

Meeting the Twain

Some people think a comet in the sky is a sign of wonderful things to come. That may 18
 have been the case in 1835 when Halley's Comet blazed overhead. At the time, no 33
 one knew that the wonderful thing was the birth of a baby in Missouri. He was 49
 named Samuel Clemens and he grew into a lively boy. He enjoyed playing jokes, 63
 swimming, and fishing in the Mississippi River. At the age of twenty-two, Sam 77
 Clemens boarded a steamboat on his way to South America. Sam fell in love with 92
 steamboat travel and his trip was forgotten. He followed his new dream and a few 106
 years later he became a steamboat pilot. In time, he moved out west and began 121
 writing for newspapers. In 1863 he started signing his name as Mark Twain. It would 136
 be Sam's pen name for the rest of his life. When his short story "Jim Smiley and His 154
 Jumping Frog" was published, Mark Twain became known across the country. After 166
 starting his family, Sam began writing books. Through his most famous characters, 178
 Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, Sam shared his boyhood adventures. As he grew 191
 older, Sam's health began to fail. In 1909 he said, "I came in with Halley's Comet in 208
 1835. It is coming again next year, and I expect to go out with it. It will be the 227
 greatest disappointment of my life if I don't go out with Halley's Comet." He got his 243
 wish. On April 21, 1910, the day after the comet passed earth, Samuel Clemens, 257
 took his last breath. His memory lives on with the stories of Mark Twain. With wit 273
 and wisdom Samuel Clemens captured the spirit of America. 282

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.
words read in 1 minute				
– number of mistakes				
= total words read correctly				
adult initials				

Parent Tips

Remind your student that fluent reading is not the same as speed reading. As an adult, I may read aloud 300 words per minute but if the meaning is incomprehensible it is not considered fluent reading. Reading aloud should have the same smoothness and rate as speaking. Help your student remember that his reading should sound as much like talking as possible.

1. Which statement about Samuel Clemens is NOT true?

- o His real name is Mark Twain.
- o He was a good storyteller.
- o He was a newspaper reporter.



2. What was the title of his first short story?

- o "Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn"
- o "Steamboats and Comets"
- o "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog"

3. What does the author want to explain with this passage?

- o When there are comets in the sky, good authors are born.
- o Sam's adventures helped him write lively stories about American life.
- o It is better to be a steamboat pilot than it is to visit South America.

4. Mark Twain was the pen name of Samuel Clemens. What do you think *pen name* means?