

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
by Mark Twain

Chapter Eight: Muff Potter in Jail

Author: Adrian Tennant
Level: Beginner - pre-intermediate
Age: Teenagers / adults
Time needed: 10-20 minutes per activity

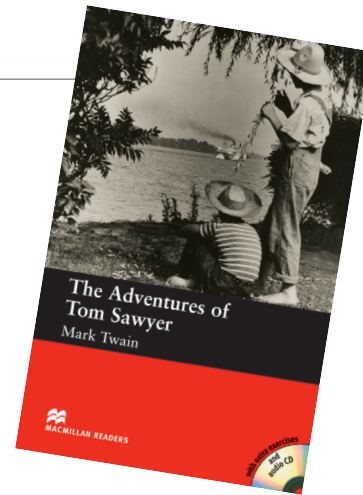
Activity 1

- 1 Start playing the recording and stop after, *Aunt Polly looked at Tom and she started to cry.*
- 2 Ask students, *Why do you think Aunt Polly started to cry?*
- 3 Tell them to write down their answer, or whisper it to their partner.
- 4 Play the next part of the recording up to, *Tom started to cry.*
- 5 Ask students, *What do you think Tom said to Aunt Polly?*
- 6 Repeat this process, stopping at the following places and asking the students the questions in brackets:
Injun Joe told lies to the sheriff. (What did he tell the sheriff?)
Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer swear this... (What did they swear?)
Becky was unhappy. (Why was she unhappy?)
There was something on the desk. (What do you think it was?)

Note: You don't need to check whether or not students have got the answers correct, in fact it isn't too important. However, if you watch their faces as you play each part of the recording after you've asked a question, you'll be able to see from their faces and body language whether they guessed correctly.

Extension: What would you do?

Write the following on the board: *Should Tom and Huck tell the sheriff who really murdered Doctor Robinson?* Have students write in their notebooks reasons for and against, e.g. *Yes, because...* and *No, because...* If you have time, have a class debate on this topic.



Activity 2

Note: You are now just over half way through the story (there are a total of 15 chapters). So, it's a good point at which to recap the story so far.

- 1 Put students in small groups and ask them to make a list of the characters so far.
- 2 Ask the students for the names and write them up on the board.
- 3 Then ask students to work in their group and try to remember what has happened so far. Encourage them to work together, monitor and help if asked.
- 4 Play all eight chapters again so that students can check their memories.

Extension: What happens next?

For each character ask students to write a statement predicting what will happen to them in the second half of the story, e.g. *Muff Potter: gets out of jail; Injun Joe: kills Huck and Tom.* Keep the statements to review later.

Chapter Eight: Muff Potter in Jail

Transcript

On Tuesday morning, Tom woke late. He got dressed quickly. Aunt Polly was eating her breakfast.

Aunt Polly looked at Tom and she started to cry.

'You're a bad boy,' she said. 'You went out last night, didn't you? I worry and worry about you. But you don't care about me.'

Tom started to cry.

'I won't go out at night again, Aunt Polly. I won't,' he said. 'I'm very sorry.'

Soon the people of St Petersburg were talking about Doctor Robinson's death. Had Muff Potter murdered him? The morning after the murder, somebody had found Muff Potter in a barn. Muff was drunk. And his knife was beside the doctor's body in the graveyard. There was blood on the knife.

Injun Joe told lies to the sheriff. 'Muff Potter killed the doctor,' he said.

The sheriff put Muff Potter in the jail. There was going to be a trial – a trial for murder.

Tom was very worried. He spoke to Huck.

'Huck, have you talked about the murder?' he asked.

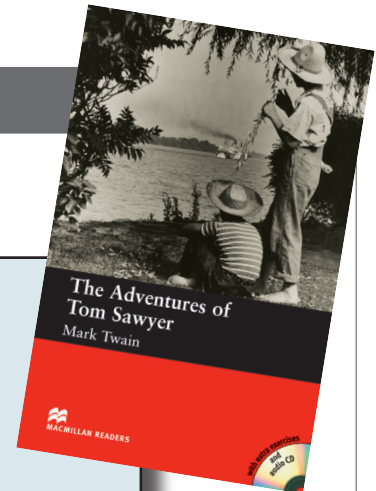
'No, I haven't,' replied Huck. 'I'm frightened of Injun Joe. He'll kill us.'

'Huck, let's swear again!' said Tom. 'We won't tell anybody!'

Huck and Tom swore again. They spoke together. 'Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer swear this – they won't tell anybody about the murder.'

The days passed. Tom was unhappy. He did not speak to his friends at school. He did not speak to Becky. He did not speak to Aunt Polly. He only spoke to Huck.

Becky was unhappy. She wanted Tom to speak to her.



Chapter Eight: Muff Potter in Jail

Transcript

The boys went to the jail every day. They went early in the morning. They gave tobacco and matches to Muff Potter. They put them through the window. Muff put the tobacco in his pipe and lit a match. He smoked the pipe.

One morning, Muff said, 'You're good boys. Other people have forgotten me, but you haven't forgotten me.'

Tom and Huck walked away.

'Muff Potter isn't a bad man,' said Huck. 'He gets drunk sometimes. But he doesn't kill people.'

'Oh, Huck,' said Tom. 'He'll be hanged, won't he?'

'Yes,' replied Huck.

Tom said goodbye to Huck. He walked slowly to school. He was very sad.

Tom sat at his desk. There was something on the desk. It was his metal door-handle. Becky had given it back to him.

