Write down information about each character as you read the book

Huckleberry Finn

Jim

Tom Sawyer

Widow Douglas

Miss Watson

Judge Thatcher

Pap

Judith Loftus (ch.11)
Jake Packard, Jim Turner and Bill (ch. 12-13)

the Grangerfords: Buck, Emmeline, and Miss Sophia

the Shepherdsons: Harney

The Duke of Bridgewater (Bilgewater)

The King (The Dauphin [dow-FEEN])

Col. Sherburn
Boggs

Mary Jane, Susan and Joanna Wilks

Harvey and William Wilks

Levi Bell

Dr. Robinson

Aunt Sally and Uncle Silas Phelps

Aunt Polly
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn – Study Questions

Answer each question with 2 or more complete sentences.

ch. 1
1. What does “sivilizing” Huck entail?
2. Why do you think “civilized” is misspelled?

ch. 2
3. What do Tom’s oaths and plans tell us about him?
4. Tom believes and follows everything he has read in fiction books. What do you think Twain wants us to think about him? What is Twain telling us about that? Does this give us a clue as to how Twain wants us to “believe” him?

ch. 3
5. Who do you think is smarter, Tom or Huck? Explain.

ch. 4
6. Why is Huck trying to give up his fortune to Judge Thatcher?

ch. 5
7. Why doesn’t Pap want Huck to learn to read?
8. What does the attempt to reform Pap tell us about human nature in general (at least from Twain’s point of view)? Do you agree? Explain.

ch. 6
9. Huck says he prefers life with Pap as opposed to life with the Widow Douglas and Miss Watson – why?
10. What do these two methods of raising Huck (Pap’s method and the method of the Widow Douglas and Miss Watson) have in common?
11. Pap makes a speech about the government on p.26-27. Find and explain three examples of how this speech is hypocritical/ironic?

ch. 7
12. What do the details of Huck’s escape plans tell us about him?

ch. 8
13. Describe the relationship between Huck and Jim. Include their escapes and the “ghost” incident.

ch. 9
14. What do you think happened in the house found floating in the river before Huck and Jim found it?

See Assignment #1 on page 4.

ch. 10
15. Why does Jim blame the snake bite on bad luck? How is this like the story of Old Hank Bunker’s death on p.53-54?
16. How does Huck feel about the whole snake bite situation?

ch. 11
17. Why doesn’t Huck’s disguise work? What does this tell us about human behavior? Do you think this makes Twain prejudiced?
18. What has Judith Loftus taught Huck how to do, perhaps without meaning to?
ch.12
19. How would you describe Jim’s morality as illustrated on p.65-66? Compare his morality to that of Pap and to that of the Widow Douglas and Miss Watson?
20. Why does Huck idolize Tom Sawyer so much? What do you think about this?
21. Describe the hypocrisy in the robbers’ conversation.

ch.13
22. Why does Huck feel bad about leaving the robbers on the steamboat? Is he just as bad as they are?
23. What does the ferryman need before he can help? Why does he end up helping without getting any money?

ch.14
24. What is Huck realizing about Jim at the end of the first paragraph of this chapter?

ch.15
25. What is Huck realizing about Jim at the end of the last paragraph of this chapter?

ch.16
26. At the bottom of p.87, Huck starts talking about his conscience. What do you think of his conscience? How did he get it? Why is he disobeying it?
27. Re-read Jim’s comments on p.89. What do they tell us about how Jim understands Huck? What do they tell us about Twain’s opinions of white and black people?
28. Why does Huck lie on the p.90?

ch.17-18
29. Compare and contrast the reasoning behind the feud and the reasoning behind gang violence today.
30. At the top of p.115, Huck wishes he hadn’t come on shore. Compare this to his description of life on the raft on p.116.

See Assignment #2 on page 4.

ch.19
31. How does the new situation on the raft resemble the way real monarchies and aristocracies work?
32. How does the second new paragraph on p.125 make this whole chapter ironic?

ch.20
33. “You’ll be in costume, and that makes all the difference in the world.” What is Twain saying about human nature, or at least American culture?
34. What do you think Twain is saying in the scene of the King confessing his sins and collecting money at the religious revival? (consider the irony in the scene)

ch.21-22
35. What do you think Twain is commenting about in the scene where the King and Duke are rehearsing scenes from Shakespeare?

ch.23
36. How are Huck’s and Jim’s descriptions of royalty ironically accurate?
37. On p.155, from Jim’s story about punishing his daughter, what are we and Huck learning about Jim?

ch.24-25
38. What is Twain’s comment about appearance vs. reality on p.158? What’s his comment on clergymen on the same page?
39. When the townspeople criticize Dr. Robinson, what is Twain saying about society?
40. “Hain’t we got all the fools in town on our side? And ain’t that a big enough majority in any town?” (top of p.178) Do you agree or disagree with Twain? Explain.
41. On p.186-187, in the paragraph that starts “I see I had…”, how can we tell that Twain approves of Huck’s revelation instead of Huck’s previous way of life? Cite examples from the paragraph.
42. On p.195, Huck says that Tom Sawyer couldn’t have done any better than Huck’s current plan. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

43. Explain two examples of irony in the scene when Harvey and William Wilks arrive in town.
44. What is Twain criticizing about human nature when the townspeople run out into the storm toward the graveyard?
45. The King and Duke later assume that the slaves stole the gold; how is this an example of The Other? Why does this comment bother Huck?

46. What is the irony in the Duke’s line on p.216, “yes, we did consider him [ours]—goodness knows, we had enough trouble [with] him”?

See Assignment #3 on page 4.

47. Find and explain an example of irony about racism on p.220-221.
48. How does Huck’s behavior change around Tom Sawyer? What do you think about this?
49. After so long away from him, how do you feel now about Tom and his plans?
50. Why does Huck feel sorry for the King and Duke? What does that make you think of Huck?

See Assignment #4 on page 4.

51. How is Huck’s letting Tom run the show like how Huck and Jim let the King and Duke run everything on the raft?
52. Considering his plans, what do you think Tom’s goal is? What does this make you think about Tom?
53. In the middle of p.247, how has Huck gained some control over Tom? How does this make Tom look?
54. When Tom is injured, how is this poetic justice? Would we feel different if it happened to Huck or Jim?

See Assignment #5 on page 4.

55. With whom is Huck more concerned—Tom or Jim? Why?
56. What has Jim done for Tom? Why? What has Jim risked in the process? What does this tell us about Jim (especially since he did this for Tom, of all people)?
57. In the book’s last paragraph what does Huck say about being “sivilized”? So where is he going? Why?

Finally…
OK, do we think Twain has the same opinions as we do about Tom and Jim? If so, considering what Jim does for Tom in the end, and considering what Tom has been doing since ch. 32, what can we deduce is Twain’s opinion of white and black people?
Assignment #1
List and explain 3 separate examples in the novel so far that show Huck is an unreliable narrator.

Assignment #2
Satire is when an author is holding up a person, idea or institution with the intent of criticizing him/her/it, tearing it down. On the surface, the author appears to support what he/she is saying, but an attentive reader can see that the author is using the irony of the object in question to criticize it and show it as absurd.
Many people misunderstand Twain’s use of satire, believing he actually supports racism, slavery and crime when he is actually holding them up to expose their faults.
After finishing chapters 17-18 (the feud), identify and explain three examples of satirical plot events or lines of dialogue.

Assignment #3
Reread the section of ch. 31, starting with the paragraph that starts with “Once I said it to myself it would be a thousand times better…” and ending with the paragraph that ends with “…I might as well go the whole hog.” In this selection, Huck is making a big decision.
In about ¾ of a page, explain what Huck is realizing here about himself (conscience vs. heart), his relationship with Jim, and what society expects of him (Huck).

Assignment #4
Give three examples of each motif:
1. Monetary value ($) placed on human life
2. Huck’s use of fake names
3. Characters that are Huck’s age (about 14)
4. Huck’s tragic stories

Then, for each motif, explain how the examples you’ve listed help bring unity to the novel.

Explain the symbolism of:
1. life on the river vs. life on the land
2. the fact that no lanterns were brought to the grave digging in ch. 29
3. Huck ripping up his letter in ch. 31

Assignment #5
The novel is very episodic, but there are themes (along with motifs) that unite the entire novel.

The first is that appearance is often the opposite of reality, often resulting in hypocrisy.
The second is Twain’s belief that society is little more than a collection of degraded rules, precepts and customs that defy logic, but that individuals can make the right decisions and overcome evil.

After reading to the end of ch. 40, consider three of the following episodes from the novel and explain how one of the above themes is expressed in those three episodes.
- Huck’s life with Pap (p. 18-36)
- Huck in Tom Sawyer’s gang (with Tom’s fantasies) (p. 4-14)
- robbery on the wrecked steamboat (p. 63-75)
- the feud between the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons (p. 95-116)
- Col. Sherburn shooting Boggs (p.141-147)
- the King and Duke’s minor schemes (p. 117-162)
- Defrauding the Wilks sisters (162-205)
- Huck’s decision to help Jim escape (ch.31, p. 212-214)
- Tom’s plans to free Jim (p. 232-276)