



AMERICAN  
LITERATURE

# Twain, travel blogger

from the Esri GeoInquiries™ collection for American Literature

Target audience – American literature learners

Time required – 15 minutes

## Activity

Discover how travel and life experiences influenced Mark Twain's body of work.  
"Travel is fatal to prejudice." – Mark Twain

## English Standards

**CCSS: ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.9.** Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work.

**CCSS: ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.9.** Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and early twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

**CCSS: ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.9.** Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance, including how they address related themes and concepts.

## Learning Outcomes

- The learner will analyze Twain's life journeys.
- The learner will analyze the historical and cultural connections to Twain's work.

Map URL: <http://esriurl.com/litGeoInquiry5>

## ? Ask

### Where did Twain's travels begin?

- Click the URL above to launch the map.
- Examine the layer, Twain's Beginnings.
- ? What proof can we see already that Twain's life influenced his literary work? *[Answers may vary but could include Jackson's Island and the Mississippi River from Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer. You can also zoom in and see places named after Twain.]*

## ! Acquire

### What was Twain's world?

- Read aloud: "Knowing where someone came from and their personal experiences helps you understand them better – including the westward expansion, Civil War, Native American battles, etc."
- With the Details button depressed, click the button, Content.
- Click the checkboxes to the left of the layer names that start with "Twain's World".
- Click items on each layer to learn more.
- ? What historical events were happening in Twain's lifetime and near his home? *[Westward expansion: He saw many pioneers headed west for better opportunities, which made him curious, as well. The Civil War: He was from a border state. During the Civil War, these states were the slave states that did not leave the Union. Native American events: He traveled very near these events or covered them as a reporter.]*

## 🔍 Explore

### How did his life's work become literature?

- Turn off the Twain's World layers.
- Turn on the layer, Twain's Travels.
- Click the cities on the map to explore his travels.
- ? What did Mark Twain write during his life as a reporter in Missouri? In San Francisco? In Europe? *[Mississippi River – Huck and Tom; San Francisco – Celebrated Frog (turn on Calaveras County); Trip to Hawaii – travel writer is born; Europe – The Innocents Abroad.]*

more ►

## Analyze

### What was it like to travel by boat from San Francisco to New York in 1866?

- ? Using the Measure tool, determine how far Twain traveled [*~ 5150 miles*].
- Click the stops to learn more about each one.
- ? How long did it take to travel from San Francisco to New York City in 1866? [*About 51 days*]

## Act

### What did he see and whom did he meet?

- Examine Twain's total journeys on the map, the historical events, and general era.
- ? How can Twain's journeys give insight into your writing or the writing of other authors? [*Answers vary but should include reference to personal experiences, personal interests, life-changing events, and interesting or influential people.*]

## LEGENDS, LAYERS, AND SYMBOLS

- To the left of the map, click Details and then click the Show Contents Of Map button. The Contents pane allows you to turn on and off layer visibility.
- Press the Legend button. The Legend pane allows you to identify symbols.
- On the map, click symbols for more information that will appear in a pop-up box.

## USE THE MEASURE TOOL

- Click Measure, select the Distance button, and from the drop-down list, choose a unit of measurement.
- On the map, click once to start the measurement, click again to change direction, and double-click to stop measuring.
- Hint: Position the area of interest on the map so that it is not obscured by the Measure window.

## Next Steps

**DID YOU KNOW?** ArcGIS Online is a mapping platform freely available to public, private, and home schools. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription at <http://www.esri.com/schools>.

**THEN TRY THIS...**

- Make your own timeline and journey. Perhaps a modern journey might be shared with social media. What would you tweet from each location, using 140 or fewer characters?
- Map other elements of literature that are part of Twain's letters.
- What geographic connections can you make to other authors?

## TEXT REFERENCES

This GIS map has been cross-referenced to material in sections of chapters from the following Mark Twain works.

- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*
- *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*
- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
- *The Innocents Abroad*