

# Mark Twain Resources for Elementary Students: Twain Quotes

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If you have chosen to read Who Was Mark Twain by April Prince with your students, then they should already be familiar with some Twain quotes. If not, quotes are a great way to introduce students to the wit and wisdom of Mark Twain prior to delving into more complex Twain texts. Read together and discuss several Twain quotes. Note that a single quote may have different interpretations, and that's ok.

## Mark Twain Quote Poster Activity

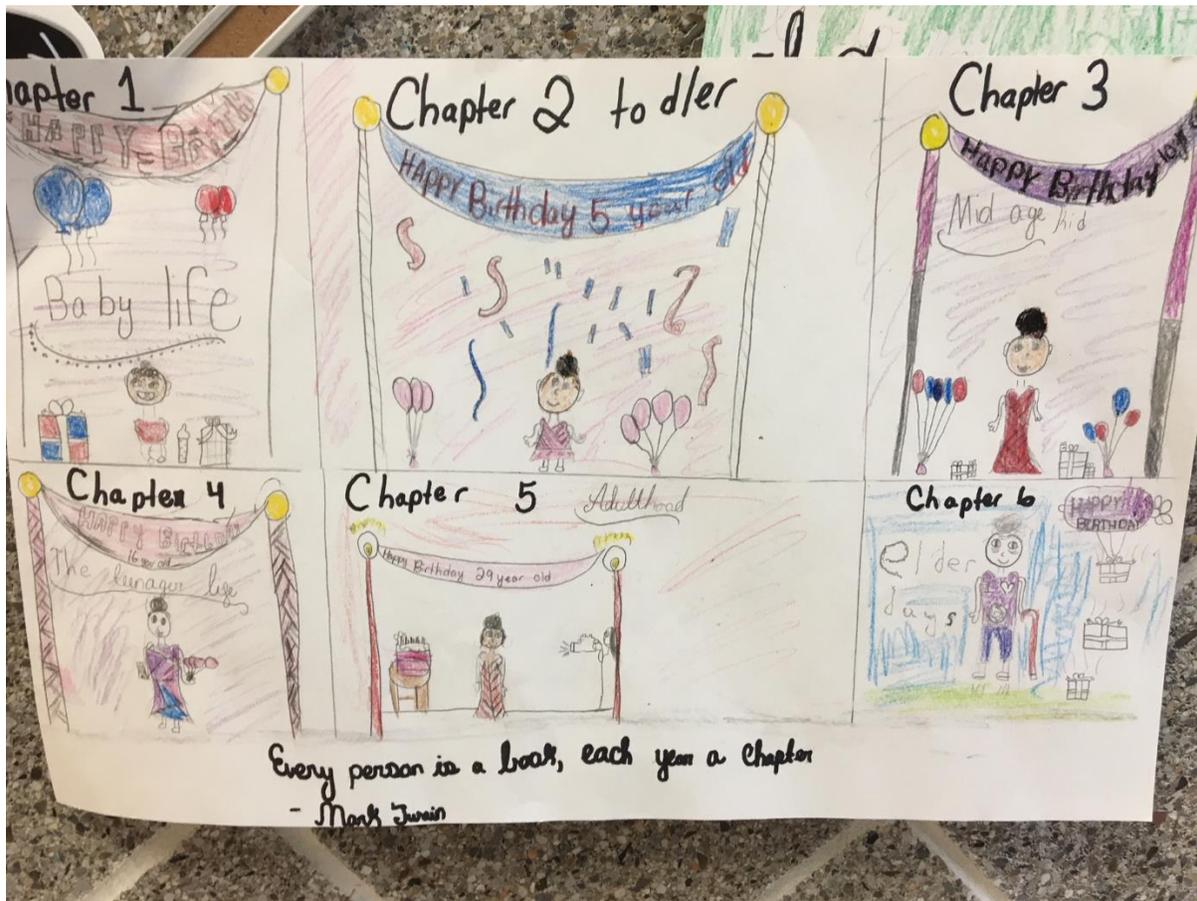
1. Cut apart a selection of Twain quotes (some are provided here.) Fold and place in a hat. Consider using a top hat, or an old straw hat to enhance the historical feel of this activity. Allow students to draw out a Twain quote. Encourage pairs or groups to share their quotes and work together to gain understanding of unfamiliar vocabulary. Encourage the use of thesauruses and dictionaries. This may be a challenge for students, so be prepared offer support.
2. Have students ponder their interpretation of the quote. I use the phrase, "What do you think Mark Twain was telling us about people?" Some students will come up with very literal interpretations, others will be more insightful. Some completely off base. Offer support as needed. I do allow students up to 2 additional quote draws from the hat, but they must choose one of the three quotes drawn.

3. Have students create a thumbnail picture, illustrating their interpretation of the quote. Feel free to use the examples below to clarify expectations.

4. The teacher should review the thumbnails to be sure students are on the right track. Once approved, allow students to create a full color poster illustrating their Twain quote.

Here are some examples:





Noise proves nothing. Often a hen who has laid an egg

weird

cackles as if she has laid an astroid.

-Mark Twain

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WU!



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## Mark Twain Quotes

1. I was seldom able to see an opportunity until it ceased to be one
2. I never could tell a lie that anyone would doubt, nor a truth that anybody would believe.
3. Adam and Eve had many advantages, but the principal one was that they escaped teething.
4. Nothing so needs reforming as other people's bad habits.
5. Thunder is good, thunder is impressive; but it is the lightning that does the work.
6. April 1. This is the day upon which we are reminded of what we are on the other three hundred sixty-four.
7. Thousands of geniuses live and die undiscovered—either by themselves or by others.
8. It's better to keep your mouth shut and appear stupid than to open it and remove all doubt.
9. Truth is good manners; manners are a fiction.
10. Let us endeavor so to live that when we come to die even the undertaker will be sorry.
11. It is a pity that we cannot escape from life when we are young.
12. You can't depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus.

13. Training is everything. The peach was once a bitter almond; cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education.

14. I have noticed my conscience for many years and I know it is more trouble and bother to me than anything else I started with.

15. When a teacher calls a boy by his entire name it means trouble.

16. My mother had a great deal of trouble with me but I think she enjoyed it.

17. Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.

18. Man will do many things to get himself loved, he will do all things to get himself envied.

19. Every one is a moon and has a dark side which he never shows to anybody.

20. Always do right. This will gratify some people, and astonish the rest.

21. The stars ain't so close as they look to be.

22. A soap bubble is the most beautiful thing, and the most exquisite, in nature.

23. Classic: A book which people praise and don't read.

24. Man is the only animal that blushes. Or needs to.

25. I was gratified to be able to answer promptly and I did. I said I didn't know.
26. You can't pray a lie.
27. The difference between the almost-right word & the right word is really a large matter. It's the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning.
28. When in doubt, tell the truth.
29. Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do...Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do.
30. The work that is really a man's own work is play and not work at all.
31. It's noble to be good, and it's nobler to teach other to be good, and less trouble.
32. When I reflect upon the number of disagreeable people who I know have gone to a better world, I am moved to lead a different life.
33. We can't all be sound: we've got to be the way we're made.
34. Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence in society.
35. Let us be thankful for the fools. But for them the rest of us could not succeed.
36. To some people it is fatal to be noticed by greatness.

37. The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up.

38. Happiness ain't a thing in itself—it's only a contrast with something that ain't pleasant.

39. If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man.

40. The man with a new idea is a crank until the idea succeeds.

41. A southerner talks music.

42. Shut the door. Not that it lets in the cold but that it lets out the coziness.

43. Get your fact first... then you can distort 'em as much as you please.

44. Truth is the most valuable thing we have. Let's economize it.

45. Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand.

46. Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; truth isn't.

47. Words are only painted fire; a look is the fire itself.

48. Do not offer a compliment and ask for a favor at the same time. A compliment that is charged for is not valuable.

49. Habit is habit and not to be flung out of the window by any man but coaxed down-stairs a step at a time.

50. A man cannot be comfortable without his own approval.

51. Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first.

52. Don't part with your illusions. When they are gone you may still exist, but you have ceased to live.

53. I have never let my schooling interfere with my education.

54. If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything.

55. It is better to deserve honors and not have them than to have them and not to deserve them.

56. Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.

57. When you cannot get a compliment any other way pay yourself one.

58. How little a thing can make us happy when we feel that we have earned it.

59. Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

60. It is wiser to find out than suppose.