

Big Read Children's Books 2009

Adaptations of Tom Sawyer for Younger Readers: Beginner Readers



“The Adventures of Tom Sawyer” series adapted by Catherine Nichols and illustrated by Amy Bates. Call Number: B Twain

1. [A Song for Aunt Polly](#)
2. [The Best Fence Painter](#)
3. [The Birthday Boy](#)
4. [The Spelling Bee](#)

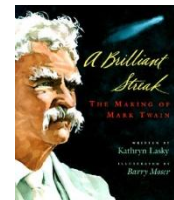
Recommended Biographies for Young Readers

[The Trouble Begins at Eight: A Life of Mark Twain in the Wild, Wild West](#) by Sid Fleischman. Grades 5 and up.

Lively prose, the best of it belonging to Mark Twain himself, and generous illustration make an endearing portrait of Mark Twain's life with emphasis on his time in the west. 224 pages. Call Number: J 921 Twain

[A Brilliant Streak: The Making of Mark Twain](#) by Kathryn Lasky, illustrated by Barry Moser. 41 pages. Grades 4-6.

Each period of Mark Twain's life begins with a quote from his work. The biography focuses on the facts of Mark Twain's life of most appeal to older elementary school students. For example, Twain's childhood encounters with violence and corpses (two of murdered men) are included. Call Number: J 921 Twain



[Mark Twain: The Man and His Adventures](#) by Richard B. Lyttle is a meaty biography that spans Mark Twain's life.. 219 pages. Grades 6-12. Call Number: J 921 Twain

“Killingly Funny Mark Twain.” [Lives of the Writers: Comedies, Tragedies \(and What the Neighbors Thought\)](#) written by Kathleen Krull, illustrated by Kathryn Hewitt. Pages 57-61. Grades 4-6.

The collected biographies by Krull and Hewitt specialize in less-known facts about their subjects, especially if they could be embarrassing. This short biography of Mark Twain gives a glimpse of his playful nature, as well as his difficulties. It reports that he once had to conduct interviews with the survivors of a sea disaster from a stretcher because he was too saddle sore to walk. Call Number: J 809 K939

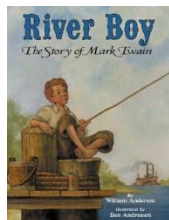
“Keeping Christmas with Mark Twain,” [Just Before Christmas: Children's Stories to Read Aloud](#), Edited by Natasha Simkhovitch.

Christmas at home is described in three short memoirs. The first is by a Katy Leary who worked for the Samuel Clemens family for 29 years, the second by a daughter, Clara Clemens. The final piece is by Mark Twain written on Christmas Day, 1909, the day after his daughter Jean died. Pages 31-32. Call Number: J 808.8033 En32

Picture Book Biographies

[Mark Twain: What Kind of Name is That?: A Story of Samuel Langhorne Clemens](#) by Robert M. Quackenbush. 36 pages. Grades 2-6.

The picture book biography is an entertaining introduction to Mark Twain for young readers. Call Number: J 921 Twain



[River Boy: The Story of Mark Twain](#) by William Anderson. Illustrated by Dan Andreasen. Preschool-Grade 2

The simplified facts of Mark Twain's life are gently told in this picture book for young children. Call Number: J 921 Twain

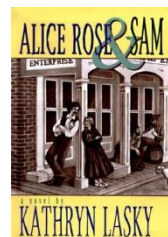
[An American Boy: The Adventures of Mark Twain](#) written and illustrated by Don Brown. Grades 2-6

Brown's picturebook biography gives greatest emphasis to Mark Twain's childhood. The events of his adult life occupy the last few pages. Call Number: J 921 Twain

Meeting Mark Twain in Fiction

[Alice Rose & Sam: A Novel](#) by Kathryn Lasky. Grades 5-8. 252 pages.

Virginia City, Nevada was a dangerous place when a young newspaper man named Samuel Clemens moved to town. This is the setting for a novel about a 12-year-old girl Alice Rose Tucker who witnesses a murder and finds an ally in the newspaper reporter who will become better known as Mark Twain. Call Number: J Lasky



[The Mark Twain Murders](#) by Laurence Yep. Grades 5-8. 152 pages.

Twain's time as a reporter in San Francisco during the Civil War is the setting for this mystery involving confederates and gold. Call Number: J Yep

Mark Twain's World

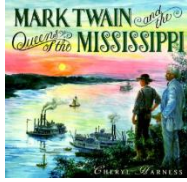
[The World of Mark Twain](#). Cobblestone: The History Magazine for Young People, May 1984. 48 pages. Grades 4-6.

Interesting facts about the time Mark Twain lived are intertwined with segments about Twain himself. Besides a short biography, there is an article about Mark Twain's primary residence and other landmarks now open to the public, a timeline, and a story about a man who reenacts Twain's lectures. Articles about the time include "Steamboating in America," "The Great River: The Mississippi," and an article on Halley's Comet that marked Twain's birth and death. For additional fun, a crossword puzzle and a craft are included. Call Number: J 921 Twain

[The Spanish-American War](#). "People at the Center of—" by Audrey Kupferberg.

Mark Twain's opposition to the war is discussed on pages 24-25 in this book about the Spanish-American War. Call Number: J 973.89 K9649

Life on the Mississippi



[Mark Twain and the Queens of the Mississippi](#) by Cheryl Harness. Grades 2-6

The era of the steam-powered paddle boats on the Mississippi is the subject of this lovely picture book. The painting on the cover shows three people standing on green bank overlooking the river traffic, two boys who could be Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn and a man in the white suit who is certainly Mark

Twain. Call Number: J 977 H2295

“Steamboats on the Mississippi: Sounding Calls” [From Sea to Shining Sea: A Treasury of American Folklore and Folk Songs](#), compiled by Amy L. Cohn, pages 122-123.

Did you know Samuel Clemens chose his penname “Mark Twain” from sounding calls used to navigate rivers? Call Number: J 810.8 C661

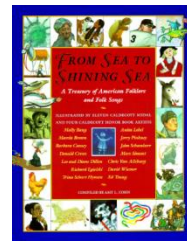
[The Boys’ Ambition](#) by Mark Twain from [Life on the Mississippi](#).

Twain explains the draw of a life on the river to the boys in his hometown in this illustrated segment from his longer work. The pictures are by George Overlie.

Call Number: J 917.7 T911

Works for Children by Mark Twain

“The Woman with the Golden Arm” a folktale retold by Mark Twain and found in [From Sea to Shining Sea: A Treasury of American Folklore and Folk Songs](#), compiled by Amy L. Cohn, pages 342-343. Call Number: J 810.8 C661



“The Glorious Whitewasher” from [The Adventures of Tom Sawyer](#) appears in [Tasha Tudor’s Favorite Stories](#) with a full-color illustration, pages 67-74. Call Number: J 808.831 T811