/

Example: Jake was frightened. Two bad men were on the boat. They wanted to find him. He asked us to keep his name secret.

A1 English: #20

journey

English A1

Travel from one place to another.

/ˈdʒɜːni/

Example: The boat moved down the Mississippi River. We stopped many times. There were problems with the boat. The journey was slow.

A1 English: #16

knee

English A1

The part in the middle of your leg. Your leg bends there.

/niː/

Example: Jubiter had long brown hair. He had no beard. He also had a large brown mark above his left knee. Four little marks were near it. People called it a planet with four moons.

A1 English: #13

Original English: #24

powerful

English A1

Able to control people or make important things happen.

/ˈpaʊəfəl/

Example: Uncle Silas said no to Brace. After that, Brace was angry with the family. He was rich and powerful. Uncle Silas was afraid of him.

A1 English: #9

pretend

English A1

To act as if something is true when it is not.

/prɪ'tend/

Example: Jake needed another part to his plan. He could pretend he could not hear. He could pretend he could not speak. Then nobody would hear his voice.

A1 English: #25

prison

English A1

A building where people must stay because of the law.

/ˈprɪzən/

Example: Jubiter had a twin brother called Jake. The two men looked the same. Jake was a thief. He ran away from prison years before. People thought he was dead.

A1 English: #12

secret

English A1

Known only to one person or a few people; or something only these people know.

/'siːkrət/

Example: Jake was frightened. Two bad men were on the boat. They wanted to find him. He asked us to keep his name secret.

A1 English: #20

Original English: #86

thief

English A1

A person who takes things that belong to other people.

/θiːf/

Example: Jubiter had a twin brother called Jake. The two men looked the same. Jake was a thief. He ran away from prison years before. People thought he was dead.

A1 English: #12

twin

English A1

One of two children born to the same mother at the same time.

/twɪn/

Example: Jubiter had a twin brother called Jake. The two men looked the same. Jake was a thief. He ran away from prison years before. People thought he was dead.

A1 English: #12

Original English: #24

A1 Culture Notes

Contents

- Arkansas
- church
- Mississippi River

A1 Culture Notes

Glossary index

Arkansas

English A1

A state in the United States. Aunt Sally and Uncle Silas live there.

/ˈɑːkənsɔː/

Example: One day, a letter came for his Aunt Polly. It was from Aunt Sally in Arkansas. She wanted Tom and me to visit her family.

A1 English: #4

church

English A1

A building where Christians meet to pray. Uncle Silas speaks to the people in his little church.

/tʃɜːtʃ/

Example: There was trouble at Aunt Sally's farm. Her husband was Uncle Silas. He was a kind man. He worked on the farm. He also spoke in the little church.

A1 English: #7

Mississippi River

English A1

A very long river in the United States. In this story, people travel on it by boat.

/ˌmɪsɪˈsɪpi ˈrɪvə/

Example: The boat moved down the Mississippi River. We stopped many times. There were problems with the boat. The journey was slow.

A1 English: #16