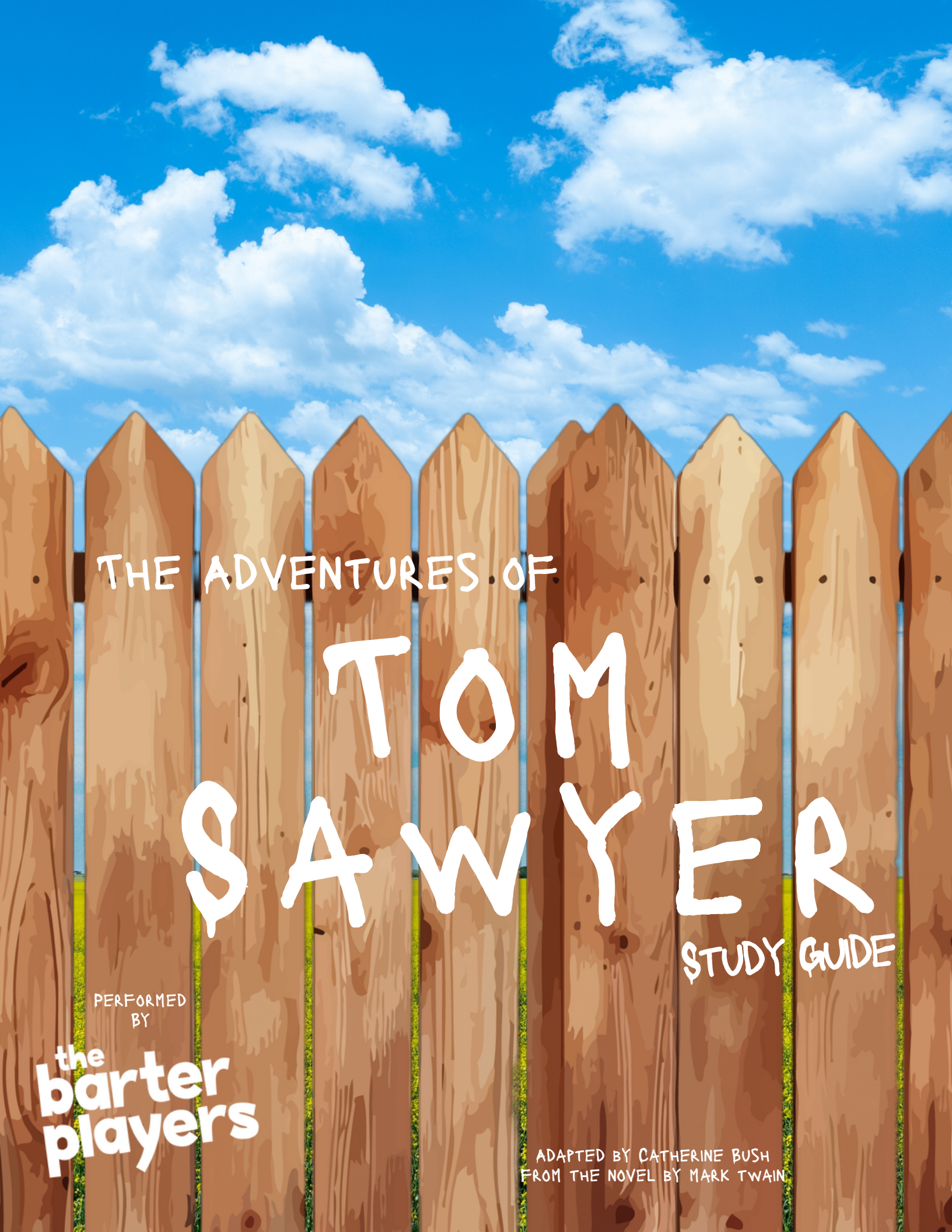




THE ADVENTURES OF

TOM SAWYER

STUDY GUIDE

PERFORMED
BY

the
**barter
players**

ADAPTED BY CATHERINE BUSH
FROM THE NOVEL BY MARK TWAIN

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Adapted by Catherine Bush from the novel by Mark Twain

Performed by The Barter Players, Fall 2026

NOTE: Standards listed below are seeing a performance of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and completing the study guide.

VA Standards of Learning

6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12, 6.13, 6.14, USII.1, TA1.1, TA2.1, TA3.1, TA4.1, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 7.10, 7.11, 7.12, 7.13, USII.2, TA1.2, TA2.2, TA3.2, TA4.2, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 8.10, 8.11, 8.12, 8.13, 8.14, USII.3, TA1.3, TA2.3, TA3.3, TA4.3, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 9.8, 9.9, 9.10, 9.11, 9.12, 9.13, 9.14, USII.4, TA1.4, TA2.4, TA3.4, TA4.4, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, 10.8, 10.9, 10.10, 10.11, 10.12, USII.5, TA1.5, TA2.5, TA3.5, TA4.5, 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4, 11.5, 11.6, 11.7, 11.8, 11.9, 11.10, 11.11, USII.6, TA1.6, TA2.6, TA3.6, TA4.6, 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5, 12.6, 12.7, 12.8, 12.9, 12.10, USII.7, TA1.7, TA2.7, TA3.7, TA4.7

TN Academic Standards

6.RL.KID.1, 6.RL.KID.2, 6.RL.CS.4, 6.RL.IKI.9, 6.SL.CC.1, 6.SL.PKI.4, 7.RL.KID.1, 7.RL.KID.2, 7.RL.CS.4, 7.RL.IKI.9, 7.SL.CC.1, 7.SL.PKI.4, 8.RL.KID.1, 8.RL.KID.2, 8.RL.CS.4, 8.RL.IKI.9, 8.SL.CC.1, 8.SL.PKI.4, 9-10.RL.KID.1, 9-10.RL.KID.2, 9-10.RL.CS.4, 9-10.RL.IKI.9, 9-10.SL.CC.1, 9-10.SL.PKI.4, 11-12.RL.KID.1, 11-12.RL.KID.2, 11-12.RL.CS.4, 11-12.RL.IKI.9, 11-12.SL.CC.1, 11-12.SL.PKI.4, TA.6.1, TA.6.2, TA.6.3, TA.7.1, TA.7.2, TA.8.1, TA.8.2, TA.9.1, TA.9.2, TA.10.1, TA.10.2, TA.11.1, TA.11.2, TA.12.1, TA.12.2

NC Student Success Standards

RL.6.1, RL.6.2, RL.6.3, RL.6.4, RL.6.7, SL.6.1, SL.6.2, SL.6.5, RL.7.1, RL.7.2, RL.7.3, RL.7.4, RL.7.7, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.5, RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3, RL.8.4, RL.8.7, SL.8.1, SL.8.2, SL.8.5
RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.4, RL.9-10.7, SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.2, SL.9-10.5
RL.11-12.1, RL.11-12.2, RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.4, RL.11-12.7, SL.11-12.1, SL.11-12.2, SL.11-12.5, TA.6.1, TA.6.2, TA.6.3, TA.7.1, TA.7.2, TA.8.1, TA.8.2, TA.9.1, TA.9.2, TA.10.1, TA.10.2, TA.11.1, TA.11.2, TA.12.1



BARTER THEATRE

A Brief History

Barter Theatre was founded during the Great Depression by Robert Porterfield, an enterprising young actor. When Porterfield and some of his actor friends found themselves out of work and hungry in New York City, Porterfield suggested they sojourn to his home in southwest Virginia where there was an abundance of food but no live theatre. He returned to Washington County with an extraordinary proposition: bartering produce from the farms and gardens of the area to gain admission to see a play.

Barter Theatre opened its doors on June 10, 1933 proclaiming, "With vegetables you cannot sell, you can buy a good laugh." The price of admission was 40 cents or the equivalent in produce; the concept of trading "ham for Hamlet" caught on quickly. At the end of the first season, the Barter Company cleared \$4.35 in cash, two barrels of jelly and enjoyed a collective weight gain of over 300 pounds.

In 1946, Barter Theatre was designated the state theatre of Virginia and became a launching pad for the careers of many iconic actors and actresses. Barter has also become one of the nation's longest running professional theatres, receiving countless awards and accolades.

Robert Porterfield passed away in 1971. His successor, Rex Partington, a former Barter actor and stage manager, became Barter's chief administrator from 1972 until his retirement in 1992. In October 1992, Richard Rose was named the Producing Artistic Director. During his tenure, attendance grew from 42,000 to more than 163,000 annual patrons. Significant capital improvements were also made, including renovation of the main stage (now Gilliam Stage) in 1995 and the 2006 addition of The Barter Café at Stage II (now the Smith Theatre).



Rose also created Barter's Equity Resident Acting Company, who performs year-round, as well as a company of designers and technicians. Rose retired in December of 2019 and Katy Brown, who had been at Barter since 1998 as the Director of the Barter Players and Associate Artistic Director, was named the fourth Producing Artistic Director – and is the first woman to hold the position.

Barter represents two distinct venues of live theatre: Barter Theatre's Gilliam Stage, and Barter's Smith Theatre. Gilliam Stage, with over 500 seats, features traditional theatre in a luxurious setting. Barter's Smith Theatre offers seating for 167 around a thrust stage in an intimate setting and is perfect for more adventurous productions. Barter Theatre is also home to The Barter Players, a talented ensemble of actors who produce plays for young audiences throughout the year.

In 2020, during the global pandemic, Barter was able to continue producing by creating a new venue at the Moonlite Drive-in, where the audience sat safely distanced in their parking spots while watching the actors on stage/simulcast on the big screen. History is always in the making at Barter. Building on legends of the past, Barter Theatre looks forward to the challenge of growth in the future.



Bartering for tickets
with Robert Porterfield

Anatomy of a Theatre

Types of Stages

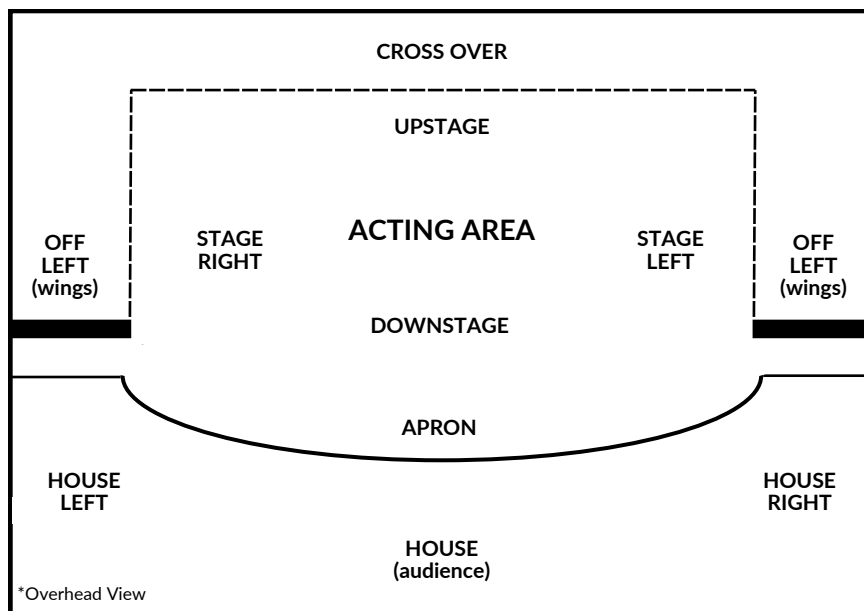
PROSCENIUM STAGE - The classic type of stage most commonly used in theatre. It is framed on all sides and raised higher than the audience. Barter's Gilliam Stage is a proscenium stage.

THRUST STAGE - This type of stage is literally thrust into the audience on 3 or 4 sides and is often not raised or is raised very little. One of the most common thrust stages in the world is Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. Barter Theatre's Smith Theatre is a 3/4 thrust stage with the first row of audience seating on the same level as the actors.

ARENA STAGE - Also called "theatre-in-the-round" an arena stage is surrounded by the audience on all sides.

BLACKBOX THEATRE - A simple, flexible space that is typically used for smaller performances with minimal sets, props, and technical pieces. It is usually painted black and is draped with black curtains

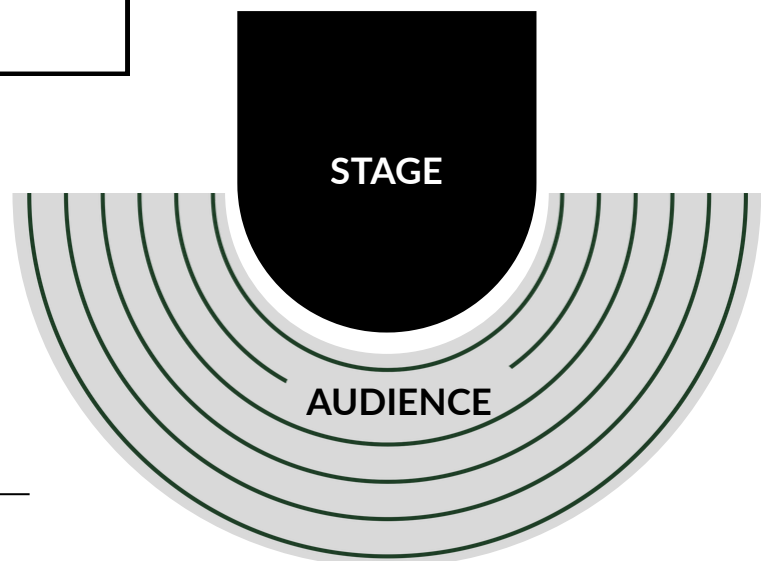
AMPHITHEATRE - An open-air, outdoor venue made famous by ancient Romans. The stepped seating arrangement allows for perfect views from any area of the audience.



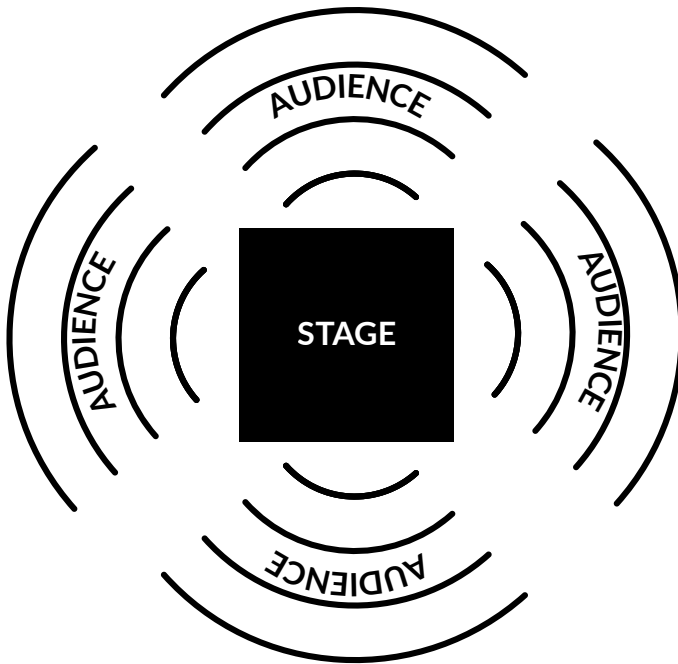
Identify each
type of stage

STAGE TYPE _____

STAGE TYPE _____



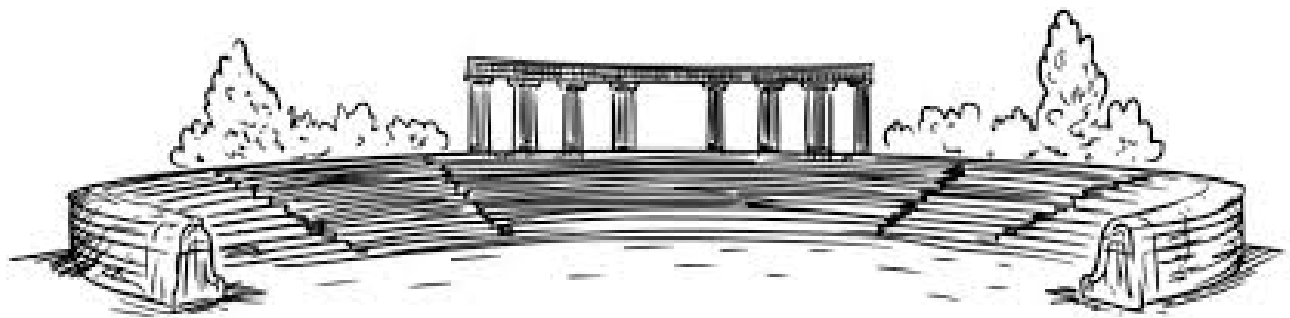
More Stages...



STAGE TYPE _____



STAGE TYPE _____



STAGE TYPE _____

Theatre Terms

STAGE TERMS

Apron: The front part of the stage that is closest to the audience

Backstage: The area of the stage that is not visible to the audience

Backdrop: A large curtain or drop that hangs at the back of the stage

Orchestra: The section of seats closest to the stage, on the main floor of the theater. These are often the most prized and expensive seats in the theater

Proscenium: An arched opening in the stage that the audience looks through

Wings: The areas to the left and right of the stage that are not visible to the audience

AUDIENCE TERMS

Auditorium: The part of the theater where the audience sits

Balcony: An elevated area of seating in the back of the auditorium

House: The area of the theater where the audience sits

Front of House: The part of the theater that is used by the audience. For example, a theater's lobby, box office, and refreshment stand are front-of-house areas

Usher: One who escorts persons to their seats in a theatrical setting

Vom: An entrance or exit for the audience passing under the seating tiers (common in arena/thrust stages)

PERFORMANCE TERMS

Act: A division of a play, which may be further divided into scenes

Ad-lib: When an actor improvises a line on stage

Aside: A line spoken by an actor directly to the audience, but not heard by the other actors

Audition: When actors perform for the director or casting director to get a role in a production

Choreographer: Responsible for telling the story through dance

Director: The captain of the ship, ultimately responsible for all creative & artistic production decisions

Matinee: A musical or dramatic performance held in the daytime and especially the afternoon

Off-Broadway: Any professional theatre venue in New York City with a seating capacity of 100-499

Producer: Plans and coordinates all aspects of a production, usually puts up and helps raise money to make the show possible

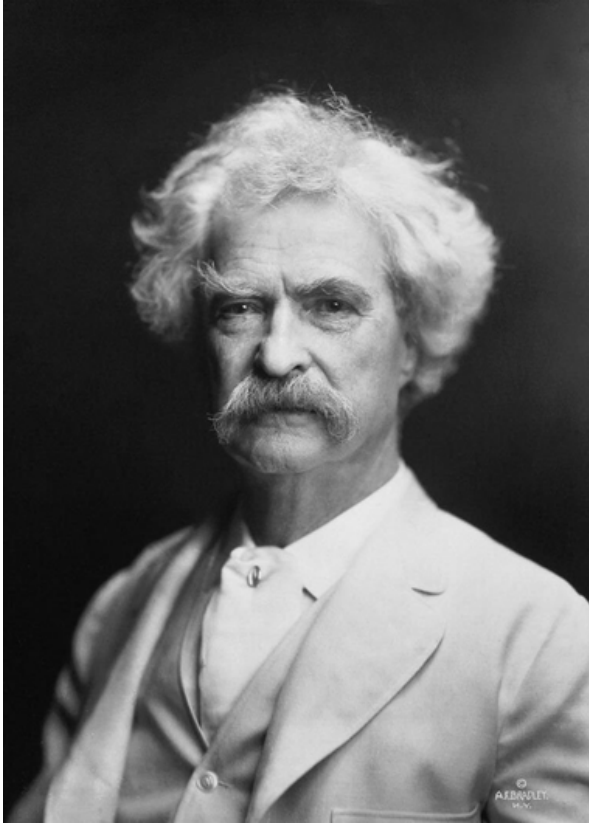
OTHER TERMS

Ensemble: The collaboration between the artists involved in the production

Genre: A specific type of drama, such as a comedy, tragedy, or melodrama

Preview: A final dress rehearsal where the audience is invited to see the show

Mark Twain



Mark Twain, born Samuel Langhorne Clemens in 1835 in Florida, Missouri, grew up in the small river town of Hannibal, Missouri, which later inspired the fictional St. Petersburg in *Tom Sawyer*. Before becoming a writer, he worked as a printer, a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi, and a miner out west. His pen name comes from a phrase riverboat crews called out to measure water depth, meaning it was safe for a steamboat to pass. He published *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in 1876, drawing heavily on his own boyhood memories and the people he knew growing up, and later wrote its sequel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Twain went on to become one of the most celebrated writers in American literature, known for his sharp humor and vivid portrayal of American life before the Civil War. He died in 1910.

Catherine Bush

Catherine Bush lives in Abingdon, Virginia where she is Barter Theatre's Playwright-in-Residence. Her plays for young audiences include *Cry Wolf!*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Rapunzel*, *Frosty*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth*, *My Imaginary Pirate*, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *The Call of the Wild*, *The Princess and the Pea*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, *Aesop's Fables*, *Santa Claus is Coming to Town*, *Mother Goose: The Musical*, *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*, *Old Turtle and the Broken Truth*, *Jingle All the Way*, *Antigone*, *Robin Hood*, *Great Expectations*, *Clementine the Musical*, and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.



BEFORE THE SHOW

- Research the Mississippi River in the 1800s. Why was it so important to towns like St. Petersburg?
- Look up Mark Twain's real hometown of Hannibal, Missouri. Find three facts that connect his childhood to the story of Tom Sawyer.
- Make a list of predictions: based on the synopsis alone, what do you think will happen in the story?

AFTER THE SHOW

- Write a diary entry from Tom's point of view describing the night in the graveyard.
- Design a "Wanted" poster for One-Eyed Joe, using details mentioned in the play.
- In small groups, act out an alternate ending: what if Tom had never spoken up at Muff Potter's trial?
- Debate in pairs: was it right for Tom and Huck to keep quiet at first? Argue one side, then switch and argue the other.
- Create a comic strip retelling your favorite scene from the play in six panels.



Character List

Tom Sawyer	Mischievous, imaginative boy always seeking adventure
Aunt Polly	Tom's loving but exasperated aunt and guardian
Huckleberry Finn	Tom's best friend, a free-spirited boy outside town rules
Becky Thatcher	Judge Thatcher's daughter and Tom's sweetheart
Judge Thatcher	The new county judge and Becky's father
Joe Harper	Tom's friend who joins him in running away to be a pirate
Billy Fisher & Johnny Miller	Schoolmates roped into whitewashing the fence
Widow Douglas	Wealthy, kind-hearted townswoman who takes an interest in Huck
Miss Dobbins	Tom and Becky's schoolteacher
Amy Lawrence	Tom's former sweetheart, before Becky
Muff Potter	The town drunk, wrongly accused of murder
One-Eyed Joe	Outlaw and grave robber who commits murder
Dr. Robinson	The town doctor, killed while robbing a grave
Mrs. Harper & Susy Harper	Joe's mother and younger sister

Setting

The play takes place in and around the fictional town of St. Petersburg, Missouri, in the spring and summer of 1846. This was a time before the Civil War, when steamboats traveled the Mississippi River and small river towns like St. Petersburg depended on the river for trade and travel. Life for children at this time looked very different from today: there was no television or internet, chores and school took up much of the day, and adventure was often something kids created for themselves outdoors.

Synopsis

Whether it's fishing with Huckleberry Finn, convincing his friends to whitewash Aunt Polly's fence, or falling in love with Becky Thatcher, nobody loves life more than the irascible Tom Sawyer. Then one night in a spooky graveyard, Tom and his best friend Huckleberry Finn stumble upon a deadly secret. Will Tom and Huck be able to save Muff Potter from the murderous treachery of Injun Joe? Or will they meet their own end in the cold confines of McDougal's Cave? As Tom and Huck embark on the greatest adventure of their lives, they learn that a man's greatest treasure isn't gold, but the gift of friendship.

FUN FACTS ABOUT MARK TWAIN



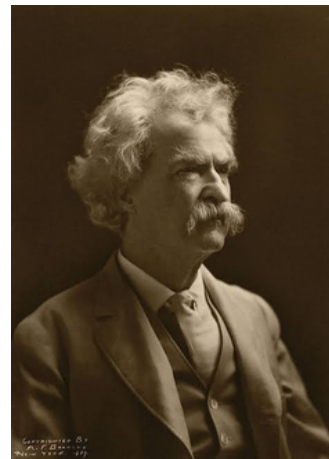
He was born in 1835, the same year Halley's Comet appeared, and he predicted he would "go out with it" too. He died in 1910, the very next time the comet passed by Earth.

He held several patents, including one for an adjustable strap to replace suspenders and another for a self-pasting scrapbook, which was actually one of his most commercially successful inventions.



Twain was good friends with inventor Nikola Tesla and was fascinated by new technology, even investing in an early typesetting machine that ended up costing him a fortune and nearly bankrupting him.

His daughter Susy once described him as looking "like a fine old head of a bird," and he was famous for his wild, wiry white hair and mustache, along with his signature white suits later in life.



Word Search

I	W	N	L	V	M	N	H	E	C	F	E	H	V	H
A	P	S	F	I	O	J	A	E	A	N	R	L	T	S
K	E	W	Q	K	T	U	R	V	X	F	B	O	Y	V
Z	R	M	C	M	M	M	E	D	P	W	E	U	M	B
G	C	E	G	O	F	D	L	K	T	H	B	A	D	A
S	R	E	R	D	L	T	L	A	R	I	C	G	R	T
M	D	E	U	I	L	T	I	L	E	T	P	D	D	D
P	O	A	P	P	J	C	K	E	P	E	D	X	K	X
I	D	P	E	W	F	Q	N	A	R	W	G	Q	L	E
S	W	R	R	H	A	Y	I	Q	O	A	J	U	C	W
K	I	Q	U	L	S	F	A	L	B	S	Y	H	R	R
I	Y	Q	K	T	U	G	P	H	A	H	T	Z	Z	Y
F	G	Z	H	M	H	X	O	Z	T	H	G	Q	P	L
F	X	A	A	Z	I	E	P	H	E	I	G	W	T	L
O	Z	X	L	L	C	H	R	D	H	P	G	K	G	P

REPROBATE

RECKON

WHITEWASH

SKIFF

DRUTHER

PAINKILLER

AFEARD

HOGSHEAD

ACTIVITY

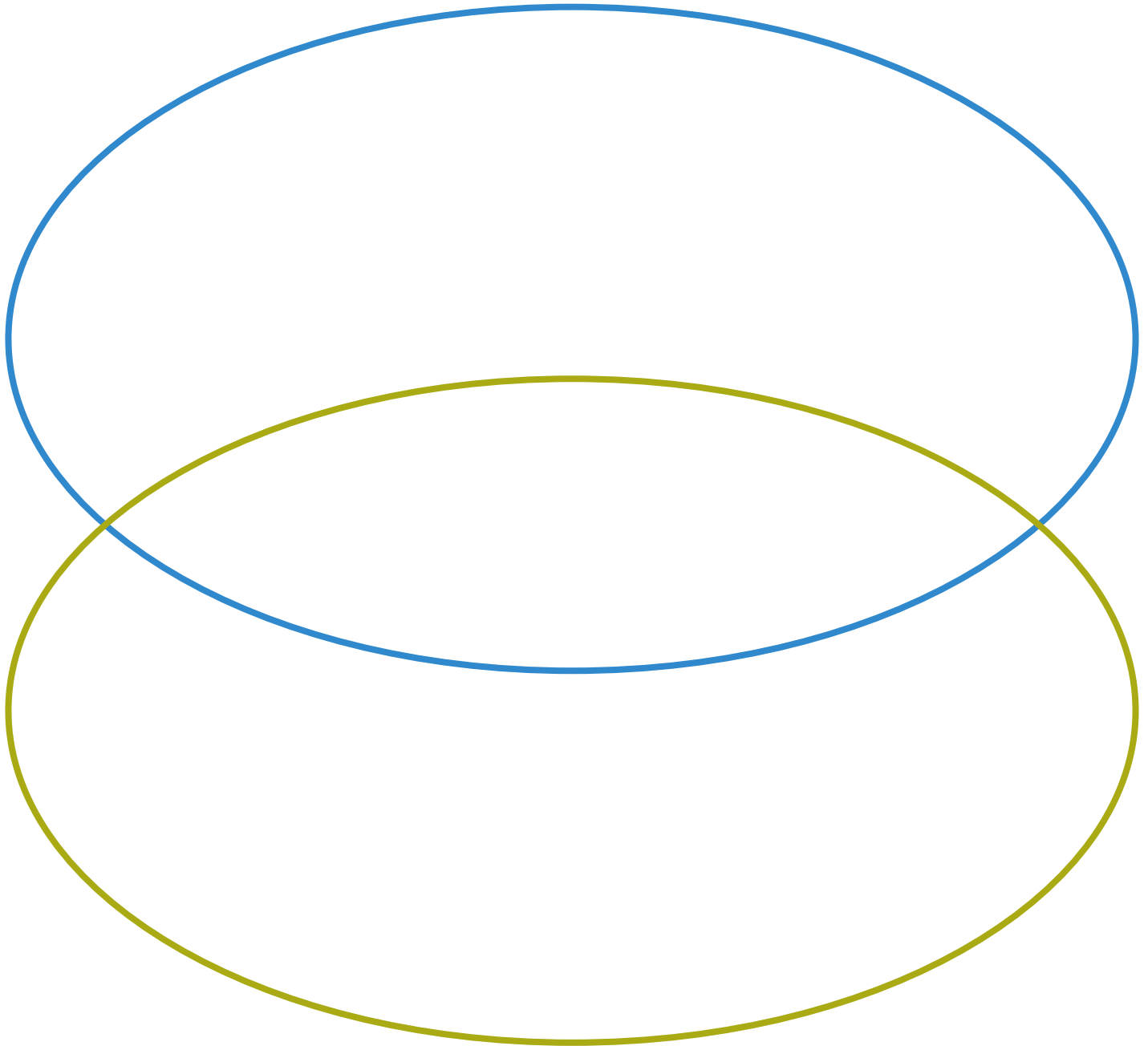
Design a "Wanted" poster for One-Eyed Joe, using details mentioned in the play.



CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Compare and contrast two characters from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. What do they have in common? How are they different? What are their virtues and faults? What do you admire or dislike about each of these characters? Discuss your results with the class.

Character 1: _____



Character 2: _____

True or False?

Circle T or F to answer the question

1. Tom Sawyer gets in trouble for eating jam out of Aunt Polly's jam pot. **T or F**
2. Tom whitewashes the entire fence by himself without any help from his friends. **T or F**
3. Huck Finn believes a dead cat can be used to cure warts. **T or F**
4. Tom and Huck witness One-Eyed Joe murder Dr. Robinson in the graveyard. **T or F**
5. Tom and Huck immediately tell the sheriff what they saw in the graveyard. **T or F**
6. Becky Thatcher is Judge Thatcher's daughter. **T or F**
7. Tom, Huck, and Joe Harper run away to become pirates on Jackson's Island. **T or F**
8. The townspeople believe Tom, Huck, and Joe have drowned. **T or F**
9. Muff Potter is actually guilty of murdering Dr. Robinson. **T or F**
10. Tom testifies at Muff Potter's trial and reveals that One-Eyed Joe committed the murder. **T or F**
11. Muff Potter is angry at Tom for testifying against him. **T or F**
12. Tom and Becky get lost in McDougal's Cave after a birthday picnic. **T or F**
13. Tom uses kite string to help find a way out of the cave. **T or F**
14. One-Eyed Joe falls to his death while trying to grab Becky in the cave. **T or F**
15. Tom and Huck find One-Eyed Joe's buried treasure hidden under a cross mark in the cave. **T or F**
16. Huck decides he wants to keep all of his share of the treasure and live like a rich gentleman. **T or F**
17. The Widow Douglas wants to take Huck in and civilize him. **T or F**
18. At the end of the play, Huck gives up on being Tom's friend **T or F**

Answers

1. True 2. False — he tricks his friends into doing it for him 3. True 4. True 5. False — they swear a blood oath to keep it secret 6. True 7. True 8. True 9. False — he is innocent 10. True 11. False — he thanks Tom for saving his life 12. True 13. True 14. True 15. True 16. False — he gives his share to Tom, saying being rich isn't for him 17. True 18. False — they remain friends and plan to become bank robbers together

Vocabulary Words

REPROBATE

RECKON

HOGSHEAD

WHITEWASH

BLOOD SWEAR

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

LAND SAKES

SKIFF

IRASCIBLE

DRUTHER

PAINKILLER

YONDER

AFEARD

CORNCOB PIPE

BULLIER

A. Over there, in that direction

B. Old dialect for "would rather"

C. A large wooden barrel, big enough for a boy to hide inside

D. A cheap white paint made of lime, used to coat fences & walls

E. Old dialect for "afraid"

F. A patent medicine (home remedy) sold in the 1800s

G. Easily angered; quick-tempered

H. A tobacco pipe carved from a dried corncob

I. A person of low, immoral character

J. A solemn promise sealed by a small cut and a handshake

K. An old-fashioned exclamation of surprise

L. Old dialect for "better" or more excellent

M. A small, light boat

N. To think, guess, or suppose

O. A lawyer who argues against the accused person in a trial



Design Your Own Pirate Flag!



Tom, Huck, and Joe run off to be pirates. Use markers or crayons to draw your own pirate flag. What color is it? What design will you create?

From the Page to the Stage!

How does a book become a stage play?

1. The Script

It all starts here. A playwright (in this case, Catherine Bush) turns the prose of literature into dialogue and direction. This is called “adapting.”

Try it yourself!

Pick a scene from your favorite story and adapt it for the stage. Try not to use the narrative voice.

Focus on character dialogue

2. Director / Actors

The director & actors begin the rehearsal process. The director “blocks” the play, which means he tells the actors where to move and stand and sit. The actors work on learning their lines, finding their character’s motivation and creating the world of the play.

3. Set Design

The director & actors begin the rehearsal process. The director “blocks” the play, which means he tells the actors where to move, stand and sit. The actors work on learning their lines, finding their character’s motivation and creating the world of the play.

4. Costumes / Wigs

The costume designer is responsible for creating a different look for each character while maintaining the overall aesthetic of the production. Each actor’s costume must be tailored to fit and be built to take the wear-and-tear of 8 shows a week! The wig designer is responsible for designing, building & styling the wigs that will appear in the show. Like the costumes, wigs are necessary to help distinguish characters

Try it yourself!

Design costumes and wigs for the characters in your scene.

5. Props

A breakaway chair! The Cardinal’s ring! Milady’s vial of poison! These are a few examples of the props designed and built by Barter’s props department for this production. A prop is defined as an object used on stage by actors for use in the plot or story line of a theatrical production.

Try it yourself!

Design and build the props you will need for your scene.

Try it yourself!

Using your adapted scene, design a set that will visually serve the story & function effectively for the actors

6. Lights & Sound

Lights not only illuminate the actors and pull focus to various spots on the stage but, together with sound, help create a mood. Lights and sound can also, along with the set, help establish location. The sound of horses hooves, the glow of moonlight, and voila! We are on a dark road in France in the year 1628!

Try it yourself!

Put together a soundtrack for your scene that establishes place & mood. Feel free to use recorded music/sound effects or perform it live!

7. Stage Manager / Crew

The Stage Manager attends all the rehearsals and once the show goes into production, is “in charge”, calling all the sound and light cues and maintaining the integrity of the piece during its run. The SM is aided in these endeavors by the Crew, the unsung heroes who work backstage moving sets, changing wardrobe, placing props – whatever is necessary for the show to go on!

Critical Thinking

A **director's** role is to move a script from the page to the stage. The director interprets the playwright's words, shapes performances, and guides design choices to create a unified production.

Theatre critics attend performances and publish informed opinions about what they experience. A critic's job is not to tell a playwright what should have been written, but to examine what is already present and explain why it succeeds or falls short.

Become a theatre critic!

After viewing the production, write a review.

The review should include one paragraph for each of the following:

Introduction – Identify the production you saw, where and when you saw it, and the purpose of your visit.

The Script – Evaluate the writing, story, and characters. Explain what was effective and what was not.

The Acting – Analyze the performances. Did the actors create believable, compelling characters? Support your opinion.

The Design – Respond to the set, costumes, and lighting. How did these elements contribute to the overall experience?

The Staging – Consider the director's choices, including how action or violence was staged. Was it clear and impactful?

The Audience – Describe how the audience reacted during key moments. What does this reveal about the production?

Conclusion – Reflect on what stood out most and what you will remember about the performance.

Share your thoughts, we would love to hear your analysis of our show!

Mail to:

Barter Theatre
Attn: Josh Lapping
P.O. Box 867
Abingdon, VA 24212